

جيمي كارتر وسياسة حقوق الإنسان: نظرة متشككة
إيران: دراسة حالة.

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Abstract:

This article seeks to disprove the conventional wisdom that equates human rights crusade with Jimmy Carter on one hand and to refute the contention that held this policy, presumably, in part, responsible for the fall of the shah of Iran on the other. The Iranian case may seem complicated, but it can offer us a new angle through which to examine the Carter policy of human rights and reinterpret it differently for the sake of unveiling its very essence. To some extent, a conclusion can be drawn to corroborate the assumption that considered this policy as a cynical ploy designed to win votes and later turned into a practical ideologized weapon amidst the raging Cold War, sidelining any moralistic dimension inherent in it. In Iran, the sterility of this policy is to be emphasized given its incompatibility with the already precarious situation in which it was evoked.

Key words: Human rights, Moralism, the Cold War, The Islamic Revolution, Liberalization.

ملخص:

يسعى هذا المقال إلى دحض الرؤية السائدة والتي تربط بين حملة حقوق الإنسان وجيمي كارتر من ناحية، ونقض الرأي الذي حمل هذه السياسة افتراضاً بأنها مسؤولة جزئياً عن سقوط شاه إيران من جهة أخرى. ومع ذلك، قد تبدو القضية الإيرانية معقدة، ولكنها يمكن أن توفر لنا زاوية جديدة يمكن من خلالها دراسة سياسة كارتر لحقوق الإنسان، وإعادة تفسيرها بطريقة مختلفة من أجل الكشف عن جوهرها ذاته. إلى حد ما، يمكن التوصل إلى استنتاج مؤيد للافتراض القائل بأن هذه السياسة خدعة ساخرة تهدف إلى الفوز بالأصوات وتحولت فيما بعد إلى سلاح أيديولوجي عملي في خضم الحرب الباردة يستهدف عنوة تهميش أي بُعد أخلاقي متأصل فيها.

في إيران، يجب التأكيد على عدم توافقه مع الوضع المحفوف بالمخاطر بالفعل الذي أثارته.

الكلمات المفتاحية: حقوق الإنسان، الأخلاقية، الحرب الباردة، الثورة الإسلامية، الانفتاح.

1- Introduction:

The purport of this article is to investigate the roots of human rights' politics in an attempt to dissociate it from President Jimmy Carter who adopted this policy and placed it at the forefront of his foreign policy agenda. Iran is taken as a case study to demonstrate the inefficiency of this policy and to give credence to critics who charged Carter with inconsistency and selectivity, depending on the value of the respective country to the US. The fall of the shah can be attributed to many other reasons but Jimmy Carter human rights' policy because the latter exerted no real pressure due to the constraints of the Cold War that tied Carter's hands and forced him to act cautiously in accordance with the rules of the war then.

2- The Human Rights' Crusade:

Human rights is an age-old issue that waited so long for politics to evolve in order to become incorporated in it as an indispensable part of this art in recent times. The United States has been historically known for its extraordinary posture vis-à-vis human rights because of the larger set of values enshrined in its Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights by the Founding Fathers. Their inclination to defend human rights fiercely either at home or abroad in line with their foreign policy guidelines demonstrated the attachment that they unremittingly paid to the matter. Ironically, their policies might dictate the reverse at some of the times in their history when the isolationist feelings tended to dominate. Americans' self-image that is fuelled by their exceptionalist tendencies prompts them to act like an exemplary nation to be emulated and that is burdened with the arduous task of ensuring moralism in the world.

After the Second World War, Americans renewed their interest in the subject of human rights in order to explore an end to the dissemination of wars that put the lives of millions of innocents on the line and threatened the world order. Interestingly, Roosevelt set a precedent in 1941 when he delivered his Four Freedoms address in which he set them forth: "freedom from fear, squalor and of speech and worship" (voices of democracy). He wanted to have them respected and defended throughout the world. His wife Eleanor Roosevelt continued his fight after his death until she finished the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights and got it ratified by the United Nations in 1948. It was a historic document that contributed to the codification and the institutionalization of human rights. Power and Allison, historians, argued that the issue of human rights was carried by Roosevelt's speech and given birth the date the Universal declaration was proclaimed(4). They were driven mainly by their sense of exceptionalism to justify their eagerness to pioneer the movement of human rights revival. Disappointedly, it had to wait until the seventies to be turned into legislation (Smith 257).

In the wake of the Cold War, the policy of containment required that the US act freely and blindly in pursuit of its national interests in order to have the aims put forth in its doctrine fulfilled. The American public expressed their disappointment loudly over what they regarded as an amoral, lives-costly and exorbitant foreign policy. Consequently, in the late sixties both conflicting superpowers had embarked on détente, a landmark decision that reflected their desire to mitigate tensions and lessen the hefty costs of their arm races in order to let peace reign and commerce prosper. The advent of President Nixon and his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger gave life to détente and made it clear that it would be a pillar of their policy. It was defined as a version of containment policy designed broadly to achieve their economic, social and political goals at lesser costs (Tulli 575). It was also meant as an attempt to reduce the Soviet threat so that to deal with some urgent issues. They believed that the USSR might offer them help to withdraw their forces with honour from Vietnam. Their involvement in Vietnam constituted tremendous challenge that they had to terminate successfully and urgently. Détente continued to be a polemical issue at home, not achieving consensus ostensibly because of the influence of pro-military groups and the fear of the aggrandizement of the Soviet threat by the Americans who never ceased to look suspiciously at the USSR during the Cold War. Fervent anti-communists also viewed it as "the road to defeat" (Borstelmann 52).

