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# Iran in U. S. media : a framing analysis of Newsweek, Time, and The New York Times

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IRAN IN U.S. MEDIA:  
A FRAMING ANALYSIS OF NEWSWEEK, TIME, AND  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Farideh Dada

May 2007

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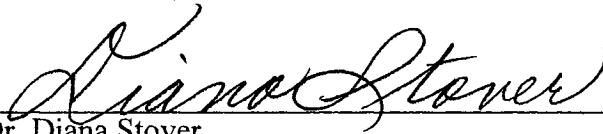
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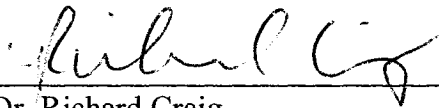
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## ABSTRACT

### IRAN IN U.S. MEDIA: A FRAMING ANALYSIS OF NEWSWEEK, TIME, AND THE NEW YORK TIMES

By Farideh Dada

This framing analysis of Iran as portrayed in *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time* from 1977 to 2004 found that the coverage paralleled U.S. policy statements in 6 of the 10 critical events studied. The tone of the articles during the hostage crisis, the Iraq-Iran war, the Airbus downing, Khomeini's death, the U.S. embargo, and President Bush's labeling of Iran as one of the "axis of evil" countries was similar to the tone in the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*. The shah's visit to the United States in 1977 was the only period in which the media did not have a critical tone toward Iran and did not frame Iran in a negative way. The study also found that the national media used stereotypical frames such as anti-American, hostile, anti-West, backward, violent, hard-liner, evil, outlaw, rogue, outcast, and dangerous in portraying Iran, Iranians, Muslims, Islam, and Iranian women.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, who—as my first teacher—inspired me to continue my education; to the loving memory of my father, who I know is always there with me in spirit; and to my family and friends here and in Iran who have always been a source of encouragement, support, and inspiration throughout my life. I can never thank you enough for your faith in me.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Literature Review.....	5
Iran .....	5
Islam.....	7
Women .....	9
Hostage crisis and revolution.....	10
Portrayals of Iran.....	18
U.S. policy toward Iran .....	20
Research questions.....	22
3. Method .....	24
Intercoder reliability.....	26
4. Findings.....	28
Critical period 1, 1977: The shah's visit.....	28
Critical period 2, 1979: The Islamic revolution.....	31
Critical period 3, 1979: The hostage crisis .....	31
Critical period 4, 1980: The Iraq-Iran war.....	34
Critical period 5, 1988: The Iran Air Airbus downing .....	34
Critical period 6, 1989: Ayatollah Khomeini's death.....	35
Critical period 7, 1995: U.S. embargo on Iran.....	35
Critical period 8, 1997: Iran's presidential election.....	35

Critical period 9, 2002: Bush’s characterization of Iran as an “axis of evil” .....	36
Critical period 10, 2004: Iran’s nuclear proliferation .....	37
Comparisons between the first event and the other nine events in the national media .....	38
News type: Shah’s visit vs. other nine critical event periods .....	38
Dateline type: Shah’s visit vs. other nine critical event periods ...	41
Content type: Shah’s visit vs. other nine critical event periods ....	43
Article tone: Shah’s visit vs. other nine critical event periods ....	45
News frames.....	49
U.S.-Iranian relationships .....	52
Framing of Iran’s stability .....	54
Framing of Iran’s human rights’ support.....	56
Framing of Iran in terms of friendliness and its relationship to the United States .....	58
Framing of Iran in terms of developing or using nuclear power, energy, or weapons .....	61
Framing of Iran and Iranians.....	63
Framing of Iranian leaders .....	65
Framing of Islam and Muslims.....	67
Framing of Iranian women.....	69
5. Summary and Conclusion .....	71

Contributions to the literature .....	82
Limitations to the study .....	83
Directions for future research .....	83
6. References .....	84
7. Appendix A: Codebook for Iran’s Portrayal in U.S. Media .....	91
8. Appendix B: Shah’s Nuclear Power Program .....	101

## LIST OF TABLES

1. A <i>t</i> -test comparison of tone toward Iran in the national news media— <i>The New York Times</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> , and <i>Time</i> —and the <i>U.S. Department of State Bulletin</i> ....	30
2. Comparison of the percentage of type of articles in <i>The New York Times</i> and the news magazines— <i>Newsweek</i> and <i>Time</i> —during 10 critical event periods ....	40
3. Comparison of the percentage of articles with either U.S. or Iran datelines in <i>The New York Times</i> and the news magazines— <i>Newsweek</i> and <i>Time</i> —during 10 critical event periods .....	42
4. Comparison of articles devoted primarily to critical events or to U.S.-Iran relations in <i>The New York Times</i> and the news magazines— <i>Newsweek</i> and <i>Time</i> —during 10 critical event periods.....	44
5. Comparison of the percentage of tone of the articles in <i>The New York Times</i> and the news magazines— <i>Newsweek</i> and <i>Time</i> —during 10 critical event periods.....	46
6. A <i>t</i> -test comparison of the tone toward Iran in <i>The New York Times</i> and the news magazines— <i>Newsweek</i> and <i>Time</i> —during 10 critical event periods .....	48
7. Comparison of the percentage of frame type of the articles in <i>The New York Times</i> and the news magazines— <i>Newsweek</i> and <i>Time</i> —during 10 critical event periods .....	51
8. Comparison of U.S.-Iran cooperation frames during 10 critical event periods in the national news media— <i>The New York Times</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> , and <i>Time</i> .....	53
9. Framing of Iran in terms of stability during 10 critical event periods in the national news media— <i>The New York Times</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> , and <i>Time</i> .....	55
10. Framing of Iran in terms of supporting human rights or civil liberties during 10 critical event periods in the national news media— <i>The New York Times</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> , and <i>Time</i> .....	57
11. Framing of Iran in terms of friendliness during 10 critical event periods in the national news media— <i>The New York Times</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> , and <i>Time</i> .....	59

12. Framing of Iran as pro-American or anti-American during 10 critical event periods in the national news media— <i>The New York Times</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> , and <i>Time</i> .....	60
13. Framing of Iran in terms of developing or using nuclear power during 10 critical event periods in the national news media— <i>The New York Times</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> , and <i>Time</i> .....	62
14. Usage of both negative and positive stereotypical frames in depicting Iran during 10 critical event periods in the national news media— <i>The New York Times</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> , and <i>Time</i> .....	64
15. Usage of both negative and positive stereotypical frames in depicting Iranian leaders during 10 critical event periods in the national news media— <i>The New York Times</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> , and <i>Time</i> .....	66
16. Framing of Islam and Muslims during 10 critical event periods in the national news media— <i>The New York Times</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> , and <i>Time</i> .....	68
17. Framing of Iranian women during 10 critical event periods in the national news media— <i>The New York Times</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> , and <i>Time</i> .....	70

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This research examined the way in which Iran has been portrayed in the American mass media before and after the Islamic revolution in 1979. It is a quantitative as well as a qualitative framing analysis of two news magazines, *Newsweek* and *Time*, and *The New York Times* during 10 critical events that occurred between 1977 and 2004. The study was designed to determine how the U.S. media and, in particular, *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New York Times*, covered Iran and whether they used frames and/or stereotypical words and phrases in representing Iran. Entman (1993), in reviewing the importance of frames, noted that frames select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text. This concept highlights journalism's role in the production of meanings and values.

Iran, a southwest Asian country, "occupies a central position—literally and symbolically—in the Middle East and, as such, its internal and international conduct have wide-ranging repercussions for the region as a whole and for U.S. interest within it" (Haass, 2004, p. 10). Iran, the non-Arab country in the Middle East, "is a resource-rich power having the world's fifth largest crude oil proven reserves (about 90 billion barrels) [11% of the world's oil reserves] and the world's second largest natural gas proven reserves (some 23 trillion cubic meters)" (Koyama, 2000, p. 2); this is why it is so important to the world's economy.

Brown and Vincent (1995) noted that "the relationship between the United States and Iran has had an important influence on world affairs during the past two decades.

Accordingly, the U.S. news media have an instrumental role in portraying U.S.-Iran relations to the public. The Iranian revolution and hostage crisis of 1979-1981, the TWA hijacking of 1985, the Irangate controversy of 1986-1987, and the Persian Gulf War of 1990-1991 are examples of important media events that have impacted public opinion regarding U.S. policy toward Iran” (p. 65).

Iran’s ruling system, a modernizing monarchy, Pahlavi dynasty which had strong ties with the United States, was replaced by the anti-imperialist Islamic republic in 1979. This political change “transformed Iran from a staunch ally into one of the most intractable opponents of the United States in the region and beyond” (Haass, 2004, p. viii). Iran-U.S. relations, which were developing day by day, “have been trapped by the legacies of the past and the very real differences of the present [since the Islamic revolution]” (Gates & Brzezinski, 2004, p. 8). Ties with the United States were severed in 1980; Iran is the only country in the region that has rejected formal diplomatic relations with the United States. As the bilateral diplomatic relations declined, political policies changed, having a major impact on media coverage of Iran. Politics and media have an interchangeable interaction. Paletz and Entman (1981) noted: “The words chosen by sources, especially high-ranking officials concerned with foreign affairs in the reporter’s own country, tend to be the words used by reporters. Thus is language imprinted with the vantage point of sources” (p. 221).

This study was aimed at determining how the U.S. media and, in particular, *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New York Times* portrayed Iran before and after the Islamic revolution in 1979. It also explored whether *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New York Times*

followed U.S. foreign policy during the critical periods such as when the shah was in power—that is, before the Islamic revolution—and after the shah was deposed, which are considered the post-Islamic revolution time periods.

The study also examined how *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New York Times* framed Iran and Iranians during each critical event. A review of the scholarly literature has shown that almost all of the research on U.S. coverage of Iran concentrated on a single event [the coverage of the hostage crisis, Said (1981); the Islamic revolution and the hostage crisis, Keshishian (2000); the hostage crisis, Larson (1986); the hostage crisis and its aftereffects, Nacos (1994); the Islamic revolution and the hostage crisis, Dowling (1989); Iraq-Iran war, Casey (2003); the earthquake in Iran, Keshishian (1997); the Iran-U.S. soccer match, Delgado (2003); and the plane crash, Entman (1991)]. Also in some other studies, the focus was not on Iran, but on the coverage of Muslims, Islam, or Islamic women, which included Iranians among others [the coverage of foreign news, Paletz and Entman (1981); Islam, Hafez (2000) and Khawaja (2000); Islamic women, Roushanzamir (2004); and Muslims, McGowan (1993)].

This study is important because, unlike earlier studies, it examined the portrayal of Iran in the national media—*Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New York Times*—during a 28-year period—in which there were 10 critical events affecting Iranian-U.S. relations.

The critical events were selected based on the list of world events in the book “Facts on File,” available online in LexisNexis, and also by using the “Iran chronology” in the library catalogue. The 10 critical events and the dates that they began are as follows:



- The shah's visit to the United States in 1977
- The Islamic revolution in 1979
- The hostage crisis in 1979
- Iraq-Iran war in 1980
- Iran Air Airbus downing in 1988
- Ayatollah Khomeini's death in 1989
- U.S. embargo on Iran in 1995
- Iran's presidential election in 1997
- Bush's characterization of Iran as one of the "axis of evil" countries in 2002
- Iran's nuclear proliferation in 2004

The findings of the study indicated the use of frames by *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New York Times* and determined the impact of politics on news coverage and news frames. Entman (1991) noted that "frames reside in the specific properties of the news narrative that encourage those perceiving and thinking about events to develop particular understandings of them. News frames are constructed from and embodied in the keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images emphasized in a news narrative" (p. 7).

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Iran*

The Middle East, and Iran as its center, has been strategically important for the United States, mostly because of its oil reservoirs. Said (1981) noted that Iran was an important ally that “lost its imperial regime, its army, its value in American global calculations during a year of tumultuous revolutionary upheaval virtually unprecedented on so huge a scale since October 1917” (p. 5). Research showed that this change in the political system of Iran in 1979 brought a great change in its diplomatic relations with the United States. This change resulted in changes in Iran’s news coverage in U.S. media. As Key (1989) noted, “in the U.S., and other technologically advanced societies, the major instrument for the manufacture of reality perceptions is the mass communication industry” (p. 99). After the United States’ “island of security in the Middle East” (Smith, 1999, p. 48) was lost, U.S. mainstream media portrayed Iran differently. In his analysis, Said (1981) noted: “If aggressive hyperbole is one journalistic mode commonly used to describe Iran, the other is misapplied euphemism, usually stemming from ignorance but often deriving from a barely concealed ideological hostility” (p. 108).

Paletz and Entman (1981) noted that “on foreign policy, the mass media tend to speak in a monolithic voice, to report a narrow perspective, to limit rather than expand public knowledge of alternative possibilities. The consequences: The mass media are conduits of elites’ vision of America’s overseas interests in all but the most exceptional circumstances” (p. 215). Said (1981), who studied Iran’s coverage in the U.S. media at

the time of the Islamic revolution, noted that “the hardest thing to understand about the editorial and feature-reporting sector of media is why, almost without exception, it regarded the movement that overthrew the Pahlavi dynasty . . . with such disdain and suspicions” (p. 106). Ramsey Clark (1999), former Attorney General of the United States during the Johnson Administration, noted that “the United States intends to have its way and serve its own interests, with Iraq, Cuba, Libya, Iran, the Sudan, and many other countries whatever the consequences to the liberties and rights of those who live there. The United States’ control over and its concerted action with the mass media enables it to demonize such countries, its victims, for ‘terrorism,’ threats to world peace and human rights violations at the very time it rains Tomahawk cruise missiles on them and motivates and finances armed insurrections and violence against them” (p. 61).

