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Duitse Iranpolitiek 1871-2005

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Publication date
2012

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Rezaeiejan, S. (2012). *Duitse Iranpolitiek 1871-2005*. Vossiuspers - Amsterdam University Press. <http://nl.aup.nl/books/9789056297039-duitse-iranpolitiek-1871-2005.html>

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Summary

This study set out the German foreign policy towards Iran during 1871-2005. In part I, the history of the German foreign policy towards Iran is outlined. The German Empire was founded 18 January 1871. Bismarck had the desire to maintain the dominant position of the German Empire that had been established in Europe. In this regard, Bismarck's foreign policy was mainly focused on Europe. He longed for a peaceful Europe, and as part of this strategy, he wanted to prevent a conflict between Germany and Russia. At the end of the nineteenth century Iran had in fact changed on into a colony of Great Britain and Russia. From the perspective of the Iranian king, Germany could play the role of a third power in Iran, and with this, he hoped that the influence of Russia and Great Britain in Iran would be reduced. At the request of the Iranian government, a Treaty of Friendship was signed between the two countries in 1873. In order to prevent any harm to Russia's interests in Iran, Germany did not invest in the diplomatic relations between Berlin and Tehran. Although economic opportunities were not taken or missed, Bismarck's policy in the short term was successful as it did not harm Russian interests in Iran. At the same time however, Germany's lack of interest in Iran had created a positive German image for Iranians. The Iranians were convinced that Germany was not interested in colonizing Iran into one of their colonial territories. The trust of the Iranians towards Germany had increased at the beginning of the twentieth century.

When the German Empire was ruled by Wilhelm II, Bismarck's moderate foreign policy changed. Wilhelm II aspired to turn Germany into a world power and he used an assertive policy towards the Middle East. During his reign, he was interested in improving relations with the Ottoman Empire rather than with Iran. Paradoxically, the increased activities of the German Empire in the Ottoman Empire led in 1907 to a division of Iran into two official spheres of influence by Russia and Great Britain. Until 1914, the German government neither pursued an economic nor a cultural policy towards Iran. The first years after World War I, there were no diplomatic relations between the two countries. This changed when Reza Shah came to power in 1925. He shared the same high hopes as in the past, that Germany would play the role of a third power in Iran. Germany was a country that could be trusted, and he believed that the German government would support him in his plans of modernizing Iran. However, again the German government was extremely anxious, as that they did not want to harm the British interests in Iran. This approach was successful. Against the background of the anti-Soviet politics of the British, the British government thumbed up German investments in Iran. Germany's power consisted mainly of economic power during the Weimar Republic. Therefore, German economic activities

increased in Iran since 1926. Economic activities took place in strategic sectors, while other powers such as Russia, Great-Britain and France were not interested in cooperation with Iran. The economic cooperation between Germany and Iran had a positive influence on the Iranian image of the Germans. The German foreign policy towards Iran was effective during the Weimar period. The German share in the Iranian economy could have been larger if the Great Depression of 1929 had not occurred.

When the Nazi regime came to power, the German foreign policy towards Iran reached an ideologized stage. Until 1933, the bilateral relationship between Germany and Iran was mainly based on economic interests. In 1933, it turned into a political one. Iran became part of Germany's anti-Soviet politics in the hope that Iran could build a front against the Soviet Union. This approach towards Germany and the bilateral economic cooperation created opportunities for Iran to modernize relatively quickly. The availability of German funds and Germany's technical expertise played a prominent role in the modernization process in Iran. The support from the German government had once again had a positive influence on the Iranian view of Germans. On the eve of World War II, Germany turned into the most important economic partner of Iran. The bilateral economic relationship became to Iran extremely important. However, the diplomatic relation of the Nazi regime with Iran was not as strong as the bilateral economic relation. This conclusion can be drawn from the fact that the Iranian government held a neutral position during the Second World War. During the period of Alfred Rosenberg, one of the influential figures in Nazi Germany, Nazi Germany's cultural policy became strongly politicized. In cooperation with the ministry of propaganda, the cultural policy in regard to Iran became very assertive. The magazine *Iran Bastan* was financed by Berlin, and Iranian students were encouraged and financially supported to study in Germany. With the fall of the Nazi regime, the Nazi cultural policy ended.

