

IRAN STUDY TOUR REPORT

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Cover image: Phillip Huntley

This Report was written and compiled by Amelia Ekkel (intern) from information and reflections provided by Study Tour members.



The Report on Hospitality was written by Kristine Cant (Study Tour member).

The Reports on Economy and Water (with Ross Stewart) were written by Patrick Moore (Study Tour Leader).



12 June, 2018

Dyason House
Melbourne

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- Ambassador Dr S. R. Mousavi, Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, IPIS

Sharif University

- Mr Hossein Shahbaz, Director of International Affairs, Urmia Lake Restoration Program, Sharif University
- Professor Masoud Tajrishy, Department of Civil Engineering, Sharif University

Ravand Institute for Economic and International Studies

- Ambassador Kia Tabatabaee, Director of the Ravand Institute for Economic and International Studies

University of Tehran

- Dr Nasrin Mosaffa, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Tehran
- Professor Ali Sadah, University of Tehran
- Associate Professor Homeira Moshirzadeh, Department of International Relations, University of Tehran

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- Ms Natalya Wells, Policy and Political Affairs Officer, ICRC, Canberra

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INTRODUCTION

Following our Study Tour to Iran in April 2017, it was important to venture there again in order to establish stronger links with Iran and institutions there. Perhaps just as importantly, we needed to understand better the problems being created by President Trump's opposition to the Nuclear Deal (The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – JCPOA).

We were invited to Iran by the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS). The prime objective of our Study Tour was to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with IPIS to enable us to form stronger links with Iran and its institutions. This will come about in a number of ways including MOUs with other institutions and the preparation of joint papers on matters of mutual interest such as trade and investment, refugees and migration, tourism, the environment, arts and culture, banking and the economy.



Signing the MOU with the Institute of Political and International Studies

“Our lengthy meeting with IPIS was frank and informative...Although we were of course seen as an ally of the US, we made clear, and they appeared to accept, that Australia had its own views on Iran that did not always necessarily coincide with those of the US.”

Jim Short

We firstly met with our Embassy where Ambassador Ian Biggs gave us a warm welcome and updated us on Iran-Australian relations. We were then hosted by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) where we were briefed on their very worthwhile work. This was followed by a meeting with Operation Mercy which receives funding from the Australian Government to implement development and welfare programs. At the meeting with Sharif University we were fully briefed on the water problems Iran faces and in particular Lake Urmia.

Our meeting with the Faculty of Law at the University of Tehran was most fruitful in that it provides a way forward to a closer working relationship between academics in Iran and Australia. Ambassador Tabatabaee of the Ravand Institute was most helpful in describing the challenges Iran faces, particularly with the Sanctions and the JCPOA.

“If travel is most rewarding when it totally surprises you, then Iran is one of the most rewarding destinations on this planet.”

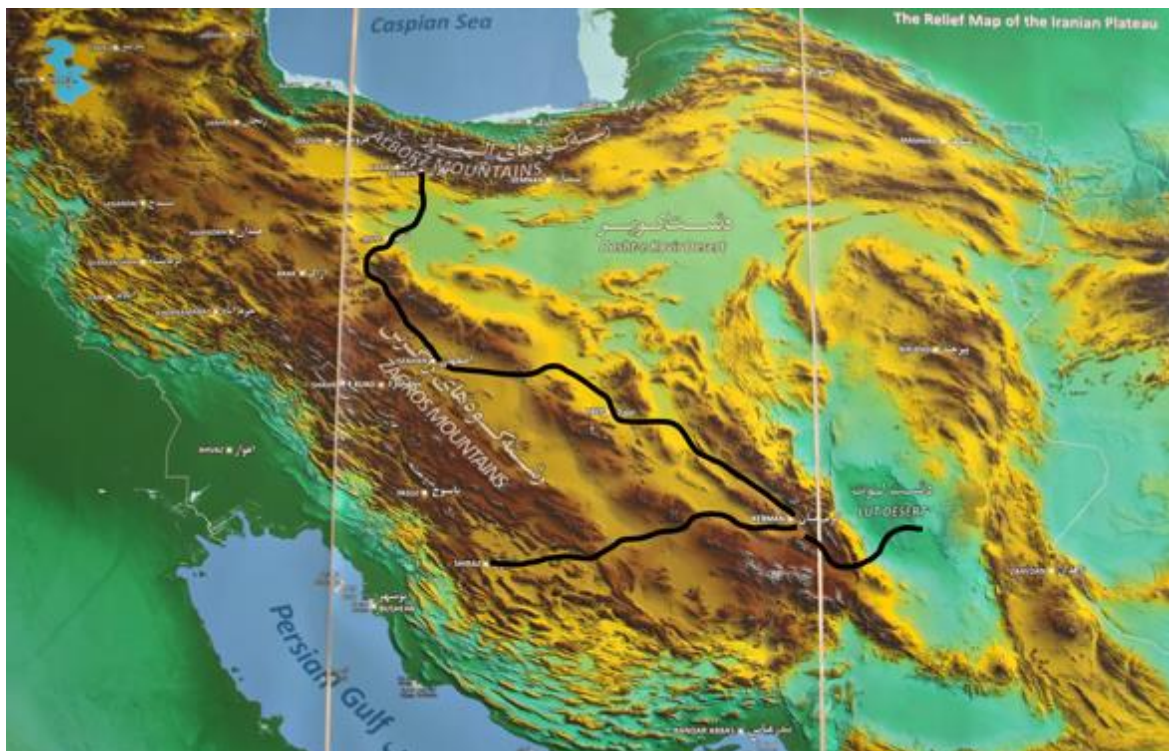
Kristine Cant

Following our meetings in Tehran, Study Tour Members visited a number of UNESCO World Heritage sites in Iran. We had an excellent guide who spoke to us about life in Iran, its history, religion, the economy and many other matters. Thus we were able to understand better Iran's place in the Middle East.



Some members of the 2018 Iran Study Tour at Meybod Ice House

Our Study Tour members numbered eighteen. Of the eighteen, seven were born overseas in Austria, England, Germany (2), Indonesia, Thailand and the US. They came from the ACT, New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. Our age group ranged from 22 to 87, making for very interesting and diverse perspectives on our meetings and on the history, culture and values in Iran.



AIIA route through Iran

ORGANISATIONS

The following is a summary of the different organisations the AIIAV met with in Tehran.

Institute for Political and International Studies

The Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) sponsored the business visa for the AIIAV to Iran. It is a foreign policy think tank. It is affiliated with the Foreign Ministry of Iran and is a subdivision of the Center for International Research and Education (CIRE). It hosts roundtable events both in Iran and around the world, including with SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute). CIRE also archives an extensive array of documents including the Treaty of Gulistan



Dr Mousavi, Dr Sajjadpour and Mr Patrick Moore

between Persia and Russia partitioning Central Asia as well as books and manuscripts taken from the US Embassy such as the book *Iran: Making of US Policy, 1977-1980* (Ebbott & McEniry, 2017).

Urmia Lake Restoration Program, Sharif University of Technology

The Urmia Lake Restoration Program is carried out under the auspices of Sharif University of Technology. In collaboration with Tabriz University and Urmia University, along with professionals from other universities, national specialised organisations, and international experts, it aims to resolve the water management of Lake Urmia in north-east Iran. The ten-year program includes three phases:



AIIA Study Tour members at Sharif University

- i) stabilising the current status;
- ii) restoration; and
- iii) sustainable restoration.

(Ebbott & McEniry, 2017).

Ravand Institute for Economic and International Studies

The Ravand Institute is a fully independent not-for-profit think tank committed to promoting the international standing of Iran. It provides strategic international business advice to local businessmen and entrepreneurs and has close ties to banking and financial institutions in Iran.



It also runs several important events including an international conference with the European Union on trade and investment. The Ravand Institute publishes its economic magazine Economic Trend online in Farsi (Ebbott & McEniry, 2017).

Ambassador Kia Tabatabaee of the Ravand Institute with Mr Patrick Moore

Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Tehran

Founded over 150 years ago, the University of Tehran is the oldest academic institution in Iran. With approximately 3000 students, the Faculty of Law and Political Science provides both undergraduate and postgraduate opportunities in a variety of fields including criminal law, international law, and religious law. It is also considered the most prestigious academic institution in the country.

It has extensive research centres including the Centre for Graduate Studies, the Centre for Comparative Islamic Law and the Institute for Public Law. The faculty has educated many prominent Iranian figures including President Rouhani (Ebbott & McEniry, 2017).



Meeting at the University of Tehran with Professor Ali Sadah, Associate Professor Homeira Moshirzadeh, and Dr Nasrin Mosaffa (left to right)

International Committee of the Red Cross

The ICRC is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. Established in 1863, the ICRC



Meeting with ICRC, led by Florence Gillette, Head of Mission in Iran

operates worldwide, helping people affected by conflict and armed violence and promoting the laws that protect victims of war.

In Iran, the ICRC promotes international humanitarian law (IHL) and acts on behalf of people affected by conflict in Iran and in Afghanistan. In particular, the ICRC has expertise in searching for and repatriating the bodies of soldiers killed in the Iran-Iraq War, and reconnecting

migrants' links with their family members. The ICRC promotes awareness of the risks of explosive remnants of war, particularly in the eastern provinces, and provides healthcare assistance to refugees from Afghanistan. Iran is also part of the ICRC's global dialogue on humanitarian values common to Islam and IHL, hosting an international conference last year on Islamic law and IHL.

Operation Mercy

Operation Mercy is an international relief and development organization. It serves the poor and marginalized through an array of community development and humanitarian aid projects.

Operation Mercy began working in Qazvin, Iran, in response to an earthquake disaster in 2002. Since that time Iran has welcomed Operation Mercy's development and relief projects. Today it works amongst disadvantaged Afghan refugees in Tehran developing life skills.



Mr Amir Zardouz (left), Deputy Director of Operation Mercy and Mr William Lodder (right), Second Secretary, Australian Embassy in Iran

DOMESTIC POLITICS

The AIIA delegation arrived in Iran almost one year after incumbent president, Hassan Rouhani, decisively won the national elections to secure another 4-year term. In May 2017, Rouhani overcame rival Ebrahim Raisi as President. Rouhani ran on an anti-extremism platform, promising human rights, civil liberties, rational economic management and an end to Iran's isolation from the world. This election platform won him 57 percent of the vote against Raisi's 38.5 percent.



Hassan Rouhani (left) and Ebrahim Raisi (right)

Iranians have been increasingly moving toward reformist politics for some time. Even though the president has limited powers and Rouhani will be restricted in his reform agenda by the Supreme Leader, Iranians continue to support reform efforts. Indeed, Iranian politics expert Laura Secor argues that “the patience and persistence of Iranian civic culture is the longer story of Iran's revolution, and one of the longest stories in the Middle East”. The Iranian people no longer expect rapid change from an autocratic regime which has fiercely protected itself to ensure its survival. They are prepared to play the long game. Twenty years ago, many Iranian citizens bought into the extravagant promises made by President Mohammad Khatami. When these promises fell away, the disillusioned public turned to the more conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for leadership. Disappointed yet again, voters are turning back to the kind of reformist policies espoused by Rouhani. This time, according to Laura Secor, they do not expect sudden change but are prepared to wait.

Rouhani first swept to victory in 2013, on the election platform of reducing Iran's international isolation. The successful negotiation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with

“Returning to Iran in April 2018, I felt again premonitions of instability. Tensions today arise more from external sources (conflicts with the US, Israel, Saudi Arabia, the UN...) than in 1975. However, the internal rumblings can be felt. There is definitely a sense that Iran is at a crossroads. The pressure cooker is bubbling away...”

Jennifer Osborne

the then President Barack Obama, was seen by many Iranians as a strong step towards ending this isolation. However, with President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the US from the JCPOA on 8 May 2018, Rouhani's initial achievement has been undermined.

