

After Khomeini

The Iranian Second Republic

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1 Political succession in republican Iran

The February revolution was a surprise attack, it took the old society unawares . . . it is no longer the monarchy that appears to have been overthrown but the liberal concessions extracted from it by a century of struggle. Instead of society conquering a new content for itself, it only seems that the state has returned to its most ancient form, the unashamedly simple rule of the military sabre and the clerical cowl.

Karl Marx, *Surveys from Exile* (II)

Since the defeat of Mohammad Mossadeq's bid for political power in 1953, the question of the political continuity of leadership in Iran has been fraught with uncertainties. Although the rule of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was uninterrupted from 1953 until 1979, his reign was not to be unchallenged (not least by Ayatollah Khomeini himself during the mid-1960s) (Abrahamian 1982: 473–9). The monarch's consequent preoccupation with control of the Iranian elite, coupled with his concerns over dissension from the traditional ruling classes or the armed forces, ensured that he would not accord the question of succession priority lest it might help to undermine his position as the governing monarch. In a formal sense the issue of succession had resolved itself with the birth of a male heir, Reza Pahlavi, in 1960 and it was not until 1978 and the advent of the revolutionary movement that the issue of succession became a serious political factor in the considerations of the opposition and the loyalists alike. The rapid erosion of support for the Pahlavi monarchy, coupled with the steady deterioration in the regime's ability to confront the revolutionaries, accelerated the collapse of the whole system, leaving little prospect of the Shah abdicating in favour of his son in order to provide for the continuity of the Pahlavi dynasty.

Similarly, the question of succession has since been an important political factor in revolutionary Iran. The revolution of 1979 gave birth to a new (ruling) political elite which, during the first two years of the Islamic Republic, remained a coalition between the Shah's secular and religious

opponents. After 1981, the clerical forces gained the upper hand and, under the guidance of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (the Supreme Leader), formed the backbone of the republic's political leadership. After 1989, however, important changes in the political leadership occurred, giving rise to the consolidation of the position of some of Ayatollah Khomeini's more junior trusted allies at the top of the power pyramid. They solved the issue of succession to their own advantage by gaining the upper hand in the contest for the control of the state and its constituent parts. In so doing, they seemed to have put an end to the problem of political continuity in modern Iran, as defined by the absence of a peaceful transfer of power, which had always threatened to undermine the position of the ruler in Iran's post-1945 history. This is perhaps the most important demonstration of a much altered political structure and attendant policies which emerged during and since the period of Ayatollah Khomeini's demise and which merit the use of the term Second Republic. [The problems of succession and political continuity are at the heart of the progression of the Islamic Republic from a state the authority of which is ultimately in the hands of one man to a constitutionally more solid and institutionally based distribution of power.]

If one is to look for political continuity in republican Iran, one has to accept that the seeds of the Second Republic were sown during the infant years of the republican regime and the unfolding drama surrounding the balance of forces therein. It was almost inevitable that the system would change after Ayatollah Khomeini's death, although it was never certain in just what manner. Less clear still was whether the Islamic Republic as a system would survive the death of its founder. As the years wore on, it became apparent that even if the system survived Ayatollah Khomeini's death it would inevitably have to change in order to adapt to new realities.

The problems of political continuity after Khomeini's death were evident from the earliest days of the revolution, in some ways reflecting a concern inherited from the Pahlavi regime along with the structures of power. Not least of the worries of the revolutionary forces was the advanced age of Ayatollah Khomeini, the undisputed leader of the revolution after October 1978, and the knowledge that a resolution of the succession dilemma would have to come sooner rather than later.

The Iran-Iraq war provided the main backdrop to the internal debates of the ruling elite about the succession. Any successor, it was assumed, would have to have the necessary skills to lead the country's war effort, maintain cohesion amongst the ruling factions, and provide guidance for the masses. A tall order indeed. It is not surprising, therefore, that no single individual with the required qualities emerged in the early years of the republic. The leadership problem was compounded by in-fighting and factionalism at the national political level and the opposition of a number of the leading Shii

clerics (Ayatollahs and Grand Ayatollahs) to the Faqih doctrine of Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers in the Shii hierarchy. The peculiarities of the Islamic Republican system and the constitutional pronouncements on the qualities of the Faqih – he had to be of high (Iranian) Shii Islamic standing, and a recognised leader in the field of Islamic scholarship – made the prospects of a 'natural' leader emerging that much harder (Abrahamian 1993).

The doctrine of the Velayat-e Faqih as enunciated by the late Imam caused some serious difficulties for his political and politico-religious successors, who were by and large of a more junior religious rank and status. Indeed, this was the case largely because the concept clearly assigned the responsibility of leading the nation to the Marja'a-e Taqlid (source of emulation in Shiism), and not to the junior clerics themselves. 'The just fuqaha', wrote Khomeini, 'must be the leaders and rulers, implementing divine ordinance and establishing the institution of Islam' (Algar 1982: 79). As Irfani points out, the 'just fuqaha are none other than the Marja'a-e Taqlid' (Irfani 1986: 35). Omid also stresses the plurality of (religious) leadership in Ayatollah Khomeini's conceptualisation of an Islamic government. In his writings, Ayatollah Khomeini normally referred to the 'Fuqaha' (religious leaders) and not the 'Faqih' (religious leader) (Omid 1992). Milani notes that the framers of the 1979 constitution deliberately established an organic relationship between the institution of the Faqih and the Marja'aiyat (Milani 1992). In 1989, therefore, when Khomeini's death resulted in the post of Faqih being transferred to his successor, the question was left open as to when the new Faqih, only recently promoted to the rank of Ayatollah, might become a Marja'a. This has since become a highly controversial political issue and a source of great tension within the system, being exacerbated by the passing away of the established Ayatollah Ozmas (Grand Ayatollahs) in recent years (Jahanpour 1994).

As it was, a number of senior Ayatollahs opposed the concept of the Faqih. At least one Grand Ayatollah raised objections to the whole process of the religious establishment's drive to monopolise political power. Grand Ayatollah Hassan Tabataba'i Qomi's comments stand as a testimony to the depth of the opposition among the orthodox Shii establishment to the fundamentalist Islamic republicans' rush for power:

I told Ayatollah Khomeini that the IRP [Islamic Republican Party] was corrupt and rotten, and it was for him not to permit these filthy laws to come into force nor allow a bunch of corrupt, irrelevant, and unqualified 'experts' to go ahead and constitute authority.

(Irfani 1983: 221)

Qomi went as far as declaring the new constitution 'no good' because a number of its articles were un-Islamic, in his view.

Another aspect of Ayatollah Khomeini's rule with a bearing on the succession issue was his style and leadership. In general Ayatollah Khomeini himself did not engage in factional politics until the latter part of the 1980s, when a crisis of institutional competition demanded it of him. Although his subordinates were selected or elected to run the Islamic state, the centrality of his role as the Supreme Leader often meant that he would exercise his power by passing judgement on major issues of the day. His pronouncements, however, were usually open to interpretation and his interventions non-strategic; they did not end a line of thought, but merely helped to weaken it against others. By intervening to bolster the position of an individual, an institution or a line of thought against others, he in fact tended to fuel the factionalism and competitive nature of elite politics in the Islamic Republic (Schahgaldian 1989). A by-product of this method of rule was the way in which it allowed the development of diverse interpretations of his views that crystallised into ideological factions among the politicised clergy. Khomeini's style of leadership has had significant implications for his successors because some of them, including perhaps the current Faqih, may not have the temperament, acumen or charisma to forge compromises among the factions as Khomeini himself managed to do so successfully.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN IRAN'S POLITICAL POWER STRUCTURES

[If the issue of succession has dogged the Islamic Republic since its early years, so too have the structures of Pahlavi society, many of which have remained in place, sometimes essential to the new republic and at other times appearing to haunt it. For many observers of (and participants in) the 1979 anti-Shah revolution, the movement fell well short of a social transformation of society by forcibly limiting the boundaries of change to the political level. Moaddel argues that:]

◁ The initial years of the post-revolutionary period were punctuated by events favouring a major structural change directed against the land-owners and capitalists. However, a reverse trend soon gained momentum. At first, it was able to halt the move toward social revolution. Then it began to undo what had been done in [the] previous phase.]

(Moaddel 1991: 319)

Although the social structure of the Islamic Republic did change sufficiently to reflect Iran's new political realities (in terms of the overthrow of the Shah and the departure and/or alienation of the '*comprador*' social groups allied

to his regime), the view persisted that the emergence of the Islamic Republic signified an exercise in the violent circulation of Iran's political elite and not a revolutionary transformation of its social structure (Ja'far and Tabari 1984). As such, therefore, it was argued that the new elite not only did not 'revolutionise' the centralised state machinery (its monopoly of legitimacy, administration and violence), but went only so far as to fine-tune it and to add new appendages to the government machinery as hallmarks of the Islamic Republic's life.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the social relations of 'production, circulation and exchange' created by the Shah remained very much intact under the new system. Later chapters will deal at some length with the economic structures of the Islamic Republic. [It is sufficient to say here that at the socio-economic level capitalism was not eradicated with the end of the 'dependent capitalist system' of the post-1953 Pahlavi period. Its political appearances changed, however, to reflect Iran's new class realities. If the Shah had come to represent the pinnacle of the socio-economic pyramid of Iran, the republican leadership reflected the ascendancy of lower social strata; they in fact came to signify the medium and upper layers of the new 'flat-top' socio-economic pyramid. Despite Ayatollah Khomeini's efforts to institutionalise a new pinnacle (substituting the Faqih for the Shah), the newly liberated 'flat-top' elites of the pyramid had already begun their competition for political power (and for control of the state as the enabling instrument of power), the essential condition for perpetuating their own social existence.]

The revolution neither eliminated the political challenge of the former elites nor ended the challenge of the politically active non-elites to the preserved and newly established vestiges of power. Despite their physical and intellectual presence, however, many of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), opponents be they monarchist or republican, failed to mount an effective challenge. Part of the reason for this failure lay in the opposition's inability to account correctly for the nature of the theocratic regime. Many elements within the leftist movements, for instance, limited their analytical tools to a prescribed set of conditions said to have existed during the Shah's era. They continued to identify the players and forces of the clergy-led movement – and regime – with the so-called 'dependent capitalist' socio-economic model. According to this view, if the entire Iranian system was, and continued to be, dependent capitalist then its ruling class(es) must also be, or eventually become, *comprador* bourgeois (this view was particularly prevalent amongst those leftists who had been influenced by the views and theories of the Fadayin Organisation) (Moghadam 1987). Furthermore, the state machinery was said to continue to operate according to the governing laws of the capitalist system which dominated Iran before the revolution and vis-à-vis the world capitalist system. The latter enabled the former to gain

some autonomy from the ruling classes in order to fulfil its own historical function of preserving the interests of dependent capitalism in the long term. The recommended solution of the leftists was therefore the destruction of the entire system.

The left Islamic Mojahedin movement based its analysis of the IRI system on the character and personality of the Ayatollah himself. In the early days of the revolution they viewed him as a progressive cleric. By 1981, however, they had revised their opinion, comparing his socio-economic position to that of the Shah. They saw in Ayatollah Khomeini the symbol of an Islamic Republican dependent system, little different from the capitalist-dependent system of the Pahlavis save in its Islamic accessories. Their failure to recognise the relationship between Khomeini himself and the character of the Islamic Republic was reflected in their choice of strategic slogans. The continuing belief that without Khomeini the Islamic Republic could indeed abandon its capitalist-dependent status led them to call for 'Death to Khomeini' along with 'Death to the Shah', reflecting the desire to attain a tactical goal, i.e. to create a change in the regime through removing the republic's leading figure(s) but preserving the post-Pahlavi structures. A fissure existed, then, between leftist secular groups – who called for an end to the Islamic Republican structures ('Death to the Islamic Republic') – and the Mojahedin – who sought only an end to Khomeini's personal rule. This confusion over strategy and differences over the choice of correct slogans served to distance the Mojahedin from their potential allies on the left at the height of the struggle between the regime and its opponents. Divided and confronted by overwhelming popular support for the regime, the opposition fell!

The monarchist and pro-monarchist forces, on the other hand, were likewise unable to analyse the nature of the revolutionary changes in Iran. Convinced of the Pahlavi regime's integrity, they constantly looked beyond Iran to find exogenous causes of the revolution, such as 'international communism'. The conspiracy to overthrow the Shah, in the eyes of the pro-Pahlavi groups, did not end with communist interference, however. Their assessment was very wide in scope, ranging from accusing the PLO of having organised and armed the militant Islamic groups, attacking President Carter for his human rights campaigns (seen to have helped to undermine the Iranian monarch's authority at home), and condemning the Carter administration for not rushing to the aid of the Shah in his hour of need. The monarchical forces failed to understand the configuration of forces which had come to make up the political elite of the Islamic Republic. The Paris-based National Movement of Iranian Resistance (NAMIR), headed by the late Shahpour Bakhtiar (the Shah's last Prime Minister), for instance, continued to identify the leading clerics of the republic with the Soviet Union and the 'sinister aims of World Communism'. In adopting such positions he and his contemporaries

failed to appreciate the socio-economic dimensions of the regime's suppression of the leftist-radical and reformist movements in Iran, in the process missing the opportunity to organise an effective united front-type structure with some of the domestic opposition forces.