Realpolitik is the policy that is commonly associated with its architects National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger and President Richard Nixon. It consists in "the assumption that the U.S. must set aside its moralistic policies and instead pursue a careful, pragmatic, and realistic foreign policy" (Megherbi 161). They tenaciously clung to it insofar as the international milieu entailed the resort to such policy. It is more of a kind of realistic policy that its detractors usually castigated it scathingly because of its exclusion of moralism and idealism. They believed that moralism should have its place in the heart of American foreign policy in accordance with the

image painted by the Founding Fathers and enhanced later by the next generations of thinkers and philosophers. The image of a moralistic America that the world would look unto for moral guidance, rather acting as a “city on the hill” in the words of John Winthrop. These ideas flowed from American exceptionalism and their messianic tendencies to spread their values and ideals across the globe. On the contrary, *Realpolitik* could be assumed adequate if viewed in the wider context in which it was framed in the midst of the raging Cold War contest that dictated that America should contain communism and limit the expansion of the Soviet influence at whatever cost. This policy soon to backfire on its advocates as its disadvantages outweighed its benefits.

The Vietnam debacle and the unjustifiable enormous loss of lives pushed the Americans to look for ways to salve their conscience by calling for a moral leadership. The Watergate Affair was also of tremendous impact as it put the credibility of the nation and the reputation of its supposedly unique and genuine democracy at stake. It illustrated the extent to which amorality metastasized in American body politics. Assumptions about the relationship between the Cold War fight and the adoption of this kind of policies were not considered. Besides, in the sixties there happened more events that played part in giving voice to some already marginalized minorities. They learned not to fear any longer and to rise up against their government in cases of injustice, convinced of the rightfulness of their causes (Renouard 3). Nevertheless, the Civil Rights’ movement played an undeniable role in smoothing the way for the emergence of human rights’ policy. Last but not the least, some other revelations like that of CIA covert activities in the shape of the Chilean coup d’état, the 1953 Iranian coup d’état and FBI spy scandal helped to convince US public opinion of the necessity for the return of moralism to US foreign policy machinery.

In the wake of Vietnam War, there emerged the executive-legislative infighting that revolved around putting an end to the imperial powers of the presidency that had been acquired during times of turbulences like the Second World War and the Cold War. This period of the seventies witnessed the election of some fresh Congressmen with lofty ambitions reflective of the then dominant mood in US society (Schmidli 214). They made many successes like the War Powers Act of 1973 and the several investigations like that of the CIA in Chile and in Iran. In the field of human rights, they seized on the mood and the political atmosphere created by détente to meddle in the internal affairs of some Eastern European countries and give birth to one of the most memorable acts: Jackson-Vanik Amendment 1974. This act conditioned the granting of “Most Favourable

Nation” title to the USSR to allowing the Jews to immigrate to Israel. Ironically, Jimmy Carter, who would later become president, attacked this amendment fiercely on the ground that it threatened détente (Kaufman 53). The Congressional activism gave more prominence to the issue of human rights, obviously with the help of NGO’s. These non-governmental organizations gave generously plenty of testimonies throughout the decade that were taken seriously by the Congress to advance this cause worldwide on one hand and to serve some domestic purposes on the other. The Helsinki Accords could be considered as a great achievement in 1975 as they persuaded the USSR and its European allies to observe human rights standards and work to improve them.

In the seventies, the Americans felt that they had to act and that the restoration of morality and its re-incorporation into their foreign policy machinery were urgent tasks that had to be done. The calls for the return to morality had their roots in the early American history and their character. There emerged, in addition to popular awareness, a movement amongst politicians that sought to revive these ideals and values: Liberal Internationalism. The liberal internationalists appeared as a reaction to the Isolationists whom they criticized of filling the Congress and trying to steer foreign policy into an isolationist direction under the pretext of the lessons of Vietnam that they claimed they had made it imperative (Sargent 201). The orientation of the New Internationalists depended on their desire “to democratize US foreign policy and restore its traditional idealism”. They countered any form of militarization and interventionism abroad due to the high price that could be incurred by it. Preeminent of their convictions was their call to abandon US backing of right-wing dictatorships. In return, they were in favour of “economic cooperation and cultural exchanges and pressed for the defence of human rights” (Herring 814). In the same vein, their policies were technically focused on the Middle East and Latin America in particular and the Third World in general because of their plans to extend their influence there and maintain their allies strong because of their importance in the Cold War chessboard.