Hamish Leslie of the Australian Embassy in Iran alerted AIIA members to the tensions inherent in the Iranian governance system. On the one hand, there are the elected positions of President, the Assembly of Experts and the Parliament. On the other hand, there are the unelected positions, the head of which is the Supreme Leader. The Supreme Leader appoints the Guardian Council which then determines which candidates can stand for direct election.

The circular nature of this system means that power is centralised in the hands of the Supreme Leader and the bodies under his jurisdiction: the Revolutionary Guard, the National Security Council and the Guardian Council. Any moves by the Parliament to limit the powers of the unelected positions can be blocked by the Guardian Council, which is appointed by the Supreme Leader.



Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei
SOURCE: The Telegraph.

This tension between the elected and unelected positions can be seen in their respective responses to protests which were held in various parts of Iran in December 2017. The AIIA members were informed that these protests arose from citizens' frustration at the state of the economy and unemployment levels. President Rouhani characterised the protests as expressions of legitimate grievances, whereas the Supreme Leader described them as evidence of Iran's "enemies" acting to undermine the regime. Hamish Leslie pointed to the divide between elected and unelected bodies as the underlying cause of the Iranian government's sometimes "schismatic" behaviour.

In Iran, local citizens often approached AIIA delegates on the street and in communal squares for discussion. There was a strong sense from the local people of Tehran, Isfahan, and Shiraz that Iran had been treated unfairly by the international community and that they wished to reconnect with the wider world. For these proud people, isolation from the international political arena was a source of both resentment and sadness.

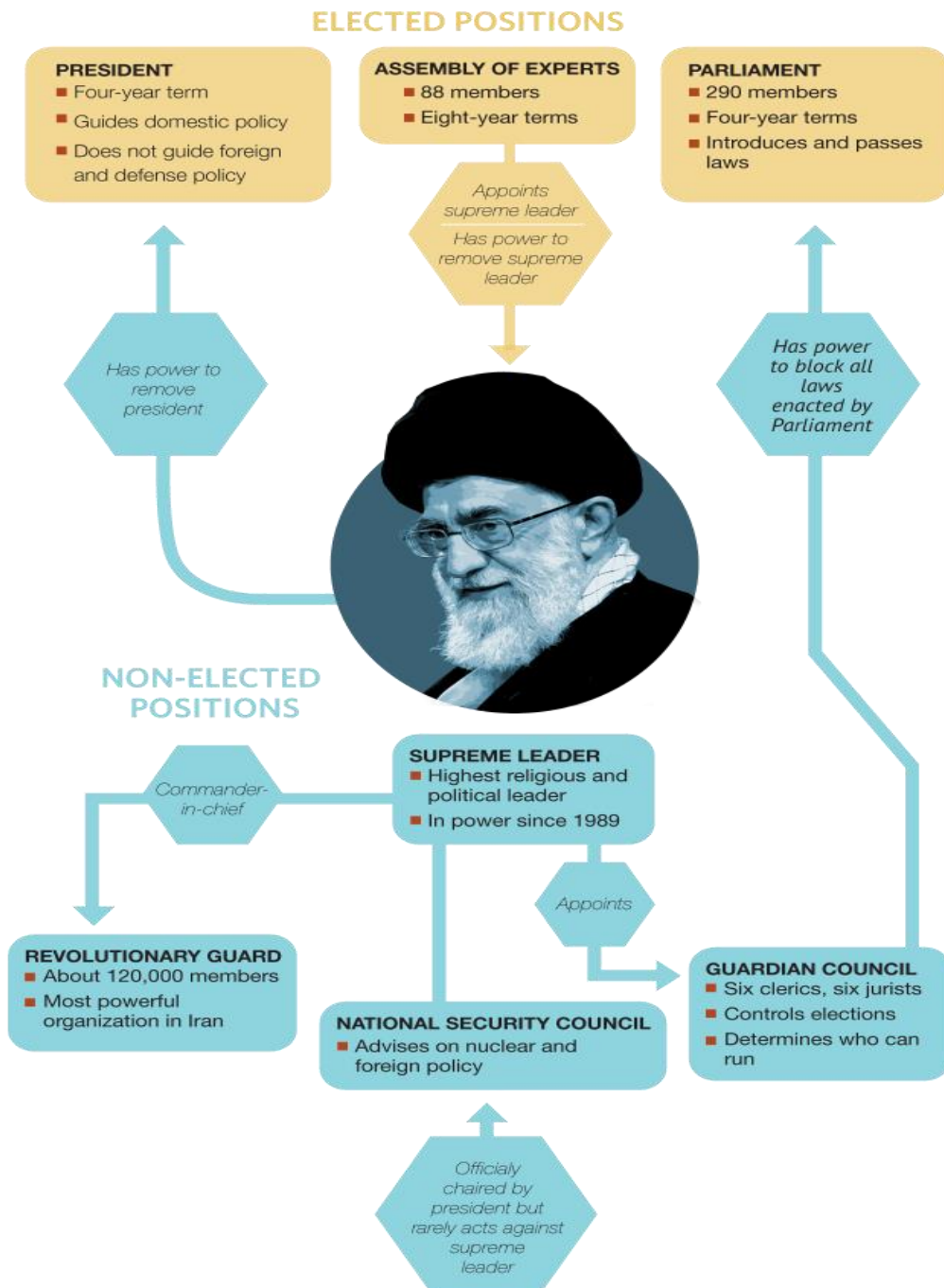
Moreover, there was quiet speculation over the identity of the future Supreme Leader. Ayatollah Khamenei's ailing health makes it likely that Iranian leaders are preparing themselves for a successor. If Khamenei dies or leaves office, the Assembly of Experts, elected by the Iranian people for eight year terms, will appoint the new Supreme Leader. The Assembly is divided into three main factions: moderates, hard-liners, and independents. Currently, moderates appear to hold sway in the Assembly, but the chairman, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati is one of the Assembly's most prominent hardliners.

Ebrahim Raisi is an emerging potential candidate for Supreme Leader. When Ayatollah Khamenei selected him to head Iran's wealthiest religious foundation, Astan Quds Razavi, Ebrahim Raisi was relatively unknown. Following the 2017 presidential elections, however, he has become a household name. He has since maintained a public profile, which suggests an intention to secure the position of Supreme Leader. Indeed, Raisi was named by some Iranians who spoke with the AIIA as a likely contender.

Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi is another possible candidate. Shahroudi is regarded as a moderate figure and is a former judiciary chief. However, as an older man at age 68, he may be overlooked by the Assembly of Experts in an effort to secure long-term stability by appointing a younger Supreme Leader. Shahroudi failed to win the role of chairman on the Assembly of Experts in 2016, securing just 13 votes.

Sadeq Larijani is another strong contender. Larijani is 55 years old and is the current head of the judiciary. He has taken a hard-line approach by openly challenging reformist politicians. Many believe that Larijani is seeking the support and approval of the Revolutionary Guard, but it seems that he lacks support amongst the Iranian populace.

IRAN'S POLITICAL SYSTEM:



ECONOMY

History

During the time of the Shah, Iran was very close to the West. Its economy since the Revolution has grown on the back of strong population growth. Over the 39 years since the Revolution, population has grown from a little under 40 million to over 80 million; a growth rate of just under 2.0% per annum. Economic growth has been around 4.0% per annum. Economic growth since the Revolution has been predominantly based on the export revenue from hydrocarbons. Having said that, it has developed its manufacturing industry behind the sanctions wall. It has the second largest copper mine in the World. It has a well-educated population.

Current situation

The United Nations ranks Iran's GDP as 25th in the World (Australia is ranked 12th). But its GDP per capita does not rank in the first 100. Economic freedom in Iran is rated "mostly" unfree.

Iran's GINI coefficient is around 40%. Australia's is around 35%. The GINI coefficient illustrates the evenness or unevenness of distribution of income and wealth in a country. An index of 1 means that one person in the country has all the wealth! A coefficient of zero means that there is perfect distribution of equality. Given the influence of the Revolutionary Guard in Iran and its control, both direct and indirect, of organisations, such a coefficient must be questioned.



Ambassador Kia Tabatabaee of the Ravand Institute for Economic and International Studies with Mr Patrick Moore

Trade and Investment

Iran's economy may be likened to the Curate's Egg: good in parts. It is very hard to give a clear picture of the Iranian Economy given the opinions of so many.

Sanctions are like a slowly tightening noose around the economic neck of Iran. Iran feels aggrieved by the continuation of the sanctions and the threat of harsher sanctions. In particular, the most damaging sanction is the US refusal to deal with any bank which deals with Iran. Thus the investment and trade flows are hampered.

"Sanctions are killing the Economy."

Tehran Carpet Seller

Despite this, we see the French, Germans and Koreans entering the Iranian car market. Renault (France) has announced a \$US 775 million joint venture with Iran to produce cars. Iran took over the Renault car plant after the Revolution and has been producing "Renaults" ever since, despite not being licensed to do so! In the event that the sanctions are not reversed, the Iranian economy

"We can obtain all the spare parts for aircraft we need."

Iranian aircraft maintenance engineer

is likely to grow at around 4% per annum for the next decade according to the Economist Intelligence Unit.

Banking and Finance

In 2012 Iran's Central Bank set the Rial to \$US exchange rate at 12,260. During the 2017 Study Tour, we saw the exchange rate around 35,000. The unofficial rate on our arrival in Tehran was nearer 50,000 although there are press reports of it reaching 60,000. Then in Mid-April, the Central Bank set the rate at 42,000 Rial to the \$US. Mind you that is the buying rate for Rials! This move follows raids on some money changers earlier this year when the Government needed \$US. Part of the reason may be that there is over \$US 30 billion trapped in banks in Japan alone which is owed to Iran for purchases of oil.

Banking regulation seems to be weak. Many Iranians do not trust the banks; but are compelled to put their savings in them because of the lack of an alternative. One day there will be the reckoning!

Anyone found selling the dollar at rates higher than 42,000 rials "will be dealt with severely" by judicial authorities and the police.

First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri

On the day of our departure the banks would not change funds! Iran is now trading with the €uro and not the \$US. It is trading in Rials with Turkey. The unofficial rate in May 2018 is now around 75,000 to the \$US 1.00

History is an important guide. When governments interfere with financial flows and exchange rates, it is just a matter of time before reality bites. One commentator in April suggested that the Rial could

trade at 70,000 to the \$US if it were freed up.

Another commented that his savings in banks could be unsafe, but asked "What is the alternative?" Some people would rather own an empty apartment in Tehran than money in the bank. There is the unfortunate likelihood that Iran could see a blow-out in inflation in the near future.

Outlook

The economy is travelling along at a reasonable growth rate, but like the Curate's egg, it is good only in parts. Oil revenues are strong with Iran light selling at \$US64.34 in April 2018. Car imports are down by 8% due to increased domestic production. Unemployment is 10% - 12.5% with youth unemployment reportedly up to double that. Those are the numbers. But in talking with traders and Bazaari, a different picture emerges. Sales are down, stocks are increasing and tourism is down. President Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA will exacerbate this.

"My personal feeling is that the economy is much worse than it is generally assumed. It reminds me on the situation of East Germany and USSR before the fall of the wall."

Hartmut Hofmann

We saw many partly completed buildings during our Study Tour. The likelihood of their being completed seems to be remote. There are no cranes beside them and some of the steel is open to the elements. More than likely, they have been abandoned. The banking industry is so weak that they cannot afford the risk of providing funds for the completion of these buildings. It is hard to believe all the “official” figures.

