**SUPREME LEADER: Ayatollah Khamenei**

**PRESIDENT: Mahmoud Ahmadinejad**

**IRAN'S MODERNIZATION THEORY:**

"We want to be modern, but not like you. We'll do it our way, based on our values and our religion."

**Some of Iran's particularities -**

Iran is NOT an Arab country. Iranians speak Farsi and they are Persian.

Iran is mostly Shiite Muslim, while the majority of the muslims are Sunni.

**IRANIAN HISTORY**

**A - The Safavids (1501-1722)**

Shiite Identity, Ismail established Iran as shiite. They tolerated Sunnis, Jews, Zoroastrians, and Christians - "people of the book." Isfahan was the inland capital, not much access to trade and little arable land. Absolute power but there was a weak central state, resulting in a fragmented empire

**B - The Qajars (1794-1925)**

Turkish group, Qajars, invade and move capital to Tehran. Remain shiite but can't claim the Twelve Iman legitimacy; separation of mosque and state. Height of European imperialism, lost some to Russia, sold oil-drilling right to Britain; serious debt, frivolous spending; Constitutional Revolution of 1905

--- Constitution of 1906: Modeled after western ones including democratic features

–  Direct elections

–  Separation of powers

–  Laws made by an elected legislature

–  Popular sovereignty

–  Bill of Rights guaranteeing citizens equality before the law, protections of accused, freedom of expression

• MAJLES assembly created, guaranteed seats to “People of the Book,” balanced executive power

• Shiism still official religion and created Guardian Council of Clerics that could veto Majles

• WWI divided Iran...chaos...by 1920s Anglo Iranian Oil Company enter Pahlavis

**C - The Pahlavis (1925-1979)**

Cossack Brigade (only real army like force)

Col Reza Khan leads coup and declares himself shah-in-shah...PAHLAVI DYNASTY

Majles lost power, authoritarian rule

1941 Muhammad Reza Shah (son) takes   
over...some democratic opposition

Tudeh Party had working class unions, National Front (middle class Iranian nationalists) led by Muhammad Mossadeq

*Mossadeq(Mossadegh) (1951-1953) :*

• Nationalize Anglo-Iranian oil company

• Constitution, not monarch

• Armed forces answer to cabinet/parliament

• Elected Prime Minister in 1951 and nationalized oil

• Wanted to promote education, esp women, modernize Iran, build roads, committed to secular liberalism

• 1953 CIA financed coup reinstated shah and absolute power

*The Shah—Reza Pahlavi*

⁃ RENTIER STATE—all based on oil $, didn’t need taxes even or the people

⁃ ISI encouraged local industry

⁃ 3 pillars: armed forces, bureaucracy, royal   
patronage system

⁃ All branches of the state grew immensely

⁃ – State controlled banks, national radio-TV network, local gov'ts, Majles was rubber stamping, etc.

⁃ Secularized courts and extended voting to women, restricted poligamy, allowed women to work

⁃ SAVAK \*secret police\* supported armed forces, ruthless

⁃ White Revolution—shah’s attempt at land reform to   
counter communism.

⁃ –  Used coercion, confiscations, irrigation to take land and make himself one of the largest landowners in the Middle East

⁃ –  Patronage system provided jobs to build up his lavish lifestyle which became increasingly opulent and offensive

⁃ Pahlavi Foundation—tax exempt and controlled over 200 companies, corruption galore!

⁃ Resurgence Party (1975) one party state with links to population, especially bazaaris

⁃ Replaces Muslim Calendar with royalist one and sends groups to teach “true islam” in countryside

**D - Islamic Republic (1979-present)**

REVOLUTION! 1979 Islamic Revolution

Iranian exiles publish anti-shah indictments of treason (dictatorship, collaborating with CIA and being a US puppet, SAVAK,fascist one party state, taking over clerics, disseminating Western culture and weakening Iran’s culture, widening gap between rich and poor, etc.

Ayatollah Khomeini in exile, also anti-Shah, starts espousing Shi’i populism (Islamic fundamentalism, more about politics than religious conservatism).

Revolution of Rising Expectations

$$ had been increasing through the 70s, but in the late 1970s oil prices decreased by about 10% while consumer prices increased 20% (things were better than they were, but then a setback)

US and Pres Carter, who believed in human rights, put pressure on shah to loosen restraints on opposition (kind of like glasnost... Accelerated revolution)

Political parties, labor organizations, professional associations, bazaaris, college students, and oil workers all united against Shah, 2 M protestors!!!!

This + Khomeini and religious fervor

The Revolution

• Pro-Khomeini clerics + National Front, Lawyers, doctors, women’s associations, Tudeh Party (communist), Fedayin (Marxist guerrilla group), Mojahedin(Muslim guerrilla group of noncleric intellectuals) + students + bazaaris.

• “This is the voice of Iran, the voice of true Iran, the voice of the Islamis Revolution”

–  Feb 11, 1979

–  Referendum replaced monarchy with Islamic republic, of 21 M eligible voters—20 M supported this change!!!!