After the Second World War, it took until 1949 for the diplomatic relation of Germany-Iran to take root again. The Federal Republic of Germany did not follow an independent political course. Moreover, politics were part of the west, and as a member of the NATO, Germany's foreign policy approach was in accordance with the United States' policy towards Iran. In addition, the Federal Republic used the approach of the Shah, in which Europe had been the central element in the 1960s. The government in Bonn did not want the Iranian government to recognize the German Democratic Republic. Moreover, the cooperation between Germany and Iran on nuclear energy issues, which was in conform with the German (and US) strategy, prevented Iran to seek support from communist countries on economic and technological field. In 1974, the Iranian government signed an

agreement with Kraftwerk Union for the build of eight nuclear power plants in Iran. Furthermore, during the period of the Federal Republic of Germany, the German government focused primarily on the economic and political relation with Iran. Germany (together with the US) turned into the most important trading partner of Iran during the period after the WWII and till the Iranian Revolution in 1979. However, the Federal Republic did not employ all the economic opportunities in order of not being blamed of an *Alleingang* by other European countries, Germany did not, for example, invest in the Iranian oil industry. This trust-inspiring measure was politically successful. However, from an economic point of view this was not in the interest of Germany. The government in Bonn focused mainly on exports, and foreign direct investment took only place in areas that were not sensitive to politics. Regarding the cultural policy, Germany aimed to become a *Kulturstaat* since the end of WWII. In this regard, the German cultural policy towards Iran strengthened. With the installment of the Social Liberal government in 1969, new politically inspired cultural policies were designed by Ralf Dahrendorf. His aim was to create a '*gesellschafts-politische*' dialogue towards countries Germany had cultural relations with. In regard to Iran this policy was effective. The German Goethe-Institute created a safe surrounding and offered the possibility of organizing cultural and political meetings for Iranian political dissidents. This gave them the opportunity to discuss politics and issues regarding the society. Even today, the Iranian intellectuals are remembering the activities offered by the Goethe-Institute in Iran in the 1970s.

Part II begins with the Iranian revolution of 1979. The revolution had a significant impact on the foreign political identity of Iran. Therefore, the Iranian foreign policy strategy changed. The Germans were in favor of the Iranian revolution, led by the people, against the dictatorship of the Shah. The Federal Republic of Germany was the only Western country of which its embassy remained open in Tehran. Although, the revolutionary regime switched to an anti-western course, Germany continued to have a political and an economic relation with Iran. The German government had two main reasons for this. First, Germany wanted to prevent Iran to become part of the communist group. This concern turned out to be unfounded as the new Iranian regime was anti-communist. The second reason was to become a key trading partner. The Federal Republic of Germany wanted to continue with the bilateral economic relationship even after the revolution. However, the political relation was not as strong as it was before the revolution. For example, Germany did not resume the settlement of the nuclear plants in Bushehr. Moreover, the pressure from the United States and Israel on Germany played a significant role in the bilateral relation between Germany and Iran after the revolution. The relationship after the

revolution can be best described as a *'mariage de convenance'*. On the one hand, Germany, an *Allemandsfreund* has tried to be the country that pursues a neutral political strategy towards Iran. On the other hand the country needs to take into account the American and Israeli concerns regarding Berlin's approach towards the Islamic Republic. At the end of the Iraq-Iran war in 1988 and after the German reunification in 1990, the German foreign policy towards Iran had reached a new stage. The Iranian government had two main foreign policy objectives towards Germany. In the first place, the Islamic Republic that had been internationally isolated, approached Germany, and, therefore, the European Union in order to come out of its isolation. Iran did not have good relations with other European powers such as France and Great-Britain. For example, France officially supported Saddam Hussein during the Iraq-Iran War. The same goes for the British. Furthermore, they had a special bond with the US and were hostile towards the Islamic Republic. In addition, after Ayatollah Khomeini's *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie, all diplomatic ties between Iran and Great-Britain were severed. Moreover, the development plans of the Iranian government meant that Germany was the most suitable partner for Iran to engage in an economic relation. The positive image of Germany, the economic and technological power of Germany, and most importantly, the willingness of Germany to have diplomatic ties with Iran, formed the basis for the strong relationship between Germany and the Islamic Republic after 1990.