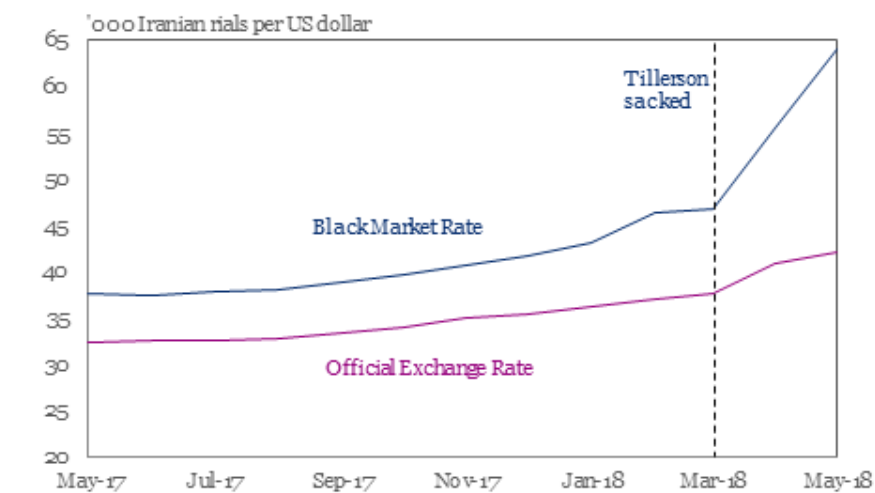
Overall, we all had the feeling that the population in general is relaxed, happy and people are enjoying life; and I mean this positively. We were told that the family is the uniting factor in Iranian society, where everybody is looked after. As long as one doesn't get involved in politics the people have enough liberty. The government seems to loosen personal restrictions. The people are not satisfied with the overall situation. But, we were told that even 90 % are watching foreign TV stations and know how to overcome the restriction of access to the internet. Everybody wants a reform, but nobody wants to have a revolution with the chaos and the unpredictable outcome seen in some neighbouring countries.

Perhaps we will let the index of the Tehran Stock Exchange tell us what investors think of the future of the Iranian Economy.



Above: the Tehran Stock Exchange Index over the past 2 years.

The Iranian currency in the parallel market has depreciated by 50% since March



Source: Haver, IIF

SOCIETY

Iranian society is deeply embedded in its Persian heritage. Many AIIA members were struck



Iranians socialising in Naqsh-e Jahan Square, Isfahan

by the fact that Iranians are very proud of their Persian identity and are eager to share this heritage with visitors to their country. This cultural heritage, however, now must accommodate the often strict Islamic laws imposed by Iran's theocratic regime. Under current laws, Iranian men and women are forbidden from close contact outside of marriage and alcohol is banned. Buses and trains are sex-segregated, as are certain public places such as beaches

and swimming pools. In 2017, the Iranian government lifted a ban on women viewing men's sporting events. However men are still forbidden from viewing women's sporting events.

Yet in Isfahan's expansive Imam Square, many young men and women could be seen mixing together. There were young men playing soccer together and even some young women playing ball games in the square. It was apparent that many people, particularly the young, resented the restrictive laws and pushed them to their limits. Moreover, we were informed that many Iranians produce their own home-brewed alcohol to consume in their homes.

Music

Music is an important part of Persian culture. Today it has an ambivalent standing under the Islamic regime. Women are forbidden from singing solo in public. Additionally, Western music was banned from state radio and television stations in 2005. Yet music is woven into Persian culture and wherever the Study Tour group travelled we were accompanied by Persian melodies and even some Western tunes.



A traditional performance at the Isfahan Music Museum

In Isfahan, some members of the AIIA visited the Music Museum. The delegates discovered ancient instruments which have heavily influenced modern instruments today, such as the *kamancheh* and the *donan*. AIIA members were treated to a live performance by museum staff on traditional Persian instruments.

Literature

In Shiraz the AIIA delegates visited the tomb of celebrated 14th century Persian poet, Hafez. According to Zahra, our guide, the 700-year-old poems are a staple feature in every Iranian family's home. AIIA members learnt that there has been some debate over Hafez's tomb and the surrounding gardens. For some Muslims, Hafez's poetry, which talks freely of wine, love, and music is antithetical to Islam. For most Iranian Muslims, however, these passages can be interpreted as symbolic. Indeed, Hafez's work is considered to be closely aligned with Islamic thought.

Architecture

Throughout the tour, the AIIA visited a number of outstanding examples of Persian architecture. The group visited UNESCO-listed palaces, mosques, bridges, historical homes, and gardens. The ancient architectural innovation apparent across Iran was astounding. Particularly impressive was the way in which Persian architects have built homes to adapt to the local climate. In Meybod, the AIIA visited an ancient ice house. This domed structure used a process of evaporative cooling to store ice in summer in the desert. Persian architects had already refined this process by 400 AD.

The AIIA delegation also visited historical homes in Kashan. These homes were designed to adjust to the changing temperatures in the harsh desert environment. They were built with each of the four sides exposed to optimal sunlight or shade according to the season. The four wings wrap around an internal courtyard, featuring a large pool surrounded by tall, shady trees. Often such houses would include wind towers. These tall structures are designed to catch the wind and channel it down onto an interior pool. The cooled wind would then circulate throughout the house, keeping the temperatures down in summer.



A traditional Caravanserai along the ancient Silk Road

The group also stayed the night in the traditional Zein-o-din 'caravanserai'. This old inn dates back to the 16th century and is located along the ancient Silk Road. The caravanserai is one of 999 such inns which were built during the reign of Shah Abbas I to provide facilities for travellers and merchants.

Hospitality Redefined: By Kristine Cant

If travel is most rewarding when it totally surprises you, then Iran is one of the most rewarding destinations on this planet. Iran is a complex country of contrasts between politics and people, but it is ordinary people that define what it is to be Iranian. And to be Iranian is to redefine hospitality for guests to their country. Wherever you travel ordinary people extend the hand of friendship and in many cases invite you home to meet their families and experience the hospitality and food they are famous for. English is spoken by large numbers of Iranians due to the high level of education many women and men have.



Nothing breaks down barriers like sharing tea, food and conversation

Iran, however, is a country with an image problem in the West. For many of us fed a diet of western, negative media reporting, Iran is portrayed as a country of fundamentalist fanatics therefore, by default, a dangerous and dark place. Do not go there! Nothing, however, could be further from the truth and for any visitor with an open and enquiring mind the question then becomes: *How could I have got this so wrong?*

Beyond the stereotype, Iran is a country desperate to be seen for what is truly is: an open, honest, welcoming and sophisticated country with a deep cultural and historical legacy. Iranians are proud of their heritage and one thing that sets Iran apart from other Middle Eastern countries is its Persian identity, preserved in traditions, language and many rich art forms, including literature. As an Iranian friend once told me: "We are Persians in blood and soul and this cannot be changed."

A delightful encounter with a family while waiting for the study group:

"Please, would you come home and stay with us?"

K: "Thank you but I'm here with a study group"

"Then maybe next time?"

(Then the obligatory photos)



Hospitality, as an integral part of Iranian culture for centuries, is embedded also in the philosophy of many international relief and development organisations working in Iran with one of the biggest humanitarian issues of our times: Afghan refugees fleeing war and violence. And it is here that we see the responsibility this country takes seriously as both government and organisations work in dealing with those so affected by war. It redefines hospitality.

No one leaves Iran without enduring memories of what hospitality truly means. An Iranian proverb sums this up:

"Every man goes down to his death bearing in his hands only that which he has given away."

...such is the heart of the Iranian people.

RELIGION

History

Iran is an Islamic theocracy and a predominantly Shia Muslim country. The Islamic conquest of Persia between 637 and 651AD instated Islam as the main religion in Iran. In Iran, 89% of the population is Shia Muslim and 10% Sunni Muslim. The remaining 1% is comprised of those adhering to other religions, such as Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism. As the AIIA Study Tour participants discovered throughout the tour, it is important to understand the historical divisions between Shia and Sunni Muslims. The rift in Islam between Shias and Sunnis occurred early in Islam's history. After the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632AD, the Muslim community was divided over who was to be his successor. Many followers of Muhammad argued that the Muslim community ought to determine his successor. However, a minority of Muslims believed that someone from his family should assume leadership. These Muslims supported Ali who was the wife of Fatimah, Muhammad's daughter. The larger group, the Sunnis, chose a man named Abu Bakr as Muhammad's successor. Eventually Ali was chosen as the fourth caliph, but not before violent conflict had broken out between Shias and Sunnis. Ali died in battle in 661AD in what is today known as Iraq, causing a rift in the Muslim community. This division was exacerbated in 680 AD when Hussein, Ali's son, was killed in a battle against Sunnis at Karbala. This day is commemorated every year by Shia Muslims as a day of mourning. This violent rift in Islam and the struggle for power in the Islamic world remain key factors in understanding on-going conflicts.



Loftolla Mosque, Naqsh-e Jahan Square, Isfahan

The Twelvers are the largest and most influential group within Shiism today. In Iran, the 1979 Revolution ushered in a theocracy which adheres to Twelver Shiism teachings. Twelvers, as the name suggests, consider there to be twelve Imams. Along with other branches of Shiism, they acknowledge Ali as the first Imam and Hussein the third. However, the most important Imam for Twelvers is the Twelfth Imam. They believe

that in the 10th Century, the Twelfth Imam went into occultation. They also believe that the Twelfth Imam will return on the day of judgement as the Saviour. The teachings of the twelve Imams are considered to be infallible by many Shia Muslims. This is another difference between Shia and Sunni interpretations of Islam. In Iran, the AIIA were informed that many Sunnis consider the shrines of the Imams to be idolatry worship. Moreover, Imams are not revered by Sunni Muslims in the way they are by Shia Muslims.

According to some Shia Iranians, Sunni Muslims have a stricter interpretation of the Qur'an, leaving little room for contextual understandings and modern interpretations. In contrast, Shia Muslims may interpret the Qur'an according to the historical context.



Free Friendly Talks at the Imam Mosque in Isfahan

Today, non-Muslims, namely Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and Baha'is comprise less than one percent of the population. Currently, 300 000 – 350 000 Christians, fewer than 50 000 Jews, and approximately 30 000 Zoroastrians reside in Iran.

Christianity predates Islam in Iran. The main Christian denomination in Iran is the Armenian Apostolic Church, followed by the Assyrian Church, the Roman Catholic Church and other denominations. Today, the largest population of Christians live in Tehran, followed by Isfahan, and then Tabriz. As was highlighted in the 2017 AIIA Iran Study Tour Report, the Iranian government recognises all Christian minorities and their rights, including production and sale of non-halal foods, wine production for communion, and special family law (Ebbott & McEniry, 2017). In Isfahan, the AIIA Study Tour group visited the Vank Cathedral. This Cathedral features beautiful painted frescos which portray biblical tales. The group also visited the museum beside the Cathedral. The museum displays various artefacts, books, and paintings relating to the Armenian Genocide.

Zoroastrianism was founded by the Prophet Zoroaster approximately 3500 years ago in ancient Iran. Zoroastrianism was the main religion in Iran prior to the Islamic conquest. Today, there are approximately 30 000 Zoroastrians in Iran. Zoroastrians believe in one God, *Ahura Mazda* (the Wise Lord). They also believe that Ahura Mazda is the creator of the universe and is a compassionate and just God. Many Zoroastrian sites still exist in Iran today. In Yazd, the AIIA visited the Towers of Silence, where Zoroastrians formerly laid their dead to rest. Zoroastrians believe that once the soul has left the body, the body is defiled. As they believe in the purity of the elements, they would not allow the earth to be contaminated by corpses. Therefore, Zoroastrians adhered to a unique burial custom. The corpses were arranged at the top of the tower in concentric circles, allowing the bodies to be eaten by scavenger birds. The bones of the dead were then placed in the centre of the pit at the top of the tower. In recent times, however, the Iranian government banned this form

of burial on grounds of public hygiene. Today, Iranian Zoroastrians line the graves of their dead with cement so as not to defile the ground. The AIIA also visited the Fire Temple in Yazd. This Temple enshrines an eternal flame, known as the 'Atash Behram' or 'Fire of Victory' which dates back to 470AD.

