



## Iranian Nation-State Building Chronological Continuance or Politicized Changes?

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**Abstract:** This article examines the nation- state building status in Iran since the formation of first national government in this country (1925). From a constructivist view, I have concentrated to analyze and compare the nation-state building process in Pahlavi regime and the Islamic Republic of Iran and tried to answer the following question: Whether the outbreak of Islamic revolution totally transformed the assumptions on national state or Islamic Republic has just developed this incomplete process and made it more perfect? Central idea of this paper is that the Islamic republic despite deep differences in values, identities, and norms with Pahlavi regime, continued the process which formerly began in its own way and in accordance to its norms. Due to weaknesses and strengths of both Pahlavi and Islamic Republic in nation-state building process, the point is that no one can talk about the outstanding developments of Islamic Republic in this area.

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### Introduction

In recent years the issues of ‘Failed State’, ‘Weak state’ and ‘Contested State’ have become important subjects in international relations studies. Among developing and less developed countries many of political units that are just legally ‘state’, even decades after their independence have been unable to complete nation-state building process in an efficient manner and are challenging with dilemmas like national integration, obtaining comprehensive identity, stabilizing political institution and national sovereignty and so on. In this space the issue of nation-state building turns into one of the most important subjects in international relations studies. Nevertheless, the discussion about circumstance of nation-state building in Iran is neglected among researchers and students of foreign policy in the country. Hence, it seems necessary to address the issue and fill this gap.

To do this, I have chosen the analytical framework presented by constructivism theory in international relations. Constructivism in an aspect receives ‘state centric ontology’ of IR mainstream that identifies states or state representatives as original actors of international society (Porcel Quero, 2001, p: 27). On the other hand constructivists unlike realists, in addition to material aspects, emphasize on

‘conceptual and linguistic dimension of structures’ (Hopf, 1998, p: 190). According to constructivists, development and evolution of international relations needs interaction between domestic and international politics. Constructivism core idea is that state’s understanding of the world around is the base of their behaviors and that understanding is an effect of identity and interests (Smith, 2001, p: 17).

In this theoretical framework, focus on some fundamental characteristics of nation- state building is essential to perceive and analyze nation-state building status in Iran (before and after 1979 revelation). There are some indicators taken from ‘Mohammed Ayoob<sup>1</sup>’s rewarding work, titled ‘The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System

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(Emerging Global Issues)'. Ghavam<sup>2</sup> and Zargar<sup>3</sup> have used these indicators in their prominent work, 'State building-nation building and international relations theory' and classified them into three groups: a. territory Satiation b. National Cohesion and Integration and c. political stability (Table 1). To analyze the nation-state building circumstance in Iran I have used these characteristics and also constructivist metatheoretical discussions.

### **Nation-state building status in Pahlavi era Territorial Satiation**

Land border as the objective and subjective symbol of national identity and spectacle of national sovereignty has a crucial importance. Territorial Satiation in any country is first captured by power amass; and showing and applying it to stabilize land borders, solve boundary problems and remove any external territorial threat. Force and law have an important role in nation-state building process and make it stable. Territorial Satiation also could be an indicator of resolving all ethnic issues and pulling loyalties toward unified political center (Ghavam and Zargar, 2008, pp 8-9). In Territorial Satiation division, for analyzing nation state building in Iran, the focus is on factors such as borders situation, national sovereignty and struggle midpoints with neighbors.

### **Borders Situation**

Current territory of Iran is only 30 percent of region which in history is known as 'land of Iran' and 'great Iran' and in geography as 'plateau of Iran'. Over ages foreign intrigues and kings lassitude had segregated many parts of this old country in a short 196 years period (Farmanfarmaian, 2008, p: 4). But since formation of formal nation-state (first Pahlavi) the subject of territorial integrity and stabilizing borders was placed at top of agenda so land surrender to foreigners routine mass topped. Due to Pahlavi government policies Iran's territorial integrity reserved after years of failure against foreigners and transferring land to them (especially during Qajars). However, since the country started the process of nation-state building (1925), it has also always had some territorial and border disputes with some of its neighbors.

Iran's most important border dispute was with Iraq and to resolve it has used tools like international law, negotiation and military force. Iran and Iraq's dispute related to the shared border of two countries in Arvandrood (Ehteshami, 2003, p: 112). Iraq government has always believed that Arvandrood is part of its territory and claimed absolute and unquestioned rule on all Arvandrood. In contrast, the Iranian government believed that because Arvandrood is a border and navigable river, according to the international law's principles and rules, the border between the two countries should be "Thalweg line" (Jafary Valdani, 1987, pp: 4-9). However, after several intense clashes between the border guards of both countries and when League of Nations and UN Security Council did not respond clearly to Iraq's complaints, resolving the issue was assigned to the litigants (UN year book, 1971). The two countries in 1975, accepted intermediation of Houari Boumediene, the former leader of Algeria, thus ratification of 1975 treaty (Algeria Treaty) resolved this border problem.