Paletz and Entman (1981, p. 232) noted that “because news emanating from the less industrialized countries consists primarily of violence, conflict, and disaster, Americans may believe life in these countries to be more strife-ridden, less desirable, than life at home. Foreigners are seen as less willing to compromise, more irrational than Americans. The mass media show ideology and fervent religious convictions as dangerous, animating violence in Iran, Lebanon, and elsewhere.”

Said (1981) noted that negation of the Iranian revolution was what mainstream media were pursuing: “With very few exceptions, the media’s purpose seemed to be to wage a kind of war against Iran” (p. 95). Gitlin (1980) noted that media form people’s ideology: “Every day, directly or indirectly, by statement and omission, in pictures and words, in entertainment and news and advertisement, the mass media produce fields of

definition and association, symbol and rhetoric, through which ideology becomes manifest and concrete” (p. 2).

Studying the U.S. coverage of Iran’s revolution, Paletz and Entman (1981) noted that the dominant theme of American press coverage was typified by repeated use of such words as “mobs,” “riots,” “anarchy,” and “rampage,” reinforcing the picture of a minority of zealots while “the shah was virtually never identified as a ‘dictator.’ Instead, his ‘autocratic’ ways were juxtaposed with descriptions of his royal jet-set lifestyle and his dynastic lineage” (p. 214). Goffman (1974) assumed that definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization that govern events and individual’s subjective involvement in them, which is the definition of frame.

According to Entman (1993), framing includes the process of selection and salience: “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52).

### *Islam*

Islam, the dominant religion in the Middle East, and in particular Iran, was associated with violence and it contributed to the negative presentation of Iran. As Hafez (2000) wrote: “Images of Islam and the Middle East in Western media systems are often confined to ‘fanatic fundamentalists’ [and] ‘anti-Western terrorists’” (p. xi). Hafez criticized Western media perceptions of the Middle East and Islam, which he said are based on simplistic media critiques, and noted that “news items often contain stereotypes

and discursive techniques that have a particularist impact on international media agendas and on the media consumers' images of the world. Instead of representing global or, at least, pluralist views, the images presented in the news are all too often fragmented" (p. 4). Keshishian (2000) also examined how Iranians were portrayed during the revolution: "In addition to being religious fanatics and backward, [Iranians] were also referred to as crazy, stubborn, and terrorists" (p. 100). Entman (1991), referring to sizing as the essence of framing, noted that "the frame of a news portrait can be enlarged so that media reports may penetrate the consciousness of a mass public that is minimally aware of most specific issues and events. Or the frame can be shrunk to miniaturize an event, diminishing the amount, prominence, and duration of coverage, and thus mass awareness" (pp. 9-10).

Like Hafez, Khawaja (2000) noted that "most Western scholars view Islamic 'fundamentalism' as a virtual reality, essentially a religiously dominated doctrine to challenge the aims of the New World Order and to threaten the status-quo of Western democratic values, political systems, economic and financial institutions well established to control the global economy, politics, and human progress systems. Whereas, Muslim intellectuals and policy makers view the 'fundamentalism' notion as an exclusively Western-manufactured myth aimed at demeaning the basic precepts of the Islamic religion and misrepresenting the Islamic activism against the colonial values and systems as anti-Western militancy and terrorism" (p. 5).

Paletz and Entman (1981), in their studies of U.S. coverage of foreign news, noted that certain kinds of foreign news are pre-eminent: "Such news is closely

connected to significant leaders; is usually perceived as negative, replete with violence and destruction; and, most important, concerns political threats to American diplomatic and economic interests. . . . Ambiguous foreign events are likely to be reported to conform to familiar expectations and stereotypes; their ambiguity is underemphasized” (p. 216).

Hafez (2000) classified articles about Islam within three different approaches: “Islam viewed under aspects of foreign and global politics, mainly as sociopolitical and cultural factors in developments inside the Muslim World and as a factor in international relationships; Islam viewed under aspects of domestic politics, mainly as a source of conflicts and threat caused by the immigration of Muslims; and Islam viewed as an ally against or as a threat to the West” (p. 91). Paletz and Entman (1981) argued that the kinds of words and their usage in the news affect the audience: “Words often become symbols that transmit meaning beyond their mere definitions. The interpretations people make of foreign news, the attitudes they develop, are influenced by the ways the stories are written” (p. 221).

### *Women*

In addition to Islam, veiled women were also one of the frames used in U.S. media portraying Iranian women. Roushanzamir (2004), in her studies of the U.S. media, found that “almost without exception, stories, whatever their actual content, are anchored by the graphic illustrations of Iranian women, veiled in the apparently impenetrable black chador [veil]” (p. 10). Roushanzamir found that Iranian women are portrayed in the U.S. media either as meekly house- or chador-bound, or as armed Islamics.

Gitlin (1980), discussing the purposeful selection of certain frames in media, noted that “media are mobile spotlights, not passive mirrors of the society; selectivity is the instrument of their action. A news story adopts a certain frame and rejects or downplays material that is discrepant. A story is a choice, a way of seeing an event that also amounts to a way of screening from sight” (pp. 49-50). Roushanzamir (2004) also stated that Iranian women are used in the U.S. media to signify horror and violence. “The prevailing mode is that descriptions of dress, and mainly the chador, remain the key news hook for descriptions of Iranian women, and in turn, Iranian women, the key news hook for Iran” (p. 23).

Paletz and Entman (1981), discussing the importance of mass media in forming people’s perceptions, noted that much of what adults learn about the world and government decisions and activities stems from the mass media: “Media content is crucial: different content, different effects” (p. 9).

#### *Hostage crisis and revolution*

Another important issue that contributed to the negative coverage of Iran in the U.S. media was the hostage crisis. On November 4, 1979, almost along with the revolution, the U.S. Embassy in Tehran was seized and 52 American hostages were held for 444 days. Larson (1986) noted that the captivity period “sustained high levels of network news attention, accounting for approximately three-quarters of all news stories from Iran during the entire 1972-1981 decade” (p. 15).

Keshishian (2000) wrote that the hostage incident provoked considerable anti-Iranian reaction among Americans that did not exist in the mid-1970s: “The seeds of

these negative sentiments against Iran had been planted already by the U.S. mass media during the Iranian revolution” (p. 99). Said (1981) noted that, after the American hostages were held in Tehran, “the consensus immediately came into play, decreeing more or less that only what took place concerning the hostages was important about Iran; the rest of the country, its political processes, its daily life, its personalities, its geography and history, were eminently ignorable: Iran and the Iranian people were defined in terms of whether they were for or against the United States” (p. 50). Nacos (1994) agreed with Said in that media coverage of hostage situations tended to favor sources closely associated with the hostages and their families, and they ignored Iranians’ concerns. Said (1981) noted: “The burning (and selling) of Iranian flags by irate Americans became a regular pastime, and the press faithfully reported this kind of patriotism” (p. 81). Said criticized the way U.S. media covered the crisis and noted that “no expert, media personality, or government official seemed to wonder what might have happened if a small fraction of the time spent on isolating, dramatizing, and covering the unlawful embassy seizure and the hostage return had been spent exposing oppression and brutality during the ex-shah’s regime” (p. xxiv).

Phillips (2001) noted that the key news about the hostage crisis was censored. He said that one of the top 10 censored stories of 1979 was the news about the embassy seizure written by Eqbal Ahmad in April 1979:

If the mass media had accurately reported events in Iran in 1978 and 1979, the American people might not have been so shocked when militant Iranian students seized the American Embassy and held more than 50 American hostages. The U.S. media were telling Americans that the shah of Iran had a ‘broad base of popular support’ while Amnesty International described Shah Pahlavi’s regime as the ‘world’s worst violator of human rights.’ The shah’s strong ties to the United



States through Henry Kissinger and David Rockefeller served to inflame Iranian nationalists, climaxing with the seizure of the embassy. (p. 205)

Said (1981) noted that the mainstream media ignored the shah's violation of human rights: "Most feature writers and editorialists contented themselves with euphemism. There seemed to be agreement that the Iranians had committed an act of war against the United States Embassy, although virtually no one also thought that what the United States did to Iran by overthrowing Mosaddeq in 1953 was an act of war" (p. 109).

The reason for overthrowing Mosaddeq, the anti-shah nationalist, was that the United States needed a safe and stable base in the Middle East, and in spite of national opposition, it had given power to Shah Pahlavi to have him as his selected agent in the region (Said, 1981). Schaffer (2003) noted that, "in August 1953 in Iran, Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, the son and successor to Reza Shah Pahlavi, was restored to power by outside powers, especially the United States, after having been briefly overthrown in a coup led by a fervent nationalist named Muhammad Mosaddeq . . . who opposed Pahlavi's policy of granting foreign powers control of Iran's oil industry" (p. 18).

Said (1981) interpreted the hostage crisis as an anti-shah movement and noted that "[Iranians] were responding, not just to the former shah's entry into the United States, but to what they perceived as a long history of humiliation inflicted on them by superior American power: Past American actions 'spoke' to them of constant intervention in their lives, and therefore as Muslims who, they felt, had been held prisoner in their own country, they took American prisoners and held them as hostages on United States territory, the Tehran embassy" (p. xvi).

Dowling (1989), like Said, criticized the lack of media attention to the reasons behind the embassy seizure, writing that “refuting the possibility that the action of the Iranians might be justified by their ends or defense of some principle(s), the media denied the validity of the ends and argued that no principles justified the Iranian actions” (p. 135). Said (1981) noted that “the American consumers of news were given a sustained diet of information about a people, a culture, a religion—really no more than a poorly defined and badly misunderstood abstraction—always, in the case of Iran, represented as militant, dangerous, and anti-American” (p. 77). By constantly repeating “anti-American,” “dangerous,” and “violent,” the media instilled the pessimistic view toward Iran. According to Entman (1993), “texts can make bits of information more salient by placement or repetition, or by associating them with culturally familiar symbols” (p. 53).

Keshishian (2000) in line with Said stated that “what was a relatively positive, though still stereotypical and oversimplified, pre-revolution and pre-hostage image of Iran—hospitality, Persian carpets, oil, and caviar—vanished. Iran suddenly was portrayed as the United States’ primary enemy and a new source of instability in the Near East, replacing the defunct ‘Soviet threat’ ” (p. 100). Larson (1986) also found that prior to the revolution, the major concerns of OPEC (Organization of Oil Producing Countries) oil prices, U.S. arm sales, and the former president’s or the shah’s travel accounted for much of the U.S. media coverage. In his study of television news, Larson found that Iran appeared in only about 1% of all international news items from 1972 through 1977. When the United States and Iran had favorable relations, the U.S. press hardly mentioned Iran and, as Larson noted, when it did, “the coverage was usually in the context of either

U.S. arms sales to the shah's government or issues related to Iranian oil" (1986, p. 116). With the outbreak of the revolution, Iran suddenly became the core of the news; but, as Keshishian (2000) noted, it was not a comprehensive picture: "No effort was made to explain the historical development of the revolution or the anti-U.S. sentiments in Iran" (p. 99). Through his studies, Nacos (1994) found that the Iranian situation remained the most extensively covered news during more than 14 months after the seizure of the U.S. Embassy, but the coverage was not an unbiased one.

Unlike criticizing Iranian leaders, the mainstream media offered no criticism of U.S. leaders. "While the Carter Administration tried to pressure the Iranian authorities to end the hostage situation by freezing Iranian assets in American banks, by ordering an oil embargo, and by initiating deportation procedures against Iranians, there was no domestic criticism of Carter's crisis management" (Nacos, 1994, p. 24). "[To Carter] indeed, anyone who disliked America and held Americans captive was dangerous and sick, beyond rationality, beyond humanity, beyond common decency" (Said, 1981, p. xxvi).

Said, questioning the validity of the hostage crisis news, noted that "with approximately three hundred reporters in Tehran during the first days of the hostage crisis, and without a Persian-speaker among them, it was no wonder that all the media reports coming out of Iran repeated essentially the same threadbare accounts of what was taking place; in the meantime, of course, other events and political processes in Iran that could not easily be characterized as instances of 'the Islamic mentality' or of 'anti-Americanism' went unnoticed" (1981, p. xii).

Larson, studying the media coverage of Iran during the revolution, noted that “television coverage of Iran in the early 1970s, along with most print media coverage, ignored a body of history from the 1950s and 1960s that might have helped place the current developments in context. Instead, three-quarters of all coverage in a decade came during the 444 days of the hostage crisis, and a great deal of that consisted of saturation coverage of selected episodes. Little attention was devoted to the causes and precedents of the hostage crisis” (1986, p. 20). Larson found that “Iran accounted for 26.3% of all international news broadcast by the networks in 1979 and 32%, or nearly a third, of such news during 1980” (p. 15).