Both republican and monarchist camps were divided over how to deal with the burning issues of the day: social philosophy, the national economic development strategy, land reform, taxation, whether to expand the public sector or free the economy to market forces, foreign policy, the role of clergy in politics, and the status of the expatriates. Lack of clear-cut policies on these issues added to the confusion over the future development of Iran and the country's place in the international community.

Thus it is fair to say that, during the crucial first two years after the revolution, the clerics were able to build upon continuities in the political and socio-economic realms to consolidate their own power, while the contenders for that power were emasculated by failure to comprehend the nature of those continuities and their own positions within the new republic. If one is to ask at this point where the succession issue comes into this, it is in the realisation by the republican Islamic regime that, to hold on to that power and to continue to defy the efforts of the opposition to seize it from them, they must recreate the existing system to allow for a peaceful transfer of power from one generation of Islamic leadership to another without exposing fragilities which could be exploited for their downfall.

At this point, it is useful to identify the various factions and political groupings which were competing for power in the early post-revolution years and to assess their respective impacts upon the succession issue within the Islamic Republic. This can provide us with essential clues as to why the Islamic regime was able to manage its peaceful transfer of power as and when it did.

THE REPUBLICAN CONTENDERS

The republican camp can be divided into three distinct groups: the fundamentalist Islamic republicans (FIR), the liberal Islamic republicans (LIR) and the secular republicans (SR). It was the first two of these groups which were ultimately to capture the reins of power at the expense of the third.

It is within the first category that the Islamic Republic's internal feuds have been fermenting. Most observers have divided the factions in the FIR camp into three or four competing groups. Until the official demise of the Hojatieh Society, the on-going power struggle within the FIR camp had centered around the two main axes of the Hojatieh and the 'Followers of the Imam's Line' (also known as the *Maktabis*). While formally everyone involved with the governing and administering of the state adhered to the

Imam's Line, clear and distinguishable differences over the interpretation of its content began to emerge soon after the revolution. From the ranks of the 'Followers of the Imam's Line' were drawn the so-called 'radicals', those who from the period prior to the death of Ayatollah Khomeini were associated with anti-Western foreign policy, favouring the continuation of the war with Iraq, the export of the 'Islamic revolution' by any means, state control of the economy and strict imposition of the Islamic social and legal system.

Many Western analysts at this time regarded Ali Khamenei, Mir Hussein Moussavi, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri (all key figures in the Islamic Republic) as Maktabis (or Towhidis), all being committed to the reform of Iran's economy in a more populist direction (full land reform, high taxation, subsidised goods and services for the poor and needy, anti-foreign capital investment policies, nationalisation of foreign trade, etc.). James Bill, for instance, has classified both Khamenei and Rafsanjani as 'political extremists' (Bill 1982: 36). According to a *Financial Times* report, 'on the one side there are social reformers, represented by the President [Khamenei] ... the Prime Minister [Moussavi], and ... Speaker of the Parliament [Rafsanjani] [who are] ... eager to push through land reform laws and the nationalisation of foreign trade' (6 May 1983). Others, Akhavi (1987), Schahgaldian (1989), Behrooz (1991) and Abrahamian (1993) among them, found a much more differentiated elite structure in post-Pahlavi Iran.

It is clear that while there was consensus over certain issues, social policy in particular, unanimity was certainly not detectable in other fields, notably economic policy and regional and international policies. 'Differences of opinion', as the regime's propagandists liked to call the divisions within the governing camp, began to emerge even in areas such as social and cultural policy, where some consensus had previously been in evidence (Siavoshi 1992). After the official demise of the Hojatieh Society (which believed strongly in free enterprise), for instance, many of the prominent radicals began to express support for the strengthening of the private sector. Ayatollah Khomeini himself was explicit in his endorsement of the private sector and the bazaar: 'The things which the government is not able to do, the government should not do. But do not prevent the bazaar from doing the things which it can do' (*The Middle East*, October 1984: 23). He also said to the economic exiles, 'return home and work and we promise that as long as there is Islam there will be free enterprise' (*The Sunday Times*, 10 January 1983).

Compared with the Imam's Line faction, the Hojatieh had a longer history and tradition, with crystal-clear objectives. Formed in the 1950s as an anti-Bahai organisation, this secretive society played an important role in the shaping of the Islamic Republic. Many of its members came to hold important posts and executive office after the victory of the revolution. In a broad sense,

the Hojatieh was vehemently anti-communist, passionately free-market (in both trade and industry) and emphatically traditionalist on social issues (Schahgaldian 1989). The Hojatieh has interpreted Quranic judgements on private property advocating an unfettered free market and non-government intervention in economic affairs, going so far as to question even the Islamic legal basis of the notion of a 'social market' system. The main criticisms levied against the Hojatieh by followers of the Imam's Line were of the latter's economic doctrine, summed up by the Prime Minister of the time as follows: 'here is a line of thought that believes in the capitalism of the 18th and 19th centuries' (Moussavi, quoted in *The Middle East* April 1985: 52-3).

The Society's best known government members, Habibollah Asgharouladi and Ahmad Tavakoli, were both ousted from the Cabinet in 1983, largely as a result of concerted attacks by the Maktabi-dominated Majlis and the rest of the Cabinet. Their dismissal marked the decline of the Society's influence at the formal level of government. Simultaneously with the two Ministers' departure from the Cabinet, a host of other high-ranking Hojatieh administrators were also sacked, including eight of the republic's 27 provincial governors, the head of the politically sensitive State Grain Organisation, and the head of the Foundation of the Affairs of War Victims. Despite these setbacks, however, the Hojatieh continued to hold its own in bodies such as the Council of Experts, the Majlis, the Council of Guardians and the Pasdaran, as well as in the lower echelons of clerical bureaucratic power (Schahgaldian 1989; *MEED* 21 October 1983 and 5 September 1983). The Hojatieh's influence was such that Asgharouladi was appointed as a member of the Imam Khomeini Relief Fund only months after his resignation as the Minister of Commerce. Ten years later Tavakoli re-emerged to pose the greatest challenge to President Rafsanjani as his main rival in the 1993 Presidential elections.

In addition to the bureaucratic rivalry between the Maktabis and the Hojatieh factions, doctrinal differences militated against a *rapprochement* between the two. The Hojatieh continued to question the concept of the Faqih, the cornerstone of the republic's constitution and the very basis of the regime's (theocratic) power structures, believing instead in the infallibility of the 'Twelfth Imamism' (that only the twelfth 'absent' Imam of the Shiis can claim power in the name of Islam). Based on this ideological objection to the existing Islamic Republic, and in co-operation with many senior clerics who did not agree with Ayatollah Khomeini's thesis but chose silent opposition rather than open confrontation of the Faqih system, the Hojatieh maintained the potential to activate its forces to subvert the regime and undermine the power of Ayatollah Khomeini's successors.

Other important factions within the FIR category included Behzad Nabavi's Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution (MIR). In the early 1980s it

boasted an organisation of several thousand armed members. MIR members were very active in the quashing of the leftist forces during the 1981 mini-civil war and in the purges of the regular armed forces. As one of the few *kolahi* (non-clerical religious groups or individuals within the Islamic Republic) organisations with an independent armed organisation, MIR was expected to play an active part in the struggle for power after the patriarch's death. To this end, many of the MIR's followers joined the Pasdaran, but kept their ties to the original organisation (Schahgaldian 1989). Coupled with his strategic post of Minister of Heavy Industry in the Moussavi government, Nabavi's role was seen as crucial by the various FIR factions in charting a new economic strategy after the war.

Another small but influential organisation in the FIR category was the Fadayin Islam, whose leadership included Ayatollah Sadeq Khalkhali (an important figure during the revolution and in the early years of the republic, and a leading parliamentarian) and Navab Safavi (an active figure in organising revolutionary Islamic organisations). This group remained loyal to the Faqih doctrine, the Maktabi agenda, and to the person of Ayatollah Khomeini.

The second movement in the republican camp was that of the liberal Islamic republicans. Many individuals from this group have at one time or another held important posts in Iran's post-revolution governments, particularly during the 1979–81 period. Some of the leaders of the LIR forces were at the forefront of the struggle against the Shah, providing the 'moderate' liberalist Islamist intellectual spirit of the revolutionary drive against the Shah. Mehdi Bazargan's National Liberation Movement of Iran (Nehzat-e Azadi) dominated the first (provisional) government of the republic. Ex-President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, the late Foreign Minister Sadeq Qotbzadeh, Admiral Madani (one of the armed forces' most senior personnel) and many middle-ranking and senior clerics were also part of the LIR. Noted religious figures who could be said to have belonged to the LIR tendency included Grand Ayatollah Kazem Shariatmadari (who was 'defrocked' by the Faqih and died in isolation in 1986). Shariatmadari led the Muslim People's Republican Party (MPRP) which dominated the Azerbaijani provinces in opposition to the regime's Islamic Republican Party (IRP). His movement was not in favour of the clergy's participation in, let alone domination of, the government, supporting instead the basic principle of an independent (even secular) government within the context of an Islamic Republic.

For our purposes, largely due to its ideology, the Mojahedin Iranian People's Organisation (MIPO) can also be characterised as an LIR movement. The MIPO collaborated extensively with the *kolahi* elements of the liberal Islamic groups, particularly during its legal and semi-legal existence (1979–81). Before 1981 a number of non-ruling clerics (either openly or

clandestinely) identified themselves with the LIR agenda. The most prominent amongst these were Ayatollah Eshraqi (Khomeini's son-in-law), Ayatollah Qomi, Ayatollah Shirazi, Ayatollah Zanjani, Ayatollah Mara'ashi, Ayatollah Lahouti and Ayatollah Bahaedin Mahallati. Of all the leading factions in the LIR category, Bazargan's Nehzat movement survived the longest through the traumas of the IRI's internal feudings; Bani-Sadr and Madani chose exile, Qotbzadeh was executed in Iran, and Shariatmadari was defrocked and his MPRP suppressed in the early years of the republic. The price paid by the Nehzat movement has been high (including harsh treatment and jail sentences), but nonetheless they remained the only domestic-based 'secular' LIR force tolerated by the regime.

The third group in the republican camp, the secular republicans (SR), enjoyed least representation in the Islamic Republic. Technically, the regular armed forces could also be regarded as SR. But their negative role in the revolution, coupled with their systematic 'de-ideologisation' and numerous purges since 1979, makes the armed forces an unknown quantity. The armed forces' ambivalence on the important issues of the day also raises the question as to whether one can regard them as an effective political force, even if one acknowledges their influence in society.

Not unlike many of the LIR, the SR forces enthusiastically welcomed the anti-Shah revolution. But no notable group or individual from the SR category has held any office or position of responsibility in the Islamic Republic, apart from the few secularists who were involved in the Bazargan government. The last SR groups which fell prey to the theocracy were the rather influential Tudeh (Communist) party and the 'majority' wing of the Organisation of Iranian People's Fadayin (OIPF). The OIPFG, which was formed a decade before the revolution, split into two – Majority (Aksariat) and Minority (Aghaliat) – factions in 1980, the Majority faction becoming known as the OIPF and dropping 'Guerrilla' from its title. The Majority allied itself closely with the Tudeh party and followed the latter's political line on domestic matters and international affairs. Both parties believed that the theocracy was 'progressive' in objective terms because it confronted US imperialism in Iran and throughout the region (Alaolmolki 1987). The Tudeh and the OIPF maintained that the class base of the regime was to be found in the (largely traditional but also modern) *petit bourgeoisie*. These groups believed that the (anti-revolutionary) bourgeois factions in the revolutionary coalition were to be found in the ranks of the 'liberals' of the provisional government, the forces around Bani-Sadr, and their clerical allies. The Tudeh and OIPF forces played a critical role in support of the government camp during the mini-civil war that accompanied the impeachment of the republic's first President, Bani-Sadr.