A rupture with *Realpolitikers* was in the offing as legislators took this matter seriously during the wider sixties. They felt the dire consequences that could possibly result of the exclusion of morality from their foreign policy. In the realm of human rights, it started with Senator Donald Fraser who argued strongly in favour of human rights, to be followed later by other acts. Donald Fraser, Democratic Congressman from Minnesota, took the lead and led more than 150 hearings over a period of five years in his quest to find a remedy for this ethical dilemma afflicting

the body of Congress and American foreign policy in general. Most of the people interviewed admitted that Nixon-Kissinger were focused on putting humanitarian considerations on the sidelines (Schoultz 109). In his report entitled *Human Rights in the World Community: A Call for US Leadership*, he criticized the American government's stance towards human rights and its negative attitude in relation to some human rights-violating countries. Among Fraser's major recommendations regarding the integration of human rights in US foreign policy was the creation of the office of human rights (9-13). Later, most of his recommendations were put into effect. Fraser's hearings aimed to resurrect the conventional American values in order to adjust to an interdependent world (Tulli 581). Congressman Fraser and his committee paved the way for the surge of human rights that would gain traction soon.

Congress that was in conflict with the executive branch took it upon itself to limit their imperial powers and assume back its responsibility of making US foreign policy conferred by the constitution. Senators proposed some laws in the wake of Fraser hearings to define or to link foreign aid to human rights' records. They were supposedly driven by the notion of distancing the US from human rights violators, which were mainly dictatorial and Communist regimes in the hope of guaranteeing fair treatment for their citizens. Of the most noteworthy acts enacted were Harkin Amendment (1975) and the Humphrey-Cranston Amendment (1976) of the Foreign Assistance Act, and Section 701 of the International Financial Assistance Act (1977) (Apodaca 11). Barbara Keys later argued, "The hearings would provide the blueprint for much of the congressional human rights efforts of the next few years, and in many ways provided the template for Carter administration foreign policy" (141). Unsurprisingly, the Congress led many resolutions in human rights long time before the arrival of President Jimmy Carter who promoted human rights. Carter would later overpublicize it and make it the centrepiece of his foreign policy in his quest to appeal to the American public. He aimed to put aside the bitter memories of Vietnam and Watergate in the hope of marking a break, which would prepare the ground for some kind of moralism to set in. Moralism was to be welcomed and embraced again: it was Carter's acid test.

3- Jimmy Carter and the Human Rights' Agenda:

The prospects for the victory of a Democratic presidential candidate seemed abundant in contrast to his Republican counterpart as the political climate of the country seemed then to indicate. In this respect, the tense conditions unleashed by the eventful seventies galvanized US citizens to hope for something different, for a rupture with past corrupt practices and to

seek better economic prospects. Nancy Mitchell recalled the pervading atmosphere then claiming that, "They grappled with failure in Vietnam and strategic parity with the Soviet Union; they faced the Arab oil embargo and growing oil competition from the European community and Japan. They suffered through Watergate, the Congressional investigations of CIA and stagflation. There seemed to be weekly reminders that the US was losing power and influence" (85). This period witnessed the transition of the US from being an unchallengeable superpower in a post- World War world into an interdependent world, with different concept of leadership, where it had to grapple with the changing setting, both politically and economically¹. There were increasingly growing misgivings about the decline of their power. Jimmy Carter, though unknown and of small political age, to their consternation, would rise to power because he offered the long-awaited moralistic political discourse. He wanted also to be seen as a light at times of darkness. Remarkably, Carter's self-portrayal as a problem-solver due to his training as an engineer and his seemingly successful experience as governor of Georgia, paved the way for him to rally people around himself.

Jimmy Earl Carter was born in Plains, Georgia, 1924 in the South of the US. After finishing his high school in his hometown, he opted for a career in the navy as a lieutenant. After graduation, he was assigned as a nuclear physicist to one of the navy's submarines. In 1953, after the death of his father, he took an important decision to quit the army and return to Plains to look after his late father's peanut business that subsequently thrived under his management. Soon afterwards, he developed an interest in politics, especially after running for the gubernatorial elections of Georgia. To his dismay, he lost the first time due to, inter alia, his refusal to endorse a racist discourse. The next time he had run, he won the election and served as Georgia's governor from 1970 to 1974.

Religion was an important ingredient of Jimmy Carter's personality. He was raised in segregated Plains where mostly Blacks populated it because of its agricultural economy. The injustices that befell them left a bad taste in his mouth. At times, he did not take part in his countrymen's policies due to his unwillingness to be associated with their racist sounding policies. He taught Sunday schools regularly at church. Interestingly, he always says that he is a born-again Christian. The impact of religion was clear on his political behaviour. Carter said that he would not blend his religiosity with politics. On the contrary, some observers believed that he would not have succeeded in Camp David and Panama if he had not used his faith to draw the negotiating parties together. Jimmy Carter's most two cherished values were his religiosity and his dedication to his work. Carter

was known for his scientific mindset and his love for the minutest of details that took him to be often pictured as a micromanager.

Jimmy Carter won his party's nomination because of his inclination to approach consensus-making subjects instead of divisive issues (Glad 273). He also kept his position on some of the polemical matters confusing so that he would not lose supporters. Being an outsider gave him an edge over his rivals and presented him with a splendid opportunity to attack the insiders of all political hues because he sensed himself invulnerable. The same advantage he enjoyed was already used by him when conducting his campaign in Georgia's gubernatorial elections in 1970 when he said to a gathering in Berlin, New Hampshire: "It's time for someone like myself to make a drastic change in Washington. The insiders have had their chance and they have not delivered" (Glad 250). Furthermore, he played on the issue of human rights in the realm of foreign policy seeking to dispose of the Cold War rhetoric that caused the US troubles and tainted its international reputation.