U.S. media demonized Iranian leaders: “[In hostage crisis] media accounts depicted Khomeini as old and sick, mentally deficient, morally deficient, spiritually bankrupt, politically opportunistic, and an incompetent national leader” (Dowling, 1989, p. 131). Like Dowling, Keshishian (2000) also referred to intensifying the negative perceptions by references to Iranian leaders as “ ‘anti-modern,’ ‘fundamentalist,’ ‘leftist-backed,’ and ‘backward’ ” (p. 99). Dowling further noted: “Consistent with fantasies depicting the Khomeini persona and his fellow leaders as incompetent and immoral were fantasies depicting Iran as poorly governed that possessed a poor legal system, and on the verge of collapse from these weaknesses and other threats” (1989, p. 140).

As Goffman (1974) noted, frame organizes more than meaning; it also organizes involvement. Entman (1991), in a discussion on framing, noted that “by providing, repeating, and thereby reinforcing words and visual images that reference some ideas but

not others, frames work to make some ideas more salient in the text, others less so—and others entirely invisible. The frame does not eliminate all inconsistent information; texts inevitably contain some incongruent data. But through repetition, placement, and reinforcing associations with each other, the words and images that comprise the frame render one basic interpretation more readily discernible, comprehensible, and memorable than others” (p. 7).

Moreover the actions of Iranians in bargaining over the release of hostages were also degraded in the media: “These actions were characterized by promises, changing terms, absurd demands, and other frustrating behaviors. These behaviors were consistent with the themes of Iranians as liars, hypocrites, criminals, and inept leaders” (Dowling, 1989, p. 136). Dowling, showing the difference in the portrayal of Iran and America, noted that “U.S. actions were sanctioned by the rightness of the American cause, the need to preserve America, the moral and other principles underlying U.S. actions, and by God. . . . The print media were full of references to the Christian God” (p. 137).

Key (1989), referring to stereotypical generalizations, noted that “audiences, with the reinforcement of media, construct perceptually a fantasized image of Libyans, North Koreans, Nicaraguans, Palestinians, Iranians, Russians, or whoever appears as the antagonist of the moment” (p. 86). McGowan (1993) also focused on media stereotypes, noting that the negative stereotypes and Western media portrayal of Muslim culture as cruel, foreign, irrational, intolerant, undemocratic, and violent began during the oil crisis of the 1970s and worsened with the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Iran and the bombing of the World Trade Center. Kamalipour and Carilli (1998), in line with McGowan, noted

that “media stereotypes produce at least two tangibly deleterious effects. For cultural nonmembers, stereotypes can contain and limit the potential of a specific cultural group. For cultural members, stereotypes can become internalized components of identity that insidiously affect members’ views of their opportunities or choices” (p. xx).

Keshishian (2000), criticizing transferring false information to the audience, wrote: “It is sad and dangerous that instead of the media offering a true understanding of a country’s unique politico-economic situation and examining the incident in a global and historical context and thereby allowing the audience to learn from it, the U.S. mass media gave the public a one-dimensional picture. What the public was offered were slogans and caricatures that further colored those stereotypical messages, which were easy to recognize and easy to remember, and which have, for the most part, remained in the mind of the public. Those images still persist” (p. 102). “All in all, television, the daily press, and the weekly news magazines reported Iran with nowhere near the insight and impressive understanding of what was taking place there” (Said, 1981, p. 117). Rosen (1998), one of the 52 Americans held hostage in Iran—almost 20 years after the incident—wrote that “Americans must acknowledge that the Iranian revolution’s violent anti-Americanism was rooted in real injuries to the Iranian people and that Iran has abandoned much of its radicalism in the past nine years” (p. A31).

The maximum coverage of Iran in the U.S. media was during the hostage crisis: “Although the news media dropped Iran as a subject once the hostages were released, the negative image of Iran had not been washed from the public mind” (Keshishian, 2000, p. 101). Larson (1986) noted that “coverage of Iran during 1981 accounted for only 8.8%

of all international news, as compared with 32% the preceding year. Furthermore, two-thirds of the coverage accorded Iran was concentrated during the first six months of 1981. By the last quarter of 1981, attention to Iran had come full circle, falling to the low levels shown in the 1972-1977 period” (pp. 18-19).

### *Portrayals of Iran*

Another event that was covered by the U.S. media was the eight-year Iraq-Iran war. Casey (2003) referred to the use of chemical weapons by the Iraqis, saying that it was ignored by the U.S. media and that the U.S. government attempted to shift the blame onto the Iranians after the first reports of the use of chemical weapons by the Iraqis. Paletz and Entman (1981) noted that “the media are prime agencies of adult political socialization. Through them, the system is made to seem right and good even after it has been headed by illegitimate officials who commit illegal acts” (p. 166).

To show the U.S. media coverage of Iran, Keshishian (1997) examined the coverage of two earthquakes, one in Armenia in 1988, the other in northwest Iran in 1990. Keshishian found that the coverage of the earthquakes was more sympathetic toward Armenians—who had close relations with the United States—and less sympathetic toward Iranians. She found the difference in content, language, and layout of the news reports.

Adams and Avison (2003) noted that the way an event is presented profoundly influences people’s understanding of that particular issue. They added that the same problem can be represented differently and, depending on the way it is represented, it can have considerable influence on understanding and the resultant decision-making.

Coverage of the United States-Iran soccer match at the 1998 World Cup in France, almost 20 years after the hostage crisis and the revolution, was studied by Delgado (2003), who found media frames in the coverage. He noted that the match was framed in political terms and that the print media turned to the familiar political and ideological frames for the relationship and interactions between the two nations. As McQuail (2000) explained: "Framing is a way of giving some interpretation to isolated items of fact. It is almost unavoidable for journalists to do this and in so doing departing from pure 'objectivity' and introducing some (albeit unintended) bias" (p. 343).

The portrayal of Iran's plane crash was another event that was studied by Entman (1991) who examined contrasting news frames that led to different coverage of similar incidents. On September 1, 1983, a Soviet fighter plane shot down Korean Air Lines Flight 007, killing its 269 passengers and crew. On July 3, 1988, a U.S. Navy ship, the Vincennes, shot down Iran Air Flight 655, killing its 290 passengers and crew: "In both cases, military officials identified a passenger plane as a possibly hostile target; in both cases, the perpetrating nation's officials claimed the shooting was justifiable under the circumstances, [but] for the first [Korean Air Lines Flight], the frame emphasized the moral bankruptcy and guilt of the perpetrating nation; for the second, [Iran Air Flight] the frame de-emphasized guilt and focused on the complex problems of operating military high technology" (p. 6). In fact, Entman found that KAL, presented as a misfortune, was portrayed as more important than Iran Air. McQuail (2000), in his discussion on framing noted that, "the more distant the events, the easier it is to achieve some consensual framing, since the sources of alternative views have less access and the audience is less



personally involved” (p. 344). Therefore, “Americans would have reacted much more strongly to their compatriot’s deaths on the KAL flight than to Iranian’s deaths even if the volume of reporting had been the same” (Entman, 1991, p. 10). Entman further noted that “the framing words and images inserted KAL into a moral discourse, while confining Iran Air to a technical one” (p. 11). Entman’s study also showed that there was more empathy for KAL victims who were humanized by verbal and visual messages. Through this comparison, Entman considered five traits of media texts for frames, which are: importance judgments, agency, identification, categorization, and generalization.

Roushanzamir (2004) noted that Iran’s negative coverage in U.S. media intensified after September 11, 2001: “After the explosion at the World Trade Center and Pentagon, President Bush . . . publicly cast Iran as one point of an ‘axis of evil’: Iran, Iraq, and North Korea” (p. 10).

McQuail (2000) stated that “the more powerful the source and the more control of information flow, the more extra-media influence there is on the framing process” (p. 344). According to Ryan, Carragee, and Meinhofer (2001) frames organize discourse, including news stories, by their patterns of selection, emphasis, and exclusion. They noted that, by framing political issues, social actors define what is and what is not relevant to the issue.

#### *U.S. policy toward Iran*

The United States and Iran have had changeable and shaky relations during the past 30 years. Houghton (2001) noted that there was a quarter-century of active American support for the shah prior to the Islamic revolution. According to the U.S.

Department of State, on April 7, 1980, the United States broke diplomatic relations with Iran, and on April 24, 1981, the Swiss government assumed representation of U.S. interests in Iran and the Pakistani government represents Iranian interests in the United States.

As Myddelton (1996) wrote, “Iran and the United States have been at loggerheads for 16 years, regularly accusing one another of terrorism and arrogance. But over the last few weeks, relations between the two have taken a decidedly nasty turn—moving away from a traditional trading of insults, toward more open confrontation” (p. 13).

Myddelton noted that the U.S. embargo in June of 1995 and Israeli’s warning of Iran’s attempt to acquire nuclear weapons technology in July of 1996 worsened the two countries’ relations. According to the U.S. State Department Web site, at present, commercial relations between Iran and the United States are restricted by U.S. sanctions and consist mainly of Iranian purchases of food and medical products and U.S. purchases of carpets and food. The U.S. government prohibits most trade with Iran.

Monshipouri (2004), who examined U.S. foreign policy toward Iran after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., found that the two countries’ relations moved toward more enmity, especially after January 29, 2002, when President Bush called the three countries of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea an “axis of evil.” She also noted that, before the outbreak of the war with Iraq, U.S. views toward Iran showed a tactical change and the United States temporarily retreated from the “axis of evil” characterization. Monshipouri contended, however, that the Bush administration’s position toward Iran has been ambiguous. The U.S. State Department

Web site stated that there are serious obstacles to improving relations between the two countries. It called Iran a state sponsor of terrorism and stated that normal relations are impossible until Iran's policies change. According to the same Web site, the U.S. government defines its areas of objectionable Iranian behavior as the following: Iranian efforts to acquire nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; its support for and involvement in international terrorism; its support for violent opposition to the Middle East peace process; and its dismal human rights record.

This study sought to determine whether the press supported U.S. policy toward Iran. Through a quantitative and qualitative framing analysis of *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New York Times*, this study explored the following research questions:

*Research questions*

1. Did the U.S. media cover Iran in such a way as to parallel U.S. foreign policy on Iran during each of the following critical events in each of the news periodicals? (The critical events are as follows: The shah's visit to the United States in 1977, the hostage crisis in 1979, the Islamic revolution in 1979, the Iraq-Iran war in 1980, Iran Air Airbus downing in 1988, Ayatollah Khomeini's death in 1989, the U.S. embargo on Iran in 1995, Iran's presidential election in 1997, Bush's characterization of Iran as one of the "axis of evil" countries in 2002, and Iran's nuclear proliferation in 2004.)
2. Were there changes in *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New York Times* coverage of Iran over time? If yes, how did the coverage change over time? In particular,

how did the coverage of the shah's 1977 visit compare with each of the other nine critical events?

3. How did *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New York Times* frame Iran during each mentioned critical period?

## CHAPTER 3

## METHOD

The framing study examined the way Iran and Iranians were portrayed in *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New York Times* during 10 critical events from 1977 to 2004.

The 10 critical events include the shah's visit to the United States in 1977, the Islamic revolution in 1979, the hostage crisis in 1979, the Iraq-Iran war in 1980, the Iran Air Airbus downing in 1988, Ayatollah Khomeini's death in 1989, the U.S. embargo on Iran in 1995, Iran's presidential election in 1997, Bush's characterization of Iran as one of the "axis of evil" countries—Iran, Iraq, and North Korea—in 2002, and Iran's nuclear proliferation in 2004.

The extent to which the coverage was consistent with and conformed to U.S. government's policy on Iran was also examined as well as whether the media used stereotypes.

The diplomatic relations between Iran and the United States have undergone many changes during the past three decades. Once a U.S. ally, Iran became a U.S. enemy after the Islamic revolution in 1979. To determine whether there were parallels in the framing of Iran, the news media coverage of Iran was compared with the official U.S. policy toward Iran in the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*, which was taken from the LexisNexis database, microfilm, U.S. State Department official Web site, and the actual hard copy in the King Library at San Jose State University. In addition to comparing the frames in the news periodicals and the U.S. policy in the *Department of State Bulletin*, the tone of each was measured to determine the degree of favor or disfavor through

which Iran was viewed. Since the research was a longitudinal study, it was possible to trace the development of the frames and tone over time.

The method was a quantitative framing analysis and a parallel content analysis of the texts as well as an examination of the articles on Iran. *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New York Times* were selected because they are regarded as national, prestige publications that provide comprehensive coverage of world events and because they are influential worldwide. The population for study was the news stories, news analyses, editorials, and commentaries published in the three periodicals during the 10 critical events between 1977 and 2004. These years were selected because they include the period before and after the shah. As discussed earlier, the hostage crisis, as well as the Islamic revolution, occurred in 1979—the year U.S.-Iran political relations underwent tremendous change.

The articles published in *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New York Times* during the year the specific event happened were examined for each critical event to see whether the periodicals differed in their coverage, amount, frames, and tone.

The relevant articles were coded according to the number of related articles in each critical period, date of articles, dateline of articles, type of articles (news and news analysis, editorials, and op-ed pieces), frame types (episodic and thematic), and content types (coverage of event and U.S.-Iran relationship). In addition, the tone of articles, depiction of Iran in terms of stability, friendliness, nuclear power, economic cooperation, security cooperation, and military cooperation, use of negative and positive frames about Iran and Iranians, and portrayal of Iran, Iranian leader, Islam, and women were coded. For more detailed information, see the codebook in Appendix A.