Another important territorial dispute of pahlavi was concerned on United Arabic Emirates claim over three islands of Great Tonb, Small Tonb and Abu Musa. Historically Tonbs and Abu Musa islands had belonged to Iran until 1903, but in this year Britain with pretexts like fighting piracy and keeping security of the British ships occupied and assigned them to his protectorates, Sharjah and RasAlkhyma (McLachlan, 1994,p:112). The Iranian government didn't accept this occupation and send more than 30 objection notes to this country (Mojtahedzade, 1996, p: 13). The leaving of British forces from the Persian Gulf (1971) largely solved this dispute and restored the rule of Iran over the islands. But some Arab states such as Algeria, Iraq, Libya and South Yemen complained to the UN Security Council and emphasized on UAE's sovereignty over islands that lie on the outskirts. Security Council addressed the complaint on December 1971 but Iran representative called the accusations against Iran merely a domestic issue. Finally Somalia representative, a member of the Arab League, proposed the Council to postpone complaint to make mediation efforts of third parties possible, thus, in agreement with all Security Council members and no complaints, even one case, they decided to close this complaint and archive it (Mojtahedzade, 1999, p: 47-49). Therefore the problem of Iran and the UAE was also resolved and Pahlavi government didn't face claims in this field.

Complete separation of Bahrain from Iran in 1971 which implemented by United Kingdom diplomacy was another Iranian territorial issue after establishment of modern state in this country. Unlike

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other similar cases here, Pahlavi government failed to maintain the territorial integrity of the country. Bahrain archipelago has long been part of Iranian territory and was ruled by the great Iranian Empire. From the early 19th century as a result of UK undisputed presence in the Persian Gulf, Bahrain, like some other sections of the Iran appendices, through the imperialist legal regimes became part of British protégés. Since then, this was always a controversial topic between Iran and the UK. During this time the British envoy was a sovereign ruler of the region, though just as apparent an Arab Sheikh was the ruler (Friedman and Brandon, 2007, p: 43). Pahlavi state frequently expressed its objections over the occupation of Iranian islands to Britain and finally, in 1930 referred to the League of Nations due to violation of its sovereignty by the English on Bahrain. Although at the reign of Reza Shah, the dispute was open, but Iran didn't gain any result (SadidoAl-Saltane, 1991,p: 121). From occupation of Iran and the substitution of Reza shah with his son in 1320 until the stabilization of Mohammad Reza Shah's reign, Iranian government had less opportunity to pursue the matter. Finally, the Iranian government on March 8, 1970 applied mediation of the UN Secretary General UThant to send a delegation to Bahrain in order of evaluation of its people's will. With the UN report representing the people of Bahrain's independence, the Security Council unanimously approved this report and thus Bahrain was separated from Iran (Iran and the Persian Gulf, 2009).

It seems that from constructivist point of view, Pahlavi government, for maintaining territorial integrity of Iran and solving territorial disputes and border problems, had a two side policy. They relied on material factors that could be found in Iran's increasing military power and also accompanied with powerful countries (especially America). On the other hand because of their respect for international norms and acceptance of international dispute resolution mechanisms (such as negotiation, mediation and presence in international organizations) they won such a prestige and credibility in the international arena for Iran that in many cases lead to international support for Iran's demands and positions.

In relation to sovereignty and autonomy that refers to ethnic groups and how to communicate with the central government, it appears that construction circumstances of social interactions and norms and also mutual attitudes of the two sides weren't in a way leading to absorption of these groups. Farsi speakers in Iran, although with over 60 percent of the population, have a majority, but the existence of six