Current situation

The 1979 Revolution ushered in an Islamic regime which codified elements of Sharia law in the Iranian legal system. All citizens, regardless of their religious affiliation, must now abide by these laws, such as the compulsory wearing of the hijab for women. However, it was apparent to AIIA delegates that the Iranian people did not necessarily desire a theocracy after the revolution. Certainly there had been a strong impetus for change, but a strict Islamic regime was not what was



AIIA members visit the Towers of Silence

intended by many Iranians. Iran today is ostensibly is a theocracy which seems to be in contradiction with the beliefs and activities of many of its citizens.

This has discouraged many Iranians away from religion and we find there is a growing number of agnostics in Iran. It appears that there is a high (unofficial) rate of conversion to Christianity, placing it amongst the highest conversion rates in the world. Whilst those who promote Christianity in public are persecuted, those who practise Christianity privately are largely left to their own devices.

Under the current Islamic regime, citizens are, at least in theory, free to practice the religion of their choice. Each religious minority is guaranteed a seat in parliament, as stipulated in Iran's constitution.

However, whilst conversion to Islam is accepted and encouraged, it is illegal to convert to a different religion once one has identified as Muslim. This is considered apostasy and harsh penalties can apply. Apostasy is punishable by death in certain cases, however the crime has never been codified in law. Furthermore, under current laws, Muslim women are forbidden from marrying non-Muslim men. Yet Muslim men may marry non-Muslim women.

“Our visit to the shrine in Shiraz shows the syncretic element of Islam in Iran. For strict Muslims, they could not worship other idols but Allah. Some Muslims visit the shrine to pay respect to descendants of the Prophet, others oppose such practice on this ground.”

Rungrawee Chalermripinyorat

Issues

Whilst the rights of some religious minorities in Iran are enshrined in the constitution, the Baha'is do not enjoy this same recognition. Since the 1979 Revolution, the Baha'is in Iran have been widely discriminated against. Such discrimination is undertaken on the basis that the Baha'i faith is not an Abrahamic or monotheistic religion. According to the Baha'i International Community, during the first decade following the revolution, more than 200 Baha'is were killed and "hundreds more were tortured or imprisoned". There are also strict limits on the Baha'is' right to assemble and worship.

Despite President Rouhani's election promises to end religious discrimination, the Baha'is continue to suffer persecution. Religious freedom in Iran evidently has its limits.

Looking to the future

Religious freedom in the Islamic Republic of Iran is evidently difficult to achieve so long as Islamic practice is enforced through the legal code. The continued persecution of the Baha'is may be alleviated by affording this religious minority the same rights as Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians. However, it seems unlikely that Rouhani will take this measure, as there is not currently the political will in Iran to do so. Even if he did attempt to make changes, it is likely the Supreme Leader would block any efforts to reform in this area.



AIIA Study Tour participant Amelia in front of the Imam Mosque, Isfahan

EDUCATION

Context

Iran is a highly educated country, particularly in relation to other countries at a similar level of development. Following reforms in 2012, the mandatory length of education is now eight years. According to the US Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook, 86.8% of Iranians over the age of fifteen can read and write, with education expenditures constituting 3.4% of the GDP. Moreover, public schooling across Iran is free.

Demand for tertiary education is extraordinarily high especially in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. In Iran, nearly 70% of university graduates in STEM are women - a higher percentage than in any other country. Last year the University of Tehran received 100 000 applications for only 4000 places across the university.

Current situation

In Tehran, the AIIA met with Dr Nasrin Mosaffa and her colleagues, Professor Ali Sadah and Associate Professor Homeira Moshirzadeh, of the University of Tehran. The university sits between positions 600 and 800 in world rankings, and sits in 139th position in Asian university rankings. The Centre for Graduate International Studies at the University of Tehran focuses on developing an in-depth understanding of international affairs. To this end, the university



AIIAV President Mr Patrick Moore with Dr Nasrin Mosaffa of the University of Tehran

centre holds workshops and seminars with other universities in Iran and around the world.

Dr Mosaffa and Professor Sadah explained that the University of Tehran has existing international exchange programs with universities in France as well as with universities in China. At the University of Tehran, international students comprise only 2% of the total 59,000 students. However, they are seeking to expand their exchange program to countries including Australia. Indeed, in 2014 the Chancellor of the University of Tehran, Mr Mahmoud Nili Ahmadabadi, announced that the university aims to extend this exchange program to include some of the world's most prestigious universities.

A number of different opportunities for engagement were raised in the meeting. Dr Mosaffa and Professor Sadah articulated their desire to conduct joint research projects between the AIIA and the University of Tehran in the field of international relations. Other suggestions included inviting Australian professors to Iran for sabbaticals or to lead discussions and training sessions in areas of their expertise, and vice versa. Moreover, the University of Tehran alongside the AIIA could set up short courses for students to be held in Iran in areas of mutual concern. The University of Tehran currently runs

a summer school in conjunction with German universities. A similar program could be set up with Australian institutions, as the University of Tehran already runs courses in English.

The AIIA also met with Mr Hossein Shahbaz of Sharif University of Technology. Mr Shahbaz is Director of International Affairs of the Urmia Lake Restoration Program. This program aims to restore Iran's largest salt water lake. It is a joint project between Sharif University and the University of Melbourne, alongside Tabriz University and Urmia University. President Rouhani elevated the profile of the Urmia Lake Restoration Program in 2013, bringing it directly under his office. This has afforded the Program considerable control over water security in Iran. Indeed Mr Shahbaz explained that the division has control over dam-building near Lake Urmia.



Professor Hossein Shahbaz and Mr Patrick Moore

“The relationship between the University of Melbourne and the relevant Iranian water experts and authorities is valuable for both sides. We (AIIA) should do what we can to encourage the University to maintain and strengthen this relationship.”
Jim Short

Many AIIA members were inspired by the potential for joint ventures between Iranian and Australian universities to achieve real change in such a vital area. The US withdrawal from the JCPOA, however, will disrupt this potential.

Issues

There are some obstacles to establishing student exchange programs between Iranian and Australian universities. As the Australian Embassy highlighted, there are currently 9000 cases of Iranians overstaying their visas in Australia. This may make it more difficult for Iranian students to obtain visas for study at an Australian institution. However, greater interactions between Australian and Iranian education institutions will assist in facilitating reciprocal education programs.

Furthermore, there are concerns over the ‘brain drain’ that is occurring in Iran. The Iranian government makes considerable investments in its students, only for them to seek employment overseas. In 2015-2016, more than 4.3 million students were enrolled in Iran's tertiary education system, comprising 7.4% of country's adult population (aged 19 and above). However, with youth unemployment at approximately 26% according to the World Bank, post-university job prospects are limited. Ambassador Rezvani of IPIS pointed to the international sanctions against Iran as the root cause of this issue. In his view, whilst brain drain is a symptom of many other developing countries, this problem is exacerbated in Iran by the sanctions which are crippling the economy and shrinking the job market.

WOMEN

The position of women in Iranian society has evolved under various regimes. Reza Shah Pahlavi, who reigned from 1925 until 1941, banned women from wearing the hijab. This decision to stamp out the hijab can be understood in the broader context of Atatürk's influence in this era. As the first President of Turkey, Atatürk launched a program of social and political reforms based on Western legal codes and dress in an effort to modernise the country. His reforms were widely lauded as promoting tolerance and equality in Turkey. Against this backdrop, in the decades prior to the 1979 Revolution, Iranian women largely wore Western-style clothing.

However, the 1979 Revolution radically changed the situation for women in Iran. When, on 8 March 1979, the law enforcing the hijab came into force, more than 100 000 women took to the streets in protest. This had no immediate effect on the law. Instead, over the early years of the Revolution, dress codes became even more restrictive. Today, women are legally required to wear the hijab and to wear loose-fitting clothing. Undercover morality police patrol the streets, reprimanding those who does not obey the dress code.

Current situation

A local Imam in Isfahan explained that according to his interpretation of Islam, women have three different types of beauty. Firstly, there is a woman's 'social beauty', incorporating her face, hands and feet which may be displayed to the world. Secondly, there is her 'family beauty', which includes from her head to her shoulders, as well as her arms and calves. Finally, there is her 'private beauty', meaning her whole body, which is reserved only for her husband. The Imam also explained that the reason men do not need to cover their bodies is because men are not considered beautiful. Rather, beauty lies with women and their private beauty should be kept for the husband alone in order to preserve familial and societal stability.



Schoolgirls in their uniforms in Shiraz

However, there are signs of change with regard to this conservative understanding of women's dress code. Whereas in the years following the 1979 Revolution the morality police

strictly controlled women's clothing, today many women wear the hijab in a far more relaxed manner. Many AIIA members were told by locals that they felt reform will come slowly but surely.



Women relaxing in Isfahan

Prior to the departure of the tour, the Mayor of Tehran announced that his police would no longer be enforcing the wearing of the hijab, leaving this issue to the morality police alone. During the time of the Study Tour it was reported that an Iranian woman in her mid-20s was slapped and wrestled to the ground by a female morality police officer. This incident sparked outrage from international media sources, but also from within Iran itself. Masoumeh Ebtekar, Iran's vice-president for women's affairs, categorically condemned the actions of the police, describing their response as "anti-religious". It seems that violent enforcement of dress codes is no longer accepted by the Iranian public or by some members of the government.

Behaviour

There are certain limitations on women's behaviour in public in Iran. Women are forbidden from singing solo in public and from dancing. Close contact between unmarried men and women is prohibited. Whilst the public image is that women always wear the hijab and dress and act 'appropriately' when strangers come to their home, it is increasingly believed this does not always occur.

"The practice of covering women in hot and uncomfortable garments not only disempowers the women, but is insulting to the men."

Eve Mahlab

On International Women's Day the Australian Embassy in Iran hosted a group of women singing for an all-female audience to highlight the positive contribution women can make to the arts. This event was also intended to emphasise the high importance Australia places on women's rights.

Education of women

According to IPIS, women comprise 54-56% of university students. According to Dr Mosaffa of the University of Tehran, these figures point to a significant issue that Iranian society will have to face in the future. Namely, the imposition of unwanted restrictions on highly educated young women in relationships with lesser educated men. This, she believes, will pose a significant challenge to male-female relationships in the future.

Employment

Ambassador Darabi of IPIS claimed that the number of women in government is continuously increasing. Indeed, women have relatively strong employment prospects in the governmental sector, but are adversely affected by underemployment in other sectors. According to Dr Mosaffa, such underemployment will cause societal tensions as highly educated young women are increasingly frustrated in their attempts to secure jobs in fields normally dominated by men. However, there have been promising signs of change for female employment in recent times. For instance, Iran Air appointed its first female CEO, Ms Farzaneh Sharafbafi, on 11 July 2017.

Religion

As a local Imam in Isfahan explained, women may become Imams. However, whilst clerical men can be distinguished by their dress, one cannot distinguish a female imam from any other woman in public in this way. Additionally, in Islam there are four highly respected women: Mary, mother of Jesus; Khadijah, wife of Muhammad; Fatima, daughter of Muhammad; and Asiya, wife of Pharaoh.



Alla women in chadors

Changes

It appears that the situation of women in Iran is gradually changing in their favour. However, there seems to be little impetus from the government to significantly change policies regarding women's rights. As Ambassador Bikdeli of IPIS argued, the harsh sanctions under which Iran currently lives, result in a restricted governmental budget. It appeared Bikdeli was implying that with limited funds, the government was not prioritising women's rights. Ambassador Tabatabaee of the Ravand Institute portrayed a different picture. He argued that Iran has become more tolerant with regard to monitoring women's clothing, saying that "the feminist movement is alive and kicking in Iran". As women continue to gain footholds within the government, perhaps they will agitate for change and introduce further policies regarding women's rights.