Carter entertained also the idea of starting a post-Cold War agenda premised on human rights policy before the actual end of the Cold War (Brinkley 522). Also, It was adopted "to forge a new relationship with the Third World and mitigate the costs of the Cold War" (Schmitz and Walker 143). His focus was mainly on the issue of human rights and the exclusion of militarism and interventionism as part of his liberal internationalist convictions that he had learned in the Trilateral Commission's lectures and strove to set into motion once elected. Nevertheless, the very idea of human rights was first mooted in the Democratic platform drafting committee and at the Democratic Convention to become later "the strongest platform commitment to human rights in our history" (Moynihan). Meanwhile, Carter seemed to escort the idea to the "centre of global rhetoric" (Moyn 155).

Jimmy Carter joined the Trilateral Commission at a time when he was still governor of Georgia at the behest of David Rockefeller, later Head of the Manhattan Bank. It was a group of politicians, thinkers and economists from the US, Western Europe and Japan whose main duty was to ensure collective understanding between these powers in addition to the implementation of their political and particularly their economic designs. It viewed the central problem of the world order as "the management of interdependence" and not "the containment of communism" (qtd in Sanders 3). The beliefs of the Trilateral Commission's members were in tune with the transformations that affected the international order. They sought ways to maintain their influence in an interdependent world with newly emerging influential actors from the West itself rivalling that of the US. Jerry W.

Sanders, a political scientist, christened this policy “managerialism” that was to replace “anti-communism” (07)². Subsequently, Carter selected a good number of his staff from this group: most notable among them was Brzezinski Zbigniew who would later become a powerful actor in his administration.

During the Democratic Convention, he had used the human rights theme to satisfy both conflicting parties of his party who finally agreed to endorse his agenda but with some minor reservations. On the one hand, there were the Liberal wing of the party, headed by Henry Jackson, that wanted this policy to be directed towards right wing dictators like Iran, Argentina and some other Latin American dictatorships in order to preclude the possibility of being bogged down in another Vietnam. They were mostly dovish. On the other hand, the Conservatives, headed by George McGovern, shunned détente and liked this policy to be applied to the Soviet Union to weaken it and to exhibit his human rights violations. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a liberal, engaged in a discussion with the party’s left in which he summed up everything saying: “We will be against the dictator you don’t like the most if you will be against the dictators we don’t like the most” (qtd in Dumbrell 18). In a nutshell, it can be said that Carter had succeeded in finding a theme that would unite his torn party; divided probably because of the Vietnam War and the losses in the previous presidential elections, and would eventually redound to his advantage. His opportunism explained that his attachment to the theme that he had espoused was based on political expediency: it can be considered as a cynical ploy to win votes. Similarly, Renouard argued that his embrace of human rights was just an “oppositional strategy” (331). In the same context, Tony Smith said that Carter came across the appeal of this theme by chance (240). In addition, Smith added, “He joined the human rights crusade and made it his own” (145). All these arguments, and others, give credence to the sceptical stance adopted towards Carter’s human rights policy and deprive it of any authenticity.

President Carter, in his inaugural address, set out his vision that was built on human right as the centrepiece of his foreign policy. He said, “Our commitment to human rights must be absolute”. He also noted that the era of interventionism and militarism was over. He argued: “Our nation can be strong abroad only if it is strong at home. And we know that the best way to enhance freedom in other lands is to demonstrate here that our democratic system is worthy of emulation”. He added also that “to be true to ourselves, we must be true to others. We will not behave in other countries so as to violate our rules and standards here at home”. He hinted at the policy that he designed to be followed towards Communist states by stating, “Our moral

sense dictates a clear-cut preference for those societies which share with us an abiding respect for individual human rights (Public Papers of American Presidents 2-3). Human rights' policy was made as a barometer to measure and categorize countries into friendly and human rights-abusing countries. President Carter's vision about human rights was never complete at the beginning, which exhibited the novelty of the idea. The "rhetorical prominence" already given to this theme, advanced forcefully during the campaign, provided ammunition to the line of thought that advocated a cynical view of Carter's human rights policy.

Carter's human rights policy was mostly addressed to the Third World based on the new classification he fashioned: the North-South instead of the Cold War view of East-West. He created it to persuade human rights-abusing countries to change their ways, and to induce the rest to embrace this policy and put it into practice (Walker 115). Dumbrell, Carter's administration historian, pointed out that it was "a way to improve America's image in the Third World and as a means to enhance US leverage in a range of regional contexts" (18). However, this policy could not be clearly understood if to be interpreted outside this context since the Third World was turned, during the sixties and seventies, into a fierce Cold War battlefield. The growing economic grievances of Third World countries also mattered. Both of the US and the USSR endeavoured to draw as many new states as possible into their orbits given the arithmetical significance of them and the ongoing transformations that were affecting the shape of the post-War map of the world. The US tried to sway some countries into its sphere of influence using different means including the ideology of human rights to counter the expansion of the USSR that it accused of disregarding the provisions of détente (Westad 28). In return, the Soviet Union argued they could not turn their back to the fledgling liberation movements in the world (Legvold 760). The time for advancing this policy and using it to America's advantage in the Third World was ripe since these countries were suffering economically and growing disenchanted with "Soviet aggression and expansionist tendencies" that goaded them into repudiating "the Socialist model" (Sharnak 312).