major ethnic groups, Turk, Kurd, Lor, Arab, Baluch and Turkmen, has had a big impact on the historical evolution of Iran (Keskin, 2008). Prior to the establishment of the modern state the presence of heads of tribes and ethnic groups in power structure, blurred the boundaries between government and ethnic groups, it means that ethnicity problems did not exist. Modern centralist and authoritarian state that emerged with Reza Khan Kingdom, under the influence of the Nation-State building process in Europe, seek to destroy the local power and authority of tribes and take exclusive political, economic, and military power to establish a powerful, centralized, bureaucratic, and modern state. Centralist policy of Reza Shah was based on three strategies: stripping tribal chiefs' authority, settled tribes and disarming of tribal forces. Thus, in a period of 1925 to 1933, Reza Shah was able to use the new regular army under his command to defeat most of powerful and autonomous tribe's chiefs in every part of the country. As a result the traditional tribal elites (Khans) lost their autonomy and peaceful interaction between the tribe's heads and government became hostile relations. This process took place in several areas such as Kurdistan, Baluchistan, Azerbaijan and so (Tibi, 1990, pp: 120-121). Neglecting ethnic minorities in the development programs of Mohammad Reza Shah continued. Therefore strong focus on integration, lack of attention to the margins in the industrial and economic development and an emphasis on ethnic cultural and linguistic characteristics vanishing, created some kind of identity crisis for some ethnic groups that made them vulnerable against the stimulation of foreign powers (Ahmadi, 1399, pp: 65-66). Tribe and ethnic group's riots in the years after fall of Reza Shah (1941-1953) and after the fall of his son (1979-1982), confirmed that these groups didn't accept creation of central government by Pahlavi regime and were not part of it, but only temporarily and perforce, surrendered and remained silent.

Another magnificent effort of Pahlavis to create national sovereignty and autonomy was their struggle against the foreign influence. Reza Shah abolished the nineteenth century Europeans learned impunities and took the right to print money from the Shahi Bank of England and give it to National Bank, which was established recently. He also took the operation of telegraph from India and Europe Telegraph Company and operation of customs duty collection from Belgian officials. Moreover, foreigners particularly missionaries were banned from management of schools, buying land, and traveling to the provinces without police permission. However, Reza Shah was not successful in reducing the

influence of British-Iranian Oil Company (Abrahamian, 1982, p: 179). Mohammad Reza Shah also was trying to increase the independence of Iran as seen in declaring of "independent national policy". In this context, notwithstanding of the strong dependence on the West Block, particularly America, he tried to improve relations with the Soviet Union in mid 1960s as well. However America's influence on foreign and domestic affairs of Iran was so high that according to some analysts the relationship between the two countries had been changed to subordination (Azghandi, 2000, pp: 268).

In terms of external security threats Pahlavi's governments that had defined their identity as patron of ancient Iranian values and protector of West bloc, had suffered conflict with Arab states that promotes pan-Arabism and called for lordship of Arabs in the region and also with the Soviet Union and the East Bloc countries. Since 1960 Shah opened some negotiations with the Soviet Union to eliminate misunderstandings that led to improvement of mutual relations. With regional Arab states, although the Shah tried to have friendly communication but Iran's try to get military hegemony in the region caused sensitivity and pessimism to these countries (Chubin, 1974, p: 174). Although in the short term, this resulted in withdrawal and reduction of their claims, but continuance of their disputes (particularly Iraq and the UAE) to Iran after the Iranian government's weakening (at the beginning of the Islamic Revolution) suggests that problems and their hostility with Iran during the Shah had not been elevated, but as the fire remains under the ashes. So from the perspective of constructivism the Pahlavi government though has largely been successful in maintaining the territorial integrity of Iran, but their method of expansion of national sovereignty and the fight against security threats has not been effective.

### **National cohesion and integration**

In the process of nation-state building, solidarity and social integration in the framework of nation conception is so important. In fact in the system within a country is so essential that all loyalties in the form of a single national identity around certain values, symbols, myths and common interests lead into a unified center. In order to achieve social cohesion and pervasive national identity, nationalism plays an effective role (Cottam, 1964, p:319). Citizenship and its correlate rights are considered as essential components of social cohesion and successful nation building (Ghavam and Zargar, Ibid, p: 30). So checking the status of national cohesion and integration during Pahlavi is required by the study of circumstances and

characteristics of the national identity, citizenship and nationalism in that period. National identity in the perspective of constructivists forms and determines through shared beliefs and in intersubjective shape. However, as mentioned in the previous section, Pahlavi governments attempted to create a single national identity based on Farsi language and culture without proper interaction with nation and consideration of culture, language, and customs of various Iranian ethnic groups. Some other components of this policy were emphasis on a kind of romantic nationalism and pride recalling with reluctance to current traditions and norms and Islamic culture (Katuzian, 1995, p: 147).