After the German reunification and the end of the Cold War, Germany was again able to follow an independent foreign policy course. However, their foreign policy towards Iran was not marked by fundamental changes compared with the period before the German reunification. In addition, after 1990, Germany's policy towards Iran was largely economically centered. Germany became the largest economic partner of Iran in the nineties. Furthermore, the country used its political weights for settling arguments between Lebanon, where Iran is very influential, and Israel. This made it possible for the German government to fulfill the role of mediator between Iran and Israel. However, the US criticized the bilateral relation between Germany and Iran. Primarily, because of the cooperation between the intelligence agencies of the two countries. This was a sensitive issue internationally. From US perspective, Germany was supporting a terrorist regime. Moreover, the German foreign policy towards Iran was not conform with the ideal of a *Zivilmacht*. In the eighties and beginning of the nineties, Germany preferred economic relations with Iran rather than to have a normative policy of a *Zivilmacht* based on moral and ethical considerations. In fact, Iran gave orders to kill the European author Salman Rushdie, and Iranian political dissidents in the West. Iran had no constructive contribution

in the Middle East peace process, and above all, violated the human rights in Iran on a large scale. Despite of all these arguments, Germany pursued a relatively uncritical policy towards Iran until the beginning of the nineties. The German aim of being a *Zivilmacht*, could not be deduced from their political activities towards their relations with Iran until 1992.

In addition, from 1979 to 1992, there was no German cultural policy towards Iran. After the revolution, the Iranian government decided to cut all ties and to close the German Goethe-Institute in Tehran and Shiraz. As a reaction on the *fatwa* against Salam Rushdie, Germany decided to stop the cultural agreement between the two states. Therefore, we cannot speak of a systematic or a coherent foreign policy towards Iran during the period of 1979-1992.

In part III, an analysis is given of the German foreign policy towards Iran from 1992 onwards, within the context of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union (CFSP). In this part, the German and European foreign policy towards Iran in regard to the human rights issue in Iran has been highlighted. Unlike most of the researches that were conducted in this matter, this study shows that one of the first countries in which the CFSP of the EU was applied to, was the Islamic Republic of Iran. In addition, it is argued that the CFSP of the EU towards Iran was certain the German foreign policy towards Iran. As the EU follows the German foreign policy towards Iran, German norms and objectives were taken over by the EU.

The strategy of a critical dialogue was an initiative from the German government in order to form a foreign policy towards Iran within the context of the EU. Unlike the strategy of the US policy, the critical dialogue strategy aims for an approach between the EU and the Islamic Republic. The critical dialogue is conform with the German concept of 'change through rapprochement', which was applied by the Federal Republic of Germany within its *Ostpolitik*. This policy was characterized by the following points: a policy of approaching, creating dialogues with the existing regime and avoid experimentation, creating economic interdependency, and multilateralism. In addition, these aims also characterize the German foreign policy towards Iran within the context of the critical dialogue strategy. Regarding the critical dialogue, the framework of the normative principles of the *Zivilmacht* politics are better formulated. Between 1992 and 1996, the EU had a Human Rights Dialogue with Iran. Moreover, the EU has condemned the human rights violation in Iran through declarations and resolutions. However, the human rights violation in the Islamic Republic did not affect the economic relation with Iran.