The policy of human rights remained ambiguous until Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who was tasked with formulating an applicable human rights policy, spelled it out, in part and never fully, in his speech at Georgia Law School on 30 April 1977. He said, "human rights policy must be understood in order to be effective" and presented his administration with a definition for human rights that was summarized in three intrinsic points:

First, there is the right to be free from governmental violation of the integrity of the person. Such violations include torture; cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment; and arbitrary arrest or imprisonment. They also include denial of fair public trial and invasion of the home. Second, there is the right to the fulfillment of such vital needs as food, shelter, health care and education. We recognize that the fulfilment of this right will depend, in part, upon the stage of a nation's economic development. But we also know that this right can be violated by a government's action or inaction-for example, through corrupt official processes which divert resources to an elite at the expense of the needy, or through indifference to the plight of the poor. Third, there is the right to enjoy civil and political liberties- freedom of thought; of religion; of assembly; freedom of speech; freedom of the press; freedom of movement both within and outside one's own country; freedom to take part in government.

Vance also emphasized the limitedness of their power when tackling issues of this sort due to the vicissitudes of politics on the one hand and the interests of their nation on the other. The means intended to be used when conducting this policy were also mentioned in the speech that ranged from quiet diplomacy to public condemnation(FRUS 77-80 154-161). This speech came as response to the Soviets and their right-wing allies who charged Carter with intervening in their internal affairs.Carter denied this accusation. Another step failed to deliver a full-fledged and coherent policy to be set in motion.

President Carter in his Commencement Address at Notre Dame University on May 22,1977 proclaimed his divorce with anti-communism ushering in a new chapter of the Cold War book, he declared: "We are now free of that inordinate fear of communism which led us once to embrace any dictator who joined us in that fear". Carter's administration sought to distance itself from right wing dictatorships in the hope of improving the image of his country in the Third World. He also envisioned replacing anti-communism with human rights to create a foreign policy consensus. Scholars chastised him for his naiveté as he entertained such ideals that had no place in power politics during the Cold War in the vain hope of creating a post-Cold War Foreign policy. He explained: "For too many years, we've been willing to adopt the flawed and erroneous principles and tactics of our adversaries, sometimes abandoning our own values for theirs. We have fought fire with fire, never thinking that fire is better quenched with water".

He concluded his speech by confirming that human rights was a tenet of his foreign policy invoking his nation's exceptionalism that drove his nation to take such initiatives by saying : “ I believe it is incumbent on us in the country to keep that discussion (human freedom and human rights) ... alive. No country is as qualified as us to set an example”. On the contrary, he confirmed, “this does not mean that we can conduct our foreign policy by rigid moral maxims. We live in a world that is complex and confused and which will always be complex and confused”be (Pubic Papers of US Presidents Carter 956-958). He left some elbow room to his regime so that some other priorities could eclipse human rights policy if needbe. He was acting rather pragmatically.

Presidential Review Memorandum (PRM 28) that first appeared on July 1977 noted that the ultimate aim of the policy of human rights was “to encourage the respect that governments accord to human rights”. It paid attention also to the limits of their power by arguing, “Our ability to change human rights practices in other societies is limited even if we were to exert such substantial efforts. Thus, our expectations must be realistic”. Besides, it clarified an important point related to human rights' policy towards friendly regimes like Iran, Korea, and Philippines, which made them not immune from the applicability of this policy for fear of being charged with “inconsistency” and “endangering the integrity of their policy”. With respect to the third world, it offered a middle-of-the-road-policy of “reinforcing positive human rights and democratic tendencies ...this support is particularly important with respect to countries that are vulnerable to external or internal threats, of which face severe economic problem” (1-22). The documents that were written during Carter's administration displayed the evolution of the policy of human rights and the conceptual ambiguity of the idea. The lack of any clear definition undermined its efficiency.

David Skidmore, a political scientist, argued that Carter pursued a “strategy of adjustment to declining US global power” in response to the growing interdependence of the world. He also made clear that “Carter's idealistic embrace of human rights was motivated not only by his own intense moral convictions but also by the belief that these sorts of appeals would bolster his own political fortunes and win support for his foreign policy reforms”. He noted, “An overemphasis on Carter administration idealism is misplaced”. Carter abandonment of this whole strategy can be attributed to “his inability to gain domestic legitimacy for the administration's early worldview or the policies associated with it” (699-722). The policy of human rights proved to be a tactic that was designed to cater to the voters' needs. Moreover, in the field of foreign policy, it aimed

to introduce a change in the American foreign policy due to the “diffusion of power” that limited the political room of manoeuvre for the US in addition to “the proliferation of issues” and the complication of their management (Oye 3-18). Interestingly, it also turned out to be a Cold War double-edged sword: on the one hand, it was meant to shake the Socialist world and penetrate it from within, and it targeted Third World countries frustrated with the policies of the Socialist camp on the other. In short, the political climate required the resort such policy.