"After forty years of rigid control by a theocratic government I discerned a sense of resignation that change will only happen slowly...Government can be capricious and harsh, it is clear."

David Lamb

WATER

*'There is water in the jug, but still we wander around with parched lips.'
'The power of water comes from its source.'*

- Persian proverbs.

History of Water Resources in Iran

From 3,000 years ago the Persians were regarded as better water engineers than even the Romans. Who else could build underground qanats and create such beautiful gardens in such desert country? Persians for years have recognised the great importance of using water efficiently whether it be in its use or in its transport.

The problem

Iran has both direct and indirect severe water problems. Water consumption for household, industrial and agricultural use exceeds the amount of water coming from rainwater, snowmelt, natural springs and recycling (of which there is not much).

Dry lakes and dry river beds give rise to sand and dust storms. In cases like Lake Urmia where the parts of the lakebed are exposed, salt is exposed and salt storms can devastate agricultural lands for miles and miles. Lake Urmia is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, as well as a RAMSAR

“Leadership at the highest political [level] is required urgently to avoid a water shortage catastrophe across the country.”

Ross Stewart

site and a national park. A large salt storm from Lake Urmia can almost reach Tehran with the North Westerly winds. According to Mr Hossein Shahbaz of Sharif University, Lake Urmia’s destruction is 70% due to human factors, such as river-damming and well-digging, and 30% due to broader changes in the climate.

There is a lack of integrated water management plans and catchment water management plans which has led to a failing water system. Due to this lack of water management, there are more than 300 000 illegal wells in Iran. These are slowly draining the water table.

Current Policies

Beautiful parks and gardens and tree-lined streets are the hallmark of Iran. UNESCO has awarded eight Persian Gardens World Heritage Site status. Its cities have many trees. However, we see pure water being used to irrigate the many trees in Iran’s cities and outskirts. These trees could, if the will and the effort were made, be watered with recycled water. In part, politicians at all levels can be

“There is a distinct lack of political will to solve the water problem, despite Rouhani’s support.”

Patrick Moore

blamed. Building a dam and promising free or almost free water for agricultural use wins votes. Irrigation for agriculture is widespread (otherwise there would be no food because of inadequate rainfall). Rainfall around Isfahan is 200 mm per annum. Tehran's is twice that! Irrigation is used unwisely and much good water is wasted.



Zayandeh Roud in Isfahan April 2017

There are no policies which are enforced to reverse Iran's water problems. It seems that matters can only get worse. Upstream dams and the diversion of water to Qom and Kashan for household and agricultural purposes, exacerbated by low rainfall have caused this.



Zayandeh Roud in Isfahan April 2018

SOLUTIONS:

Desalinisation

Desalinisation is not an option for Iran. The dry cities of Tehran, Kashan, Isfahan, Yazd, Kerman, Shiraz and their environs, with a combined population of over 25 million people, are all over 1,000 metres above sea level.

Better Irrigation

Open water irrigation systems suffer two problems in Iran. Evaporation is one and the other is the illegal pumping of water from these canals which incur low or nil penalties from the courts. Water is carried in pipes over the desert from Isfahan as far as Yazd which is 300 km away.

Recycling

There is no current policy to significantly increase the production of recycled water. None of Kashan, Isfahan, Shiraz, Yazd, Tehran and Kerman have recycled water, even for parks and gardens.

In many cities we were asked to put used lavatory paper into bins and not the toilet. Apparently, the sewerage system cannot handle toilet paper. Recycling is a long way off.

It was amazing that in some hotels, our towels were changed daily. There is no formal encouragement by water authorities to reduce the use of water.

Pricing water

Water is provided at below cost to users. For instance, the basis for charging for water in the Lake Urmia basin does nothing to conserve water. Farmers pay a percentage of their crop for water usage, irrespective of the amount used.

Water management systems

Water management systems for transferring water from one catchment area to another do not take into account current climatic conditions and assumes that the rainfall is “normal”. This results in a terrible misallocation of resources. Important questions must be posed regarding the effect of the Inter-basin Water Transfer on environmental issues such as impact on aquatic life, particularly on fish and shrimp. Building dams in many cases turns out to be the problem, not the solution! Ahmadinejad built a dam on the Karun and when it flooded over the countryside, it was over salty soil; a complete disaster.



Iran needs a mighty Tigris. The only Tigris available is efficient usage and recycling.

MIGRATION AND REFUGEES

In April, the AIIA delegation met with Amir Zardouz, Deputy Director of Operation Mercy and William Lodder, Second Secretary, Australian Embassy in Iran. Operation Mercy is an international relief and development organisation which works to serve the poor and marginalised. They facilitate an array of community development projects and humanitarian aid programs. Today, Operation Mercy works amongst disadvantaged Afghan refugees in Tehran, alongside other relief programs. The Australian Embassy supports Operation Mercy in its projects across Iran.

Current situation

Statistics on migrants and refugees in Iran are varied and lack consensus. However, the ICRC claims that there are approximately 3.6 million migrants residing in Iran. Of these, nearly 1 million are registered refugees: a figure recognised by the United Nations. A further 2 million are undocumented migrants. The remaining 600 000 are Afghan migrants who can obtain Iranian visas. Afghan migration shows little sign of ending. Indeed, Mr Zardouz estimates that every day 1000 people cross over into Iran. Children of refugees born in the country are also afforded UN-recognised refugee status, but are granted fewer rights than Iranian citizens.

“These organisations are currently working in Iran to confront one of the biggest humanitarian issues of our times: Afghan refugees fleeing war and violence. This is a responsibility this country takes seriously, with both government and organisations working to deal with those affected by war.”

Kristine Cant

Refugees in Iran generally reside in poor areas of the major cities in Iran and take on underpaid manual labour. They also are vulnerable to xenophobia. Although, according to William Lodder, the prevalence of xenophobia is declining in Iran, this issue continues to impact upon the Afghan population.



Mr Amir Zardouz, Deputy Director of Operation Mercy and Mr William Lodder, Second Secretary of the Australian Embassy in Iran

The Iranian government is concerned that young migrants and refugees, facing isolation, xenophobia and unemployment, will be susceptible to radicalisation. The government has responded to these concerns by implementing a comprehensive education plan. According to legislation passed in May 2015, all refugee children now have access to free education.

Both the Australian Embassy and Operation Mercy spoke highly of the Iranian government’s efforts to accommodate vast numbers of refugees and migrants. However, in 2012 the government

NATIONAL SECURITY

History

The Persian Empire, since its establishment over 2,500 years ago, has ceded territory to all its present neighbours as well as parts of North Africa and Europe.

Iran's population at the time of the Revolution was about 20 million. It is now 82 million. It is predominantly self-reliant on food. About ninety percent of its population is Shia. The Middle East is predominantly Sunni. There are some significant



SOURCE: Wikipedia

differences between Shia and Sunni Muslims. The major one being that the Sunnis treat the words of the Hadith and the Qur'an as immutable whereas the Shia treat both books as capable of being interpreted in response to current mores, technology and society. For instance the Sunnis abide by the inheritance rule that male heirs receive double that of female heirs. Shias can give it 50:50.

Iran is determined to maintain and ensure the continuity of Shia Muslim. Shias are about 20% of the World's Muslim population.

The Current Situation

It's all about living with the bomb. Iran's neighbours have the bomb. Iran is concerned that Russia cannot expand Northwards, Eastwards or Westwards. So the only possible expansion for Russia is to the South; towards Iran. That makes Iran feel uncomfortable. Israel's bombs and superior air force make Iran nervous. Israel has in the past made pre-emptive strikes against Iran targets. The US sixth Fleet is in the Persian Gulf with the bomb. Near neighbours, Pakistan and India also have the bomb.

Threats

- Iran, for some obscure reason, continues with its talk of driving Israel into the sea.
- The US (and others) talk about the need for regime change in Iran.

This just keeps the tension going in the Middle East and shows no sign of ceasing. This tension certainly keeps the US Military Industrial complex busy.

Allies, Friends and Others

Iran has no allies of any military significance. That is likely to remain so. It will continue to try to exert influence, particularly where it has Shia allies.

Before the withdrawal of the US from the JCPOA, Iran was set on a path of becoming a stronger country, both economically and politically. It has political allies in Syria and Lebanon. It has a good capability of producing conventional weapons. It has about 350 fighter aircraft; about half that of Israel. However, many of Iran's fighters are ageing. In any conventional warfare, Iran would be completely outgunned. Thus as Iran cannot extend its own military influence, it does so with "forward defence" in Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. Nevertheless, it is difficult to understand to what advantage.

The JCPOA



President Trump has been against the JCPOA from the beginning of his presidency. SOURCE: Foreign Policy

"In July 2015, the world held its breath to see if the deal would come to fruition. Upon the AIIA's arrival in Iran in April 2018, the world was holding its breath amidst a looming certification deadline that could herald the JCPOA's destruction."

Bethany Evans

The JCPOA has not been kind to Iran. After the initial benefits, it finds that it has bought a pig in a poke. Some say the same of the Revolution in that what was promised about a free society did not eventuate. The Gordian knot would be easier to unravel!

In implementing the JCPOA, the US made hundreds of changes. Putting even some of these back in place will not be easy. Maybe up to 400 organisations and people would have to be put back on the US black list. Boeing and Airbus would most likely lose their contracts for the sale of \$US39 billions of aeroplanes. European companies including Volkswagen, Renault, Peugeot, Total and others who recently formed joint ventures with Iran would lose out. Even suppliers to these companies such as Rolls Royce would be hurt.

« Je crois qu'aujourd'hui nous sommes à un moment historique pour l'Europe. L'Europe est en charge de garantir cet ordre multilatéral que nous avons créé à la fin de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et qui est parfois aujourd'hui bousculé »

Emmanuel Macron, President of France, 8 May 2018

We are therefore going to see some pretty hard lobbying from President Macron and others. But reminiscent of Maggie Thatcher, "You turn if you want

to. This lady's not for turning". I suspect that President Trump will either stay put or use his leverage to accomplish a better outcome for both peace in the Middle East and a better Iran.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran is in compliance with the JCPOA. Therefore President Trump has another agenda in abrogating the agreement. Is it just regime change or reducing Iran's ability to defend itself or to get out of Syria, Yemen and Lebanon? Maybe all three?

"The Australian Government has consistently said that the JCPOA should remain in force until such time that an alternative agreement can be negotiated. While the US decision creates uncertainty for the future of the JCPOA, we strongly encourage Iran to continue to abide by its provisions."

Julie Bishop, 8 May 2018

Leon Panetta (President Trump's Defence Secretary) made the observation that *"If you don't have a strategy as to where to go after you roll a grenade in the room, it makes it pretty dangerous"*.

It would be surprising if President Trump's move was to be the final outcome. It is the beginning of the start of negotiations without necessarily knowing where those negotiations are going to end up.

Israel has strongly argued against the JCPOA. On 30 April 2018, Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu made a televised presentation claiming that Iran had lied about its nuclear program. This presentation was based on information that was already widely known. But the purpose was clear: to dissuade international publics, and ultimately President Trump, that the JCPOA ought to be abandoned. A wealthier Iran with improved relations with the



Israeli President Netanyahu's televised presentation, 20 April 2018. SOURCE: Reuters.

West, would only make Israel feel more threatened. Trump's recent withdrawal from the JCPOA and Israel's intensified strikes on Iranian military bases in Syria, indicate that Israel's standing in the region will only be strengthened.

