

# Imam Khomeini's Struggle Against Imperialism and Zionism

Editor

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The twentieth century witnessed many calamitous events that have impacted people in profoundly negative ways throughout the world. These included the first and second world wars that resulted in the slaughter of tens of millions of people. It also witnessed the Palestinians' Nakba (catastrophe), when their lands were forcibly taken from them and handed over to create the Zionist State of Israel. The overwhelming majority of Palestinians were turned into refugees and remain scattered in refugee camps around the world to this day.

Some would argue that on the positive side, the last century also witnessed the emergence of many independent nation-states in Asia and Africa. This is only partly correct. Independence has been a cruel hoax. It merely transferred power from white European colonialists to their brown slaves that have continued the colonial enterprise with even more disastrous consequences. Corruption has reached dizzying heights; mismanagement is the norm and subservience to imperialism is their cherished goal.

True independence means people having the right and freedom to choose their own political, economic and social systems and policies, free from the coercive influence of predatory powers. How many countries can claim to be truly independent? Barring the major military powers—China, Russia *et al*—Islamic Iran stands alone. Perhaps, tiny Cuba could also be added to this list but that's about it.

Until 1979, Iran under the Shah was a Western puppet. Imam Khomeini (ra), whose thirty-first anniversary falls on June 3, was one leader who accurately diagnosed what afflicted Iran, and indeed much of the Muslim world. He called the Shah's regime a US puppet and demanded an end to all imperialist influence in Iran. He also called the Zionist regime in Occupied Palestine illegal and urged Muslims and people of conscience everywhere to rise up against this usurper regime.

Imam Khomeini did not have an army of armed men at his disposal. His followers—primarily the youth of Iran—were armed with only *Imaan* (faith-commitment to Allah) and the courage of conviction. He not only showed them the directional course but also inspired them to make sacrifices for their cause which was based on truth and justice. This is how the noble Messenger of Allah (pbuh) had done at the advent of Islam in Arabia. One of the favorite verses that the Imam often quoted from the noble Qur'an was: **"I counsel you one thing only: Be [ever conscious of] standing before Allah, whether you are in the company of others or alone" (34:46).**

The valiant people of Iran—men, women, youth and even children—responded to the Imam's call without hesitation. After a year-long struggle that was entirely peaceful and offered more than 80,000 martyrs, the Shah had to flee. His regime collapsed. That, however, was not the end but only the beginning of difficulties for the Islamic state that emerged in Iran. The enemies of Islam, led by the US and its allies in the east and west, were determined to not let the fledgling Islamic state consolidate itself. Internal sabotage was accompanied by an armed invasion from abroad. It was outwardly led by the regime of Saddam Husain in Iraq but it had the backing of all western powers as well as the Arabian regimes.

For eight years, the people of Iran led by Imam Khomeini withstood this onslaught all alone. Not one country came to its help. No weapons were sold to it. While the Iraqi regime was showered with weapons and advisors, the predatory western powers also gave him chemical and biological weapons to use against Islamic Iran. Tens of thousands of Iranian soldiers and revolutionary guards were poisoned with chemical and biological weapons yet despite repeated calls to the UN Security Council to investigate, the so-called world body was not able to muster the courage to state clearly who was responsible for using such weapons. Dominated by the very powers that had supplied Iraq these weapons, they were not going to hold Saddam responsible until he had outlived his usefulness.

No other country except Islamic Iran can show similar resilience in the face of a grand international conspiracy. So, what enabled the people of Iran to withstand such pressure and continue to do so to this day? It was the towering personality of Imam Khomeini steeped in *taqwa*. He had no personal, parochial or class interests.

We need to look at *taqwa*, a uniquely Islamic concept, a little deeper. No individual can be *muttaqi* without engaging in the struggle to change his environment, it being understood that the prevailing environment is unsatisfactory. The *taqwa* of the Muslim is a permanent condition although it rises and ebbs with time. When they collaborate to consolidate their *taqwa*, Muslims are said to be participating in the Islamic movement.

Thus, *taqwa* is progressively institutionalized until it reaches its highest known and recorded form—the Islamic State. This is what represents the collective expression of the *taqwa* of all Muslims. They must commit all their resources—human, material and spiritual—to the Islamic State. And if an Islamic State does not exist, they must strive to establish one. This is the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (pbuh).

Every Islamic movement needs a *muttaqi* leader. The Imam was just such leader. Emerging from the deepest roots of Islam, he was both profoundly spiritual as well as politically astute. He understood the prevailing imposed global order as totally unjust and alien to the values and ethos of Islam. It had to be uprooted completely, at least from one geographical area—Iran—if an Islamic order was to be established. In the contemporary era, Iran has become a laboratory for this experiment in Islamic socio-political and economic engineering.

Islamic Iran's determination to remain independent and pursue the Islamic paradigm has led to a relentless, vicious propaganda campaign by the imperialists, Zionists and their allies including the Najdi Bedouins. American 'exceptionalists' may take issue with the assertion that Islamic Iran is the only truly independent country but they should note that the US is a virtual Zionist colony. Numerous American academics have also acknowledged this fact.

Islamic Iran derives its strength and power directly from its adherence to Islamic principles. The Islamic system of governance established by the late Imam Khomeini after the victory of the Islamic revolution is what enables the people of Iran to make such huge sacrifices. It has inspired Muslims, indeed oppressed people everywhere, to rise up against injustice and tyranny.

Imam Khomeini (ra) and his successor, Imam Ali Khamenei represent Islamic leadership at its best. *Allahu Akbar!*