Many of the SR groups tried to form a common programme against the

regime, but their ideological and organisational differences, lack of grass-roots support for their doctrinaire positions, particularly those attached to Marxism–Leninism platforms, and endemic factionalism militated against a single alliance emerging in time to fight the FIR forces before elements from the latter moved to monopolise power in their own hands. Nevertheless some common platforms were formed. The National Council of Resistance (NCR), formed in exile in 1981, largely by an alliance between the MIPO and Bani-Sadr, is an example of a drive towards forming anti-regime common platforms. Through its wide membership the NCR could, in its heyday (1981–3), boast of representing a cross-section of Iranian political opinion as well as a politico-military organisation. Its membership included the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) (the largest and most powerful organisation in Iranian Kurdistan), the National Democratic Front (Jebhe-e Demokratik-e Melli) (a splinter of the Union of National Front Forces), over 80 respected nationalists and independent socialists (including Sheikh Ezzedin Hussein, a prominent Kurdish religious figure), some splinter groups from the OIPFG (Minority), the Union of Iranian Communists organisation and the pro-Albanian Toofan organisation (later reorganised into the Workers' and Peasants' party).

At the same time, however, considerable SR and leftist effort was devoted to fighting the NCR. Groups of different sizes, such as the OIPFG, Peykar, Organisation of Communist Unity (Sazeman-e Vahdat-e Komonisti), Workers' Way (Rah-e Karegar), Toilers' Party (Hezb-e Ranjbaran), Komeleh (Kurdish-based Marxist–Leninist organisation) remained in opposition to the ruling regime as well as to coalitions like the NCR where the Marxist–Leninists did not play a 'leading' role. These differences ensured that the SR forces could not unite to pose a serious political challenge to the position of the ruling FIR. Even the NCR began to fall apart after 1985. By 1987 the KDP, Toofan and many other smaller groups had left the NCR, and Bani-Sadr's departure effectively ended the organisation's ambitions to offer a viable national alternative to the Islamic Republic. In the NCR's scheme of things for post-Khomeini Iran, Bani-Sadr was to be the interim President of the post-Velayat-e Faqih system of the 'Democratic Islamic Republic of Iran'. Indeed, Bani-Sadr continues to claim to be the only legitimate President of the republic: 'I am the only one who has real legitimacy in Iran because I took part in the revolution from the beginning and because I was the first elected President in Iran's history' (Lahoud 1992: 26).

Prior to the banning of the Tudeh party in 1983 four main positions towards the Islamic regime were discernible among the Iranian secular republican left:

- 1 To support the Islamic Republic unconditionally and attempt to strengthen the position of the anti-imperialist forces within the regime.
- 2 To offer the regime conditional support.
- 3 To join the NCR and radicalise it from within.
- 4 To oppose the bourgeois and *petit-bourgeois* alternatives in Iran and aim to establish a united Marxist–Leninist front against the FIR, the LIR and the monarchists.

By the time of Ayatollah Khomeini's death no clear synthesis of these positions had emerged. In general terms, well established organisations of the left had effectively been suppressed or disbanded, and the newer groupings simply did not have the expertise and the organisational resources to regroup and 'hibernate' until better political conditions presented themselves. The Communist Party of Iran, for instance, formed in 1983 by the amalgamation of three organisations (Komeleh, the Unity of Militant Communists and Sahand), expanded rapidly in the early years of its existence, mainly because many of its new members came from the other failing communist and leftist organisations. But by 1989 the second post-revolution communist party formed in Iran had effectively ceased to exist, its forces scattered and dissipated. It is worth noting that the first CP after the revolution was formed in early 1979 and led by Mr Azaryun, who himself had split from the Tudeh party.

On another front, the OIPFG tried to act as a magnet for the disparate leftists, forming the Organisation of Revolutionary Workers of Iran (Sazeman-e Kargaran-e Enghelabi-e Iran, or ORWI) in the mid-1980s as a way of expanding the presence of the left in national affairs. In anticipation of Ayatollah Khomeini's death and the ensuing confusion, ORWI aimed to assist in organising secret worker and peasant committees to facilitate organised labour's participation in any power structure that might follow. Its priority, therefore, was to establish and develop links with workplaces and seek frameworks for organic structural linkages with workers' movements and left-wing political coalitions. The ORWI's limited resources and lack of experienced cadres peripheralised this organisation soon after its foundation.

Besides the KDP, the small but high-profile National Democratic Front (NDF; led by Mossadeq's grandson, Hedayatollah Matindaftari) was the only other notable SR force not espousing a left-wing or Marxist ideology. The Front, which had been alienated from the Islamic regime soon after the end of the Provisional Government, collaborated closely with the NCR, accruing considerable prestige to the latter while the alliance lasted. As the NDF was prominent largely because of its leading personalities, it was in no position to affect the political balance of power among the SR forces in any one direction. It enjoyed, in other words, a narrow social base. Moreover its

influence over the power struggle within the ruling FIR factions was practically non-existent. That said, such groups are by no means dead and buried. They maintain contacts with the modern middle classes which, under more democratic conditions and in spite of their otherwise narrow social base, could lead to them rapidly increasing their influence if the scope of political freedom were to be extended. Their role would become particularly important if a more balanced mix of secular and Islamic leadership were ever to emerge in Iran.

In 1983 Hassan Nazih, former Chairman of the National Iranian Oil Company, set up yet another SR organisation in exile, known as the Front for the National Sovereignty of Iran (FNSI). This described itself as a 'middle national alternative to the extremist leftist and rightist opposition groups' (MEED 4 November 1983). Aiming to be a consensus-based movement, it strove to unite the liberal SR and LIR forces within a single front-type organisation. The strategic aim of the FNSI was to offer an easily recognisable alternative to the 'extremists' of FIR, the hard left and the monarchist groups still bent on reinstating the Pahlavi dynasty. Like all other foreign-based organisations, however, its impact on the domestic political scene in Iran and its influence over the succession issue were negligible.

None of the SR groups and organisations was therefore in a position to challenge the regime after Ayatollah Khomeini's death, nor were they able to present themselves as viable alternatives to the Islamic Republic. By the time of Ayatollah Khomeini's death the only non-FIR group of any substance in the Islamic Republic was Bazargan's *Nehzat-e Azadi* movement. It too came under severe pressure after 1988 and its voice was effectively silenced during the crucial days in June and July 1989 when a new leadership was emerging to replace Ayatollah Khomeini.

THE MONARCHIST CONTENDERS

The monarchist contenders for power in Iran can be divided into a number of categories, based on leadership, political programme, and closeness to the *ancien régime*. The fundamentalist monarchists (FM) constituted that faction of the monarchist camp that believed in a strong, independent and powerful Shah at the helm of the state. Total loyalty to this father figure forms a central plank of the FM's outlook. The FM leadership, mainly in exile, includes Mohammad Reza Shah's own sister (Princess Ashraf Pahlavi), many of his former military commanders, many members of the Imperial Guard, and high and middle-ranking leaders of the state security organisation, SAVAK.

Soon after the overthrow of the Shah, leading military figures, such as Generals Ariyana, Oveissi and Palizban, established military-style organisations abroad, with secret links with some of Iran's officer corps and national

minorities. General Ariyana's Iran Liberation Army (Azadegan) was the most prominent of FM entities. The strength of these groups was at its greatest in the early years of the Islamic Republic. According to exile sources in Europe, elements from this group routinely co-operated with General Oveissi's military organisation and former Prime Minister Bakhtiar's (assassinated in Paris in August 1991) NAMIR organisation. Confidential reports indicate that in the early days of the Iraqi invasion of Iran in 1980 a Bakhtiar-Oveissi alliance mobilised its joint military forces from the Iraqi and Turkish borders with the intention of overthrowing the Tehran government and replacing it with a military-civilian government of 'national unity' under the premiership of Shahpour Bakhtiar (based on conversations with a number of army colonels, undertaken in Los Angeles, April 1987). Their military attacks were halted when the armed gang encountered logistical difficulties on the Turkish border; the chain of command broke down and the group failed to gain Western and large-scale Turkish support for this operation.

The Free Iran (Iran Azad) group, led by Princess Ashraf's daughter (Azadeh Shafiq), constituted the only civilian link of the FM organisations. The combination of its leaders' family heritage and its civilian character placed the Free Iran group in a position to work closely with the groups and personalities of both the FM and what can be termed the constitutional monarchists.

The constitutional monarchist (CM) forces draw inspiration from the democratic 1906 constitution of Iran for their preferred political system, which also reserves a special (supervisory) role for the Islamic hierarchy. Before his assassination, Bakhtiar headed the largest and best organised of the CM groups. Founded soon after Bakhtiar's departure from Iran in 1979, NAMIR claimed to have a popular base in Iran's bureaucratic and military circles. The organisation's declared intention was to lead 'a coalition of democratic forces including intellectuals, middle class liberals, army officers, tribesmen and working classes to replace the Ayatollah's regime with a just and constitutional government', with 'the young Shah . . . as [its] constitutional monarch' (Bakhtiar's speech at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Voice of Iran* 13, July-August 1984: 7).

To this end, NAMIR and former Prime Minister Ali Amini's Iran Liberation Front (ILF), the only other significant CM faction, signed an agreement in July 1983 calling for the return of a constitutional monarchy with Reza Shah II as the new monarch. By 1984, however, personality clashes and differences over policy had reduced the influence of this alliance among the monarchist groups. With Bakhtiar's untimely departure from the scene little prospect for the success of the alliance remained.

Despite their well financed and impressive organisational networks in

exile, in the absence of substantial apparent support among the masses and at the grass-roots bureaucratic level, the monarchists could not contemplate a return to power in Iran without the unreserved support of the armed forces. As Houshang Nahavandi, one of the late Shah's close advisers has put it, 'The [monarchist] politicians without the support of the military and the confidence of the Iranian armed forces have no role, in my opinion, in the immediate future of Iran' (quoted by Renner 1982: 9).

By contrast, many of the LIR forces rejected a political role for the armed services. Many of the LIR and SR forces remained sceptical of the contribution that the armed forces could make, either to assist in the overthrow of the ruling regime or in constructing a new democratic government in post-Khomeini Iran. Bani-Sadr's position is revealing in this context: 'I think that the bulk of the army is on my side. But I am not at all in favour of the army going into political action . . . To remake, re-establish, a military regime in Iran would be to recommence an experiment that has already failed' (ibid.).

Paradoxically, therefore, in order to recover his crown, the 'liberal' Crown Prince himself had no option but to support the FM groups. This relationship had a direct impact on the prospects of a return of the Pahlavi monarchy to Iran. This was so because even though his personal preferences reflected a desire to return to Iran as a constitutional monarch, so long as he remained surrounded by the discredited functionaries of his father he could not claim to represent a democratic future for Iran based on the slogan 'The Shah must reign and not rule'. The absence of such commitments in the monarchist camp prevented the emergence of a broad support base for the institution of the monarchy in republican Iran.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STATE

It has been clear that, despite the distinct platforms of the individual entities, organisations, groups and personalities already discussed, one factor provided a notable element of commonality: the role of the state in making their visions realisable. According to Hamza Alavi, the state in post-colonial countries is an 'overdeveloped bureaucratic-military apparatus' that manages and administers the ruling 'national elite' of landlords and a small indigenous and powerful *comprador* bourgeoisie (Alavi 1979). Alavi's rather simplistic 'tripartite' elite analysis notwithstanding, the focus on the 'system' highlights the indispensable function of the bureaucratic-military state to the survival of most, if not all, the capitalistic and 'socialist-oriented' Third World elites. Iran is no exception to this rule, but a recognition of the role of the *petit bourgeoisie* (traditional and modern) at the leadership level is also vital to an understanding of the First and Second Iranian Islamic Republics.

When the equilibrium of forces (formed around certain class interests)

alluded to by Alavi is disturbed then the state becomes both the end and the means to a new balance of forces. In pre- and post-revolution Iran, control of the state machinery has enabled a particular class to control virtually all aspects of national life – economic, political, ideological, cultural and social. Indeed, it can be argued that the swift transfer of political power and of the nation's identity in the ideological, cultural and social spheres helped, more than any other process, to camouflage the non-transformability of the existing national economic relations.

To put it simply, by taking control of the substantial assets of the royal family and its class allies, the new elite in post-revolution Iran expanded the role of the state. Since it had itself assumed control over the state it at once both consolidated and increased its own power. In this sense the role of the Iranian state became even more central to its political masters than would be suggested by the Alavi model: control of the state having a direct bearing on the competition for political power. Moreover, it is in the interests of the state itself to encourage the return of stability to the country, hence its apparent readiness to swing its support behind the most effective faction in the power struggle.

One associated aspect of the continuity to be found in the strategy of the republican regime which may be said to have existed under its predecessor was that, despite its clear popular base amongst the 'deprived' classes, the new elite showed sufficient pragmatism to court also the domestic private sector and thus to encourage the emergence of a new 'bourgeois' stratum which (as had been the case under the Pahlavi regime) might come to owe its livelihood and legitimacy to the longevity and consent of the elite in control of the state. After the defeat of the LIR factions in 1981, the ruling elite gave enough economic leverage to the traditional merchant class (largely but not exclusively bazaar-based) to ensure the latter's continued support for the government.