Despite the calls of the revisionists for a fair evaluation of the policy of human rights, and Jimmy Carter presidency in general, by enumerating his foreign policy achievements, this political phenomenon needs to be studied in light of the Cold War context that was still lingering at the time. Carter revealed his plans to reduce tensions and initiate a new era but they were mainly campaign promises that were so hard to implement since the words of an outsider exercised no much influence over the enormous bureaucracy. Jimmy Carter adopted this policy and it bore fruit at some spots in the world. It also gained a rhetorical prominence, which would contribute to its flourishing later. A thorough investigation of the historical and political evolution of human civilization confirmed that at that juncture human rights were fated to come to the fore due to several trends and phenomena that occurred before. Carter’s intransigence and enthusiastic advancement of this policy incurred adverse effects in such important states like Nicaragua and Iran. In Iran, the US is still suffering the consequences of the fall of the shah.

It is not the aim of this paper to condemn or condone Carter’s line of thinking regarding this matter of human rights. Instead, it tries to find out to what extent did Carter’s beliefs and his foreign policy agenda helped in shaking the Peacock Throne? Starting with the assumption that Carter was a Cold Warrior in a dovish garb acting in accordance with the requirements of the campaign firstly and the imperatives of adjustment imposed by the political timing secondly. His true convictions soon to be revealed through the increasing Soviet activism and some other events including the fall of the shah.

4- Iran: Case Study:

Iran’s politico-economic and geostrategic importance can be attributed to its location and the role it assumed as a bulwark against communism in the period after the Second World War, in addition to its huge oil reserves and the nature of its regime as pro-Western. All these merits prompted the US to offer its unconditional support to the Pahlavi monarchy. Mohamed Reza Pahlavi (1941-1979) was installed as a monarch

after the dethronement of his father in 1941 by the Allied due to his dubious allegiances during the war. The US was committed to prolong the longevity of this ally's dynasty in one of the world's most troubled regions at whatever cost. He counted on US support and guarantees to ensure his political survival during the first years of his rule when Iran was unstable both economically and politically. He was to be ousted forever should not the US and Britain intervene to save his throne in what is commonly known in Cold War annals as the Iranian coup d'état of 1953. Of the worst repercussions of such an undertaking was the erosion of the Shah's legitimacy and this stigma would later haunt him for the rest of his reign. This episode drew him more closely to the US to the degree to be portrayed as a Western puppet in the imaginary of his people. The partnership between the US and Iran would evolve from a client-patron to a level that forced the US to reconsider and treat the Shah as an equal, especially after the British withdrawal from East of Suez in 1968. This turning point contributed to the fulfilment of the Shah's design of making Iran again a regional power in an attempt to revive the glories of Ancient Persia.

The feelings of unequivocal support on the part of the US towards Iran tended to fade at some points when the Democrats occupied the Oval Office that the Shah looked suspiciously at them. Ali Ansari, Iran historian, opposed this idea by arguing that the shah's relations with US president had never been made worse because of the "party affiliation" of the incumbent president save Kennedy (250). In his inaugural address, President Kennedy stated, "Those who make reform impossible will make revolutionary change inevitable". He sent a clear message to Third World countries of which the shah felt himself mostly concerned. The New Frontiersmen, during his watch, urged the shah to reform politically, socially and economically and to limit his military ambitions (Pollack 81). They saw reform as the best guarantee of stability for the shah's regime that could stave off the communist threat. The Kennedy administration was bent mainly on encouraging reform to preserve the stability of pro-Western regimes (Nemchnok 343). Kennedy had anticipated change in the Third World and felt that he had to act to save what could be saved instead of losing it to the communist camp (Goode 13). Kennedy also supported the self-determination course of action embarked upon by some Third World movements in order not to alienate them from Washington and to win them into his orbit as a counterbalance to the Soviets who had been already engaged in this battle over the Third World. President Kennedy suggested that the Shah had to appoint his friend Ali Amini, a "competent technocrat" as prime minister. The shah's political mindset inhibited him from accepting

any political figure of stature to assume such position for fear of being upstaged and finally toppled in a repetition of his father's scenario that he did against the Qajars. He finally removed him due to the deteriorating conditions at home. The Shah's short experience with Kennedy left a bad taste in his mouth and led him never to hesitate expressing his aversion to the Democrats.

The victory of Jimmy Carter refreshed the shah's memory and reawakened the searing recollections of President John Kennedy since his discourse was in considerable part akin to that of Carter at its core of reform. During the primaries, the shah asked his Court Minister Assadollah Alam to inquire about the candidate Jimmy Carter. Of the most memorable reactions by the shah to the election of Jimmy Carter was his saying to his court minister, "what sort of calamity he may unleash on the world. He is no more than an ignorant peasant boy" (qtd in Luca 181). These misgivings would prove true given the unsuitability of such a discourse to the political context in which it was employed, especially in Tehran. President Carter put human rights and arms' sales at the forefront of his foreign policy. Worthy to mention also is Carter's poor knowledge of Iran and its value at the beginning of his term. These two elements were hard to implement when it came to Iran. In the case of Iran, the already-shaken and unstable regime felt that seismic events were to come due to mostly internal and barely external factors combined. The question that arises in this case study is to what extent was Carter's human rights policy responsible for giving the Niavaran Palace its coup de grace that would cause it to collapse.