It is not unreasonable to assume that President Trump wants a cessation of the development of ballistic missiles, no more uranium enrichment and above all the removal of Iranian forces from the borders of Israel. To achieve these, it will not be enough to just tell Iran that the status quo prior to the withdrawal from the JCPOA will be re-established. Iran will need something more. If not, then the forces of the right in Iran will hold sway over those of reform. This may even lead to the resumption of uranium enrichment, although that may prod Israel

to taking some “measures”. What is disconcerting is that Iran’s military leaders welcomed the US withdrawal from the JCPOA.

Quid pro quo

So it comes to the negotiation tables over the next six months where demands are put upon Iran and the US; but in return for what? President Trump, who sees foreign policy as a series of deals rather than a long term strategy, must decide to make it worthwhile for Iran. And that something cannot be force. There is a carrot. It is freeing up financial transactions with Iranian banks for both trade and investment flows.

**“Thought for the day:
What if Iran already had say 50
nuclear warheads? Would it use
them? Does it really want
Mutually Assured Destruction?”**

Patrick Moore



US President Donald Trump and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani
SOURCE: The Global Post.

“Last year we bought SIM cards for our mobiles. Sales of SIM cards to foreigners is now not permitted. Yet I was able to credit my 2017 SIM card for use this year. Maybe there is some fear of foreign influence.”

Patrick Moore

AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN IRAN

History

Australia has maintained uninterrupted diplomatic links with Iran for 50 years. Australia's attitude towards Iran throughout this time has remained positive. During the Iran-Iraq war Australia reduced its mission in Iran, but still maintained a diplomatic presence in the country with a chargé d'affaires.

The Australian Embassy has been building up its number of staff posted in Iran over the last three years in particular. Currently there are eleven Australian-based diplomats working at the Embassy in Tehran alongside forty local staff. Austrade now has a permanent post at the Australian Embassy. This makes the Embassy one of Australia's largest middle-sized posts around the world.



H.E. Ian Biggs, Tim Paterson and Hamish Leslie of the Australian Embassy in Iran (left to right)

Julie Bishop's visit to Iran in 2015 signalled the willingness of Australia to strengthen its positive relationship with the Islamic Republic. This visit was reciprocated by Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif in March 2016. Subsequently, in September 2016 Australia's Trade, Tourism and Investment Minister Ciobo visited Iran.

Australia's role in Iran has historically been to facilitate trade between the two countries and

"We pointed out that notwithstanding these influences, the Australian government wants to continue constructive trade and political relations with Iran, as shown by Foreign Minister Julie Bishop's visit in 2015 and Trade Minister Ciobo's visit this year."

Richard Broinowski

to foster mutually beneficial economic opportunities. However, Australia has recently expanded its interests in Iran, focusing on sectors including water security, education, and tourism.

On the 7th April 2018, the AIIA and IPIS signed a Memorandum of Understanding. This is a ground-breaking action which signals a growing desire within Iranian institutions to form closer ties with independent Australian organisations such as the AIIA. As Iran opens up to the world and Australia reaches out to Iran, there is vast potential for institutions and governments of both countries to undertake joint ventures in areas of mutual interest.

Current policies

One key area of mutual interest is water security. Water is a scarce resource for both Iran and Australia and both countries share concerns over long-term water security. Australia has

significant experience in dealing with long periods of drought and so it is well placed to take on an advisory and collaborative role on this issue. Indeed, institutions such as the University of Melbourne and Sharif University have already begun work on restoring Lake Urmia, as has been discussed.

Another area of common interest is education. Iran and Australia are both focusing on developing strong international exchange programs. Whilst there are currently 188 Iranian postgraduate students in Australia, we were not made aware of any official exchange program between Iranian and Australian academic institutions. However, the University of Tehran is especially interested in establishing a reciprocal exchange program and a sabbatical program with Australian universities. It is also keenly interested in inviting Australian professors to the University as guest lecturers or to engage in joint research projects.



Iranian students in Isfahan

Furthermore, the tourism industry in Iran is growing and Australian tourists are part of this growth. Approximately 30,000 Australian non-dual-national tourists visit Iran each year. However, there are fewer Iranian tourists visiting Australia each year because of difficulties acquiring Australian tourist visas. This difficulty is partly due to the high numbers of Iranians overstaying their visas in Australia. At present, there are 9,000 Iranians who have overstayed their visa in Australia. In a positive step, Deputy Secretary Williams recently signed an MOU on a consular return agreement. This will hopefully improve the regularisation of return arrangements, thereby facilitating increased tourism within both Australia and Iran.

Australia is also involved in humanitarian assistance programs in Iran. Whilst there is no official aid program to Iran, the Australian government funds various humanitarian programs. For instance, the Australian Embassy in Iran provides 10 million AUD per year to the Iranian universal health insurance scheme for Afghan refugees. Australia works with high-calibre local NGOs in Iran, such as Operation Mercy, to ensure the funds are used effectively.

Finally, an important area of mutual interest is trade. According to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, trade between Iran and Australia has dropped by two thirds since the country was placed under international sanctions. In the 2015-2016 financial year, the value of Australia's two-way goods and services trade with Iran was \$375 million. In the hope that the JCPOA would be successful, Austrade aimed to increase trade with Iran once again. In January 2016, in line with the JCPOA deal, Australia eased its autonomous sanctions relating to sectors including oil and gas, banking and finance, and transport, amongst others. With President Trump's recent decision to withdraw the US from the deal, Australia-Iran trade relations may suffer.

Problems

Iran's backing of the Assad regime in Syria and activities in Yemen is further straining bilateral relations with the US. Likewise, its hostility towards Israel and Saudi Arabia, as well as its support of Hezbollah, continues to cause tensions. Australia however, has established positive relationships with the US, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. This is a delicate position which must be carefully balanced.

A further problem that faced Australia's role in Iran during the time of the AIIA visit, was the uncertainty over the JCPOA. With the US now out of the deal, Iran's trade and investment sector will struggle to attract foreign interest. The reimposed sanctions will limit the potential for Australian firms to invest in Iran.

"In July 2015, the world held its breath to see if the deal would come to fruition. Upon the AIIA's arrival to Iran in April 2018, the world was holding its breath amidst a looming certification deadline that could herald the JCPOA's destruction."

Bethany Evans

Solutions

In the AIIA's meeting with IPIS, some members raised the possibility of Australia taking on a mediating role in order to improve relations between the US and Iran. Due to Australia's strong relationships with both countries, it may be able to assist the US and Iran in reaching a clearer understanding of each other's interests. Certainly, Australia's close alliance with the US will likely make the Iranians sceptical of Australia's neutrality as a mediator. Yet, neither



AIIA members at meeting with IPIS, Tehran

the US nor Canada have an Embassy in Iran and they do not pursue formal diplomatic ties with the country. Australia's unbroken diplomatic ties with Iran would give it greater access and a stronger platform from which to mediate.

In the medium-term, developing closer links between Iranian and Australian institutions can facilitate greater mutual

understanding and sharing of best-practice. Continuing and building upon AIIA – IPIS relations must therefore remain a priority. By reaffirming its positive relationship with Iran at official and unofficial levels, Australia may be better placed to act in a mediatory role.

WHAT WE DON'T YET KNOW

Whilst we gained rare insights into Iran's politics, culture and religion, The AIIA Study Tour group were left with some unanswered questions. Firstly, there remains the question of whether Iran is an expansionary or defensive power. Some point to the actions of the Revolutionary Guard in Syria, Iran's alleged funding of Hezbollah in Lebanon, and its involvement in the Yemen civil war as evidence of Iran's expansionary endeavours in the Middle East. However, others on the AIIA Study Tour argued that Iran is merely defending itself against hostile actors in the region. It is employing forward defence as a tactic to protect itself in the region. These points were not clearly addressed in meetings in Iran.

Secondly, the role of the Revolutionary Guard was little discussed throughout the Study Tour, which was dominated instead by talk of the JCPOA. It is apparent that the Guard exerts a strong influence over important sectors of the economy, including investment, manufacturing, construction and mining. President Rouhani has attempted to reform the economy, thereby challenging the Revolutionary Guard's influence.

Additionally, successive international sanctions have been aimed at minimising the role of the Revolutionary Guard in international trade. It remains to be seen whether the Guard's influence will be restricted.

"I am concerned about ability of the Iran Government to make changes to the economy...when faced by vested interests within the Revolutionary Guard. The influence of the Guard is subtle and real in commerce and the economy – and perhaps taken for granted/accepted by the population at large."

Phillip Huntley

"Also I question Iranian foreign policy especially the claimed attempt for direct access to the Mediterranean which means control of Syria and Lebanon. How does it help Iran and at what cost? Are they trying to reinstate the Persian empires?"

Frank Mahlab



Members of the Revolutionary Guard. SOURCE: BBC

Thirdly, some questions were posed throughout the tour regarding Iran-Israel relations, but received perfunctory and deflective responses. In 2005, President Ahmadinejad called for the destruction of the state of Israel. This fiery rhetoric has been used since by hard-liners within the Islamic regime. In various meetings, some AIIA members raised the topic of Israel, but there seemed to be little willingness to engage with this controversial issue. Ambassador Tabatabaee of Ravand Institute firmly denied claims that Hezbollah was a terrorist group. Yet questions remain about how Rouhani and future Iranian leaders will approach the state of Israel.

APPENDIX I: PRESIDENT'S REPORT

TWELVE MONTHS ON

It was obvious in April 2017 that Iranians were optimistic about their then forthcoming elections. Rouhani was a popular reformist leader and Iranians wanted and still want reform. He represented more of what Iranians hoped for than Raisi. Indeed, that was the result with Rouhani winning 50% more votes than Raisi.

It was not obvious in April 2017 that the JCPOA was to be a stumbling block to Iran's pathway towards reform and improved economic activity. Indeed, the JCOPA was not discussed in our meetings last year nor commented on in our 2017 Report [qv].



Thus, in a period of 12 months, we see and feel a change, for the worse, in Iran. Bazaari are no longer confidentially approaching Tourists; but sit, disconsolately in their shops; resigned to their fate. Tourism is down about 5%.

Last year we saw many buildings partly completed. They remain partly completed. Abandoned might be a more appropriate word. Tehran's stock of empty apartments still seems to be north of 250,000.

The Rial was set by the Central Bank of Iran at just over 12,000 to \$US1.00 in 2012. It increased to around 50,000 in early April 2018. In mid-April, it was again pegged by the Central Bank at 42,000 to

\$US1.00. The Black Market rate is much higher. In late 2017, there were raids on money changers and others to get hold of \$US. As of our departure from Iran, traders and hotels were not permitted to change Rial and \$US. All must be done through the banks at the Official Exchange rate. Iranians are worried about the security of the funds they have in the banks. The Black Market rate is over 50,000 Rial to the \$US1.00. A sure sign that the banking crisis which was visible over three years ago is again bubbling up.

Iran's economy is two-speed. Overall, oil prices have lifted the economy; but the trickle-down effect is not that visible. Unemployment and Inflation have not really budged since last year. Payments for Iranian oil are trapped in foreign bank accounts. Isolating Iran and its economy through Sanctions is doing too much



No Yankee Dollar Quotes now

harm for little return and hampers much-needed Economic Reform which would lead to Political and Cultural reform.

Perceptions of Iran from within Australia are unbalanced.

The portrayal of Iran from within Australia does not reflect the Iran as we saw it. There has been no improvement over the past 12 months. Indeed, it has probably worsened; much because of the hype about the JCPOA. Iranians feel hardly done by as a result. One of the more frequent questions asked of Study Tour Members by Australians before our departure was: “Is it safe?” This question really is in two parts: Is it safe internally, and will it be subjected to attack from outside?

“Iran is a sad, sad place—like something out of the Handmaids Tale. A once great civilisation reflected, for example, in the design, logistics and workmanship of the tile work in the mosques and the splendour of Persepolis, Iran is today — a depressing mess.”