THE CRISIS OF SUCCESSION

The complexities of Iranian political leadership and relation among the FIR ruling forces themselves led some to conclude, prior to Ayatollah Khomeini's death, that the tensions between the various factions within the theocratic 'ruling class' would lead to the FIR's downfall after the departure of the Islamic Republic's only cohesive force. One observer was to state categorically that the system would not survive for long:

the clergy have failed either to establish a cohesive and enduring polity or to address imaginatively and forcefully Iran's economic problems let alone rise to the aspirations of the Iranian people . . . [sic] the growing

challenge to theocratic rule . . . would not fail to ultimately undermine the clerical regime's hold on power. The gathering storm is too powerful for the debilitated clerical regime to effectively weather and survive . . . the end of the clergy is not far in sight.

(Kadhim 1983: 66)

In retrospect, however, attention should be paid to the emerging balance of power within the FIR camp in the course of and after Iran's acceptance of the cease-fire resolution SCR 598 in 1988. One faction of the FIR category, which became known as the 'realists' or 'pragmatists', formed an alliance with the social conservatives and was increasingly able to dominate the state machinery. In doing so, it progressively marginalised the influence of the Maktabi forces in the Islamic and secular national institutions of power.

Much of the analysis of this process has, however, misunderstood the dynamics of the process involved. The anonymous author of a booklet published before Ayatollah Khomeini's death was to say, for example:

it is clear today that the supporters of the privatisation of trade and industry led by the technocrats like Rafsanjani, Khamenei and Moussavi are in control of the instruments of power, and the principle opposition factions, the Imam's Line and Hojatieh, have been removed from the political scene and from control of the state.

(*Baresieh-e Siasy-ijtemayi-e Rejeem-e Jomhouri Eslami Iran*: 12)

This view underplays the purely political differences in the ruling elite and looks for structural factors in order to offer an understanding of the real motives behind the rivalries that beset the FIR forces. In doing so, it first of all seeks to separate the 'pragmatic' influences in the regime from the two main factions of FIR (Imam's Line and Hojatieh). Secondly, it completes the separation by introducing a new category to the FIR, attributing autonomous life to a set of influential actors, the so-called (clerical – Rafsanjani and Khamenei, and *kolahi* – Moussavi) technocrats in the Islamic Republic.

I would argue that the presence of a technocratic coalition had been in evidence since the mid-1980s. However, the technocrats themselves were not in any sense a homogeneous and cohesive force in the republic; nor did they entertain a common set of principles and unbending objectives. By definition, their pragmatism in dealing with matters of the state necessitated extensive alliance building with other influential actors and groups, however tactical and short-term. While such alliances helped to deflect attacks by other factions of the FIR, the uncertainties arising from such fluid relationships led to a sense of insecurity among the governing ranks of the republic, which in turn bred opportunism within the elite.

Inevitably, there was much behind-the-scenes negotiation. In search of power the various factions sought to extend their influence to the institutional levers of such power, including the newly created instruments of the Islamic state. Consolidation of power bases was also the order of the day as the news of the Ayatollah's worsening health condition became common knowledge after 1987. Institutions of power, therefore, were in danger of being irredeemably divided along factional lines. The competition continued regardless of the fact that Ayatollah Montazeri had already been selected by the Council of Experts to succeed Ayatollah Khomeini. A symptom of the institutionally based rivalry was the announcement in February 1988 that Ayatollah Khomeini had appointed a number of the senior clergy to serve on a new state body empowered to resolve the increasingly intractable differences over policy, legislation, and the interpretation of the law. The Council for the Determination of Expediency (or 'what to do for the best') was established to try to resolve the profound differences between the Council of Guardians (the 'upper chamber' in a loose sense), the Majlis, and the executive. Such differences in the end came down to the competition between two 'politico-ideological schools of thought', one bent on continuing the domestic and foreign policies of the war years, and the other urging the reform of the entire system.

The battle between the two FIR camps became violent in the mid-1980s, when the armed bodies of the Islamic regime fought the battles of local clerics in the major Iranian towns and cities of Isfahan, Shiraz, Mashad and Kerman (Akhavi 1987). The end of the Iran–Iraq war meant that the leaders of the republic were forced to address the country's problems in a more immediate and tangible manner, exacerbating the hostilities between the factions. In the context of the Expediency Council's inability to resolve the differences within the FIR, largely because the council itself mirrored the same patterns of rivalry, Ayatollah Khomeini, who for the most part had assiduously kept aloof from the in-fighting among his clerical lieutenants and had intervened only as the final arbiter, was forced to intervene.

To force the issue, a ranking member of the clergy sent a letter to the Ayatollah (dated 21 October 1988) pleading with him to intervene before the whole system became threatened with extinction. Hojjatolislam Mohammad Ansari Kermani wrote his note in a guarded manner, but his criticism of Ayatollah Khomeini's vacillation was ill concealed:

two politico-ideological schools of thought, both affiliated to the revolution and defenders of Islam, with a huge following, including important personages, have embarked on serious competition against each other today. This rivalry is not confined to theoretical issues alone; it has appeared on the political, social and economic scenes. The more it pro-

gresses, the greater the rivalries . . . I see that many members of the two factions enjoy the support of Your Eminence; that whenever Your Eminence has expressed your support for one faction, an endorsement of the other has followed. There are numerous examples, when the Society of Theological Teachers or the Publicity Organisation is endorsed, immediately the staff of the Publicity Office are given support; on the one hand the honourable Council of Guardians is endorsed, and the Council of Expediency on the other; the Tehran Struggling Clerical Society on the one hand, and the Struggling Clergy on the other; Mr Mohtashemi and the Prime Minister on the one hand, and Messrs Nateq and Azari on the other.

(Hojjatolislam Ansari Kermani's letter to Ayatollah Khomeini, *Kayhan* 16 November 1988)

The letter ended with the following plea: 'To Your Eminence . . . the issue is clear, but unfortunately we have not been able to understand it . . . I feel that this problem . . . can only be solved by Your Eminence's instructions and views'.

Bearing in mind the crisis of leadership which was by now engulfing the republic, and the stark differences over preferred policy for the future development of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khomeini's reply (dated 1 November 1988) left much to be desired. One particularly disturbing feature was that for the first time he publicly raised doubts regarding the suitability of Ayatollah Montazeri (his own chosen successor) for the position of the Faqih:

There should always be jurisconsults in Islamic governments. The revolution and the system always allow the expressing of theological and jurisprudential views, even if they contradict one another. No one has the right or the authority to prevent this . . . Unity of action and ideas is necessary. Jurisprudence at seminary level is not sufficient. If a person is extremely knowledgeable in matters concerning seminaries, but cannot determine what is good for society, or cannot distinguish between suitable and unsuitable persons, or in general lacks the necessary wisdom in social and political issues, that person is not a jurisconsult [or Faqih], as far as social and governmental matters are concerned. He cannot rule the society . . . Clearly, if there are differences between the various personalities and factions of the revolution, they are purely political, even if they appear to be ideological because they all share common principles; that is why I approve of them. They are faithful to Islam, the Quran and the revolution. They each have their own plans for the advancement of Islam and the services of Muslims [*sic*] . . . it is clear to me that both factions

have faith in God and serve the public . . . I reiterate that since our country is in the reconstruction stage, it needs unity and camaraderie.

(*The Echo of Iran* 1 December 1988: 23)

Ayatollah Khomeini's reply not only failed to propel one or other faction unequivocally into dominance within government, but it also undermined the one element of certainty regarding the continuity of the regime in terms of succession to his own rule. Thus at a time when a pronouncement was vital that would secure the regime from the destructive impact of factionalism, he was actually contributing to the existing fissures.

In attempting to take advantage of the regime's apparent disarray, the opposition groups chose this time to step up their campaigns. Many of the monarchist groups, the Mojahedin and some LIR forces sought to enlist elements of the officer corps in their plots to topple the regime. Despite the military's three or so coup attempts in the 1979–87 period, there was little evidence available to support the contention that the armed forces had been sufficiently politicised by the war and the excesses of the revolution to make a concerted bid for power. The attempted coups, in any case, were all guided by a civilian political leadership; the armed forces were not acting independently. The military establishment was certainly an 'elite in itself' but not 'an elite for itself'. Therefore, to win the support of this institution, the opposition forces were devoting considerable resources to secret recruitment among the officer corps. Sepehr Zabih's analysis of the Mojahedin's policy towards the armed forces is every bit as applicable to the strategy of the other opposition forces in the LIR category, the FM and some forces of the left. He states that:

the Mojahedeen have now been concentrating on recruiting army officers. Rajavi [the leader of the MIPO] seems to be convinced that as long as Khomeini is alive the Pasdaran will remain loyal to him because they owe their very existence to him. The Army, on the other hand, has very few reasons to display irreversible loyalty to the Ayatollahs.

(Zabih 1982: 107)

Concrete evidence of the success of this strategy is to be found in the number of officers who, in exile, declared their allegiance to the various opposition camps. For example, Captain Firouz Behseresht (naval officer), Colonel Abbas Abedi (deputy commander of the air force), Colonel Ismail Talayeh, and Colonel Ali Akbar Eskandari (military attaché of IRI in India) joined NAMIR, and Captains Mohammad Ali Aryafar and Bahram Afzali (commander of the navy) joined the MIPO and the Tudeh party respectively (all data obtained from interviews with West European-based opposition sources).

Although the military personnel opposed to the Islamic Republic posed less of a threat, being based as they were outside Iran, it remained a preoccupation of the regime to uncover the networks and the secret cells which might remain intact within. Despite the periodic purges, execution and exile of many military personnel the regime continued to doubt the allegiance of the armed forces to the ruling FIR. To appease the military, therefore, the pragmatists chose to align themselves with the regular armed forces and went as far as to suggest that the defeats and reversals on the war fronts were largely due to the incompetence of the Pasdaran commanders and their troops rather than to that of the regular armed forces.

Taking the longer view, it can be said that the inter-elite, intra-elite and non-elite confrontations of the 1979–89 period took their toll of all the parties concerned. On the FIR side the losses were significant. In 1981 alone the regime lost over 100 of its high- and middle-ranking officials and personalities. The more significant losses of the regime included Ayatollah Beheshti (the head of the Supreme Court and the leader of the IRP), the majority of the IRP's central committee, four Cabinet Ministers, five Deputy Ministers, one Prime Minister (Hojjatolislam Bahonar), one President (Rajaii), more than 20 MPs, Hassan Ayat (the regime's leading ideologue), Gilan Province Governor Ali Ansari, Hojjatolislam Ali Qodousi (the Revolutionary Prosecutor-General), Hojjatolislam Abdulkarim Hashemi Nejad (Secretary-General of the IRP), Ayatollah Asadollah Madani (Ayatollah Khomeini's representative in Tabriz), Ayatollah Abdul-Hussein Dastghaib (a senior Khomeini aide), a number of Friday prayer leaders, Defence Minister Colonel Namjou, and Air Force Commander Colonel Javad Fakouri (data compiled from *Jomhuri Eslami*, *Kayhan*, *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, *Mojahed, Kar*, and the 1980–1, 1981–2, 1982–3, 1983–4 editions of *Middle East Contemporary Survey*).

The opposition's losses were also great. The MIPO lost some 30,000 of its members and supporters in the first few years of the republic, including three of its most senior leaders (Khiabani, Sa'adati and Kazem Rajavi – the brother of MIPO's leader). The OIPFG lost hundreds of its forces and at least two of its leaders, Sultanpour and a military leader known only as Eskandar. Peykar Organisation lost much of its central committee (such as Rouhani, Ashtiani and Haqshenas) in addition to scores of its members and supporters. The Tudeh party also did not escape the wrath of the regime: Kianouri, Tabari and Eskandari of the central committee and over 2,000 of its members were either executed or imprisoned. The KDP, CPI and other leftist groups sheltering in Kurdistan continued to lose cadres in their confrontations with the Pasdaran and the military in Kurdistan. The leader of the KDP, Dr Abdulrahman Ghasemlou, was assassinated in Vienna in 1989. Many of the monarchist movements' leadership were lost through assassinations, includ-

ing Shahriar Shafiq (founder of Iran Azad), General Oveissi, Ali Akbar Tabataba'i and Bijan Fazeli. Although the death of General Ariayna of the Azadegan FM group was not instigated by the regime, according to Azadegan sources, as many as 12 other military officers may have been assassinated abroad by agents of the regime (*Mednews* 3 December 1990).