In this period some actions in context of citizenship rights took place but since the Pahlavi government's power structure was vertical and imperious between people and rulers and sanctity had been considered as the main feature of political power, these movements did not seek substantial results. In historical perspective, Iranian society before the formation of the modern state, like many less developed countries, had undergone the fragmentation and this was seen especially in the political pattern of the country. There has existed Tyranny and oppression on the one hand and periods of lack of concentration, insecurity, murder, rape and destroy on the other hand (Katouzian, 1981, p: 100). In such circumstances, with the formation of Pahlavi's modern state, selection of tyranny rather than insecurity and order instead of anarchy by the social forces has been a conscious and compulsive choice. Such a choice didn't blur blood, family and tribe ties and Iranian society that has been defined its identity upon ethnic relationships and identity, released its basic rights to have the security (Bashiriye, 2004, p: 75). Regarding the nationalism, though Pahlavi government was the first modern state who wanted to create unified national identity based on nationalist ideas, however, its 'Iranization' policy was relying on tribe wiping and violent rejection of tribal identities, thus increased political tensions between central government and tribes living in the country. On the other hand nationalism is based on national sovereignty and national will, while none of the Pahlavis had that position (Sariolghalam, 2008, p: 73). So from the constructivism perspective, Pahlavi governments were not successful on national solidarity and integrity and were not able to create real solidarity between the Iranian nation through the introduction of a common identity, establishing civil rights in practice and provocation of nationalist sentiments.

### Political development and stability

Another index of successful nation-state building is achievement rate of a state unite in reaching to the desirable level of political stability, which requires economic development, successful institution building and having efficient military institutions. On modernization and economic development during the Pahlavis one can say that Reza Shah Government was the first Iranian government designed a plan (although elementary and incomplete) for transformation of economy and economic development. So the national government in Iran was formed at time that country in terms of infrastructure, support and economic conditions was in the turmoil situation and this could suspend process of nation-state building. Pahlavi state opened the ways of country access to various sources of capital and technology in the world via maintenance and development of peaceful relations with all countries, with few exceptions (Hunter, 1993, p: 205) and through this, achieved many improvements in the economic field.

A major difference between Reza Shah and his son was the amount of oil influence. During Reza Shah, oil did not have major role in the economy and politics; state main income was through the tax and until 1937, oil revenues constituted approximately 13 percent of total government revenues. This situation gradually changed and in 1913 to 1949, oil revenues made up nearly 42 percent of government revenues. At this time the Iranian government had rentier features (Mahdavy, 1970, p: 37). Therefore, although Iran during the Pahlavi government had high level of economic growth but this growth wasn't the result of appropriate long-term economic programs. In fact, historical and structural roots of government, overcome of tyranny and weaknesses of society and community groups from intellectuals to middle-class, was the reason of intellectual and political elite's captivity in their ideology, subjectivity and interests. So this class wasn't able to remove subjective and objective obstacles facing reform and creating a powerful central government by obligation to transforming social system and developing country. Central government weakness, deep social crisis and foreign intervention created a permanent instability rather than a sustainable stability that is essential for the development, and so a vicious circle of crisis, the failed government officials' reforms, weakness of central government, social protest movements, the failed revolutions and foreign invasion continued. (Fesharaki, 1985, p: 117)

In terms of institution building, although beginning of this process goes back to Qajar era (like establishment of House) but it was Reza Shah who

completed the failed efforts of reformers like Abbas Mirza<sup>4</sup> and Amir Kabir<sup>5</sup>, found a "new order" and strengthened central and national government. Iran's new education system was founded in 1925-1930. Administrative system reforms and extension by increasing the number of employees and hiring graduates of schools and educational institutions and paying wages and benefits in accordance with European models began in this era. (Katouzian, Ibid, p: 154). However, by taking advantage of army and royal authority Reza Shah reserved the political system totally in his hands. In parliamentary elections Shah determined the election results and composition of each parliament (Abrahamian, Ibid, p :172) Thus, although Pahlavi government had many improvements in institution building, but the nature of absolute power of government and distance between the king and the nation made these institutions nonfunctional. Thus in many cases institutions such as the constitution, political parties, parliament and ... just looked like the institutions in West but practically were under the Shah's control and operation.

From constructivist view, Pahlavi Governments in the military area have not had much success. Creation of national army and armed forces in Iran returns to modern state formation during the first Pahlavi. Army was formed from combination of available forces and in particular Ghazagh forces. The foreign officers were excluded, and Military College was founded in 1300. Decrease in tribe chiefs' power; dissolving tribal and nomadic organizations and settlement of tribes were the first military actions. Throughout the 1930s Reza Shah was concerned about survival of his regime. So in this era Security Management and Detective Police which is also remembered as the political police, were the only organizations responsible for intelligence and security around the country. Following the overthrow of Reza Shah, his

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4- Abbas Mirza (1789-1833) was a Qajar crown prince of Persia. He developed a reputation as a military commander during wars with Russia and the Ottoman Empire, as an early modernizer of Persia's armed forces and institutions.