Islamic Republic

Constitution of 1979, very theocratic, most power to Supreme Leader and clergy

Prime Minister Bazargan was opposition, but discredited with pic of him shaking hands with US govt officials. Anti-American sentiment and paranoia exploited.

Hostage Crisis (some say engineered to undercut Bazargan)

Constitution voted on...and won with 99% of vote, but voter participation down 75%

1980s Islamic Republic

Consolidation of Power...

–  Ayatollah Khomeini’s charisma and popularity

–  Iraq-Iran War (1980-1988) rallied people to defend homeland

–  Prices of oil increased!

Cultural Revolution (mao style) purify country from secular, western behaviors. Universities cleared of liberal, suppressed opposition (most civil society), many executions revolutionary justice

1989 Khomeini dies, successor Khamenei not as charismatic, nor does he have following or is he considered highly by most grand ayatollahs. Iran Iraq war bankrupted country and demoralized, oil prices decreasing, people wanted more participation, less cleric power, clerics seen as more corrupt.

**I. Cleavages**

A. Religious

B. Ethnic

C. Class

D. Reformers v. Conservatives

**II. Civil Society**

1997-2005 "Tehran Spring" (Khatami) - > Khordad Front

2009 Green Revolution (Mossavi)

**III. Political Participation**

A. Protests

B. Women

C. Elections

**IV. Mass Media**

Gov't controls 65-80% of the economy

79 evolution shut down 20 newspapers

1981 Majles passed a saying that it was illegal to use pen in speech against the government

Radio ad TV are run by the IRB

Compared to Egypt, for example, they have more tradition of criticizing the gov't

Elite very well educated - medical journals, sports magazines, movie magazine, fine arts, etc.. allowed if stay out of politics

**V. Gov't Institutions**

A. Jurist Guardianship & Supreme Leader

Velayat-e faqih - decide all issues (everything is connected to religion) Chosen by the Assembly of Experts

that's how you become the supreme leader - basis of power

B. Guardian Council

12 people (Supreme leader decides 6, the other 6 the Majles approve)

Guardian Council can veto anything according to Sharia law

Decides who runs the elections

C. Assembly of Religious Experts

86 people, directly elected by the people somewhat like the Majles. Responsibility along with GC and SL to interpret constitution, choose the Supreme Leader. They were required to have a seminary degree, but now non-clerics are allowed to be a part of the assembly as well

Rafsanjani is the chair of the Assembly of religious experts and expediency council

D. Expediency Council

Started with 13 clerics including the president

Chief Judge, speaker of Majles and jurists

Fights between GC and the Majles, EC is supposed to go in between. 32 members appointed by SL. They are like the Politburo - most powerful people in Iran. Many of them are also in the GC.

E. President & Cabinet

\*\*Iran doesn't fit the mold presidential vs. parliamentarism

He is the highest official representing democratic principles in Iran

Not exactly chief of state head of government because Supreme Leader is over. It's more complicated than that because it is effectively a theocracy

4 years terms, 2 consecutive

Divise the budget, supervise economy, execute police, chair the National Iranian Security Council, appoint provincial governors, town mayors

All were clerics except Ahmadinejad (an engineer)

Democratic Institutions: President, Majles, Assembly of Religious Experts

Non-Democratic/Theocratic Institutions: Supreme Leader, Guardian Council, Expediency Council

F. Bureaucracy

MINISTRIES

Culture and Islamic Guidance Ministry

Intelligence Military

Reconstruction - expands social services in the country side

SEMI-PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Foundation for the publication of Khomeini's works

Foundation for the oppressed

Martyr Foundation

\*\*Confiscated from the elite

Leftovers from Pahlavi's - confiscation of 1 billion dollars

G. Majles

Uni-cameral

Elected by the people (together with Assembly & President)

1906

Survived the Shah

290 seats

H. Judiciary

1) Sharia

-------Islamic

same moral values all over the world

Most important

Ultimate interpreter is the supreme leader

2) Qanun

Body of statues

No sacred meaning

Laws written by the Majles

They have to be in accordance with Sharia law or they do not pass

**VI. Military**

Revolutionary Guard

Army

**VII. Economics is for donkeys**

Ayatollah Khomenei's (First Supreme Leader) views on economics. This low opinion of economics is said to be "one factor explaining the inchoate performance of the Iranian economy since the revolution." Another factor was the long war with Iraq, the cost of which led to government debt and inflation, eroding personal incomes, and unprecedented unemployment. While Iran became more strict Islamically under Khomeini, absolute poverty rose by nearly 45% during the first 6 years of his rule.

**IX. Foreign Affairs**

Nuclear affair plays a major role in the current political spectrum

Israel X Iran currently escalating tensions because of the possibility of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons

There are major controversies regarding Iran's program; they maintain firmly that their program is entirely for "peaceful purposes"