Clearly the struggle for power, both between republicans and their opposition as well as within the regime itself, was a costly business. The regime was weakened in its first decade by its efforts to fend off competitors for power, as well as by the internal struggles which resulted from uncertainties surrounding the whole issue of succession. In this connection it should be remembered that succession was not simply a question of which personality or personalities should assume the titles of power after Khomeini's death. It was an elemental battle between strands of ideology and policy which had evolved through the revolutionary process, each of which now sought to mark the revolution as its own. As if these confrontations were not enough for so young a regime, they took place at least until July 1988 within the context of the Iran–Iraq war, which itself debilitated and infected the republic with its own damaging impositions.

IRAN'S ACCEPTANCE OF SCR 598 AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Within the ruling elite, the issue of the war was inextricably linked with the question of the export of the revolution. The 'internationalists' regarded the war as the best conduit for the export of the revolution, whereas the 'Stalinists' on the war issue advocated consolidation at home as the best strategy for the republic's future progress. Mozaffari argues that, like its Russian counterpart, which eventually became 'revolution in one country', 'the Islamic revolution has also evolved from the Umma revolution to the Iranian Islamic revolution' (Mozaffari 1993: 614).

The war had already been condemned as 'un-Islamic' by some senior Islamic figures. Grand Ayatollah Tabataba'i Qomi, for instance, had issued a *fatwa* against continuing the war in 1985. It read as follows: 'The war between Iran and Iraq is completely *haram* [forbidden by the Sacred Law] . . . Large sums of money are wasted. Towns and villages are destroyed. Women are widowed and children are orphaned' (*Voice of Iran* 17, March–April 1985: 17). This *fatwa* appeared at the time when Ayatollah Khomeini and his FIR followers were preaching that the war was a 'blessing' for the Islamic Republic.

The end of the war, furthermore, produced difficulties of its own for the regime. After some years of absence the armed forces would be reintegrated with civil society, particularly through their involvement in the economic reconstruction effort of the government, a prospect which carried with it the

possibility of their renewed politicisation. Moreover, with the war emergency conditions over, the opposition groups would be in a better position to reactivate their remaining forces against the regime. The MIPO was the only opposition force which had been preparing in a systematic way to challenge the regime from exile. Enjoying considerable Iraqi hospitality, it set about creating a substantial military force, known as the National Liberation Army of Iran (NLA), in Iraq. By 1987 the NLA was ready to take on the Islamic Republic on the battlefield. It could field as many as 15,000 troops by 1988 (*Jane's Defence Weekly* 18 April 1987; *Middle East International* 9 January 1988; *The Washington Post* 10 January 1988). The NLA launched a number of military offensives against Iranian regular and Pasdaran forces in 1988 and 1989, but was not successful in holding any territory or translating its military operations into any political gains. Its similar operations in 1992 and 1993 were equally unsuccessful.

To secure their position against these threats, the key personalities at the highest echelons of power moved swiftly to put into operation the mechanisms of succession shortly after the end of military hostilities with Iraq. However, Ayatollah Khomeini was still pursuing his line of personal intervention, much as he had since the early days of the revolution. He maintained his role as the ultimate power broker and his practice of selecting or designating his trusted allies for sensitive posts. It should be noted that Ayatollah Khomeini's office used to select the Friday prayer leaders of the provinces and appoint six of the 12 members of the influential Council of Guardians. He had personal representatives on the Supreme Defence Council and on all other revolutionary and Islamic organs, including the regular armed forces and the Pasdaran. It was Ayatollah Khomeini who appointed Hojjatolislam Rafsanjani as the acting Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces in June 1988. On two occasions after the cease-fire agreement Ayatollah Khomeini intervened to prevent Prime Minister Moussavi's resignation, and in the end it was he who brought about the 'resignation' of Ayatollah Montazeri as his successor.

The end of the war shook the balance of the existing social, political and economic order. While the pragmatists saw in this development great opportunities to advance their own reformist agenda, plainly, so long as Ayatollah Khomeini remained on the scene they would not be in a position to isolate the *Maktabis*. However, all factions within the FIR had recognised that without Ayatollah Khomeini and his prevailing influence the system might not survive. As the survival of the FIR forces depended on the survival of the Islamic Republic, the two leading factions found common cause in trying to adapt the system to survive the Ayatollah's eventual departure.

As far as the republic's institutions of power were concerned they had so far been shown to be resilient enough to survive an external challenge. The

key problem for the potential successors lay in the structure of power, which had been designed and moulded to suit Ayatollah Khomeini personally. It was, therefore, imperative that a process of structural reform, including constitutional reform, should begin before the Ayatollah's death, and that it should enjoy his blessing, if a smooth transfer of power was to take place in the Islamic Republic.

Ayatollah Montazeri's resignation as Faqih-designate in March 1989 ended a prolonged period of jockeying between Montazeri, Rafsanjani and Khamenei. Ayatollah Montazeri's departure from the political scene opened up new opportunities for the more junior statesmen to dominate the system. Montazeri's status as a Grand Ayatollah, however, was not affected by his political misfortunes. His return to the holy city of Qom was low-key, but as the only senior Ayatollah of any national stature in the FIR camp he could divide the leadership by serving as a focus for other FIR opposition to the Leader-President alliance.

Hojjatolislams Rafsanjani and Khamenei (Speaker of the Majlis and state President respectively) were the two leading clerical actors who stood to gain a great deal from Ayatollah Montazeri's resignation. They had both risen through the ranks of the (theocratic) political system of the republic. Both were central committee members of the IRP. Khamenei entered the formal structures of power as the Deputy Minister of Defence, later to become the Pasdaran's representative on the Revolutionary Council. He was elected President of the republic in 1981, a post he kept until his election by the Assembly of Experts as the Faqih in June 1989. Rafsanjani's ascent of the ladder of power in the republic was particularly rapid, as more senior religious-revolutionary Islamic figures lost their lives to opposition-instigated political violence. He was elected to the first Majlis of the IRI as an MP from Tehran. Before becoming Speaker of the Majlis in July 1980, he had held the post of supervisor of the Ministry of the Interior. He was selected as Ayatollah Khomeini's representative on the Supreme Defence Council (the highest decision-making body on matters relating to the war) in 1981, and acted as its spokesman soon after. He was elected to the Assembly of Experts in 1983, and in 1984 he was also appointed a member of the Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution by Ayatollah Khomeini. He was appointed acting C-in-C shortly before Iran's unconditional acceptance of SCR 598 (*Diplomat* 25 February 1991; Jahanpour 1992).

Both Khamenei and Rafsanjani, as well as Montazeri, had held influential political positions on the 16-member Council of the Revolution (*Shoray-e Enqelab*), which was formed in December 1978, and which has provided much of the leadership of the republic. Both Premier Bazargan and President Bani-Sadr were members, as were Foreign Minister Qotbzadeh, Hassan

Habibi (President Rafsanjani's First Vice-President), and clerics such as Beheshti, Bahonar and Moussavi Ardebili.

The Council of the Revolution played a prominent role in shaping the politics and policies of the republic in its formative years. Indeed, it was this institution which provided the individuals who went on to lead the republic in later years. In the end it was not any of the political groupings within the FIR camp which emerged to provide answers to the question of political and spiritual succession in the republic, but rather certain clusters of individuals from the original Council of the Revolution.

The ultimate ascendancy of Khamenei and Rafsanjani such that they were able to form the Leader-President alliance was a recognition of this need for the dominant personalities of the regime to surmount ideological and factional differences in the interests of providing continuity, as well as being symptomatic of Ayatollah Khomeini's acknowledgement of the need to leave structures for succession in place before his death. To formalise its ruling position, however, the constitution had to be reformed to reflect both the changes in the institutional distribution of power and the subtle new realities in the rubric of power.

Many of the FIR groups and organisations remained active, albeit at a much lower tempo. Two such key organisations were the Association of Combative Clergy (pro-Rafsanjani) and the Association of Combatant Clergy (the organisation of the radicals), which continue to maintain a high profile in channelling the energies of the competing FIR factions. However, what is evident is that throughout the war, and in the period immediately following, there were two processes taking place simultaneously. First, there was a struggle between factional competitors for power within the regime who sought to direct policy and establish ideological supremacy. Second, the institutions of the regime were themselves serving as stepping stones for the ascendancy of individuals who were able, by virtue of their realism, to overcome ideological issues in order to act as a nascent structure of power in themselves. The factionalism served to weaken the regime in such a way as to allow individuals to come to prominence and ultimately to assert their brand of leadership in a way which could facilitate secure succession. This process provided a cornerstone for the direction in which the republic has moved ever since, not least because it has set the scene for constitutional, economic and political reform relatively unhindered by the more dogmatic obstructions of ideological rivalry.

2 The emergence of the Second Republic

Now that the war has been halted, we are in the reconstruction phase. In this phase we should think that the revolution has just started.

(Hojjatolislam Rafsanjani, December 1988)

The previous chapter demonstrated how the regime that succeeded the revolution was, under the arbitration of Khomeini, a composite of political forces struggling to attain the 'high ground' of control – and legitimacy of that control – in the new state form. The supremacy of Khomeini as unquestionably the Supreme Leader did not allow a smooth development of independent political institutions and loci of power, since such development was ultimately and constantly subject to his own arbitrary and personal intervention. The persistence of divisions within the elite was partly caused by Ayatollah Khomeini's style of leadership and the mode of his intervention in inter-elite conflict resolution (Bakhash 1989). Secondly, as Cottam has put it, 'Khomeini has not permitted any individual or faction to gain preeminence within his government' (Cottam 1989: 172). Thus it was only with his death (including the period preceding that event when preparations had to be made for the survival of the regime after his departure) that the development of independent political institutions could really effectively take place.

THE EMERGENCE OF NEW AGENDAS

The republic's acceptance of a cease-fire with Iraq alerted many Iranians and Iran-watchers to the fact that they were witnessing important changes in the Islamic Republic. The changes were reflected in the foreign policy of Iran, as well as in the balance of forces at the leadership level in the republic. The acting C-in-C, Speaker Rafsanjani, stated on 18 July 1988 that Iran's acceptance of a cease-fire 'will open a new chapter in our history' (SWB, ME/0208, 20 July 1988). Interestingly, it was the 'Young Turks' of the regime who were setting the pace of change. For example, according to Iraqi sources, the letter

carrying Iran's acceptance of SCR 598 to the UN Secretary-General was not drafted by Khomeini's office, but by Khamenei, Rafsanjani and Moussavi Ardebili in the Majlis Speaker's office, on the morning of 17 July (SWB, ME/0218, 1 August 1988).

That Ayatollah Khomeini was unhappy about the decision to end the war in this manner was illustrated by the tone and tenor of his first public statement after the announcement of Iran's decision. He said:

the acceptance of the resolution . . . was truly a very bitter and tragic issue for everyone and particularly for me . . . [sic] in view of the opinion of all the high-ranking political and military experts of the country . . . I agreed with the acceptance of the resolution and the cease-fire . . . death and martyrdom would have been more bearable to me.

(SWB, ME/0210, 22 July 1988)

There is no mistaking the fact that the decision to end the war had been pressed, to say the least, upon Ayatollah Khomeini – despite protestations to the contrary by President Khamenei. President Khamenei stated in December 1988 that 'neither Mr Hashemi [Rafsanjani] nor I or anyone else had any idea a week before the acceptance [of SCR 598] whether the resolution was going to be accepted. It was not us who accepted the resolution; it was the Imam [Khomeini] who accepted the resolution' (*The Echo of Iran* 15 December 1988: 4). Ayatollah Khomeini, thus, was already giving way to others.

At this stage, the clearest sign of changes in policy and outlook was to be found in the foreign policy realm. Again, Rafsanjani led the way in questioning the virtues of past policies: 'The main thing is that we can stop making enemies without reason because of this new move [Iran's acceptance of SCR 598]. This has put a new road in front us. There are many people who are currently giving facilities to Saddam [Hussein] who would not have done so if our foreign policy had been right' (SWB, ME/0218, 1 August 1988).

Clearly a turning point had been reached in Iran, whereby the revolutionaries' stamp on the republic's foreign policy orientation had begun giving way to that of the 'realists', to use Ramazani's characterisation of the Rafsanjani camp. It is worth reiterating the point that 'In the six-year interval between July 1982 and July 1988 when Iran accepted the UN-brokered cease-fire, the idealists' foreign policy orientation often prevailed over that of the realists' (Ramazani 1989: 210). After that date the realists came to the fore. The first signs of change that many Iran-watchers had detected manifested itself in the ending of its 'confrontational foreign policy' (ibid.).