<sup>5</sup>-Amir Kabir (1807 - 1852) was chief minister to Naser Al-Din Shah Qajar (Shah of Persia) for the first three years of his reign and one of the most capable and innovative figures to appear in the whole Qajar period.

intelligence and security system with a history of abuse and violation of fundamental rights had quickly turned to weakness and until several years later, wasn't established any efficient intelligence and security organization in the country. Weakness and ineffectiveness of the security and military forces were not confined to the domestic arena. Iranian Army wasn't able to respond to the Allied invasion of Iran and Reza Shah's forced resignation in 1941 and so involved in dispersal and collapse (Halliday, 1978, p: 348).

Shah also essentially strengthened intelligence and security system to stabilize and strengthen its position against the opposition. Most important action in this context was the establishment of SAVAK at 1956. SAVAK with the guidance and supervision of General Nassiri (Old companion of shah) censored the media, selected applicants for government jobs and used any manner, including torture, to destroy the opposition (New York Times, News week, 1972). So in homeland security field, Pahlavi state saw itself as dominant power on nation and due to mistrust to people and relying on foreign powers, no collation happened between state and nation (as the most ideal form of nation-state building). This had severely reduced legitimacy of internal security intelligence agencies (especially SAVAK) and had raised government need to foreign governments including Israel's security assistance. On the other hand, the parallel security and intelligence organizations, weakness of this organization, insufficient training in police and military forces and lack of the necessary forces in internal security led to system inefficiency (Fardoost, 1391, p: 486).

In terms of preserving the independence and territorial integrity, fighting against foreign influence became more serious than before the formation of modern state. Shah was graduated from the Iranian Officer University and had the dream of dominating the Persian Gulf, but Iranian Army did not have the organization and equipment necessary to achieve this goal. So, shah attempted to reorganize, equip and change makeup of the army units (Chubin, 1977, p: 197). British government's decision announced on January 16, 1968 based on the withdrawal of its troops from the Persian Gulf region until 1971 and also the Nixon Doctrine declaration convinced governments of Britain and America to give the British role in the region to Shah. Hence, between 1965 and 1970 Iranian government purchased Total 1/6 \$ billion arms, and in 1971 to 1972, ordered another 1 \$ billion (Sobhani, 1989, p: 38). Shah tried to increase Iran's military position among regional

countries to the highest possible level and largely achieved this goal.

Perhaps this issue from a realistic approach enhanced Iran's power and its regional and global status but as mentioned, constructivists don't limit power in the material dimension and consider results of countries' militaristic policies. Also in constructivism perspective, military development especially the form that is the same as the West is a security dilemma for developing countries because it is considered to cause damage to other vital parts of the country due to lack of adequate and appropriate financial resources. However, the Shah of Iran tried to create a military power equal to Western developed countries. Costs of making such an army threatened development of many other parts (such as economic development, improvement of ethnic minorities' situation to attract them to central government...). As the result, while national security was increased in some areas, insecurity and instability in many other areas was intensified.

Now with the cognition of the strengths and weaknesses of the nation-state building process during the Pahlavi era I have tried to analyze the situation in the Islamic Republic. This study also helps to better understand this country's policies and orientation.

### **Nation-state building in Islamic Republic of Iran Territorial Satiation**

When Islamic Revolution occurred, both factors causing the lack of neighbors' aggression to the territorial integrity of Iran during the Pahlavi were removed. It meant that in the material dimensions of power, many major contracts to buy arms and military were canceled and due to the weakness and inexperience of new government and ethnic riots, the potential to use the facilities properly also did not exist. In terms of normative dimension, Islamic Republic has been isolated in the international arena because of Islamism, mistrust to and the absence in international institutions, revisionist policies and seeking revolution export. So Iraq introduces the leading cause (or excuse) to attack Iran as a preventive measure within the principle of self-defense (Chapin Metz, 1987). This ultimately made the longest contemporary war between the two countries. Finally, after eight years of war, UN Resolution 598 was accepted by the two sides (Weinruch, 1990, p: 49). Iraq again recognized Algeria contract and withdrawal of Iraqi forces from the Iranian territory began in august, 1990.

