

two books add to the development of theory. Time and the scholarly community will have the final say. That both books will find audiences is a safe conclusion.

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Rezun, Miron, ed. *Iran at the Crossroads: Global Relations in a Turbulent Decade*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1990.

This book on post-revolutionary Iran's relations with the superpowers and its Arab and non-Arab neighbors provides a wealth of information on continuity and change in Iran's international relations. Most of its contributors are well-known academics and media analysts of the Middle East. The book consists of eleven chapters organized in six parts.

The first section, with articles by Miron Rezun and Roger Savory offers an historical perspective as background for the internal and external causes of post-revolutionary Iran's "irrational" behavior in the international arena. Both articles, while providing insightful information, suffer to some degree from certain weaknesses, inaccuracies and debatable claims. For example, Rezun emphasizes Iran's alleged historical desire to dominate East Asia through the "east-west" expansion of the Trans-Iranian Railway under the last Shah. He argues that this expansion was intended to redirect "the flow of Afghan trade away from the Soviet border back to the markets of South Asia and the Middle East." (p. 13) One must question the significance of the "Afghan trade" as justification for an eastward railway expansion. Moreover, Iran's limited eastbound railways were mostly related to industrial and inter-city transportation, and they actually did not extend to the Afghani border.

Rezun also asserts that for centuries "Iranian clergy [have acted] as the most vocal opponents of unpopular monarchs." (p. 15) In fact, however, since the sixteenth century when the Safavids established Shia as the official religion of the state, Shiite clerics have sometimes been supportive of imperial courts and at other times, passive and apolitical. Occasionally, they have raised voices of dissent, most notably with the opposition to the last Shah led by Ayatollah Khomeini.

Roger Savory is more focused and comprehensive in his chapter on how Iran, caught between two colonial powers — Russia and Britain — followed a policy of "equilibrium," playing one against the other, while at times trying to find a "third power." He identifies and elaborates on the political and economic "imperatives" of Iran's foreign policy. However, he

considers the driving force of Iran's foreign policy to have been the Ithna-Ashari (Shiite Twelver) ideology and tradition. This he later refers to as "Iranismus" and defines as the idea of a distinct cultural identity and the desire to maintain the country's sovereignty. Much of what he ascribes to "Iranismus," such as its "strongly negativist and xenophobic components" (p. 45), if true, is not confined to Ithna-Ashari and could be applied to the entire Shia sect, and for that matter, to Islam. Moreover, the desire for national independence and sovereignty has not been limited to Iran, but applies to nearly all ex-colonies and semi-colonies of the region and the Third World, in general.

The chapter is also too gentle to the last Shah's foreign and domestic policies and gives him undue credit. We are told that the Shah "dreamed of making his country independent of foreign control, both politically and economically. Unlike Mossadegh, however, he also had the goal of generating an internal social and economic revolution . . ." (p. 49) Savory, without even mentioning the 1953 CIA backed coup d'état, which returned the Shah to power and made Iran's foreign policy an appendage of US foreign policy for the region, creates the impression of independence in the Shah's regimes' policies. The chapter's coverage of Mossadegh's foreign policy of "negative equilibrium," is inadequate and at times inaccurate, even though it did represent a major shift in Iran's foreign policy. He attributes the anti-American sentiments in Iran to a "hostility towards economic development and modernization," (p. 51) and not to resentments against American involvement in the toppling of the democratically elected government of Mossadegh and American meddling in Iran's affairs. Drawing on a book published in the 1960s, Savory talks about "unrealistic" and "irrational attitudes" and the "qualitative difference between Iranian society and other cultures." (p. 59) The article includes other minor flaws. As examples, on page 50, he refers to the "Fifth Seven-year Plan for Economic Development," which was really a Five-year Plan, and on page 60 talks about the country being "handed back" to Reza Shah in 1946, when he means Mohammad Reza Shah.

Subsequent chapters dealing with Iran's relations with its non-Arab and Arab neighbors read relatively well, as do the sections dealing with the Iran-Iraq war and Iran's relations with the superpowers. Most provide a good historical background of changes taking place in Iran's foreign policy towards selected countries, although they are mainly descriptive and at times understandably sketchy.

Miron Rezun's concluding chapter focuses mainly on the Rushdie Affair which was still a major issue at the time this book was written and which affected Iran's relations with the West. He rightly points out that the Rushdie Affair revealed internal conflicts, and that the motives behind the death sentence lie in the "dynamics of Iranian factionalism." (p. 208) Yet, in an orientalist fashion, he states that "[the Rushdie Affair] points up the fragility of the international system as long as there are states whose philosophy and culture are not rooted in Western liberal/secular tradition." (p. 202) Some sections of the chapter have been hastily updated to reflect changes, while other sections have remained untouched. This may be confusing to

readers. For example, on page 216, there is a discussion of the possibilities and problems of choosing a successor for Khomeini considering the dismissal of Ayatolla Montazeri, while on page 210 the reader is already told that Khamenei (then president) had been chosen as the new Leader of the Revolution. These and other minor inconsistencies need to be corrected for the future edition of the book.

Iran at the Crossroads, despite some misgivings and shortcomings, is an informative book on Iran's foreign policy.

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Rezun, Miron. *Post-Khomeini Iran and the New Gulf War*. Quebec: Centre Québécois de Relations Internationales, 1991.

Iran and the United States have had a strange relationship since the Islamic revolution of 1978-79. The revolution itself spent an inordinate amount of fury in humiliating America through the hostage crisis. The US, on its part, remained equally hostile to Iran through its off-again-on-again tilts toward Iraq during the eight-year long war between the two Persian Gulf neighbors. But the ties between Iran and the United States could not remain on a simple plane. The issue of American hostages in Lebanon forced the Reagan administration to cut a deal with Iran. However, the disclosure of this deal, which emerged as a major foreign policy debacle of the Reagan presidency, forced the United States to fall back on an anti-Iranian posture. The loss of American credibility emanating from the "Iran-gate" also made it necessary for Washington to convince the moderate Arabs of the Persian Gulf region that the "arms-for-hostage" issue was indeed an aberration, and not a well-deliberated policy option. The Kuwaiti invitation to reflag its ships could not have come at a better time.

A similar American preoccupation with Iran was also manifested during the Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM. By the same token, Iranian foreign policy was also characterized by a similar near-obsession with the nuances of American foreign policy toward the Persian Gulf region. Now the Gulf War of 1991 is history; however, both Teheran and Washington continue to keep their wary eyes on each other's foreign policy "shenanigans." Professor Miron Rezun's monograph, though somewhat dated, should be read by keeping the preceding context in mind.

The author has included several interesting and important sections in his study. For instance, the section on the Iranian "power struggle" is quite crucial because in Iranian politics this issue is never really a settled one. Even