It remained unclear at this point, however, what 'a fresh stance', as Tehran Radio termed it, meant besides the change in Iran's policy towards the war. What changes in the nature of the Islamic Republic were about to occur, and in which direction, were much harder to posit in the summer of 1988,

although the future President had already alluded to the necessary domestic changes which must, in his view, follow Iran's acceptance of the cease-fire. In the course of his sermon at the Friday prayers, on 1 August 1988, Rafsanjani outlined his vision of the need for a new path for the Islamic Republic, but typically stopped short of advocating a change of policy openly, disguising his views within a critique of the Maktabi positions:

There may be some who might think that we are not prepared to compromise. They may say what is the meaning of wealth, comfort, what does solving international problems mean . . . ? There is no just government in the world and therefore we should always be as we are now. There is no need for us to change our present situation. Let prices rise as they will; let the people's problems mount up, irrespective of the burden, we are ready for martyrdom! This is not a correct view. It is not possible to organise the long life of a generation in this way.

(SWB, ME/0218, 1 August 1988)

The message emanating from these speeches and statements was a clear one: Iran had reached a turning point in its history, and it was up to the political leadership of the country to chart a new path for it. It was as yet unclear whether the changes in policy envisaged for the republic were to be comprehensive enough to encompass the existing power structures of the country. Discussions about the future of the republic after Khomeini and about the content, nature and form of the post-Khomeini leadership were, however, put high on the agenda of the regime, mainly, but not exclusively, at the behest of Rafsanjani and his clerical allies.

THE EROSION OF THE OLD ORDER

The backdrop of the change in thinking and attitude came from an unexpected quarter, Prime Minister Moussavi, the republic's longest serving Prime Minister and an individual known for his strict adherence to the Imam's Line. In a speech made shortly before the IRI's acceptance of SCR 598, he stated: 'It is a fact that . . . we have problems and that criticisms are justified. We realise that we have not attained all the aspirations of the Islamic revolution' (SWB, ME/0167, 2 June 1988). These words provided the opening shots of a campaign of open self-criticism and public reflections at the executive leadership level, which in turn systematically and inextricably gave form to the new agendas of competing factions within the FIR, and pushed these discussions forward towards the crystallisation of positions on the future of Iran and the destiny of the Islamic Republic. Ayatollah Montazeri, the Faqih-designate, led the criticisms of the Moussavi government, and provided a forceful critique of the First Republic, advocating instead

improvements in the IRI's relations with other states, more political freedom and a freer economic system (and fewer state controls) now that the war had come to an end.

Although it is practically impossible to put a firm date on the birth of the Second Republic, it is much more feasible to find the seeds of the transformation of the old order in a period of rapid change and flux (from July 1988 to June 1989). The Thermidor of the Iranian revolution, marking 'the end of the revolutionary process and the beginning of the definitive establishment of the new regime' (Mozaffari 1993: 611), forms the very basis of policy changes in Iran. The end of the war was one major feature of this period, but so also were the death of Ayatollah Khomeini and the constitutional reform process which he put in motion before his death. It is a combination of these factors, coupled with the role and influence of the faces and individuals which came to occupy the highest echelons of power after Ayatollah Khomeini's death, that help to identify the basis of post-Khomeini leadership in Iran. At the output level, also, one can see a Second Republic emerging to replace the First.

From this vantage point one can scrutinise the new leadership's approach to domestic, regional and international issues, as well as observe the type and nature of policies which were adopted. It can be shown that the policy changes have been so fundamental, their impact on the country so far-reaching, and their consequences so revolutionary that it makes little sense to continue to regard the post-Khomeini Islamic Republic as an exact replica (in structural, institutional and policy terms) of the old. Yet a strong element of continuity with the past does exist, particularly when one examines the political origins and backgrounds of the republic's post-Khomeini leadership. This, however, is not the only manifestation of such continuity. Many of the formal and informal structures of the 'old regime' remain, if not in substance then at least in appearance.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the revolution President Khamenei and Ayatollah Montazeri stated that the revolution should be 'reviewed' and its successes and failures assessed. This might not be done satisfactorily, however, President Khamenei maintained, mainly because 'of one basic weakness and that is lack of a centralised executive administration' (SWB, ME/0381, 10 February 1989). This proved to be the opening shot in the debate surrounding reform of the constitution in which the executive branch of government could play the leading role in managing the affairs of the state. For the Faqih-designate, on the other hand, the main issue at this juncture was to review the leadership's past behaviour with a view to making suitable adjustments. 'We must repent of our past mistakes', he said (SWB, ME/0384, 14 February 1989). He put the emphasis on reforms which might help in the absorption of the 'specialist forces both at home and abroad', the

extension of freedom of speech and political activity, and an end of censorship in the press and the electronic media.

The above, rather complementary, positions joined to add to the impetus for reform of the executive structures and 'the ways of the state' already openly discussed. These developments in themselves were perhaps not sufficient evidence of the demise of the old order, however. But two significant developments before the death of Ayatollah Khomeini were to provide tangible dimensions for it. These were the process of constitutional reform sanctioned by Ayatollah Khomeini and the resignation of Ayatollah Montazeri as the Faqih-designate in March 1989.

THE RESIGNATION OF AYATOLLAH MONTAZERI

The resignation of Ayatollah Montazeri on 28 March 1989 as the Faqih-designate some four years after his official endorsement as the successor to Ayatollah Khomeini was a significant development as far as the future of the Islamic Republic was concerned. At one level, the resignation helped to highlight the lack of stability prevalent in the system some ten years after the founding of the Islamic Republic. But, apart from underlining the deep factionalism at the heart of the system, Montazeri's resignation offered an unexpected ray of hope to those individuals who harboured ambitions in the direction of the spiritual leadership of the republic after Ayatollah Khomeini. Although Ayatollah Montazeri was not defrocked by Khomeini, unlike Grand Ayatollah Shariatmadari, who was defrocked in 1986 for challenging the Faqih's monopoly of spiritual and political power, little doubt remained that Montazeri's resignation resulted from differences between him and Khomeini. Coming in the midst of the constitutional reform debate, the resignation of Montazeri heightened the concern of the leading clerics in the republic involved with the Constitutional Review Panel to accelerate their proceedings, and, perhaps more important, to avoid being caught between the two leading Ayatollahs of the land.

The political demise of Montazeri in March raised serious questions about the issue of succession in Iran. Coming so soon after Ayatollah Khomeini's *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie in February 1989, the impression that the Islamic Republic was returning to its old pattern of confrontation in the international arena, and that domestically it was heading towards civil strife, could not have been dismissed out of hand at this point. The impression of rivalry and divisions was reinforced as the depth of the differences between Montazeri and Khomeini became public knowledge. In May 1989 the Deputy Speaker of the Majlis, Hojjatolislam Mehdi Karrubi, announced that Ahmad Khomeini, the Ayatollah's son, was preparing a document for publication aimed at clarifying the basis and nature of Ayatollah Khomeini's opposition

to Montazeri's position as the Faqih-designate (*Kayhan Havai* 17 May 1989). Karrubi, whose brother Ayatollah Hassan Karrubi was said to have represented the Islamic Republic in secret negotiations with Israeli military and defence officials in July 1985 (Menashri 1990: 377), then proceeded to declare that for two and a half years Ayatollah Khomeini had been unhappy about Ayatollah Montazeri's conduct and the activities of his office. He pointedly identified the links between Montazeri and Mehdi Hashemi, the brother of his son-in-law and the man in charge of the Islamic Republic's support for liberation and revolutionary movements (itself run from Montazeri's office), who had publicised the extensive contacts between Tehran and Washington in the autumn of 1986, as a factor in the Faqih-designate's demise. Hashemi and 40 others were arrested and confessed to committing a number of crimes against the Islamic Republic, including corruption, and subversive and 'counter-revolutionary' activities. Hashemi was executed in September 1987.

The 'Irangate' episode had caused deep animosity between Montazeri and his entourage and the government team (including Rafsanjani, Khamenei, Velayati and Karrubi, amongst others) which had led to the secret contacts with the United States and Israel. That Montazeri had been regarded by the Rafsanjani-Khamenei axis as an obstacle in their way cannot, therefore, be overemphasised in the context of the succession struggle. In addition, Ayatollah Khomeini's tacit endorsement of the government line during the Irangate affair effectively meant the isolation of Montazeri in executive circles, and particularly in policy matters affecting the state, hardly a solid foundation for the Faqih-designate to consolidate on. That the Irangate revelations soon formed part of a power struggle must also be emphasised. According to one observer, the Irangate revelations emanating from the *El-Shira'a* newspaper in Lebanon were 'part of Montazeri's and Rafsanjani's battle for power in Iran' (Segev 1988: 283). Montazeri's position, thus, can be said to have been compromised from this point onwards, barely a year after his election by the Assembly of Experts as Khomeini's successor. That he should effectively be forced out in 1989, therefore, does not mean that the roots of rivalry were recent. The struggle for power characterised in chapter 1 had continued to determine the fate of the Islamic Republic till Ayatollah Khomeini's dying days.

The end of Montazeri's political career, however, did not come until Ayatollah Khomeini's message of 22 February 1989 to the clergy. In an indirect criticism of Montazeri in this message Ayatollah Khomeini offered his 'apologies' 'to the mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, the spouses and the children of the martyrs and the self-sacrificing devotees because of some of the wrong analyses of these days' (*The Echo of Iran* 16 March 1989: 21). In another indirect attack on Montazeri, Ayatollah Khomeini stated, on 22

March, that 'I don't have a brotherhood with anybody, regardless of his rank. My friendship with them depends on the correctness of the path they pursue' (*Iran Focus* April 1989: 4). Up to this point Montazeri (along with a number of other high-ranking clerical figures) had repeatedly called for open and unprejudiced admission of the mistakes of the past ten years. He had criticised the excesses of the past, including lack of democracy.

To the annoyance of Ayatollah Khomeini, Montazeri's letters to Ayatollah Khomeini and other figures in Iran complaining about the lack of political reform at home and about the continuation of executions of members and supporters of organisations opposed to the regime, said to number over 1,000 in the year following Iran's acceptance of SCR 598 (Bakhash 1993), were being distributed abroad by his supporters. An unexpected meeting of the steering committee of the Assembly of Experts with Ayatollah Khomeini on 27 March convinced Montazeri that the differences between him and the Faqih had become unbridgeable. His resignation the next day opened the way for others interested in the position of the Faqih to 'make themselves available'. Ayatollah Khomeini's deteriorating health, however, meant that the issue of the succession would have to be faced sooner rather than later.

Ayatollah Khomeini's death on 3 June opened the way for the election of a new Faqih by the Assembly of Experts. Even though the new constitution had not yet been put to the vote of the people, the election of the new Faqih followed its recommendations (see below for details of the 1989 constitution on the choice of Faqih). On 5 June the Assembly named Khamenei as the new Faqih, by-passing the country's senior Ayatollahs. Hasty elevation to the rank of Ayatollah accompanied his new appointment (Milani 1992). It was reported that President Khamenei had been elected against the wishes of one-third of the Khobregan Assembly, who apparently had an overall preference for Ayatollah Khomeini's son, Hojjatoleslam Ahmad Khomeini (Haeri 1989), although the national press gave a figure of 60 voting in favour of Khamenei, out of the 74 individuals present (*Kayhan* 4 and 5 June 1989). Ayatollah Montazeri telegraphed his support for Ayatollah Khamenei from his base in Qom on 16 June.

Khamenei's appointment put a swift end to the speculation about the succession debate; it also galvanised Hojjatoleslam Rafsanjani into action. He could now pursue his political career unhindered, and with the support of Khamenei. The proposed changes to the constitution would open new opportunities for Rafsanjani to climb the political power ladder further and take his chances at becoming the Islamic Republic's first executive President.

As the Assembly of Experts was constitutionally charged to elect the new Faqih, the outcome of the deliberations depended a great deal on the balance of forces in this body. Naturally, in the absence of the recognised Faqih-designate, Ayatollah Montazeri, and the non-option of a Leadership Council, the

Khobregan moved towards a compromise solution and chose Khamenei to be the new Faqih. He was elected on the basis of Article 109 of the 1989 constitution (qualities and attributes of the Leader). The procedure leading up to and the nature of this particular appointment, notes Ahrahamian, 'unwittingly undermined the theological foundations of Khomeini's Velayat-e Faqih' (Abrahamian 1991: 116). This is so largely because Khamenei's appointment was neither based on his seniority in rank, nor prevented by his not being a Marja'a-e Taqlid, both points being emphasised in the 1979 constitution and in Ayatollah Khomeini's own writings and pronouncements.

It was announced on 19 June that the date of Presidential elections would be brought forward by three weeks (from 18 August), to take place at the end of July. The Interior Minister, Hojjatoleslam Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, gave two main reasons for this decision (*Kayhan Havai* 28 June 1989). One, that in the absence of Ayatollah Khomeini it was imperative for the system to be stabilised as soon as possible and 'Ayatollah Khomeini's wishes realised'. Secondly, that since his appointment as Faqih it was not possible for Ayatollah Khamenei to be the President as well. With the Guardian Council's approval, thus, the new date for the Presidential elections and the referendum on the constitutional changes had been arrived at. It was stated that as Ayatollah Khomeini himself had recommended a two-month period for the review of the constitution and as the Review Panel had completed its deliberations there was no reason why the two events could not be combined.