Now after the fall of Saddam Hussein and new government coming to power in Iraq and also isolation of Iran because of its nuclear case and international community sanctions, some Iraqi officials have hinted

to possibility of ignoring the Algeria treaty. (World of Economy, 12/26/2007). So it seems that Iranian border problems with its Arab neighbor still remain unsolvable and creating cross-border conflicts and tensions between the two countries is not unexpected.

Iran and UAE dispute over the three islands again resumed in October 1992 following some Iranian efforts to exert sovereignty over the islands. Accordingly United Arab Emirates, in a memorandum to the United Nations emphasized on the claim of possession over islands (Wellman and Frasco, 2010). This problem continues over these years, as Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan the UAE foreign minister in May 2010 on a journey to Palestine compared Iran and the Zionist regime and claimed: "Iran has occupied large and small Tonb and also Abu Musa islands and this is an issue that can develop tension between Iran and all neighboring Arab countries (Reuters, 2010). Nevertheless Iran sees itself as legal ruler of three islands and wants to solve the problem through dialogue between the parties (Iran Rejects UAE's Claims March 11 2010).

At the northern borders of Iran the Soviet collapse and replacement of five new countries, eliminated all previous agreements and created a variety of differences between the Caspian littoral states on the legal regime of this lake. Islamic Republic in relation to its share in the lake used dialogue and bargained with the Caspian region countries. However, especially in meeting of coastal countries' representatives in Kazakhstan, Amati (Mojtahedzade, Piruz (2002)), a trilateral agreement between Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan was signed about the division of the northern parts of the Caspian. Thus, status of 64 percent of the Caspian Sea waters was identified and these countries showed no respect for Iran's comments and proposals (Mojtahed-Zadeh, Hafeznia, 2007).

Another point regarding the territorial satiation is government approach to ethnic issues. In constructivist perspective, Pahlavis wrong policies toward ethnic groups (coercion, violence and repression) to absorb them in the national government provoked these groups to seek autonomy. Islamic Revolution occurrence and the weak of central government provided such a context. Although Ayatollah Khomeini was emphasizing on the doctrine of unity of all Iranian ethnic groups and pro equality features of Islam, but with the collapse of central political power structure, centrifugal and divergent ethnic trends were increased and fledgling revolutionary government faced with numerous separatist ethnic uprisings. Thus in the early years of revolution the group PEJAK (Free Life Party of Kurdistan) among Kurds, the Jundallah (Soldiers of

God) among Baluchs, two groups of 'separatist Pan Arab' and 'pro-federalism Pan Arab' among Arabs and 'Turkmen People political movement' " among Turkmens were raised (research reports on khozestan's Arabs ethnic group..., 1999). In such circumstances the government, despite some ideological and doctrinal considerations resorted to military or paramilitary means to impose the rule in ethnic areas. After controlling the rise of ethnic insurgencies, Islamic Republic changed policy in these areas to creating integration, eradication of poverty, doing construction activities and developing communication (Hajiani, 2001, p: 126).

In connection with legislation, first and most important step in dealing with ethnic issues is the Article 15 in constitution; this principle, recognizes ethnic diversity in the country and emphasizes the advantage of regional and tribal languages in the press Media and teaching of ethnic literature in schools (in addition to Persian). It also draws on Article 19 that the Iranian people from every ethnic group and tribe, regardless of color, race and language are the same in front of law (the Islamic Republic of Iran's constitution.) However, although the Islamic Republic tried to attract them to central government by recognizing their language and customs and giving official job to them, but some acts of discrimination, led to increasing distance between ethnic groups and central government (Hassan, 2008)

Regarding security threats, changing in norms, values and identity of the Iran's government after the revolution transformed its type of attitude and definition of the enemy. Accordingly, the Islamic Republic of Iran as a great regional power knows regional (Israel) and the global actors (America) as original and serious sources of threats to its security. From the perspective of the Islamic Republic of Iran, U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Persian Gulf and attempting to penetrate Central Asia and Caucasus with NATO enlargement to the East and U.S. efforts to transmit it into Middle East and also sanctions which America unilaterally or in accompany with the UN Security Council imposed against Iran have a serious impact on security of the country (Sullivan, Summer 2002, p: 185). America and Israel's constant threats about attacking Iran's nuclear facilities, is another security consideration in this country. Isolation also is considered as an important security threat in constructivism theory since it limits the possibility of communication and understanding between the states. In this regard the United States and Israel are trying to introduce Iran as the "axis of evil" and "supporting terrorism" in the international arena to change public opinion toward Iran and put it in the international isolation. These

efforts tightened Iran blockade, and Iran's foreign relations with other countries limited and became more difficult and, therefore, the economy, domestic welfare and Sustainable development were damaged. All these economic detriments at constructivism view are considered security threats.