To identify frames, the researcher made a list of the (1) major attributes that were applied to Iran and (2) the stereotypical words or phrases that were used in all of the studies discussed in the literature review. In addition, the researcher randomly examined news stories, news analyses, editorials, and commentaries published in the three publications to make a second list of attributes and stereotypes that were most frequently used to apply to Iran. From the two lists, frames and stereotypes that were used in the framing and content analysis were developed. The tone was measured by a 3-point Likert scale—positive, neither positive nor negative, and negative.

#### *Intercoder reliability*

To determine intercoder reliability, the researcher trained a second coder, who is American. The second coder was given 10% (75 of 752) of the articles randomly selected from among the articles included in the study.

To double code articles, a random number was selected between 1 and 10—because there were 10 critical events—and the articles were coded accordingly. The number that was chosen was four. Therefore, article number four was the first article that was double-coded. The number 10 (725/75) was added to four (the first article for double-coding) to determine the second and the rest of the articles for double-coding. The data from the second coding set for the 50 variables was compared one by one with the first coding set and the agreement percentage was calculated using the Scott's pi formula, Poindexter and McCombs (2000, p. 204).

$$\pi = \frac{\% \text{ observed agreement} - \% \text{ expected agreement}}{1 - \% \text{ expected agreement}}$$

The overall reliability was 93%. The reliability for each of the 50 variables is listed in the codebook in Appendix A.

The software program SPSS 14.0 for Windows was used to analyze the data. Statistical tests that were used to answer the research questions were *t*-tests and chi-square tests.



## CHAPTER 4

## FINDINGS

This chapter provides a discussion of the research findings and an interpretation of the framing analysis.

To answer the first research question—“Did the U.S. media cover Iran in such a way as to parallel U.S. foreign policy on Iran during each of the 10 critical events?—coverage in the national media was compared with articles in the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* that reflected U. S. policy on Iran.

Since *Newsweek* and *Time* publish only once a week and have limited space, their coverage was not nearly as extensive as that of *The New York Times*; thus the coverage of the three—*Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New York Times*—was combined to form a national news media category.

*Critical period 1, 1977: The shah’s visit*

The first event covers the last visit of the shah with U.S. officials before his fall. Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was invited by the then-U.S. President Jimmy Carter for a state visit on November 15-16. Oil prices and Iran’s security interests were the main subjects of their discussion. Iran and the United States enjoyed good bilateral relations at that time. *The New York Times*, in its November 16, 1977 article titled “Carter Lauds Shah on His Leadership,” (p. A12) reported that President Carter assured the shah that the United States would continue to honor its longstanding relations with Iran and praised the shah for maintaining a strong, stable, and progressive Iran under his leadership.

The paper further reported that President Carter reaffirmed that he fully supported the special relationship that the two countries had developed over the last 30 years and gave his personal commitment to further strengthening their ties. The president assured the shah that the United States would cooperate with Iran in its economic and social development and in continuing to help meet its security needs.

*The New York Times*, in another article on November 17, 1977, also reported that President Carter reaffirmed the U.S. support for a strong Iran, saying that Iran's security was of the highest priority and that he wished to meet Iran's security needs.

It further reported that the two leaders discussed an agreement on the peaceful nuclear-energy uses that would allow the United States to sell Iran six to eight nuclear reactors as a part of Iran's 200-reactor program.

As shown in Table 1, during the shah's visit, there was a significant difference in the coverage by the national media—*The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*—and the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*. Reflecting U.S. policy, the tone of the *Bulletin*'s articles was uncritical (3) as compared to the more neutral (2.2) tone of the articles in the same period written in the national news media.

Table 1

*A t-test Comparison of Tone toward Iran in the National News Media—The New York Times, Newsweek, and Time—and The U.S. Department of State Bulletin*

<i>Event</i>	<i>National News Media</i>		<i>U.S. State Dept. Bulletin</i>		<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	
Shah's visit (1977)	41	2.2	6	3.0	.001
Revolution (1979)	86	1.5	8	3.0	<.000
Hostage crisis (1979)	71	1.4	6	1.5	.563
Iraq-Iran war (1980)	162	1.4	31	1.2	.184
Airbus downing (1988)	41	1.5	19	1.3	.395
Khomeini's death (1989)	39	1.3	4	1.3	.816
U.S. embargo (1995)	30	1.3	9	1.0	.086
Iran's election (1997)	36	1.6	—	—	—
Axis of evil (2002)	34	1.5	9	1.1	.057
Nuclear program (2004)	104	1.4	16	1.0	.019

*Note.* *n* represents number of articles; means range from 1 to 3, with 1 representing a critical tone, 2 representing a neither critical nor uncritical tone, and 3 representing an uncritical tone.

*Critical period 2, 1979: The Islamic revolution*

During the second critical event—the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979—the monarchy system, supported by the United States, was toppled and the Islamic republic headed by Ayatollah Khomeini came to power. *The New York Times* wrote in its January 5, 1979 issue that it was feared that the Iranian crisis had raised doubts about the ability of the United States to defend one of its strongest supporters in the area. In its January 22, 1979 edition, *The New York Times*, in a report titled “New anti-American wave spreads in Iran,” reported how hostility and anti-American sentiments were on the rise in Iran, contending that was the outcome of a revolution headed by a hard-line Shiite Muslim leader, Ayatollah Khomeini.

As shown in Table 1, during the Islamic revolution, there was a highly significant difference in the portrayal by the national media—*The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*—and the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*. The results showed that U.S. policy had not yet turned critical toward Iran. The *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*’s articles were uncritical (3) of Iran; in contrast, the national media tone tended to be somewhat critical (1.5).

*Critical period 3, 1979: The hostage crisis*

The study of the third event, the hostage crisis in 1979 showed that on November 4, 1979, a few months after the Islamic revolution, the U.S. Embassy in Tehran was seized and 52 American hostages were held for 444 days. The U.S. government reacted strongly to this event.

*The New York Times* wrote in its editorial on November 9, 1979:

Iran's student warriors may not know that, but Ayatollah Khomeini does. He knows that Washington tried to appease him by discouraging the shah from settling here in the first place. The Ayatollah also knows that the Carter Administration gave him military aid to crush various rebels and encouraged American business to help rebuild his economy. If all that was not enough to preserve an elementary diplomatic civility, it can only be because the Ayatollah needed this contest of will. The suspicion grows that to salvage this power in the streets of Tehran, he found it necessary to reopen a unifying battle against the shah and America. No shameful ransom will dissolve such calculated hostility. (p. A34)

In its November 12, 1979 edition, *The New York Times* wrote about the angry reaction of residents of one community to the crisis, quoting one resident as saying: "I think the time has come to move in and use physical force. I am afraid we are not going to do anything about it. We ought to turn the job over to the Israelis. They would know what to do" (p. A10). The story quoted another resident: "Immediate economic sanctions against Iran ought to be employed" (p. A10). Another reaction reported by the paper was: "We ought to round up all the Iranian students in this country, put them in one center and swap them for the Americans" (p. A10). *The New York Times*, in its November 15, 1979 column called for restabilizing Iran: "We should now impose a food embargo on Iran" (p. A31). It further wrote: "Assume that the shah ultimately returns to Mexico and the American hostages are released; do we turn the other cheek, forgive and forget? On the contrary—we should treat this kidnapping with great seriousness and turn this provocation to our advantage" (p. A31).

The tone in *Newsweek* was not much different from that of *The New York Times*. The magazine in its November 19, 1979 issue wrote: "The sight was calculated to terrorize and humiliate. In a U.S. embassy compound swarming with a rabble-like cadre of armed Iranians and daubed with hostile signs, captors paraded about 60 blindfolded

American diplomats and marine guards” (p. 61). It further reported that: “the president himself began to set an aggressive new tone for U.S. dealing with Iran” (p. 61). The magazine wrote: “The Carter Administration’s diplomatic objectives, simply put, were to unite the world against Iran and to divide Iran against itself” (p. 61). *Newsweek* in its December 10, 1979 article reflecting frustration of Americans over the crisis quoted President Carter’s mother as saying: “If I had a million dollars to spare, [*sic*] look for someone to kill Khomeini” (p. 41).

Following the hostage crisis, Secretary Cyrus Vance, in a press release published in the February 1980 issue of the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*, asked the Security Council to impose sanctions against Iran to force the government to release the hostages. Also then-President Carter in a speech made to reporters assembled in the White House called the hostage-takers terrorists and said: “In an irresponsible attempt at blackmail, to which the United States will never yield, kidnappers and terrorists, supported by Iranian officials, continue to hold our people under inhumane condition” (p. 53).

As shown in Table 1, during the hostage crisis, there was not a significant difference in the portrayal by the national news media—*The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*—and the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*. The data showed that U.S. policy had turned critical toward Iran, and that the tone of the *Bulletin* remained critical during the next 25 years, indicating an almost progressively negative tone over time.

*Critical period 4, 1980: The Iraq-Iran war*

The fourth critical event—the Iraq-Iran war in 1980—began on September 4 with some border clashes between Iran and Iraq. According to a September 20, 1980 *New York Times*’ article:

Iraq contended that the 1975 border agreement, signed in Algiers by Mr. Hussein and Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, included a provision for turning over to Iraq 90 square miles in the area of Muslims nearby Zein al-Qoas and that the Iranians never carried it out. Iran says the pact did not specify such a turnover. Besides, the new Islamic rulers of Iran say, Iraq did not demand the territory while the shah was in power. (p. 4)

Moreover, attempts to exert full control over the islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tumbs, and Lesser Tumbs by Arabs as well as full control of Shat-al Arab by Iraqis resulted in the act of aggression by Iraq.

As shown in Table 1, during the Iraq-Iran war, there was not a significant difference in the national media—*The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*—and the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*. The results showed that the media and the *Bulletin* were critical toward Iran.

It is worth mentioning that 93 articles out of 162 published in *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time* in this period were either entirely about the hostage crisis or had a reference to that event. Also 29 articles out of 31 articles published in the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* in this period were either totally about the hostage crisis or had a reference to that era.

*Critical period 5, 1988: The Iran Air Airbus downing*

The fifth event covers the Iran Air Airbus downing in 1988. According to a July 4, 1988 *New York Times*’ article, a U.S. Navy warship in the Persian Gulf shot down an

Iranian passenger plane carrying 290 people. All on board were killed. The Navy said it mistook the plane for a jet fighter.

As shown in Table 1, during the Airbus downing in 1988, there was not a significant difference in the coverage by the national media—*The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*—and the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*.

*Critical period 6, 1989: Ayatollah Khomeini's death*

The sixth period covered Ayatollah Khomeini's death in 1989. On June 4, 1989, Ayatollah Khomeini, the spiritual and political leader of Iran and founder of the Islamic Republic in 1979, died of bleeding in his digestive system. *The New York Times* called him a "foe of U.S." in the headline.

As shown in Table 1, during this era, the national media—*The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*—and the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* were equally critical.

*Critical period 7, 1995: U.S. embargo on Iran*

The seventh critical event was the U.S. embargo on Iran in 1995. In May 1995, President Bill Clinton imposed a trade ban on Iran; the contention was that Iran supported terrorism and was attempting to develop nuclear weapons.

As shown in Table 1, the tone of the articles during this period was not significantly different between the national media—*The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*—and the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*.

*Critical period 8, 1997: Iran's presidential election*

On May 24, 1997, Iranians went to the polls to choose a new president. Voting for a change, they chose Mohammad Khatami, an intellectual and a reformist who was



called by *The New York Times* on May 23, 1997 an “unusual” cleric: “During his years in the Culture Ministry, books and journals circulated that are now banned. He has been teaching university courses about Islamic reform movements.”

Because the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* did not publish any article regarding this event, the coverage of the national media could not be compared with U.S. policy.

*Critical period 9, 2002: Bush’s characterization of Iran as an “axis of evil”*

During the ninth critical event, Bush characterized Iran as one of the “axis of evil” countries. On January 29, 2002, President George W. Bush in his State of the Union address branded Iran, Iraq, and North Korea an “axis of evil.” According to *The New York Times*’ article published on February 8, 2002, President Bush “cited Iran as a potential target for its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and its support for groups like Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad and Hamas that the United States brands as terrorists.”

Washington also accused Tehran of seeking to destabilize Afghanistan by supporting chosen warlords with money and weapons, and giving shelter to fleeing Taliban or al-Qaida fighters.

The United States also contended that Iranians had tried to supply the Palestinian Authority with 50 tons of weapons aboard the freighter *Karine A*, intercepted by Israel on January 3, 2002.

As shown in Table 1, during this period, there was not a significant difference in the national media—*The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*—and the *U.S.*

*Department of State Bulletin*, although the *Bulletin*'s tone (1.1) was more critical than the national media tone (1.5) toward Iran.

*Critical period 10, 2004: Iran's nuclear proliferation*

In 2004, the issue of Iran's nuclear proliferation re-emerged as the most important source of tension between the two countries. In April 2004, the U.S. State Department imposed sanctions against two Russian firms for selling equipment that could assist Iran in its quest for weapons of mass destruction. The Bush Administration contended that Iran's nuclear proliferation was the greatest threat to regional stability.