It can be argued, therefore, that by September 1989 Hojjatoleslam Rafsanjani and Ayatollah Khamenei had acquired enough authority to become the two main pillars of the new regime, each instrumental in his own way in consolidating the emerging Second Republic. The former was proclaimed Iran's new President on 30 July, with 15,537,394 votes in favour, defeating his only rival (Dr Abbas Shaibani, who won 650,000 votes) by an overwhelming majority. As far as Hojjatoleslam Rafsanjani was concerned, this result compared very favourably with the previous three-candidate Presidential election in August 1985, which had returned President Khamenei with a total of some 12 million votes (Povey 1986). The referendum also approved the constitutional amendments, with 16,025,459 votes in favour (*Ettela'at*, 30 July 1989 and 1 August 1989). President Rafsanjani's Cabinet was introduced to the Majlis (for approval) on 19 August, two days after his taking the ceremonial Presidential oath.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS: PROCESS, IMPACT AND OUTCOME

The weaknesses of the 1979 constitution of the Islamic Republic in terms of vaguely defining the roles and responsibilities of the various centres of power

in the republic had been evident at least since the political struggle in 1980–1 between President Bani-Sadr and Prime Minister Rajai and his IRP-based clerical supporters. The form that that struggle took and the eventual dismissal of Bani-Sadr, at the behest of Ayatollah Khomeini and orchestrated by the Majlis (through exercising its constitutional right of the issuing of a vote of no confidence against the President), underlined the ambiguities in the constitution. At the same time, the leadership was acutely aware of the destabilising impact of such ambiguities on the entire system, particularly in the absence of Ayatollah Khomeini as the mediator and the ultimate arbiter.

The confusions associated with the lack of clarity in delineating responsibilities and in the assignment of duties in the state machinery had a direct impact on the functioning of the state, particularly in the sectors which had sprung from the revolution and the birth of the Islamic Republic. The differences between the Council of Guardians and the Majlis over legislation, for example, were one such area needing urgent attention. The Guardian Council's rejection of a high proportion of Majlis legislation as 'un-Islamic' (as much as 48 per cent according to the *Iran Times* 27 June 1989), led to the creation in February 1988 of a new mediatory body, the 13-member Council for the Determination of Expediency (literally the Council on the Discernment of What to do for the Best), which was to mediate between these two constitutional bodies. Interestingly, the creation of this body merely reinforced the existing divisions. The council from the outset was beset by difficulties, over its mandate, jurisdiction and functions. Some 97 MPs (according to IRNA 7 October 1989, 104 deputies), for instance, sent a letter to Ayatollah Khomeini in November 1988 complaining that the Expediency Council had exceeded its powers and had ratified government Bills without consulting the Majlis or the Guardian Council (*Kayhan* 7 December 1988). Ayatollah Khomeini duly responded in December by advocating limitation of the powers of the Expediency Council (maintaining that the extraordinary powers given it were mainly because of the war): 'only it should act in cases when there is difference between the Majlis and the Council of Guardians' (IRNA 31 December 1988). Ayatollah Montazeri went further, stating shortly before his resignation that the Expediency Council 'is an institute contrary to the constitution which was set up owing to the existing necessities and the war . . . in the future all affairs will be managed in accordance with the constitution' (*The Echo of Iran* 2 March 1989: 18).

President Khamenei confirmed in December 1988 that reform of the original constitution was being actively pursued by the clerical leadership of Iran. This followed the publication of a letter sent to Ayatollah Khomeini by a number of Majlis deputies complaining about the shortcomings of the

original constitution. During the Friday sermon of 3 December 1988 President Khamenei stated:

I do not claim that our constitution is free of all defects . . . In part regarding the administration of the country, whether relating to the executive or the judiciary, there are, of course, certain difficulties, certain vague points [*sic*]. In those cases when society is faced with a certain difficulty which has not been foreseen by the constitution, it is up to the leadership of the country and the leader of society to find and propose a solution.

(*Kayhan* 7 December 1988)

Further support for constitutional reform came in January and February 1989 from other leading clerics, including the speaker of the Assembly of Experts, Ayatollah Meshkini (who later chaired the Constitutional Review Panel), and Ayatollah Ardebili, the Chief Justice (*Iran Focus* March 1989).

It was not until 25 April 1989, however, that Ayatollah Khomeini (himself the highest authority in the country) formally ordered President Khamenei to set up a 25-member Constitution Review Panel (20 members of which were appointed by Ayatollah Khomeini and five elected by the Majlis) to discuss the reform of the constitution. In an interview with a number of Qom theologians in March 1989, President Khamenei stated that 'our constitutional law has not foreseen a need for management in some governmental departments in such a way as to satisfy the needs of society' (*Jomhouri Islami* 4 March 1989). The Majlis, thus, was more or less bypassed in this process. Both Hojjatoleislams Khamenei and Rafsanjani served as members of the Review Panel. Ayatollah Khomeini's preferences for the main areas needing further clarification were: the Faqih issue; centralisation of the executive power; centralisation of judicial power; refinement of Article 64 of the 1979 constitution about the membership rights and number of deputies elected to the Majlis from the recognised minorities in Iran; centralisation of management of the radio and television services; and clarification and formalisation of the duties and rights of the Expediency Council (Behrouz 1989).

The main debate in this panel crystallised around two schools of thought: those who advocated a strengthening of the Prime Minister's post (and reduction of the Presidential office to a ceremonial appointment) on the one hand, and those who advocated the abolition of the premiership in favour of the presidency (making the presidency an executive office) on the other.

Meanwhile, the tensions between the offices of the Prime Minister and the President remained unresolved. Although President Khamenei remained largely uncritical of the Moussavi government, it was the Majlis and the Faqih-designate which maintained the pressure on his government. But in terms of the distribution of executive power in the republic the failures of the successive Moussavi governments to solve Iran's economic difficulties

(thanks partly to the Guardian Council's opposition to the radical legislation proposed by Moussavi and supported by the Majlis) provided further ammunition for those who advocated the abolition of the premiership. It emerged in due course, moreover, that Moussavi himself had been in favour of constitutional reform in the directions foreseen by President Khamenei and Speaker Rafsanjani. He is reported to have complained openly that the root of the Islamic Republic's problems lay in the lack of concentration of power in the executive branch (*Iran Focus* April 1989).

Between 26 April and 15 June the Review Panel met 21 times. According to the regulations governing the operations of the Review Panel, three subcommittees were established to examine and propose the necessary revisions. By 11 July the final amendments to the constitution had been made. The amendments were put to a referendum on 28 July, coinciding with the Presidential elections. The proposed changes, published after Ayatollah Khomeini's death, finally removed the position of Faqih as the most powerful single authority in the land, and institutionalised the mechanisms of power and its formal distribution in the Second Republic. According to one observer, 'Without an Imam with . . . *baraka* [i.e. one like Ayatollah Khomeini], the Vilayet [Faqih] becomes simply another type of political secular state structure' (Jansen 1989: 14). It is the process of change undertaken through the constitutional reform and the developments embodied in the amendments put forward which allow one to regard the context and content of the constitutional reform as an important indication of the rise of the Second Republic.

The outcome of the review process further reinforced the position of those forces in the FIR camp who had gathered around the 'pragmatic' agenda and faction(s). The main function of the amendments was to formalise the division of power in the Islamic Republic. As will be discussed in chapter 3, the amendments to the constitution directly affected the balance of power in the Islamic Republic as well. The most significant constitutional development was the abolition of the office of the Prime Minister. Article 60 of the new constitution stated that 'The executive power shall be exercised by the President of the Republic and the Ministers, except in cases for which the Leader has been made directly responsible by this law'. Article 60 of the 1979 constitution had proclaimed: 'The executive power shall be exercised by the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the Ministers' (all the references to the constitutional amendments are from *The Echo of Iran* 25 August 1989 and September 1989).

According to Article 113 of the 1989 amendments,

Next to the Leader, the President of the Republic is the highest official authority of the country who is responsible for the enforcement of the

Constitution and presides over the executive power with the exception of those matters which directly relate to the Leader.

In addition, Article 87 of the 1989 constitution states: 'The President shall be obliged to obtain a vote of confidence from the Assembly [Majlis] immediately upon its formation'. Article 87 of the 1979 constitution read as follows: 'The Council of Ministers must obtain a vote of confidence'. Instead of 'government Bills and regulations' being 'notified to the President' (Article 126 of the 1979 constitution), under Article 126 of the amended constitution the President is put 'directly in charge of budgeting and planning as well as the administrative and employment affairs of the country'. Articles 133, 134 and 136 give the power to appoint Cabinet Ministers to the President and to dismiss them, and appoints him as the head of the Cabinet.

In total, the 50 or so amendments or revisions to the 1979 constitution affected the following articles: 5, 57, 60, 64, 69–70, 85, 87–91, 99, 107–13, 121–2, 124, 126–8, 130–42, 157–8, 160–2, 164, 173–6. Only three new articles were added to the 1979 constitution, Articles 109, 112 and 176. While Article 176 gave authorisation for the establishment of a Supreme Council of National Security, itself constituted under the authority of the President, Article 109 is devoted to defining the qualifications and attributes of the Faqih. The latter is particularly important, as all post-Khomeini leaders are assumed not to have the moral and 'natural' authority of the 'Founder and Leader of the Islamic Republic' and as such the qualities of future leaders have to be enshrined in the constitution. Furthermore, in the absence of the overall authority of a figure such as Ayatollah Khomeini, the new clause is designed to avoid conflict among the leading contenders for the position of the Faqih. The new article thus formalised the office of Faqih, which emerged out of the political treatise of Ayatollah Khomeini himself as the main feature of the Islamic Republic. Article 112 of the amended constitution established the Expediency Council as a legal-functional entity of the Second Republic.

At the output level also the 1989 amendments proposed changes, particularly to the sections relating to the selection and administrative responsibilities of the Faqih. These sets of changes consolidated the post-Khomeini religio-political structure of power in the Islamic Republic. Some five alterations to the 1979 constitution addressed the status of the Faqih and his role and duties. Specifically, Articles 5, 107, and 109–11 deal with these matters. Article 5 of the 1989 amended constitution is particularly important, as it erases an important qualification clause present in the 1979 version, which stated: 'If no clergy having such majority [of the people] is found, the leadership will rest with the Leadership Council composed of the clergies having the qualifications aforementioned'. Instead, the amended constitution

(Article 107) refers to the appointment of the Leader being the task of the '[religious] experts elected by the people', who

Should they find one of the candidates more conversant with the regulations and subjects involving jurisprudence or social and political issues, or in case a candidate shall enjoy public support or shall be especially conspicuous regarding any one of the merits described in Article 109, they shall appoint him as the Leader, or else they shall introduce and elect one of the candidates as the Leader.

This is in contrast to Article 107 of the 1979 constitution, which stated that in the absence of a single Faqih figure emerging: '[the experts or Khobregan] shall decide on three or five religious leaders qualified for leadership as members of the Council of Leadership'. Under Article 109 of the amended constitution it is declared that 'Should there exist a number of qualified applicants, the individual who shall have stronger insight in matters involving jurisprudence and politics shall have preference'.

The 'single Faqih' doctrine enshrined in the new constitution was apparently formulated in order to minimise instability at the highest level in the post-Khomeini era. The Leadership Council option, regarded as an attractive formula in situations where a clear Faqih figure may not have emerged, came to be viewed as an obstacle to the survival of the post-Khomeini system by the leading clerical FIR figures. The collective leadership system also came to be regarded an inefficient model, where, by definition, differences amongst the Leadership Council members on policy and matters of judgement might lead to indecision. Secondly, many of the pragmatic forces were fully aware that the Leadership Council formula could serve to fuel rivalries and, furthermore, might in fact end up limiting the influence of individuals below the religious rank of Ayatollah. With the exception of Khamenei, who was elevated to the rank of Ayatollah when he was elected as the Faqih, Rafsanjani and the majority of his clerical allies were still Hojjatoleslams.