### **National Cohesion and Integration**

About the second indicator of the nation-state building, Islamic Republic of Iran is facing with the problem of lack of consensus on the unified definitions of national identity and nationalism. In Iran due to specific political culture and comportment, the consensus and unity between elites very rarely occurs. Standpoint to the identity and nationalism is no exception (Ramazni, 1995, p: 49). Discords between elites has caused that Iran remain stranded in defining its identity as Ummah (Muslim community) of Islam, or the nation of Iran.

While the Pahlavi governments, regardless of realities of Iranian society (diversity of ethnic groups and religious orientation) were trying to make a single national identity based on Persian language and culture, the Islamic Republic (especially in the first decade) was attempting to limit definition of Iranian national identity only to the Islamic Ummah and Shiite religion that was never accepted by Iranian society and elites. Thus defining the identity and goals of Islamic Republic of Iran, still over 33 years of the revelation, it has not found a constant and steady shape and in all administration has been changed and transformed. Likewise granting citizenship rights to the community although has been emphasized in the constitution and politicians words but in practice has not yet made significant progress. Continues changes in government policies and lack of firm decision to guaranty civil rights have caused frustration and disappointment among many elites and also their immigration to developed countries or familiar problem of Brain Drain (Taheri, 2005, p: 32).

### **Political stability**

Last index of nation-state building that in relation to Iran should be addressed is the political stability or quality and efficiency of the institution-building, economic development and country's military institutions. Although in the Islamic Republic had provided the democratic institutions and mechanisms for the circulation of elites and the peaceful transfer of power, and the election had performed on a regular basis, but due to the political culture of ruling, desertion of law and absolutism, this institutions do not have the necessary functions (Azghandi, 1997, pp: 407,404) therefore,

the circulation of elites is performed in a faulty way and just among about 60 people, in form of change in posts (Zarifinia, 1999, p: 38). However, institutions' performance had been increased rather than the Pahlavi period and the supreme leader that is considered the spiritual and political guide of the Iranian government, indirectly elected by the people and according to constitution is same as other people in front of law (Islamic Republic of Iran's constitution, article 107).

On economic development, according to the share of oil revenues in total public revenues after the revolution, Islamic Republic of Iran can also be called a rentier state. (Badii, 2004, p: 11) After the Islamic Revolution until the end of war with Iraq (1979-1989) because of the critical situation of revolution and war, the economy was largely in the hands of the state so the private sector as a parcel of the civil society, had no major role. With the presidency of Rafsanjani, for the first time, Iran's rentier state in accepting Structural Adjustment Program, considered the role of civil society (private sector) and accepted to limit the framework of its activities due to the necessity of structural reforms in the economy, (Tsui,2011:14). In constructivism theory the condition of economic development is associated with the type of each country's identity. In other words, by every identity one cannot achieve economic development. Accordingly, during the presidency of Rafsanjani and then Khatami, the Islamic Republic success to define its identity as a peace loving country who wants to expand relations with other countries, led to some expansion in country's relations with the international community, particularly countries in the region and the European Union and also making harmony between foreign policy and its economic development needs (Haji Yousefi, 1999, p: 51).

But after the rise of the ninth government, Ahmadinejad's statements, programs and acts indicated kind of recess and intensification of hostility with the West and regional tensions. This matter has strengthened prospects of all-round economic sanctions against Iran instead of improving economic relations with the global economy. The severe introversion, suspicion to foreign investment and globalization, depending on the closed economy and intensified supportive control and politicizing of economic relations with other countries and the international community, are the primary aspects of Ahmadinejad's government economic policy. Thus, although the Islamic Republic through oil revenues and some medium-term plans somewhat has experienced economic growth, but due to lack of elites consensus in presenting and implementing of



long-term economic strategies and programs, has suffered from inefficiency (Chart 1).

In context of military power and ability to stabilize domestic authority and foreign independence is important that the Islamic Republic because of its norms and values, and also the definition of his identity as an Islamic revisionist state has always faced with various sanctions included military ones. These limitations since the early years of the Islamic Revolution led to extensive efforts in order to reach autonomy in military industries. Thus today Iran is capable to produce various missiles, fighters, tanks, armored personnel carriers, floats and other military equipment (Burgess, 2010:85). Unlike Pahlavis, the Islamic Republic has not engaged in regional arms races and is allocating lower parts of the country's budget to purchase military equipments (www.cia.gov, 2011). As shown in Table 2, Iran is one of the last countries in the Middle East in terms of military budget per GDP. Nevertheless, it seems that Islamic Republic of Iran, with its current military capabilities had little problem to preserve its independence and territorial integrity at regional level, but at the global level and in front of big powers like US or West allied powers there is no certainty.