However, as shown in Table 1, there was a significant difference in the national media—*The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*—and the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* during this period. The result showed that the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* was much more critical (1.0) of Iran than the national media (1.4).

In summary, the study showed that there was a significant difference between the national news media—*The New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*—and the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* in three different critical periods—the shah's visit, the Islamic revolution, and the nuclear proliferation program.

There was no significant difference between the national media and the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* in six different critical periods—the hostage crisis, the Iraq-Iran war, the Airbus downing, Khomeini's death, the U.S. embargo on Iran, and branding Iran as one of the countries in the "axis of evil."

An important finding is that the national news media had a critical attitude toward Iran from the second through the tenth critical periods with the means ranging from 1.3 to

1.6 on a 3-point tone scale in which 1 was critical and 3 was uncritical. It is important to note that the national press did not follow the U.S. State Department's lead in continuing to be uncritical of Iran during the Islamic revolution.

The shah's visit to the United States in 1977 was the only period in which the media did not have a critical tone toward Iran. The shah's visit and the Islamic revolution were the only two periods in which the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* had an uncritical tone toward Iran.

*Comparisons between the first event and the other nine events in the national media*

To answer the second overall research questions—Were there changes in the news magazines—*Newsweek* and *Time*—and *The New York Times* coverage of Iran over time? If yes, how did the coverage change over time? In particular, how did the coverage of the shah's 1977 visit compare with each of the other nine critical events?—articles in the national media during the first event were compared with that of the other nine critical events in the same media.

To provide a context for the study results, the type of articles, datelines, tone, and content type comparisons were made between *The New York Times* and the news magazines—*Time* and *Newsweek*.

Since there were not enough articles in the two magazines—*Time* and *Newsweek*—they were combined to form a magazine category for comparison with *The New York Times*' articles.

*News type: Shah's visit vs. other nine critical event periods.* In this study, articles were categorized as news, editorials, or op-ed pieces. As shown in Table 2, more than

three-fourths of the articles in the news magazines and *The New York Times* in all critical periods were news stories. During the 21-year period from the shah's 1977 visit to the 1997 presidential election in Iran, almost all of the articles in the news magazines were news stories. In fact, with the exception of the hostage crisis and the Iraq-Iran war critical periods, in other six critical periods—the shah's visit, the Islamic revolution, the Airbus downing, Khomeini's death, the U.S. embargo, and Iran's presidential election—all of the coverage was news stories. However, in the last two critical event periods—Iran as one of the “axis of evil” countries and the nuclear proliferation program—articles written in the news magazines were either news stories or op-ed pieces. The largest number of news stories written in *The New York Times* was during the Iraq-Iran war critical event period, when 96% of the articles were news stories and 4% of the articles were op-ed pieces. It is the only critical event period with no editorials. The smallest number of news stories in *The New York Times* was during Iran's presidential election when 78.8% of the articles were news stories, 6.1% of the articles were editorials, and 15.1% of the articles were op-ed pieces. The Airbus downing critical event period was the only time period in which no op-ed pieces were written.

Table 2

*Comparison of the Percentage of Type of Articles in The New York Times and the News Magazines—Newsweek and Time—during 10 Critical Event Periods*

<i>Events</i>	<i>% of article type The New York Times n = 467</i>			<i>% of article type Time and Newsweek n = 177</i>		
	<i>News</i>	<i>Editorial</i>	<i>Op-Ed</i>	<i>News</i>	<i>Editorial</i>	<i>Op-Ed</i>
Shah's visit	91.6	5.6	2.8	100.0	—	—
Revolution	90.0	2.0	8.0	100.0	—	—
Hostage crisis	81.6	12.2	6.2	95.5	—	4.5
Iraq-Iran war	96.0	—	4.0	93.7	—	6.3
Airbus downing	93.1	6.9	—	100.0	—	—
Khomeini's death	88.5	7.7	3.8	100.0	—	—
U.S. embargo	84.0	8.0	8.0	100.0	—	—
Iran's election	78.8	6.1	15.1	100.0	—	—
Axis of evil	80.0	4.0	16.0	88.9	—	11.1
Nuclear program	92.6	5.3	2.1	77.8	—	22.2

*Dateline type: Shah's visit vs. other nine critical event periods.* As shown in Table 3, a comparison of the articles' datelines—only the articles with either Iran or U.S. datelines—indicated that all of the articles in the two magazines during the shah's visit had Iranian cities as datelines, as compared with only 24.1% in *The New York Times* with Iranian datelines. The table also shows that all of the articles about the downing of the Iranian Airbus in the national media had U.S. datelines. Overall, *Time* and *Newsweek* ran more articles with Iranian datelines than did *The New York Times*.

Table 3

*Comparison of the Percentage of Articles with Either U.S. or Iran Datelines in The New York Times and the News Magazines—Newsweek and Time—during 10 Critical Event Periods*

<i>Events</i>	<i>NYT</i> <i>n = 274</i>		<i>Newsweek and Time</i> <i>n = 34</i>	
	<i>% of Iran dateline</i>	<i>% of U.S. dateline</i>	<i>% of Iran dateline</i>	<i>% of U.S. dateline</i>
Shah's visit	24.1	75.9	100.0	—
Revolution	54.1	45.9	100.0	—
Hostage crisis	22.9	77.1	66.7	33.3
Iraq-Iran war	32.7	67.3	28.6	71.4
Airbus downing	—	100.0	—	100.0
Khomeini's death	15.4	84.6	50.0	50.0
U.S. embargo	8.3	91.7	100.0	—
Iran's election	47.6	52.4	100.0	—
Axis of evil	50.0	50.0	100.0	—
Nuclear program	53.3	46.7	—	—

*Content type: Shah's visit vs. other nine critical event periods.* The content analysis included all articles on Iran that were published by *The New York Times* and the two news magazines during the 10 critical event periods. The articles were coded as being either primarily about the relationship between the United States and Iran or about the critical event.

As shown in Table 4, the study of the content of the articles showed that the highest number of articles devoted to the U.S.-Iran relationship in *The New York Times* was during the shah's visit and the lowest number of articles devoted to the U.S.-Iran relationship was during the last critical event, Iran's nuclear program. The highest number of articles published in the two news magazines on the relationship between the United States and Iran was during the Airbus downing and the lowest number of articles on the U.S.-Iran relationship was during the Islamic revolution.



Table 4

*Comparison of Articles Devoted Primarily to Critical Events or to U.S.-Iran Relations in The New York Times and the News Magazines—Newsweek and Time—during 10 Critical Event Periods*

<i>Events</i>	<i>% of content type The New York Times n = 467</i>		<i>% of content type Time and Newsweek n = 177</i>	
	<i>General Iran-U.S. Relations</i>	<i>Critical Event</i>	<i>General Iran-U.S. Relations</i>	<i>Critical Event</i>
Shah's visit	83.3	16.7	20.0	80.0
Revolution	36.0	64.0	2.8	97.2
Hostage crisis	28.6	71.4	—	100.0
Iraq-Iran war	56.6	43.4	76.2	23.8
Airbus downing	41.4	58.6	83.3	16.7
Khomeini's death	76.9	23.1	61.5	38.5
U.S. embargo	56.0	44.0	40.0	60.0
Iran's election	69.7	30.3	—	100.0
Axis of evil	76.0	24.0	33.3	66.7
Nuclear program	9.5	90.5	44.4	55.6

*Article tone: Shah's visit vs. other nine critical event periods.* Table 5 shows that more than 66% of the articles in *The New York Times* and 80% of the articles in the *Time* and *Newsweek* in the first critical event period had neither a critical nor an uncritical tone toward Iran and Iranians. There were no critical articles in the two news magazines during the first period, and less than 6% of the articles written covering the first event in *The New York Times* were critical toward Iran and Iranians. The table also shows that, in seven of the nine other critical event periods, the *Times* did run a small number of articles that were uncritical toward Iran and Iranians. In contrast, none of the articles in the news magazines during the last nine critical event periods were uncritical.

Table 5

*Comparison of the Percentage of Tone of the Articles in The New York Times and the News Magazines—Newsweek and Time—during 10 Critical Event Periods*

<i>Events</i>	<i>% of article tone The New York Times n = 467</i>			<i>% of article tone Time and Newsweek n = 177</i>		
	<i>Critical</i>	<i>Neither critical nor uncritical</i>	<i>Uncritical</i>	<i>Critical</i>	<i>Neither critical nor uncritical</i>	<i>Uncritical</i>
Shah's visit	5.6	66.6	27.8	—	80.0	20.0
Revolution	44.0	50.0	10.0	63.9	36.1	—
Hostage crisis	55.1	40.8	4.1	90.9	9.1	—
Iraq-Iran war	58.6	40.4	1.0	76.2	23.8	—
Airbus downing	44.8	44.8	10.4	100.0	—	—
Khomeini's death	65.4	34.6	—	76.9	23.1	—
U.S. embargo	76.0	24.0	—	60.0	40.0	—
Iran's election	48.5	42.4	9.1	66.7	33.3	—
Axis of evil	44.0	48.0	8.0	77.8	22.2	—
Nuclear program	63.2	32.6	4.2	66.7	33.3	—

As shown in Table 6, there was a significant difference in the coverage by *The New York Times* and the news magazines—*Newsweek* and *Time*—during four critical event periods—the Islamic revolution, the hostage crisis, the Iraq-Iran war, and the Airbus downing. There was no significant difference in the coverage by the paper and the news magazines in the other six critical event periods.

Table 6

*A t-test Comparison of Tone toward Iran in The New York Times and the News Magazines—Newsweek and Time—during 10 Critical Event Periods*

<i>Events</i>	<i>The New York Times</i>		<i>Newsweek and Time</i>		<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	
Shah's visit	36	2.2	5	2.2	.931
Revolution	50	1.6	36	1.4	.036
Hostage crisis	49	1.5	22	1.1	.003
Iraq-Iran war	99	1.4	63	1.2	.018
Airbus downing	29	1.7	12	1.0	.002
Khomeini's death	26	1.4	13	1.2	.475
U.S. embargo	25	1.2	5	1.4	.477
Iran's election	33	1.6	3	1.3	.494
Axis of evil	25	1.6	9	1.2	.080
Nuclear program	95	1.4	9	1.3	.698

*Note.* *n* represents number of articles; means range from 1 to 3, with 1 representing a critical tone, 2 representing a neither critical nor uncritical tone, and 3 representing an uncritical tone.

### *News frames*

To answer the third research question—“How did *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time* frame Iran during each mentioned critical period?—the type of frame, coverage of U.S.-Iran economic, security, and military relationships as well as the coverage of Islam and Iranian leaders, women, and the nation in each critical periods were examined.

Articles were categorized according to their framing modes—episodic or thematic. Iyengar and Kinder (1987) classified the story frame function as either episodic or thematic. Episodic framing depicts discrete events such as a political crisis or a disaster. In contrast, thematic framing attempts to explain and analyze public issues and to put them into context.

It is the meaningful context that gives value to information provided in news. Implicit messages are being carried out to readers through framing. As Nacos and Torres-Reyna (2003) noted: “When stories provide readers with more than bare-bone facts and explain news events in a larger context, news consumers get more comprehensive information and are able to make their evaluation of individuals and groups on a more informed and educated basis” (p. 151).

Norris, Kern, and Just (2003) explained: “The idea of ‘news frames’ refers to interpretive structures that journalists use to set particular events within their broader context. News frames bundle key concepts, stock phrases, and iconic images to reinforce certain common ways of interpreting developments. The essence of framing is selection

to prioritize some facts, images, or developments over others, thereby unconsciously promoting one particular interpretation of events” (pp. 10, 11).

As shown in Table 7, 80% of the articles in the shah’s visit period in the news magazines had episodic frames. However, the episodic frame is not dominant in any other time period. There are almost equal numbers of thematic and episodic frames in articles written in *The New York Times* during all the critical event periods, except during the Islamic revolution and the hostage crisis critical event periods when more than three-fourths of the articles had thematic frames. What is particularly noteworthy is that both the *Times* and the two news magazines covered the revolution and the hostage crisis in a thematic way; which means that they provided analysis and background information that put the events into context.

Table 7

*Comparison of the Percentage of Frame Type of the Articles in The New York Times and the News Magazines—Newsweek and Time—during 10 Critical Event Periods*

<i>Events</i>	<i>% of frame type The New York Times n = 467</i>		<i>% of frame type Time and Newsweek n = 177</i>	
	<i>Episodic</i>	<i>Thematic</i>	<i>Episodic</i>	<i>Thematic</i>
Shah's visit	52.8	47.2	80.0	20.0
Revolution	12.0	88.0	8.3	91.7
Hostage crisis	8.2	91.8	9.1	90.9
Iraq-Iran war	57.6	42.4	4.8	95.2
Airbus downing	55.2	44.9	—	100.0
Khomeini's death	42.3	57.7	15.4	84.6
U.S. embargo	48.0	52.0	—	100.0
Iran's election	42.4	57.6	—	100.0
Axis of evil	44.0	56.0	—	100.0
Nuclear program	54.7	45.3	22.2	77.8



*U.S.-Iranian relationships.* As Table 8 shows, during the first critical event, the coverage of the U.S.-Iran relationship in terms of economic, security, and military cooperation in the national media—*The New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*—framed Iran as being cooperative, as compared with the other nine events in which Iran is framed as being neither cooperative nor uncooperative or as uncooperative. Articles about bilateral economic cooperation reached their lowest level during the hostage crisis and during the Iraq-Iran war. During the Iraq-Iran war, the Airbus downing, the U.S. embargo, and Iran's presidential election, the national media framed the bilateral security level as being very low. Similarly, the national media framed the bilateral military relationship as being uncooperative during the Iraq-Iran war, the U.S. embargo, Iran's presidential election, and Iran's nuclear program.