The German government pursued a strategy of Human Rights Dialogue with Iran within the context of the EU. This in contrast to their economic policy which was based on bilateral relations. For this reason, on the bilateral level, human rights issues were not discussed with Iran. The human rights issue in Iran was not urgent enough for Germany and the EU to jeopardize the economic relation with the Islamic Republic. In this regard, this policy does not correspond with the principles of an ideal civilian power, where economic relations should be as valuable as non material objectives, such as the promotion of human rights. A Human Rights Dialogue was held with Iran, but only for the purposes of holding a dialogue and not for reaching any tangible results. The United Nation's human rights reports of 1992-1996 show, that no improvement has been made regarding the human rights issue in Iran. Publishing declarations and adopting resolutions for condemning human rights violation in Iran seemed to be insufficient for convincing the Iranian regime to respect human rights. There are no other instruments used by the EU for putting more pressure on Iran. The followed strategy of a critical dialogue by Germany and the EU has not been successful regarding the Human Rights Dialogue.

In regard to the terrorist attacks on political dissidents at the Mykonos restaurant in Berlin in 1992, a German judge had condemned Iran and charged the Iranian minister of Information and the Iranian president with murder. In reaction to this, Germany and the EU decided to postpone the critical dialogue with Iran. The German argument that by means of a dialogue with Iran, the country would be easier to predict, proved to be wrong. After a few months, when the critical dialogue between Iran and Germany was ended, Germany was once more prepared to hold new dialogues. The main reason for resuming the diplomatic relation was the Iranian presidential elections. The presidential candidate, the Reformist Mohammad Khatami, won the elections. For Khatami winning these elections meant an opportunity to implement the strategy of 'constructive engagement'. Even after the Mykonos verdict, the Germans argued that isolating Iran was not the solution for the 'Iranian problem'. The EU offered a perfect stage in order to bring the diplomatic relation between Germany and Iran to a multilateral level. On the one hand, the fact that Khatami came to power, increased the hope for reform both on a national level as well as on the international level. Both sides believed that progressive reformation was possible. Therefore, the new president gained much support. On the other hand, when the Red-Green coalition took office in Germany in 1998, the hope for a critical approach towards Iran had strengthened. Above all, it has always been the SPD-party or the party of Bündnis 90/Die Grünen that posted critical questions to the government at the Bundestag. In addition, they pleaded for a critical and an assertive German foreign policy towards

Iran. However, in reality the Red-Green coalition continued with the foreign policy strategy of the conservative rule of Helmut Kohl. The same approach was applied on the economic relations. In addition, the economic policy of the EU towards Iran did not change during the period of constructive engagement.

One of the aims of the constructive engagement was to promote democracy and the human rights situation in Iran. In accordance with these beliefs, the EU established a series of Human Rights Dialogues with Iran. However, these series of the Dialogue had not the desired outcome. Research on the failure of the German and European Union Human Rights Dialogue with Iran mainly shows that the political rhetoric of the EU members is not conform with their actions, and that the EU holds its economic interest above moral aims. This study is also concerned with the failure of the politics due to the Iranian political structures, and in this case, what is referred to as the European *Blauaugigkeit* regarding the hope for reforms within the Iranian theocratic system. The political system of Iran is extremely complicated.

At the same time however, it does not necessarily have to be difficult to find out which of the political institutions have sufficient power to make political reforms in Iran possible. Only the religious institutions that are not chosen by the people, can reform the Islamic Republic. Therefore, it is not the republic bodies (such as the parliamentarian or the president), who are selected by the people that have this power. Germany and the EU had actually tried to pursue a critical policy towards human rights in Iran during four series of the Dialogue which had been held from 1998 until 2004. The institutions who they tried to approach in accordance with the strategy of *Wandel durch Annäherung*, proved to be incapable to apply changes and reforms, because they were powerless within the political structures of the Islamic Republic.

Furthermore, the will of the so-called reformists, who joined the constructive dialogue with the EU, can be questioned. These 'reformists' are also part of the Iranian regime, and, therefore, their approach towards human rights politics is based on the political Islam. In this regard, questions remain open on how European human rights politics, based on the tradition of the Enlightenment in which individuals are central, can achieve a synthesis with the political Islam, where order is placed above the individual and, in many cases, the value of an individual depends on his or her gender.