Eve Mahlab

The answer of course is, it is safe. It has the same DFAT Travel Advisories as France, Indonesia and Belgium (amongst others). Australia is probably worse off than many countries in having accurate commentary about Iran because it has no permanent press there to report first hand. Thus what is published in Australia is the dramatic and is selected by sub-editors who have little or no first-hand knowledge of Iran. For instance:

The Murder rate (per 100,000 of population) in Iran is half that of the US. Australia’s murder rate is half that of Iran. The violent crime rate in Australia is double that of Iran. The prison population in the US is three times that of Iran. The fear of violent crime in Australia is 64% higher than that of Iran. For more information please [click here](#).

Much of what Australia is told about Iran is influenced by the press and policy makers in the US and Israel. The UK press and most of the European press give a less biased picture; but that tends not to be printed in Australia. We have an excellent Embassy in Iran. Later this year it will be celebrating 50 years of permanent representation in Iran. Thus we do have excellent first-hand knowledge of Iran. It would be terrific if DFAT could encourage Australian press representation in Iran.

Reform

Change in a Theocracy probably has to come about slowly. Beliefs cannot be turned around overnight. Yet there are some small signs of change. There is a more casual attitude towards the appropriate wearing of the hijab. More hair is now shown than last year; and the hijab falls back more frequently! Indeed some Islamic Scholars are arguing that the hijab is not a necessary part of religion at all. There was even evidence of Iranians showing some décolletage. Modesty yes, but hijab, no. The attempts of protest in last December and January were abruptly stopped and appear not being carried on any further. In another move, the death penalty for the trafficking of certain drug has been repealed.

The question of course is who is initiating these reforms. Whoever it is nevertheless must have the reforms approved by Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader. Despite the popularity of Rouhani in the 2017 elections, it is not unreasonable to assume that the Supreme Leader was and is responsible for initiating reforms. Whilst the current structure of the Government remains, it is and will be the Supreme Leader who is in charge. That being so, it may not really be that critical as to who is the President.

There is talk outside Iran of “regime change”. The US State Department from time to time raises this. Given Iran’s Political Structure and the prominence of the Revolutionary Guard, continuing reform is a far more likely outcome than regime change. Abrupt regime change would be accompanied by bloodshed. Reform on the other hand can and is being carried out; but slowly. There is little visible dividend to Iran in signing the JCOPA. The biggest impediment to reform is the slow economy; and that is cause by the persistence of the US in effectively blocking the unimpeded transfer of monies into and out of Iran.



Map of Iran (source: Lonely Planet)

“Iran’s size in area is double that of New South Wales. It has a population of 82 million. It has well-educated people. The population is young. Such a country cannot be ignored. It must have a (responsible) role in the Middle East.”

Water

We were fortunate last year to meet with Sharif University to discuss Lake Urmia where the University of Melbourne is working with Sharif University to solve its water management problems. We met with them this year for a more wide-ranging discussion.

It seems to me that water is THE most dangerous problem facing Iran today. If lakes like Lake Urmia dry up, then we will see sometime in the future salt storms ruining agricultural lands.

Population growth, the change in diet (from less grain to more meats as people become wealthier), the wastage of water, the unauthorised taking of water and the lack of a pricing policy all exacerbated by the lack of Political will, means that water remains Iran's biggest threat. We have seen politics get in the road of sensible reforms to water usage in the Murray Darling Basin (whose area is 70% the size of all Iran). Both in Australia and in Iran, technology is available to solve the problems.



Zayandeh River, Isfahan – The first time it has ever run dry

This topic is fully covered in our report. But to emphasise, the problem is obvious and the solutions are there. This is sad, given that the Persian Empire managed water so well. Some robust political will is necessary; but not yet forthcoming.

Iran in the Middle East or as Iran prefers to call it, the Far West

One unanswered and maybe unanswerable question is: “In whose interests is it to maintain a high level of political and military tension in the Middle East?” Ask ten people and maybe you will have a minimum of fifteen answers! But I would like to put forward one question which has not been answered: “Why is it that Iran persists in advocating the end of Israel” as advocated by Ahmadinejad in 2005?

This line was recently put forward by the head of Iran's army, Abdolrahim Mousavi, who “threatened to “annihilate” Israel as tensions escalated between the two countries”. The headline read “*Iran pledges to destroy Israel within 25 years*”.

Saudi Arabia is also creating a high level of tension with Iran and Qatar; maybe to distract Saudis from its internal problems? As my daddy said, if you ask the wrong question, you receive the wrong answer! Maybe the answer lies in this quotation:

A former Attorney General of Israel, M Ben Y Air, once made a famous observation: “The Six Day War was forced upon us, the seventh day continues to this day and is our choice.”

The “Art of the Deal”.

There seems to be a deal to be done in the Middle East; and Trump is the man of the moment concerning deals. Iran wants and needs to have its Sanctions lifted; particularly the US sanction which prevents any Global or US financial institution dealing with Iran. Would Iran sign a peace treaty with Israel in exchange for this?

The problem with such a deal is that the US Industrial Military Complex would lose out. It needs tensions to drive its business model.

Maybe it would be better for President Trump to visit President Rouhani and Ali Khamenei rather than Kim Jong-Un?

Tourism

We were warmly received wherever we went. We were approached with smiles in the streets; even invited to attend 6.00 am exercises in Imam Square. The Iranians lived up to their reputation of being very friendly. But if Tourism is to thrive, steps must be taken to improve the English of those working in the industry.

JCPOA

It is interesting to note that the recent claims (May 1) by Israel that Iran lied are mostly yesterday’s claims which the international Atomic Energy Agency had already covered. Various columnists have pointed out that, no matter what Netanyahu claimed, there was no breach of the JCPOA. Seems a lot of brouhaha to ensure Trump does not ratify the JCPOA on May 12.

Patrick Moore

“US President Donald Trump’s decision to withdraw from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), will severely degrade regional and global security. His decision has increased the risk of war and a nuclear arms race in the Middle East and beyond. He has undermined attempts to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons through multilateral diplomacy, as unilateral withdrawal equals non-compliance with a legally-binding UN Security Council resolution. This is a rejection of the UN as arbiter of international peace and security, as well as of international law as a lynchpin of international relations.”

Chatham House May 2018

APPENDIX II: INTERN'S PERSPECTIVE

As a Study Tour Intern at the Australian Institute of International Affairs Victoria, I have spent the last six months preparing for our tour of Iran, alongside Patrick Moore, President of the AIIAV. I am especially grateful to the Walter Mangold Trust Fund who subsidised my place on the tour. Through their support I was afforded valuable insights into working in the field of international relations, as well as the trip of a lifetime. I would strongly encourage any students interested in international affairs to pursue an internship at the AIIA, particularly a Study Tour internship. I have learnt so much throughout my internship which I will carry with me into my future career.



Outside the Golestan Palace, Tehran

It was an absolute privilege to travel with such a diverse and talented group of individuals on the 2018 Iran Study Tour. I believe that this particular mix of people from different generations resulted in a valuable exchange of perspectives. The four young students on the Tour, myself included, were fortunate enough to learn from the wisdom of the retired and semi-retired travellers, acquired over many years of work in government, education, and business. In return, we as students could share our recent research as well as our understanding of the international political scene from the perspective of our generation. The long bus rides were transformed by lively debates, story-telling, and laughter.

The group quickly gelled together well and the meetings we held with Iranian institutions were filled with questions and input from all group members. A particularly significant moment for the group, and for the AIIA more broadly, was the signing of the MOU with the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS). Through this achievement, the AIIA can now work towards establishing joint ventures between the two institutions and further developing Iran-Australia relations.

My personal highlights of the tour included meeting with the various institutions, immersing myself in the bustling bazaars, visiting the Lut Desert, exploring the ancient Persepolis and Necropolis, and dining with local Iranian families. Throughout these experiences I was struck by the vibrancy of the country. Before our departure, I had read about the crippling effects of sanctions on Iran, the restrictive dress code for women, and the high unemployment rates. I little expected the colourful and vibrant feel of the Iranian cities, or the relaxed, warm atmosphere of the smaller towns. I intend to one day return to Iran and continue to explore this constantly surprising country.

Amelia Ekkel, Study Tour Intern AIIAV 2017-2018.

APPENDIX III: ITINERARY

Date	Morning		Late Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Location
TUE 3 April	AIIA Flights					Australia
WED 4 April			Arrive Tehran		Briefing- 6:30pm at Howeyzeh restaurant	Howeyzeh Tehran
THU 5 April	Meet Australian Embassy- 8:30am	Meet ICRC- 10am	Meet Operation Mercy- 12pm	Meet Sharif University – 2pm	Buffet dinner at Australian Embassy residence 7:30pm	Tehran
FRI 6 April	Saadabad Palace		Golestan Palace	National Museum	<i>Free time</i> Briefing- 6pm Howeyzeh restaurant	Tehran
SAT 7 April	Meet IPIS- 9:30am		Meet Tehran University- 12:30pm	Meet Ravand- 3pm	<i>Free time</i>	Tehran
SUN 8 April	Drive to Kashan		<i>Free time</i>	Fin Garden	Tabatabaei House	Kashan
MON 9 April	Drive to Isfahan		<i>Free time</i>	Naqsh-e-Jahan Square & Imam Mosque	Bazaar <i>Free time for Dinner</i>	Isfahan
TUES 10 April	Chehel Sotoun Palace		<i>Free time</i>	Ali Qapu palace & Sheikh Lotfollah mosque	Siosepol & Khaju bridges <i>Free time for Dinner</i>	Isfahan
WED 11 April	Vank Cathedral		Imam Square	Isfahan Bazaar and free time		Isfahan
THU 12 April	Drive to Yazd		Via Meybod Ice House	Settle into Hotel/Walk around town		Yazd
FRI 13 April	Tower of Silence			Water museum	Old part of Yazd	Yazd

SAT 14 April	Drive to Zein-o-din	Caravanserai	<i>Free time</i>		Zein-o-din
SUN 15 April	Lut Desert		Rayen Citadel	Shahzadeh garden & Shah Nematollah shrine	Kerman
MON 16 April	Kerman Bazaar	<i>Free time</i>		Cooking Class	Kerman
TUES 17 April	Drive to Shiraz	via Meymand	<i>Free time</i>		Shiraz
WED 18 April	<i>Free time</i>	Shiraz Bazaar & Arg of Karimkhan	Ali-ibn-Hamzeh Mausoleum		Shiraz
THU 19 April	Persepolis		Necropolis	Farewell Dinner	Shiraz
FRI 20 April	Return flight to Tehran				Tehran
SAT 21 April	Return flights to Australia				Tehran

APPENDIX IV: TIMELINE OF ROUHANI'S PRESIDENCY

2013 June - Reformist-backed cleric Hassan Rouhani wins presidential election, gaining just over 50% of the vote.

2013 November - Iran agrees to curb uranium enrichment above 5% and give UN inspectors better access in return for about \$7bn in sanctions relief at talks with the P5+1 group - US, Britain, Russia, China, France and Germany - in Geneva.

2014 June - President Rouhani says Iran is ready to assist the Iraqi government in its battle against extremist Sunni insurgents, amid reports that Iranian Revolutionary Guards are in Iraq providing military training and advice.

2014 November - Russia agrees to build up to eight nuclear reactors in Iran, in move that might ease Iranian demands to have own uranium enrichment.

2015 July - After years of negotiations, world powers reach deal with Iran on limiting Iranian nuclear activity in return for lifting of international economic sanctions. The deal reportedly gives UN nuclear inspectors extensive but not automatic access to Iranian sites.

2016 January - Serious rift in relations after Saudi Arabia executes leading Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr. Crowd sets Saudi embassy alight. International economic sanctions on Iran lifted after UN says satisfied with progress on fulfilling nuclear agreement.