Table 8

*Comparison of the U.S.-Iran Cooperation Frames during 10 Critical Event Periods in the National News Media—The New York Times, Newsweek, and Time*

<i>Events</i>	<i>U.S.-Iran economic cooperation</i>		<i>U.S.-Iran security cooperation</i>		<i>U.S.-Iran military cooperation</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>
Shah's visit	1.0	15	1.0	9	1.4	34
Revolution	2.2	26	2.0	10	2.2	17
Hostage crisis	2.9	41	2.6	5	2.7	7
Iraq-Iran war	2.9	35	3.0	16	3.0	17
Airbus downing	2.3	3	3.0	4	1.9	8
Khomeini's death	2.3	9	2.8	6	2.4	8
U.S. embargo	2.7	26	3.0	4	3.0	7
Iran's election	2.7	19	3.0	1	3.0	5
Axis of evil	2.6	16	2.6	9	2.9	10
Nuclear program	1.6	9	2.6	90	3.0	2

*Note.* *n* represents number of articles; means on the three cooperation scales range from 1 to 3, with 1 representing a cooperative relationship, 2 representing a neither cooperative nor uncooperative relationship, and 3 representing an uncooperative relationship.

*Framing of Iran's stability.* As shown in Table 9, Iran was framed as a stable country during the shah's visit, the 1997 Iran's presidential election, and its 2004 decision to develop nuclear energy, in the national news media—*The New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*. The most unstable depiction of Iran was during the hostage crisis, the Iraq-Iran war, and the Airbus downing.

Table 9

*Framing of Iran in Terms of Stability during 10 Critical Event Periods in the National News Media—The New York Times, Newsweek, and Time*

<i>Events</i>	<i>Portrayal of Iran's stability</i> <i>n</i> = 225		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>%</i>
Shah's visit	8	1.3	3.6
Revolution	61	2.9	27.1
Hostage crisis	27	3.0	12.0
Iraq-Iran war	93	3.0	41.3
Airbus downing	8	3.0	3.6
Khomeini's death	5	2.4	2.2
U.S. embargo	2	2.0	0.9
Iran's election	5	1.4	2.2
Axis of evil	13	1.8	5.8
Nuclear program	3	1.3	1.3

*Note.* *n* represents number of articles; means range from 1 to 3, with 1 representing stable, 2 neither stable nor unstable, and 3 representing unstable on a stability scale.

*Framing of Iran's human rights' support.* As shown in Table 10, Iran was framed as a country that did not support human rights and civil liberties in all critical periods in the national media—*The New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*—except in the shah's visit period where it is framed as almost an advocate of human rights and civil liberties. The most unsupportive human rights framing of Iran was observed during the hostage crisis, the Airbus downing, Khomeini's death, the U.S. embargo, and the nuclear program.

Table 10

*Framing of Iran in Terms of Supporting Human Rights or Civil Liberties during 10 Critical Event Periods in the National News Media—The New York Times, Newsweek, and Time*

<i>Events</i>	<i>Portrayal of Iran's human rights</i> <i>n = 137</i>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>%</i>
Shah's visit	—	—	—
Revolution	29	2.7	21.2
Hostage crisis	26	3.0	19.0
Iraq-Iran war	35	2.9	25.5
Airbus downing	—	—	—
Khomeini's death	14	3.0	10.2
U.S. embargo	—	—	—
Iran's election	10	2.7	7.3
Axis of evil	—	—	—
Nuclear program	—	—	—

*Note.* *n* represents number of articles; means on a supporting human rights/civil liberties scale range from 1 to 3, with 1 representing supportive, 2 neither supportive nor unsupportive, and 3 representing unsupportive.

*Framing of Iran in terms of friendliness and its relationship to the United States.*

The study indicated that Iran was framed as a warm, friendly, and hospitable country only during the shah's visit critical event period. In all other critical event periods, it was framed as an evil, cold, and unfriendly country in the national news media—*The New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*. As shown in Table 11, the most unfriendly framing of Iran occurred during the hostage crisis and the Airbus downing. Regarding framing of Iran in its relationship to the United States, as Table 12 shows, Iran was framed as being pro-American only during the shah's visit. The highest level of framing of Iran as being anti-American was during the hostage crisis, the Iraq-Iran war, the Airbus downing, Khomeini's death, and the U.S. embargo.

Table 11

*Framing of Iran in Terms of Friendliness during 10 Critical Event Periods in the National News Media—The New York Times, Newsweek, and Time*

<i>Events</i>	<i>Portrayal of Iran's friendliness</i> <i>n = 348</i>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>%</i>
Shah's visit	1	1.0	0.3
Revolution	39	2.4	11.2
Hostage crisis	35	3.0	10.1
Iraq-Iran war	76	2.8	21.8
Airbus downing	19	3.0	5.5
Khomeini's death	18	2.9	5.2
U.S. embargo	5	2.6	1.4
Iran's election	18	2.5	5.2
Axis of evil	33	2.6	9.5
Nuclear program	96	2.6	27.6

*Note.* *n* represents number of articles; means on a friendliness scale range from 1 to 3, with 1 representing a friendly country, 2 neither a friendly nor unfriendly country, and 3 representing an unfriendly country.



Table 12

*Framing of Iran as Pro-American or Anti-American during 10 Critical Event Periods in the National News Media—The New York Times, Newsweek, and Time*

<i>Events</i>	<i>Portrayal of Iran as friend or foe to the U.S.A.</i>		
	<i>n = 453</i>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>%</i>
Shah's visit	13	1	2.8
Revolution	45	2.4	9.9
Hostage crisis	51	3.0	11.3
Iraq-Iran war	109	3.0	24.1
Airbus downing	29	3.0	6.4
Khomeini's death	31	3.0	6.8
U.S. embargo	22	3.0	4.9
Iran's election	25	2.9	5.5
Axis of evil	34	2.8	7.5
Nuclear program	94	2.6	20.8

*Note.* *n* represents number of articles; means range from 1 to 3, with 1 representing a pro-American, 2 a neither pro-American nor anti-American, and 3 representing an anti-American stance.

*Framing of Iran in terms of developing or using nuclear power, energy, or weapons.* As shown in Table 13, Iran was not depicted as a nuclear threat in the national news media—*The New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*—in the shah’s visit period. (See an ad from the 1970s showing the shah’s nuclear power in Appendix B.) The highest level of framing of Iran as a nuclear threat was found during five critical event periods—the Airbus downing, Khomeini’s death, the U.S. embargo, Iran’s presidential election, and Iran as an “axis of evil.”

Table 13

*Framing of Iran in Terms of Developing or Using Nuclear Power during 10 Critical Event Periods in the National News Media—The New York Times, Newsweek, and Time*

<i>Events</i>	<i>Portrayal of Iran's use of nuclear power</i> <i>n = 190</i>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>%</i>
Shah's visit	8	1.3	4.2
Revolution	20	2.5	10.5
Hostage crisis	4	2.8	2.1
Iraq-Iran war	8	2.9	4.2
Airbus downing	1	3.0	0.5
Khomeini's death	2	3.0	1.1
U.S. embargo	18	3.0	9.5
Iran's election	15	3.0	7.9
Axis of evil	20	3.0	10.5
Nuclear program	94	2.8	49.5

*Note.* *n* represents number of articles; means on a use of nuclear power scale range from 1 to 3, with 1 representing a peaceful use, 2 a neither peaceful nor unpeaceful use, and 3 representing an unpeaceful use.

*Framing of Iran and Iranians.* The study found that Iran and Iranians were framed as irresponsible, extremists, irregular, terrorists, aggressive, hard-liner, fanatic, insurgents, irrational, intolerant, anti-modern, anti-American, frenzied, crazy, cruel, violent, backward, outcast, rogue, evil, dangerous, hostile, lawless, or untruthful during the last nine critical event periods in the national news media—*The New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*. Iran and Iranians were framed as pro-American, talented, modern, wealthy, culturally rich, or hospitable only during the shah's visit period.

As Table 14 shows, during the ninth event, Bush's labeling of Iran as one of the "axis of evil" countries, Iran was framed with the highest number of negative stereotypical frames in the national media—*The New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*. In contrast, during the shah's visit Iran was depicted with the highest number of positive stereotypes.

Table 14

*Usage of both Negative and Positive Stereotypical Frames in Depicting Iran during 10 Critical Event Periods in the National News Media—The New York Times, Newsweek, and Time*

<i>Events</i>	<i>Positive and negative stereotypes</i> <i>n = 636</i>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>%</i>
Shah's visit	41	2.2	6.4
Revolution	86	1.7	13.5
Hostage crisis	71	1.6	11.2
Iraq-Iran war	161	1.5	25.3
Airbus downing	41	1.7	6.4
Khomeini's death	39	1.5	6.2
U.S. embargo	30	1.4	4.7
Iran's election	35	1.8	5.5
Axis of evil	32	1.3	5.1
Nuclear program	100	1.7	15.7

*Note.* *n* represents number of articles; means on the stereotypical Iran scale range from 1 to 3, with 1 representing negative frames, 2 neither negative nor positive frames, and 3 representing positive frames.

*Framing of Iranian leaders.* As shown in Table 15, during the last nine critical event periods, Iranian leaders were framed negatively, as being old, sick, mortal, militant, stern, crazy, autocratic, hostile, mentally deficient, morally deficient, opportunistic, incompetent, dictatorial, incomplete, hard-liner, and devilish in the national news media—*The New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*. The most negative framing of Iranian leaders was during the Airbus downing and Khomeini's death. Iranian leaders were framed neither negatively nor positively during the shah's visit critical event period in the national news media.

Table 15

*Usage of both Negative and Positive Stereotypical Frames in Depicting Iranian Leaders during 10 Critical Event Periods in the National News Media—The New York Times, Newsweek, and Time*

<i>Events</i>	<i>Positive and negative stereotypes about leaders</i> <i>n = 145</i>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>%</i>
Shah's visit	10	2.0	6.9
Revolution	32	1.5	22.1
Hostage crisis	16	1.3	11.0
Iraq-Iran war	37	1.4	22.5
Airbus downing	7	1.0	4.8
Khomeini's death	16	1.0	11.0
U.S. embargo	—	—	—
Iran's election	6	1.1	4.1
Axis of evil	12	1.2	8.3
Nuclear program	9	1.3	6.2

*Note.* *n* represents number of articles; means on the stereotypical Iranian leaders' scale range from 1 to 3, with 1 representing negative stereotypes, 2 neither negative nor positive stereotypes, and 3 representing positive stereotypes.

*Framing of Islam and Muslims.* The study found that Islam and Muslims were framed as hostile, rebellious, militant, extremist, fundamentalist, intolerant, undemocratic, terrorist, anti-American, and anti-Christian during the last nine critical event periods. As shown in Table 16, Islam and Muslims were framed neither positively nor negatively during the shah's visit critical event period.



Table 16

*Framing of Islam and Muslims during 10 Critical Event Periods in the National News Media—The New York Times, Newsweek, and Time*

<i>Events</i>	<i>Portrayal of Islam and Muslims</i> <i>n = 109</i>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>%</i>
Shah's visit	2	2.0	1.8
Revolution	15	1.3	13.8
Hostage crisis	16	1.3	14.7
Iraq-Iran war	31	1.2	28.4
Airbus downing	5	1.0	4.6
Khomeini's death	13	1.0	11.9
U.S. embargo	4	1.0	3.7
Iran's election	7	1.1	6.4
Axis of evil	9	1.1	8.3
Nuclear program	7	1.0	6.4

*Note.* *n* represents number of articles; means on an Islam and Muslims' framing scale range from 1 to 3, with 1 representing negative framing, 2 neither negative nor positive framing, and 3 representing positive framing.

*Framing of Iranian women.* Only a few number of articles were written about Iranian women in the national news media—*The New York Times*, *Time* and *Newsweek*—during the 10 critical event periods. However, as shown in Table 17, framing of women was neither positive nor negative during the shah’s visit, while their framing in all the other nine events was negative. The highest number of negative frames of Iranian women was found during five critical periods—Islamic revolution, the Airbus downing, Khomeini’s death, the U.S. embargo, and the nuclear program.

Table 17

*Framing of Iranian Women during 10 Critical Event Periods in the National News Media—The New York Times, Newsweek, and Time*

<i>Events</i>	<i>Depiction of women</i> <i>n = 37</i>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>%</i>
Shah's visit	1	2.0	2.7
Revolution	11	1.0	29.8
Hostage crisis	3	1.7	8.1
Iraq-Iran war	—	—	—
Airbus downing	2	1.0	5.4
Khomeini's death	2	1.0	5.4
U.S. embargo	3	1.0	8.1
Iran's election	8	1.3	21.6
Axis of evil	6	1.3	16.2
Nuclear program	1	1.0	2.7

*Note.* *n* represents number of articles; means on an Iranian women framing scale range from 1 to 3, with 1 representing negative framing, 2 neither negative nor positive framing, and 3 representing positive framing.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The thesis examined the coverage of 10 critical events in the national news media—*The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*. It also examined the relationship and the extent of compatibility between U.S. policy and the national news media in framing Iran and Iranians during 10 critical events in a 28-year period.