In terms of homeland security and stability, in the Disciplinary Force, Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution (often called Revolutionary Guards) and in some cases Basij<sup>6</sup> are responsible for providing domestic order and stability (www.cia.gov, 2011). In spite of the recent riots to protest the 2009 presidential election results in some cities and operations performed by Kurd terrorist groups and also Jundallah in some parts of the country, the Islamic Republic of Iran has stability and its military forces are able to maintain domestic order and security.

## Conclusion

In this paper the process of nation-state building in Iran (1925-2010) was studied in the constructivism theoretical framework and through some of the main indicators of the nation-state building. In this cognitive system, definition of the state's goals and means to achieve them largely depend on state's interpretations of their identities. The results

indicated that, Pahlavis were defining Iranian government's identity as the regenerative of ancient Iranian emperor's grandeur, acceptor of the existing international order and the partner of West block. However, since the entrance of Iran to the modern state system was delayed and the process of nation-state building was not the result of endogenous development in social and cultural construction, this process didn't help integrating the conflicting social identities and organizing basic social gaps in an interactive and institutionalized form. So the first Pahlavi government was forced to implement three phase of state building (stabilizing the borders, national cohesion and integration and political stability) through dictatorship and mass mobilization. Thus the government in both domestic and foreign arena appears as an absolute power that could make decisions independently of the needs and requirements of the society. Pahlavi's government was successful in maintaining the territorial integrity of Iran by employing military power and alignment with international norms, but its too much reliance on shah's absolute power, militarism and repression prevented the decisive resolution of disputes with neighbors and underlying threats. Pahlavis have not been successful in creating national cohesion and integrity and also in producing real solidarity between the Iranian nation through the introduction of a common identity, to establish civil rights and provoking nationalist sentiments in them. Relying on oil revenues for economic development and the use of oil money for the being independent from community, imitative and surface development of political and social institutions and then converting them to organizations under the ordinance of king and also developing military power in price of other sectors' development, are most important problems of Pahlavis in political stability context.

Occurrence of revolution and regime change in Iran transformed the definition of the national government but even among the different post-revolution administration, consensus and coordination on definition of government identity do not exist. In fact, Islamic Republic of Iran defines its identity as a part of Islamic Ummah who wants to support the world's poor, liberation movements, and revolutions but in opposition also tries to do functions of national government.

It appears that Islamic Republic, despite the idealistic slogans and presenting a different identity of the state, diligently pursues the development of the national state in Iran and like Pahlavi dynasty, seeks to strengthen and rebuild nation-state building process. In this regard, this regime who knows itself as the metropolis of the Muslim world decisively

<sup>6</sup> - is a paramilitary volunteer militia established in 1979 by order of the Islamic Revolution's leader Ayatollah Khomeini. The force consists of young Iranians who've volunteered, often in exchange for official benefits.

stands against aggression of Muslim neighbors (Iraq and the United Arab Emirates) and refuses to grant an inch of Iranian soil to them. Iranian government also tries to link all ethnic groups by different tools, including military power and giving facilities to create and extend national sovereignty in all parts of the country. In terms of national cohesion and integration, Islamic Republic of Iran, although facing lack of consensus on definition of national identity and nationalism, but records shows that wherever the territorial integrity of Iran has been threatened, government resorting to both the Islamic and Iranian identity has attempted to protect the country against aggressors. In granting citizenship rights to the society despite of the constitution's admission and politicians' speeches, there are many problems and obstacles.

Altogether it appears that Islamic Republic, despite deep hostility to Pahlavi regime, continued the nation-state building process in its way and in accordance to its norms. Based on constructivism point of view major mistakes of Pahlavis in this area were immoderate reliance on military power instead of communication, dialog and interaction with adversaries, autocracy and emphasize on absolute power of king in domestic issues and excessive dependence on foreign powers rather than the proximity to the nation. Islamic Republic does not have military ambitions such as pahlavis, its relation with nation has been expanded and denies any ties to the East or West; however, the ordinance morality and the desertion from law was continuing, so its opposition to some international norms and institutions, lack of interaction and dialogue with opponents and slogans such as the export of revolution, patronage of liberation movements led to neglecting and failing in elimination of security threats, and political and economic development of country. Hence it seems that regarding strengths and weaknesses of the Pahlavi regime and the Islamic Republic of Iran in the state-nation building, still much remains to complete this project.

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**Note:**

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