2016 February - Reformists perform well in elections to parliament and Assembly of Experts.

2016 December - The US Senate approves a ten-year extension of the Iran Sanctions Act, which penalises American companies for doing business with Tehran.

2017 January - Iran reportedly carries out medium-range ballistic missile test. UN Security Council recommends investigation to see whether it violated a UNSC resolution banning tests of missiles designed to deliver nuclear warheads.

2017 May - Hassan Rouhani wins re-election as president.

2017 June - Several people are killed in co-ordinated attacks on parliament and the shrine of Ayatollah Khomeini. The Islamic State group claims responsibility.

2017 July – Volkswagen, Groupe PSA, and Renault announce return to Iranian market.

2017 December - Rare demonstrations erupt in several towns and cities over several days.

2018 January - Based on a new amendment, only those distributing more than 50 kilograms of narcotics such as opium, 2 kilograms of heroin or 3 kilograms of crystal meth will be sentenced to death.

2018 May – US President Trump withdraws US from the JCPOA nuclear deal.

REFERENCE: BBC 2018, "Iran Profile Timeline", available online: <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14542438>>.

APPENDIX V: MOU BETWEEN IPIS AND AIIA

In The Name of God

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

**Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) of the Ministry of
Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

And

Australian Institute of International Affairs, Victoria (AIIAV)

The Institute for Political and International Studies, represented by its president, H.E. **Dr. Seyed Mohammad Kazem Sajjadpour**, hereinafter referred to as "**IPIS**", The Australian Institute of International Affairs, Victoria, represented by its President **Mr. Denis Patrick Moore** hereinafter referred to as "**AIIAV**", convinced of the necessity of promoting and reinforcing cooperation, mutual exchange of views and information, improvement of research and academic programs, and also exchange of experts and researchers;

Desiring to establish and to promote continuous relationships in academic and research fields in an institutionalized framework; have reached the following understanding:

A. GENERAL AGREEMENTS

1. Purpose of Cooperation

The purpose of cooperation between IPIS and AIIAV is the improvement of scientific and academic interactions between the Parties, and promotion and strengthening of friendship and mutual understanding between the people of the two countries in general and the Parties in particular.

2. Fields of Cooperation

Cooperation between the Parties covers the entire area of interaction and research in the two Institutes. To provide the grounds for cooperation and exchange of projects in specific field of mutual interest, the Parties will sign mutually accepted work plan note, required for this purpose.

B. FORMS AND METHODS OF COOPERATION

3. Exchange of Experience and Cooperation in the Field of Research and Education

3.1. Exchange of Experts and Researchers

Exchange of experts and researchers will primarily be on short-term basis, for example up to 3 months periods. Experts and researchers may be assigned

with specified academic and research tasks. Travel and accommodation costs will be provided for by the sending Party.

3.2. Mutual Research Programs

The Parties will implement the joint research programs of mutual interest. The duration and the conditions of such programs will be decided by the two institutes through a specific work plan note.

3.3. Participation of Third Party Institutions

Within the framework of the MOU, the Parties by mutual acceptance may also cooperate in the activities of other institutes, to promote the advancement of education and research.

3.4. Exchange of Publications

The Parties will exchange publications and other related materials on reciprocal basis.

3.5. Mutual Assistance

The Parties will lend mutual assistance by exchange of information and extending of invitations to meetings, symposium and conferences. The Parties will also facilitate, coordinate and promote contacts; when and where possible with a view to establish academic and research cooperation with other respective national research institutions and partners.

C. SPECIFIC ARRANGEMENTS

4. Preliminary Arrangement

The Party wishing to dispatch an expert or a researcher, will forward, the curriculum vitae, the list of publications and the work schedule of the person concerned to the host Party at least six months in advance and will confirm the sending of such an expert or researcher at least four weeks prior to his and her dispatching to the receiving host country.

5. Travel Expenses

The sending Party will provide for the travel expenses of the round trip between the two cities, where the respective Institutions are situated. Unless under special conditions, the host Party will provide for accommodation expenses. In particular, the host Party will provide accommodation, as well as, the expenditures necessary for conducting the research activities within the host country provided for in the working program.

D. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MOU

The conditions and the implementation measures of the MOU will be defined in the forms of work plan, which will regulate the other activities.

E. FINAL PROVISIONS

7. Duration

This MOU will enter into effect on the date of its signature and will remain in force for a period of four-years and will automatically be extended for further four-year periods unless one of the Parties notifies the other in writing of its intention to terminate the MOU at least 6 months prior to the date of its expiry.

8. Amendment

This MOU may be amended by mutual written request and agreement of the Parties, such amendments will come into effect on the date of its signature by the Parties.

9. Disputes Settlement

Disputes arising from interpretation or implementation of this MOU will be settled amicably through consultations or negotiations between parties in a diplomatic manner.


This MOU was done in the city of Tehran on 7 April 2018 corresponding to Farvardin 18,1397 in two original copies each in English and Persian, all the text being equally valid in case of divergence in interpretation or, implementation, the English text will prevail.



For
Australian Institute of
International Affairs,
Victoria (AIIAV)

Denis Patrick Moore
President

For
Institute for Political and
International Studies
(IPIS)



Seyed Mohammad Kazem Sajjadpour
President

«بسمه تعالی»

تفاهم نامه میان

مرکز مطالعات سیاسی و بین المللی وزارت امور خارجه جمهوری اسلامی ایران

و

موسسه استرالیایی امور بین الملل - ویکتوریا

مرکز مطالعات سیاسی و بین المللی به نمایندگی جناب آقای دکتر سیدمحمدکاظم سجادیپور، رئیس مرکز، که از این پس "مرکز" نامیده می شود و موسسه استرالیایی امور بین الملل ویکتوریا (به نمایندگی از طرف تمامی واحدهای تابعه موسسه یاد شده در استرالیا) به نمایندگی جناب آقای پاتریک مور، رئیس موسسه، که از این پس "موسسه" نامیده می شود؛

با اعتماد به ضرورت ارتقاء و تقویت همکاری ها، تبادل نظرات، بهبود برنامه های تحقیقاتی و آکادمیک و همچنین تبادل متخصصین و محققین؛ با تمایل به برقراری و ارتقاء ارتباطات مداوم در زمینه های تحقیقاتی و آکادمیک در یک چارچوب نهادینه شده؛ موارد ذیل را تفاهم می نمایند:

الف) توافقات عمومی

۱. هدف از همکاری

هدف از همکاری میان مرکز و موسسه، بهبود تعاملات آکادمیک و علمی میان طرف های این تفاهم نامه، و ارتقاء و تقویت دوستی و فهم دوجانبه میان ملت های دو کشور به طور اعم و میان طرف های این همکاری به طور اخص می باشد.

۲. زمینه های همکاری

همکاری میان دو طرف شامل تمامی حوزه های تعامل و مطالعات در دو موسسه می باشد. به منظور فراهم آوردن زمینه های همکاری و تبادل پروژه ها در یک زمینه خاص مورد علاقه دوجانبه، طرفین یادداشتی متضمن برنامه اجرایی مورد نیاز آن را که از سوی هر دو موسسه قابل قبول باشد، امضاء خواهند نمود.

ب) اشکال و روش های همکاری

۳. تبادل تجربیات و همکاری در زمینه تحقیقات و آموزش

۱.۳. تبادل متخصصین و محققین:

تبادل متخصصین و محققین به طور اساسی برپایه بازه های زمانی کوتاه مدت، برای مثال تا ۳ ماه انجام خواهد شد. برای متخصصین و محققین مبادله شده امور و وظایف خاص آکادمیک و تحقیقاتی تعیین خواهد شد.

۲.۳. برنامه های تحقیقاتی مشترک:

دو طرف برنامه های مشترک تحقیقاتی که مورد علاقه طرفین باشد را پی گیری خواهند نمود. طول مدت و شرایط چنین برنامه هایی به طور مستقل توسط دو موسسه و از طریق یک یادداشت متضمن برنامه اجرایی آن تصمیم گیری خواهد شد.

۳.۳. مشارکت موسسات ثالث:

در چارچوب این تفاهم نامه و به منظور ارتقاء آموزش و تحقیقات، دو موسسه با توافق دوجانبه می توانند در قالب فعالیت های موسسات دیگر با یکدیگر همکاری نمایند.

۴.۳. تبادل انتشارات:

طرفین، انتشارات و دیگر تولیدات مشابه خود را براساس عمل متقابل مبادله خواهند نمود.

۵.۳. مساعدت های دوجانبه:

طرفین از طریق تبادل اطلاعات و دعوت از یکدیگر برای نشست ها، سمپوزیوم ها و کنفرانس های خود، یکدیگر را یاری خواهند نمود. طرفین همچنین هر زمان و هر کجا که میسر باشد، ارتباطات متقابل با دیگر طرف ها و موسسات تحقیقاتی کشور متبوع خود را با هدف برقراری همکاری های تحقیقاتی و آکادمیک، تسهیل و هماهنگی های لازم را فراهم خواهند آورد.

ج) ترتیبات خاص

۴. ترتیبات مقدماتی

طرف اعزام کننده محقق و یا کارشناس، حداقل ۶ ماه قبل از عزیمت فرد مورد نظر شرح حال، فهرست انتشارات و برنامه کاری وی را برای موسسه پذیرنده ارسال کرده و حداقل ۴ هفته قبل از زمان سفر، موسسه میزبان را از عزیمت قطعی فرد مورد نظر مطلع می نماید.

۵. هزینه های سفر:

طرف اعزام کننده هزینه های سفر دو طرفه میان شهرهایی که دو موسسه در آن ها واقع شده اند را تامین خواهند نمود. موسسه میزبان هزینه های مربوط به اقامت را (مگر در شرایط ویژه) برعهده خواهد داشت. به طور خاص، موسسه میزبان اقامت و همچنین سایر هزینه های ضروری برای انجام فعالیت های تحقیقاتی مشخص شده در برنامه کاری در کشور میزبان را متقبل می شود.

د) اجرای تفاهم نامه

شرایط و اقدامات اجرایی این تفاهم نامه در قالب برنامه های کاری که کلیه فعالیت های مرتبط را سامان می دهند، مشخص خواهند شد.

هـ) شرایط نهایی

۷. مدت تفاهم نامه

این تفاهم نامه از تاریخ امضاء و به مدت چهار سال معتبر بوده و به طور خودکار برای دوره‌های چهار ساله دیگر تمدید خواهد شد، مگر آنکه یکی از طرفین به صورت مکتوب حداقل شش ماه قبل از انقضاء مدت تفاهم نامه، قصد خود مبنی بر اتمام آن را به طرف دیگر اعلام نماید.

۸. اصلاحیه

هر گونه اصلاح این تفاهم نامه از طریق ارایه درخواست مکتوب و توافق دوجانبه انجام خواهد شد. چنین اصلاحیه هایی از تاریخ امضاء توسط طرفین معتبر خواهند بود.

۹. حل و فصل اختلافات

اختلافات ناشی از تفسیر و یا اجرای این تفاهم نامه به صورت دوستانه و از طریق مشورت و یا گفتگو میان طرفین و به روش دیپلماتیک حل و فصل خواهند شد.

این تفاهم نامه در تاریخ ۱۸ فروردین ۱۳۹۷ مطابق با ۷ آوریل ۲۰۱۸ در دو نسخه اصلی به زبان های فارسی و انگلیسی امضاء گردید. تمامی نسخه ها دارای اعتبار مساوی بوده و در صورت اختلاف در تفسیر و یا اجرا، نسخه انگلیسی ملاک خواهد بود.

از طرف موسسه استرالیایی امور بین الملل-ویکتوریا از طرف مرکز مطالعات سیاسی و بین المللی



سید محمد کاظم سجادپور

رئیس مرکز

دنيس پاتريك مور

رئیس مرکز