The study found that the tone of the articles in the national news media—*The New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*— during six critical event periods of the hostage crisis, the Iraq-Iran war, the Airbus downing, Khomeini's death, the U.S. embargo on Iran, and the branding of Iran as one of the "axis of evil" countries was similar to the tone in the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*. However, the data showed that the tone of the articles in the national media was significantly more critical than the tone of U.S. policy articles in the *Bulletin* during two critical event periods—the shah's visit and the Islamic revolution.

Another important finding is that the national news media had a critical attitude toward Iran from the second through the tenth critical event periods, with the means ranging from 1.3 to 1.6 on a 3-point tone scale in which 1 was critical and 3 was uncritical. It is important to note that the national press did not follow the uncritical tone of the U.S. State Department toward Iran during the Islamic revolution.

The shah's visit to the United States in 1977 was the only period in which the media did not have a critical tone toward Iran.

In this study, the average tone of the national media coverage of Iran (excluding the first event, which occurred before the Islamic revolution) was 1.4 on a 3-point tone scale, with 1 representing critical coverage, 2 representing neither critical nor uncritical coverage, and 3 indicating uncritical coverage. The national coverage of Iran during the shah's period was 2.2 on a 3-point tone scale, indicating that the press coverage was uncritical.

This study also indicated that *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time* framed Iran or Iranians negatively ( $M = 1.37$  on a 3-point coding scale), depicting Iran as an uncooperative, evil state during the last nine critical event periods. The publications also framed women as weak, chador-bound, and male dominated, and depicted Islam and Muslims as anti-Christian, extremist, and fundamentalist during the last nine critical event periods. The only positive frames about Iran, Iranians, women, Muslims, Islam, and leaders were observed during the shah's visit.

The study also showed that during the shah's visit critical event period, the coverage of the U.S.-Iran bilateral economic, security, and military cooperation in the national news media framed Iran as being cooperative. In contrast, in the other nine critical event periods, Iran was framed as being (1) neither cooperative nor uncooperative or (2) as uncooperative. Moreover, Iran was depicted as an unstable country during seven critical event periods—during the Islamic revolution, the hostage crisis, the Iraq-Iran war, the Airbus downing, Khomeini's death, the U.S. embargo, and Iran as one of the "axis of evil" countries.

In general, the research showed that the prevailing rhetoric of the three national publications in covering the events after the Islamic revolution presented a negative picture of Iran. The Islamic revolution was viewed more as a religious revolution than a freedom revolution through which a dictatorship was overthrown. It is worth mentioning that Iran's dominant religion did not change after the revolution. The shah of Iran was also a Muslim who even said he was a very committed Muslim, but he was never referred to as "Muslim leader" or "Muslim shah." As *The New York Times* reported on January 17, 1979, the royal couple—the shah and his wife—even kissed a Quran, the Muslim's holy book, and walked under it as a Muslim custom, before their last departure from Iran. After the revolution, individual Iranian leaders were constantly referred to as "leader of the Muslim opposition," "Muslim leader," "Islamic leader," or "Shiite Muslim leader," along with some other demonizing attributes such as "hard-liner," "devil," "extremist," and "incompetent."

The power of words in covering an event is not deniable. To justify America's giving shelter to the shah after he secretly left Iran, the publications brought up his illness and cancer problem to appeal to the public's sympathy. In most of the articles about the shah after the revolution, his illness and his "under-treatment" situation was attached to his name as if it were an inseparable title.

*The New York Times* in an editorial on November 9, 1979, wrote: "Whatever one's view of the shah, he was admitted to the United States, rightly or wrongly, because he was sick and powerless" (p. A34). The *Times* in another editorial on November 11, 1979, reported that Ayatollah Khomeini endorsed "gun-toting" students' hostage-taking

and demanded that the United States hand over Iran's deposed shah, "who is undergoing cancer treatment in New York" (p. E1). The paper on November 12, 1979 referred to "a band of Islamic students outraged because the United States allowed the shah to go to New York for medical treatment" (p. A16). In another article dated November 14, 1979, the paper reported the Iranians' demand of "extradition of the shah who is under treatment in a New York hospital" (p. A16). The paper also wrote in its November 23, 1979 issue that "Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Iran's revolutionary leader, has demanded the return of the deposed shah, who is being treated for cancer in New York" (p. A18).

According to the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* in December 1979, the U.S. Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, in a question-answer session in Gainesville, said: "The shah was allowed to come into the country for humanitarian purposes when he indicated that there was a possibility that his health was deteriorating. We, of course, worked with him and helped to set up arrangements whereby he could come and receive the tests, treatment, and, eventually the operation. He obviously will be allowed to remain however long it takes for his recuperation" (p. 23).

In another event, during the Iraq-Iran war, U.S. officials implicitly and explicitly supported Iraq. The publications, most of the time by using loaded words, blamed Iran for the war. Iran-U.S. relationships were cut completely in this era, and sanctions were imposed on Iran on April 7, 1980. It was at that time that U.S. embassies refused to give visas to Iranians. The United States even asked its allies to sever their relationships with Iran and to agree to sanctions.

*The New York Times* in its March 30, 1980 issue, referred to the three Iranian islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tumbs, and Lesser Tumbs as the islands that were “occupied” by Iranians. In its April 10, 1980 issue, the *Times* wrote that U.S. officials “seek ways of improving American-Iraqi ties” (p. A16). In the same issue it was reported that State Department officials were divided: “Some believe that the United States should capitalize on Iraqi-Iranian tensions to build closer ties with Iraq; others fear that such a show of support could further alienate Iran” (p. A16). The paper on April 23, 1980, contended that the informal relationship between Baghdad and Washington “has improved considerably in recent years” (p. A10). On April 27, 1980, it also reported that “bombing of Iranian refineries is regarded as a last resort, an option that would be exercised only if relations between the two nations deteriorated to war” (p. 15).

The publications also indirectly supported the Iraqi government and sought public sympathy. *The New York Times* in its November 23, 1980 issue, justified the actions of the Iraqi government and considered it as being compassionate: “Iraqi aid to poorer countries, in the form of low-interest loans and other easy-payment vehicles, amounted to more than \$2 billion last year. President Hussein has also proposed an arrangement under which the rich OPEC members would designate funds from oil price rises, and developed nations would do likewise in industrialized exports to provide more funds for the world’s poorest countries” (p. F8).

*Newsweek* also followed the same path. In its October 6, 1980 issue, the magazine quoted the U.S. national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, as saying: “We see no fundamental incompatibility of interests between the United States and Iraq. . . .



We do not feel that American-Iraqi relations need to be frozen in antagonism.” The Carter Administration also allowed U.S. firms to do business with Iraq, including oil exploration, health-care equipment, and airplanes. *Newsweek* wrote that Saddam Hussein “has chosen his moment well, striking at a time when revolutionary Iran is weak and when not even the two superpowers are willing or able to stop him.” *Time* also repeatedly depicted the country’s image as “a regional menace,” and called Iranians in the war with Iraq “occupiers.” The United States, in spite of its claim of neutrality in the Iraq-Iran war, provided Iraq with weapons. *Newsweek* on October 13, 1980, reported that “Washington sent four radar-packed early-warning planes and about 500 support personnel to Saudi Arabia, a country that has provided a safe haven for Iraqi warplanes.”

According to the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* in December 1980, U.S. Ambassador Donald F. McHenry, the U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations, said in a statement: “Iraq’s representatives have reasserted their government’s respect for the United Nations and have consistently affirmed their government has no claims to Iranian territory” (p. 73). Such justifications were made while, in reality, Iraq claimed Iranian territory and captured Iran’s southern city of Khorramshahr. Moreover the governments’ claims should not be accounted by their actions.

But a bit of history review is instructive. Iran-U.S. relationships before the Islamic revolution were extremely close. The *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* on March 31, 1975 reported the remarks by the then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Iran’s Finance Minister Houshang Ansary in the joint communiqué and technical cooperation agreement as saying: “The economic cooperation agreement between Iran

and the United States that is foreseen is the largest agreement of this kind that has been signed between any two countries” (p. 402).

In exchanges of greetings and toasts between then-President Gerald Ford and the shah, the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* on June 16, 1975, reported that President Ford considered Iran as a model of economic development, saying that “Iran is an amazing country—an ancient civilization that through the centuries has retained its distinctive national identity and culture” (p. 824).

According to the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* on July 14, 1975, the United States also welcomed Iran’s taking on greater security responsibilities in the region. It can be compared to the present time when the United States has expressed extreme concern over Iran’s active role in the region, in particular in Iraq.

According to the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* on June 6, 1977, then-Secretary of State Cyrus Vance said in a news conference: “Our long and close relationships to Iran, with Iran, had been a policy which I believed was very beneficial to both our countries and to the stability of the region. We reached agreement on this. We feel that we must continue to strengthen that relationship in the future and reached agreement on that proposition. And we will be continuing to work together very closely on common matters during the years ahead” (p. 613). In another statement by the then-Secretary Vance before a House committee, the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* on July 28, 1977, quoted Vance as proposing the sale of AWACS weapons to Iran, saying that Iran is a strong and friendly regional power and that the United States will help it meet its defense requirements. Vance said that, because of having the most important industrial

installations, “Iran should be in a position to defend itself not only against an actual attack but also against political pressure from potential adversaries in the form of threats of force” (p. 245).

Meanwhile, *The New York Times* on July 12, 1977, referred to Iran as the “major purchaser of American arms” (p. 8). Also, on April 12, 1977, it reported that the United States and Iran signed a nuclear cooperation pact. The two countries discussed the possibility that Iran might purchase eight nuclear power plants from America. The pact was signed when West Germany was already building two nuclear power plants in Iran, and France signed a \$3 million contract for two 900-megawatt nuclear power plants and a 10-year supply of enriched uranium fuel in October 1977.

On November 17, 1977, *The New York Times* reported that Iran’s security was a matter of highest priority for the United States, that the shah of Iran had a continuing need for the best military equipment available, and that the United States, as Iran’s chief ally, had an obligation to supply his needs. It also reported that the leaders of the two countries were discussing an arrangement on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy that would allow the United States to sell Iran six to eight nuclear reactors as part of Iran’s 200-reactor program.

But, the pages were turned near three decades later. The same paper, *The New York Times*, in several editorials in 2004 repeatedly called Iran a “nuclear threat.” In its editorial on August 23, 2004, it once again claimed that Iran was trying to develop nuclear weapons. It expressed concern that Iran’s ability to enrich uranium could lead to producing nuclear bombs. In the same issue, the paper also quoted the U.S.

undersecretary of state, John R. Bolton, as saying that Iran could produce weapons-grade uranium within a year and a nuclear weapon within four years. “These Iranian assertions give the lie to their contention that their nuclear program is entirely civil and peaceful in purpose.”

According the *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, Strobe Talbott, the U.S. deputy secretary, in a statement before the Arms Control Association on February 23, 1995, said that America is committed to block Iran’s attempt to develop nuclear weapon capability. Lynn E. Davis, undersecretary of arms control and international security, at a State Department briefing on February 28, 1995, said that the United States needed to prevent rogue states including Iran from acquiring dangerous arms and technology. He expressed his strong opposition to any nuclear cooperation between Iran and any other country in the world.

The U.S. Department of State Web site quoted John S. Wolf, assistant secretary for nonproliferation, on May 4, 2004, as expressing deep concern over Iran’s desire to continue a full nuclear fuel cycle capability. He said that, for the United States, it is clear that Iran has long been developing capabilities for producing nuclear weapons. The Web site also quoted U.S. undersecretary for arms control and international security, John R. Bolton, as saying Iran’s pursuit of deadly weapons marks it as a rogue state, and it will remain so until it completely abandons its efforts to produce weapons of mass destruction.

In an editorial published on October 22, 2004, *The New York Times* called Iran a “nuclear rebel” and quoted Joschka Fischer, Germany’s foreign minister, as saying that

nuclear Iran could set off a Middle Eastern arms race. *The New York Times* on November 17, 2004, once again blamed Iran for not giving up its nuclear ambitions, saying that Iran has a long history of cheating on its nuclear nonproliferation obligations. In many articles covering Iran's nuclear power in 2004, *The New York Times* repeatedly quoted the George W. Bush administration as saying that the administration is convinced that despite Iran's denial, it has a covert program to build nuclear bombs not to produce energy.

*Newsweek* also followed the same policy. On August 16, 2004, the magazine called Iran a great threat and a problem for the future, saying that the United States is unlikely to sit passively while Iran develops a nuclear bomb.

A human rights issue—the increasing number of political prisoners and their abusive treatments in prisons, which was one of the factors that gave rise to the revolution—was perceived as developing before the Islamic revolution. *The New York Times* in its November 13, 1977 issue, reported that the number of political prisoners had been reduced, and that the shah had allowed international groups to investigate conditions in prisons. It also reported that torture had been officially prohibited in the shah's prisons. The paper on its December 31, 1977, quoted the then-President Jimmy Carter as calling Iran's leadership an "enlightened leadership." It quoted American officials as saying the shah had moved effectively to limit political arrests, relax restrictions on the press, and end the use of torture.