While many of the functions of the Faqih under the new amended constitution remained the same as under the old, there were certain instances where his powers were subject to re-examination. One such instance occurs in Article 110 of the amended constitution. In spelling out the functions and duties of the Faqih, clause 1 of Article 110 reads as follows: 'To designate the general policies of the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran after consultation with the Congregation for Determining the Expediencies [the Expediency Council]'. No such provision existed during Ayatollah Khomeini's 'Faqihship'. At the same time, however, the influence of the Faqih has been deepened in the amended constitution. Article 110 of the 1989 constitution, for example, also lists 11 'functions and authorities' for the Leader, ranging from making appointments to the religio-political and military estab-

lishments to 'declare war or peace and mobilise the [armed] forces' (clause 5). By contrast, the 1979 constitution listed six 'functions and authorities of the Leader', including the above clause. The 1989 amendments removed the Faqih's power to dismiss the President. This can happen only at the suggestion of the Majlis when endorsed by the judiciary. Finally, the final draft of the amendments also dropped a reference to the Faqih's constitutional right to dissolve the Majlis under certain circumstances. Encountering strong opposition from the Majlis deputies to this suggestion, the new Faqih instructed the Constitution Review Panel to erase this clause altogether.

As far as the duties and responsibilities of the Faqih were concerned, the amended constitution had to adapt to new realities and the changing political environment. Ultimately, the process of adaptation had a direct impact on the defined role of the Faqih. The end of the war caused the abolition of the National Defence High Council (a relic of the war years which was disbanded after the cease-fire agreement), for instance, which in turn removed a source of constitutional leverage in the hands of the Faqih, thus affecting the mode of his interaction with the governing system. The old constitution had required the Leader 'to establish the National Defence High Council' (clause 3, subclause C, Article 110), whereas the new one requires him 'to settle the problems of the system which cannot be solved through normal channels, through the Congregation for Determining the Expediencies' (Clause 8, Article 110).

In order to ensure continuity in the system, the amended constitution made specific provisions in the event of the death, resignation or removal of the Faqih. Article 111 states that 'Until such time as the new Leader will be introduced, a council comprising the President, the Head of the Judiciary, and one of the jurists of the Guardians' Council appointed by the Congregation for Determining the Expediencies shall provisionally assume all duties of the Leader'. The 1979 constitution only required that provision should be made for the Khobregan to be convened 'for the purpose of studying and implementing this Article [111]'.

Another significant amendment is to be found in its treatment of the judiciary. Firstly, it abolished the five-member Judicial High Council as the highest judicial authority in the republic and replaced it with a single appointment (made by the Faqih), to be known as the Head of the Judiciary (Chief Justice) (Article 157). Constitutionally, he is Chief Justice for a five-year period and responsible for all judicial administrative and executive matters. Secondly, the Minister of Justice is responsible to the Chief Justice. Indeed, the Minister is to be chosen by the President from 'among those proposed to the President by the Head of the Judiciary' (Article 160). Thirdly, instead of the Faqih appointing the religious-based positions of the President (or Head) of the Supreme Court and the Public Prosecutor-General (as was

the case under Article 162 of the 1979 constitution), the appointments are to be made by the Head of the Judiciary. Fourthly, the Head of the Judiciary is empowered to change or remove a judge (under strict and very special circumstances and not against the will of the judge(s) concerned) after consultation with the Head of the Supreme Court (Article 164). It is clear, therefore, that, consistent with the procedures regarding the presidency of the republic and that of the choice of the Faqih, in this respect also the 1989 amendments moved towards the centralisation and 'personalisation' of the structures of power.

These changes reflect the constitutional/legalistic aspects of the Second Republic. One final feature of the 1989 amendments needing further attention is the formalisation of the Expediency Council as a constitutional entity in post-Khomeini Iran. Under Article 112 of the amended constitution the Expediency Council is recognised as a body

formed for the purposes of determining the proper acts and things deemed expedient in cases where a ratification of the [Majlis] shall be rejected by the Guardians Council on grounds of inconsistency with the principles of the Holy Sharia or the Constitution [*sic*]. The Congregation shall be formed upon the instructions of the Leader.

The deadlocks of the earlier era, therefore, had given birth to a new (largely) clerical body which was then enshrined as a permanent structure of the Second Republic. Its membership expanded to 20 under Ayatollah Khomeini, the Expediency Council was reconstituted in October 1989 according to the amended constitution. Now under his firm control, the Faqih proceeded to select the membership of the Expediency Council, ensuring that the main streams of political opinion in the republic were represented in this body. 'The presence of well-known political figures of the country, even though from the two main political streams of the country, is . . . [an] important characteristic of the newly formed council', according to an editorial in the *Tehran Times*, an English-language newspaper known to be close to the government (*Tehran Times* 8 October 1989). President Rafsanjani was elected Chairman of the Expediency Council by the membership on 10 October 1989.

Certain aspects of the 1979 constitution, however, were regarded as unalterable. These included the Islamic nature of the system; the Islamic basis of all the laws and regulations; the spiritual bases and Islamic objectives of the republic; the republican nature of the system; the legal guardianship (Faqih) introduced by Ayatollah Khomeini; the official religion of Iran as 'Asna Ashari' based on the 'Twelfth Imamism'; the conduct of the country's affairs by reference to public vote.

POLICY CHANGES IN POST-KHOMEINI IRAN

Basically, three areas of policy change can be identified in the Second Republic, these being the main functional features of the post-Khomeini state: first, domestic politics; second, economic and social policy; third, foreign policy. Not all of these have been pursued with the same vigour by the new administration. Of the three areas, the main focus has been on economic and foreign policy.

The changes in the foreign policy realm have been dominated by the need to improve Iran's regional and international standing through co-operation and dialogue with the West, the (former) USSR, the Gulf Arab states and other Arab and regional actors. This stemmed partly from Iran's economic needs in the era of reconstruction, and partly from recognition of the fact that the republic's diplomatic isolation had had severe repercussions for Tehran's regional status.

The need for economic reform and policy change was the dominant theme of the Rafsanjani presidency. In a series of speeches, President Rafsanjani outlined the policies of his first term in office and reiterated them in two major policy-oriented speeches (at the swearing-in ceremony of 17 August 1989 and the Friday prayer sermon of 1 September 1989) soon after his election. Against the background of a deteriorating domestic economy, the new government's strategy was based on raising industrial production and accelerating economic growth. The control of inflation and a reduction in the government's budget deficit were regarded as major priorities of the Rafsanjani administration, but so too were the raising of foreign finance for reconstruction and economic development, the raising of tax receipts by the government, deregulation, liberalisation, and privatisation of the economy. The heart of the new economic policies was to be found in the Five Year Development Plan, formulated in 1989 and scheduled to start in 1990.

Throughout, the emphasis was on economic co-operation with the West and others, which in turn depended on correct, if not warm, diplomatic ties. As Hojjatoleslam Rafsanjani stated in the course of his Friday prayer sermon of 1 September, 'I will not now engage in fantasies of an independent and self-sufficient society', plainly endorsing further integration into the international system (SWB, ME/0552, 4 September 1989).

On political reform the Second Republic has been much more cautious about advocating change and even slower to implement it. Recalling the discussion in chapter 1 on factionalism and the tendency towards monopolisation of power by the FIRs, it is hardly surprising that political reform has not been taken seriously. As Nader Entessar notes, 'the Islamic Republic has yet to devise a formal and institutionalised system of political participation' (Entessar 1992: 225).

Historically speaking, it can be seen that in fact a certain element of continuity exists with Iran's pre-revolution experience, as for much of the Shah's rule only three political parties were allowed to operate in Iran, none of them freely. The political parties concerned were the Iran Novin (the governing party), Mardom and Pan-Iranist. In 1976 the Shah decreed the end of the old party system, creating in its place a single-party political system (the new party was called Rastakhiz) and discharging the 'loyal opposition'. In the Islamic Republic the 'ruling party', the IRP, was disbanded even before the emergence of the Second Republic, and no new political party had appeared to represent the post-Khomeini leadership of Iran, or indeed to represent the FIR opposition forces.

Although the regime initiated some political changes as early as December 1988, mainly by considering the implementation of the Political Parties' and Groups' Activities Act of 1981 (suspended for the previous seven years), little tangible progress has been made in the direction of political freedoms. Hojjatoleslam Rafsanjani even talked of communists being allowed to operate freely in the future (IRNA 7 December 1989). It is worth recalling that the war was given as the official reason for the suspension of the Parties Act (see the Interior Minister's interview in *Kayhan*, 14 December 1988). The change in the political atmosphere enabled some 24 groups and personalities to apply to the Interior Ministry for formal recognition (*Kayhan* 18 January 1989). By mid-February over 30 parties had submitted applications (SWB, ME/0384, 14 February 1989), none of which received a licence to operate. No changes to the constitution were envisaged in regard to political organisational rights and freedoms in Iran, despite the establishment in 1993 of a human rights committee attached to the Majlis.

Article 26 of the constitution stated that:

Political parties, and professional associations and societies as well as societies subscribing to Islam or other recognised minority religions, are free to operate, provided that they do not violate the principles of independence, freedom, national unity, Islamic criteria or the foundations of the Islamic Republic.

Freedom to hold marches and public gatherings is provided for in Article 27 of the constitution. That said, since 1981 all opposition political parties have been banned; even the ruling party itself, so to speak, the Islamic Republican Party, was disbanded at the behest of its leaders in June 1987. It is ironic that the only group out of the 80 which emerged soon after the revolution which has survived in the Islamic Republic, Bazargan's *Nehzat-e Azadi* movement, is normally regarded as a voice of the opposition. It has not, however, been allowed to function as a political party.

Regardless of the rights to political organisation granted in the constitu-

tion, political groups and organisations have to comply with the principles laid down in the 1981 Parties Act. The Act does not of course allow the emergence of 'irresponsible' political organisations. The Act's 19 articles strive to obtain conformity rather than diversity. Article 1 categorically declares that political organisations must 'conform to the overall principles of the Islamic Republican system'. Article 14 of the Act states: 'Groups applying for permits must clearly state their allegiance to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran in their articles of association and manifestoes', and Article 15 warns, 'Any changes in the leadership, manifesto or articles of association of the groups must be announced to and reviewed by the committee stated in Article Ten'. The Act also reserves the right of the 'Article 10 committee' to dissolve organisations found to be functioning beyond the boundaries set by the state.

Freedom of association and political organisation outside the parameters already laid down in the Islamic Republic, it seems, would cause serious problems for the 'agenda' in Iran, and would ultimately result in challenges to the very legitimacy of the entire system. This is clearly not desirable in a republic which has to maintain a form of rule inherited from a revolutionary process, itself the 'child of more than one father' and lacking the guiding hand of Khomeini. Lack of 'diversity' in politics, furthermore, is utilised in the Islamic Republic to reinforce the uniformity of the system – despite the openly recognised and all-pervasive differences within its edifice.

As already stated, many of the above features of the Second Republic amount to a sharp departure for the Islamic Republic from its past (the first decade of its existence). But far from moving towards new horizons, much of the data indicates that the new regime is in fact moving back in time – albeit under a vastly different leadership and political system – to try and fulfil the policies and priorities pursued by Imperial Iran. Ultimately, without the war, a combination of geopolitical exigencies and Iran's position in the international division of labour have re-emerged to influence greatly the direction and tempo of future development of the Islamic Republic. As Abrahamian has observed, Ayatollah Khomeini's heirs 'no longer talk of land reform, income redistribution and nationalization of foreign trade . . . They talk less about social justice and the rights of the shantytown poor, and more about productivity, privatization, business incentives, managerial skills and free-market mechanisms' (Abrahamian 1991: 119).

3 The politics of power in post-Khomeini Iran

Machiavelli had a concept called the concept of *virtu*. The substance of this concept is that man can change his environment qualitatively, but depends upon two essential things and their meeting together. First, favourable circumstances, and then the leadership which is able to understand these circumstances, react instinctively with them, seize the favourable moments, and then act with determination to fulfil them. When these two characteristics meet, a qualitative change in the situation becomes possible.

(Hanna Batatu, in *Perspectives on the Middle East 1983*, Washington, DC: Middle East Institute, 1983)

As already discussed in chapter 2, the dismissal of Ayatollah Montazeri as the prospective leader of the Islamic Republic, and the crisis following the Salman Rushdie affair in the spring of 1989, helped to disguise a real trend towards the Second Republic, then in its embryonic state following the appointment of Hojjatolislam Hashemi Rafsanjani as the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces in June 1988 – only weeks before Iran's unconditional acceptance of SCR 598.

The loss of the 'moderate' Montazeri was interpreted by analysts as a blow to the pragmatic/realist line prevalent in Iran at that time, and the Rushdie affair was seen as a sign which marked the ascendancy of the radical elements within the Islamic Republic – in time to consolidate power before the Ayatollah's impending demise. Given the new agenda of the republic since Ayatollah Khomeini's death, an alternative presentation of these two events can be made, and one which can be regarded as advancing the cause of the pragmatists (or realists in relation to economic and foreign policy).

Far from weakening the hand of the realists, Ayatollah Montazeri's dismissal helped this loose grouping in two important ways. Firstly, it removed a potential source of political power against the Khamenei-Rafsanjani coalition *before* Khomeini's death, thus strengthening the general realist