The influx of large amounts of petro-dollars during the seventies was a result of the campaign spearheaded by the shah and members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to increase the price of oil. At that time, the shah was largely known for his activism on the international political scene. To his chagrin, a world economic slowdown followed and the price of oil fell down again, which would later pave the way for some sleeping problem to arise. On the domestic front, his translation of the surfeit of money into huge development plans accelerated the rate of inflation due to the limited absorption capacity of the Iranian economy: an overheating resulted. Besides, Iran witnessed large demographic growth followed by increasing expectations on the part of the populace that neither the shah could attend to their needs and aspirations nor the economy would absorb. In brief, the social front was boiling at a time when austerity measures had to be taken. Most Iranians, particularly the poor classes, thought that social justice, which they eagerly sought, had been abandoned for the sake of economic development (Ansari 247).The

severe economic hardships reminded the Iranians, particularly the most vulnerable of them, of the shah's profligate spending and grandiose plans that they perceived badly. Of the most remembered acts was his excessive purchase of weaponry from the US: Richard Nixon granted him this privilege so that he could be able to assume the position of the gendarme of the Gulf in 1972 in application of the Nixon Doctrine, first enunciated in 1969. The blank check policy caused severe burden to the Iranian budget as it exhausted colossal amounts of money. In addition, the worsening reputation of corruptibility attached to his family and immediate entourage contributed to the people's displeasure with their current regime.

The Iranian system was fated to suffer politically for many reasons. The closure of political participation was one of them. It angered the growing middle class that most of its members were eager to become active politically. The shah thought to offer people of all political persuasions the chance to enter politics, and the older generation an opportunity to revive their careers. There were also some segments of the intelligentsia who had grown fed up with the policies and the repressive nature of the shah and his notorious security apparatus SAVAK³. They ultimately opted to pursue a militant course to force the shah to grant them some concessions. One of the most important points in this era was the malady that racked the shah's health who had thought that it was better for him to liberalize and smooth the way for his son to succeed him. The religious opposition had been growing intense and louder over the years due to many grievances and the exclusion that they suffered at the hands of the powerful secularists, backed by the shah. The turning point that changed their attitude vis-à-vis the shah's regime can be traced back to the June 1963 uprising when they rose up against the Shah under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini in defiance of his reforms that could affect the ulama's political, social and economic position. It would prove later instrumental in overthrowing the shah and ending his dynasty. The shah finally decided to embark on a liberalization program, which would lead, and other causes of equal significance, to the creation of a political atmosphere conducive to chaos during the time that preceded his downfall in February 1978.

The liberalization program that was launched by the shah in 1976 prior to the advent of Carter came to be associated erroneously in Iran with the pressure exerted by the latter. In a calculated move, the shah chose to appease the incoming president by releasing political prisoners in November 1976. He also changed the tone of his policy and allowed opposition groups some freedom to operate like writing petitions and public letters to him without punishment in an unprecedented act never seen except before 1953 (

Pollack 121). In early 1975, the shah's regime was criticized by Amnesty International as one of "the worst violators of human rights" in the world. The shah felt embarrassed by congressional and media criticism of him. As a result, he allowed the International Red Cross, Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists to enter Iran in March 1977 and hoped they would offer him some useful recommendations regarding human rights-related reforms. The shah in his memoirs, *Answer to History*, recalled that he had welcomed their comments and stressed the application of their recommendations, but he blamed the media for not paying much attention to his reforms (149). Before their visit, in February, he released 257 political prisoners (Abrahamian 501). Unsurprisingly, the number of released political prisoners would reach 1500 by November 1977 (Guerrero 37). Butler William J, chairperson of the Executive Committee of International Commission of Jurists, remarked that during the last eight or nine months, no cases of torture had been reported (Human Rights in Iran 6). The shah's admission of them to Iran was an unprecedented move that was much appreciated by Vance during his last visit in May 1977. Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, said that he expected the shah to make more efforts as their commitment to this issue was worldwide. Vance asked him to improve his human rights record that he considered as a *sine qua non* of their support as long as it was in combination with arms sales, one of the important tenets of their foreign policy. The shah argued that his country was vulnerable to communist attacks. Hence, his toleration of dissent and relaxation of repression could be far-fetched. He also reminded his American interlocutor, "(He) had no objection to our human rights foreign policy as long as it was a question of general principle and not directed at him and did not threaten his country's security" (Vance 317-319). Another hidden part of Vance's visit was the "reduction of US profile in Iran" (Thornton 248).

The lifting of the repressive measures gave the Iranians the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of his mini-liberalization. Richard Cottam, Iran specialist, argued: "if the regime was in trouble economically, embarking on a programme described as liberalization could lead the opposition to sense a vulnerability in the regime's authority position that they could not resist exploring" (Iran and the US 158). The opposition members felt bolder as never before. In May 1977, 53 lawyers wrote an open letter to the shah denouncing his regime. Their acts went unpunished, which would give courage to others to do likewise. Several steps were taken by other politically involved groups to escalate more so that the monarch should hear their voices and grant them some of their long denied freedoms.

In July, former National Front affiliates who tended to identify themselves as Mossadigists sent a letter to the shah asking him to stop his repressive practices and to cling to the provisions of the 1906 constitution in addition to further demands like the release of political prisoners and the improvement of human rights' conditions. Ervand Abrahamian, Iran expert, observed that "until November 1977, the opposition focused its energies on indoor activities: writing letters, forging new groups, reviving old ones, drafting manifestos and publishing newspapers" (505). After November, another course was to be taken since other groups, notably the Islamists, joined the fray, convinced of the fragility of the once powerful monarchy. Liberalization was briefly explained as, "in sum, he had opened the political door slightly, had sought to hold it there, and, when necessary, had instructed his police to slum it shut again" (Bill 226). The shah was to oscillate between the stick and the carrot for the remainder of his reign and the subsequent events of the Iranian revolution best illustrated this point.

There was also a vital role played by Ali Shariati, Jalal Al-e Ahmed in preaching the importance of the native Iranian culture that they saw as being threatened by the shah's programs of Westernization and modernization. Since they had found no way to reach the people's hearts, they used Shi'ism and its history to mobilize them and convince them of their duty to rise up against injustice, evoking religious paradigms, though never spoken plainly against the shah. Ali Shariati was called the "ideologue of the revolution" whereas Jalal Al-e Ahmed brought forth the concept of "Westoxication". The shah was oblivious of the growing green threat of the religious class whose political ambitions were long deep in history. The clerics capitalized on the increasing momentum of the revolutionary activities. They succeeded in striking a responsive chord with their people and walked on their backs softly to power.

The shah's visit to the US in November 1977 was a disgrace as Iranian student protested against him. Soon afterwards, the US police had no choice but to throw tear gas to disperse the crowd, which caused the shah and Carter to wipe their streaming tears. It was misconstrued in Iran as an American withdrawal of support to the shah. During their private meeting, Carter mentioned the subject of human rights just briefly because there were more important matters to be discussed. Carter stated in his memoir, "it soon become obvious that my expression of concern would not change the policies of the shah in meeting a threat which, I am sure, seemed very real to him" (437). Carter wanted to show that the shah was still reluctant to embark on large-scale liberalization because he was prisoner of his own illusions that he never freed himself from. Thereafter, the shah felt more

supported by the US and simultaneously strong enough to start to regain his mailed fist once put to rest for a while until things transpired. The visit was used to attack Carter for pursuing a double standard in his implementation of his human rights policy, lenient with his allies in which their interests were important and intolerant of other nations' behaviour whose significance to America was barely noticeable. This accusation can be considered as nonsensical since politics required the actors to take such a course, especially the cold war logic, without abandoning their quest altogether by taking exceptional measures similar to the ones used with the shah so that some hope could be left standing.

The anti-shah's activities proceeded and he kept alternating between punishment and concession in hope of finding the right formula to deal with such a worsening situation. Carter was to return by the eve of the New Year to Iran to visit the shah in a stopover in his long tour. In this visit, Carter poured effusive praise on the shah by saying: "Iran, whose destiny is so well-guided by the shah, is an island of stability in one of the most troubled regions of the world. That is a great tribute to you, your Majesty, and to the great task that you are accomplishing in Iran, and to the respect, admiration, and love that your people bear you" (qtd in Afkhami 452). Cottam interpreted it as demonstration of support for the shah and declaration to the opposition that his administration did not intend to abandon him (Human Rights in Iran 12). Carter's praise of the shah led also to the Iranians' disenchantment with him. They felt that they had to act on their own to achieve their goals. In January 1978, the shah sanctioned the publication of an article against Ayatollah Khomeini to discredit him that would spark an endless sequence of events. These events would lead eventually to his fall in February 1979.

5- Conclusion:

It is desirable to have an objective look into Carter's human rights policy that indubitably improved human rights in some countries. In addition, his foreign policy achievements were remarkable: Camp David Accords, Panama, and normalization of relations with China. Politically speaking, Carter never abandoned the Cold War logic embedded in the machinery of US foreign policy. He tried to offer his people what they were eager to see in hope of gaining political advantage. Carter used his human rights policy firstly as a battering ram to attack the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies. He then extended it to the Third World theatre to wage the Cold War by other means and try to lure as much newly independent nations into his camp as possible. He also called his allies to respect human rights to strengthen their systems. In Iran, it was completely

different because the internal situation was already spinning out of control. Different contributing factors fuelled the rebellion against the shah who was losing his throne. Carter's human rights policy was of no heavily felt impact there since Carter chose not to pressure the shah owing to the importance of Iran to the US and the fragility of the internal situation there.

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¹For further details, see: Sargent, J Daniel. *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

² Managerialism has been defined by Jerry W. Sanders as, “maintaining US global influence called for a reinvigorated system of world trade and the creation of rationalized institutions of financial cooperation in partnership with the expansion of multinational corporate investment”(1).

³ SAVAK: Iranian State Intelligence and Security Organization. It was established in 1957. The CIA and Mossad trained most of its agents. It was notorious for its repressive activities.