According to the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* for December 1977, Charles W. Naas, director of the office of Iranian affairs in a statement before the subcommittee

on International Organizations of the House International Relations Committee praising human rights in Iran, said: "A few months ago the shah of Iran publicly commented that he had previously ordered the ending of the use of torture. We have had no reports of the use of inhumane treatment against prisoners this year" (p. 895).

The *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* in March 1995 reported that Iran's government continued to be a major abuser of human rights. *The New York Times* on March 1, 1997, criticizing Iran's human rights, wrote, "Islamic jurisprudence allows a man to divorce his wife unconditionally and without recourse to a court of law. Wives are not granted similar privileges, except under extreme and very complicated circumstances." Such issues are not new and bound to after-the-revolution Iran. These laws existed even before the revolution in Iran, and women's advocacy groups were fighting for women's rights at that time too, but those issues were ignored and not covered then.

As Semati (1997) said, the West's conception of the Middle East, including Iran and Islam, results from the fact that only a few major news agencies control the flow of information, while their main objective is to increase profit rather than transmission of fair and unbiased truth and information. Therefore, stories covered by Western-trained journalists, get recycled and consumed by many.

### *Contributions to the literature*

Unlike previous research that concentrated on single events, this study provides data on the portrayal of Iran in U.S. national media during 10 critical events—a 28-year period. Although Iran received uncritical coverage during the reign of the shah, the coverage turned critical in 1979, when the shah was overthrown and Iranian students held Americans hostage in their embassy, and has remained critical to this day.

A second contribution is that, except for the Islamic revolution critical event period which brought an end to the shah's rule, the coverage of Iran by the national media almost paralleled U.S. policy as documented in the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin*. The coverage was critical of all aspects of life in Iran, especially the portrayal of U.S.-Iran relationships. Iran was seen as being uncooperative in bilateral economic, security, and military relationships.

Also, Iranians were framed as being insurgents, terrorists, anti-American, backward, anti-modern, crazy, and hostile during the last nine critical event periods. Iran was framed as being a rogue, evil, and outlaw state during the same critical event periods.

Women were seen in a stereotypical way—as being chador-bound and dominated by the men in their families. Iranian leaders were framed as being hard-liners, dictators, hostile, militant, opportunist, and incompetent. Islam and Muslims were portrayed as rebellious, extremist, anti-American, anti-Christian, fundamentalist, and hostile.

This study adds a new perspective, and unlike earlier studies it examined the coverage by *The New York Times* and the U.S. news magazines, *Newsweek* and *Time*, of Iran over time in which there were 10 critical events affecting Iranian-U.S. relations.

*Limitations to the study*

A limitation of the data needs to be noted here. The shah's visit to the United States in 1977 was not well covered in the media, with *Time* and *Newsweek* publishing only five articles, and the *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* publishing only six.

Because of the limited number of articles in *Time* and *Newsweek*, it was not feasible to study the three publications separately; therefore, the two magazines were combined into one category.

*Directions for future research*

A study could be done on the portrayal of Iran in additional critical events and in other U.S. media. Moreover, future studies could focus on critical events before the Islamic Revolution in 1979. It would also be interesting to compare the coverage of Iran in U.S. media with that of the United States in Iranian media.

Finally, future research could also examine the impact of such coverage on public opinion in forming their image of a particular country and to show how people—Iranians and Americans—responded to the critical events.



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## APPENDIX A

## CODEBOOK FOR IRAN'S PORTRAYAL IN U.S. MEDIA

1. Article number (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)  
 Each article is being numbered as follows:  
 Articles of the 1st critical event period published in *The New York Times* are numbered from 1 to 36  
 Articles of the 2nd critical event period published in *The New York Times* are numbered from 100 to 149  
 Articles of the 3rd critical event period published in *The New York Times* are numbered from 200 to 248  
 Articles of the 4th critical event period published in *The New York Times* are numbered from 300 to 398  
 Articles of the 5th critical event period published in *The New York Times* are numbered from 400 to 428  
 Articles of the 6th critical event period published in *The New York Times* are numbered from 500 to 525  
 Articles of the 7th critical event period published in *The New York Times* are numbered from 600 to 624  
 Articles of the 8th critical event period published in *The New York Times* are numbered from 700 to 732  
 Articles of the 9th critical event period published in *The New York Times* are numbered from 800 to 824  
 Articles of the 10th critical event period published in *The New York Times* are numbered from 900 to 994  
 Articles of all critical events periods published in *Newsweek* magazine are numbered from 1000 to 1078  
 Articles of all critical events periods published in *Time* magazine are numbered from 1500 to 1597  
 Articles of all critical events periods published in *U.S. State Department Bulletin*, *U.S. State Department Dispatch*, or U.S. State Department Web site from 2000 to 2107
2. Critical Events Period (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)  
 The 10 critical events occurred between 1977 and 2004 are being studied and numbered as follows:
  - (1) The shah's visit to the United States in 1977. The related articles between Jan. 1, 1977 and Dec. 31, 1977 were studied.
  - (2) The Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979. The related articles between Jan 1, 1979 and Dec. 31 1979 were studied.



- (3) The U.S. hostage crisis in 1979. The related articles between Jan. 1, 1979 and Dec. 31, 1979 were studied.
- (4) Iraq-Iran war in 1980. The related articles between Jan. 1, 1980 and Dec. 31, 1980 were studied.
- (5) Iran Air Airbus downing in 1988. The related articles between Jan. 1, 1988 and Dec. 31, 1988 were studied.
- (6) Ayatollah Khomeini's death in 1989. The related articles between Jan. 1, 1989 and Dec. 31, 1989 were studied.
- (7) U.S. embargo on Iran in 1995. The related articles between Jan. 1, 1995 and Dec. 31, 1995 were studied.
- (8) Iran's presidential election in 1997. The related articles between Jan. 1, 1997 and Dec. 31, 1997 were studied.
- (9) Bush's characterization of Iran as one of the "axis of evil" countries in 2002. The related articles between Jan. 1, 2002 and Dec. 31, 2002 were studied.
- (10) Iran's nuclear proliferation in 2004. The related articles between Jan. 1, 2004 and Dec. 31, 2004 were studied.

Note: Only the articles covering the events or covering the U.S.-Iran relationships were studied.

3. Periodicals (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

The one newspaper, the two magazines and the one bulletin were numbered as follows:

- (1) *The New York Times*
- (2) *Newsweek*
- (3) *Time*
- (4) *U.S. State Department Bulletin*, *U.S. State Department Dispatch*, or U.S. State Department Web site

4. Date of article (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

Month, day, and the year articles were published were stated. (e.g. 11/02/1980)

5. Dateline of article (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 95%)

- (1) Tehran
- (2) New York
- (3) Washington
- (4) Other U.S.
- (5) Israel
- (6) Europe
- (7) Other Iran
- (8) Other Middle East
- (9) Other
- (10) No dateline
- (11) Washington and Kuwait

- (12) Paris and Washington
- (13) Dubai and New York
- (14) Cairo, Jerusalem and Paris
- (15) Damascus and Washington
- (16) London and Cairo
- (17) Tehran, Jerusalem and Washington
- (18) Moscow, Cairo and Washington
- (19) Tokyo and Seoul
- (20) Ramallah, Beirut and Washington
- (21) Tokyo, Tehran and Washington
- (22) Beijing, London, Seoul, Cairo, Washington
- (23) Bam and Washington
- (24) Cairo and Tehran
- (25) Tehran and Europe
- (26) Tehran, Washington, Europe
- (27) Tehran and Washington
- (28) Tehran, New York and Washington
- (29) Washington and other U.S.
- (30) Paris, Washington and UN
- (31) New York and Washington
- (32) Washington and London
- (33) Washington, Baghdad, other Middle East
- (34) Paris, Baghdad and Washington
- (35) Washington and Rome
- (36) Iraq and Lebanon
- (37) Iran and Lebanon
- (38) Washington and Beirut
- (39) Washington and Iraq

6. Paragraph numbers of article (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 96%)

7. Article originator (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 99%)

The source article was taken from:

- (1) *The New York Times*
- (2) *Newsweek*
- (3) *Time*
- (4) Associated Press (AP)
- (5) Associated Franc Press (AFP)
- (6) Reuters
- (7) United Press International (UPI)
- (8) *Washington Post*
- (9) *Los Angeles Times*
- (10) Other
- (11) Not mentioned

8. Type of article (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 97%)

- (1) News and news analysis
- (2) Editorials
- (3) Op-ed pieces
- (4) Letter
- (5) Press Conference
- (6) Statement
- (7) Communiqué
- (8) Meeting
- (9) Report
- (10) Speech
- (11) Press release
- (12) Fact Sheet
- (13) Interview

9. Article frame type (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 89%)

- (1) Episodic
- (2) Thematic

Note: Episodic framing depicts concrete events that illustrate issues. It represents a special event, crime and disasters. While thematic framing presents collective general evidence. It attempts to explain and analyze public issues.

10. Article content type (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

As was mentioned earlier, stories covering the 10 critical events and the U.S.-Iranian relationships have been studied.

- (1) Coverage of event
- (2) U.S.-Iran relationship

11. Article tone (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 85%)

The tone of content of articles toward Iran and Iranians in general are categorized as:

- (1) Critical
- (2) Neither critical nor uncritical
- (3) Uncritical

12. Source attribution (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 95%)

U.S. Presidents, cabinet members, military officials

The number of paragraphs U.S. presidents or members of their cabinets or military officials were quoted in articles as sources of information.

13. Source attribution (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 96%)

Former U.S. officials, policy makers, other officials

The number of paragraphs U.S. officials, policy makers, or other officials were quoted in articles as sources of information.

14. Source attribution (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 97%)  
U.S. intellectuals, academics  
The number of paragraphs U.S. intellectuals or academics were quoted in articles as sources of information.
15. Source attribution (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 99%)  
UN officials  
The number of paragraphs UN officials were quoted in articles as sources of information.
16. Source attribution (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 99%)  
U.S. ordinary people  
The number of paragraphs U.S. people were quoted in articles as sources of information.
17. Source attribution (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)  
Iranian leaders  
The number of paragraphs Iranian leaders were quoted in articles as sources of information.
18. Source attribution (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)  
Iranian presidents, their cabinets, prime ministers or military officials  
The number of paragraphs Iranian presidents, their cabinets, prime ministers, or military officials were quoted in articles as sources of information.
19. Source attribution (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 99%)  
Iranian former officials, policy makers, other officials  
The number of paragraphs Iranian former officials, policy makers or other officials were quoted in articles as sources of information.
20. Source attribution (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)  
Iranian intellectuals, academics  
The number of paragraphs Iranian intellectuals or academics were quoted in articles as sources of information.
21. Source attribution (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)  
Iranian ordinary people  
The number of paragraphs Iranian ordinary people were quoted in articles as sources of information.

22. Source attribution (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 97%)  
Other  
The number of paragraphs other sources were quoted in stories.
23. Depiction of Iran in terms of U.S. self-interest (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 93%)  
(1) Iran is strategically important
24. Depiction of Iran in terms of U.S. self-interest (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 99%)  
(1) Iran as a major oil supplier
25. Depiction of Iran in terms of U.S. self-interest (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)  
(1) Iran as a U.S. ally
26. Depiction of Iran in terms of U.S. self-interest (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)  
(1) Iran as an anti-Communist country, as an ally to Soviet, or in general, Iran-Soviet/Russian relationships is a U.S. concern
27. Depiction of Iran in terms of U.S. self-interest (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)  
(1) Iran as a nuclear threat
28. Depiction of Iran in terms of U.S. self-interest (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 96%)  
(1) Iran as a terrorist threat, supporter of terrorism, threat
29. Depiction of Iran in terms of stability (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 85%)  
(1) Stable  
(2) Neither stable nor unstable  
(3) Unstable
30. Depiction of Iran in terms of democracy (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 93%)  
(1) Democratic  
(2) Neither democratic nor undemocratic  
(3) Undemocratic
31. Depiction of Iran in terms of supporting human rights and civil liberties (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 96%)  
(1) Supportive of human rights and civil liberties  
(2) Neither supportive nor unsupportive of human rights and civil liberties

(3) Unsupportive of human rights and civil liberties

32. Depiction of Iran in terms of friendliness (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 89%)

- (1) Friendly
- (2) Neither friendly nor unfriendly
- (3) Unfriendly

33. Depiction of Iran in terms of being America's friend or foe (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 95%)

- (1) Pro-American
- (2) Neither pro-American nor anti-American
- (3) Anti-American

34. Depiction of Iran in terms of using or developing nuclear energy or power or weapons in general (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

- (1) Peaceful user or developer
- (2) Neither peaceful user nor unpeaceful user or developer
- (3) Unpeaceful user or developer

35. U.S.-Iran relationship in terms of economic or trade cooperation, U.S. investment, or cultural cooperation (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 93%)

- (1) Cooperative
- (2) Neither cooperative nor uncooperative
- (3) Uncooperative

36. U.S.-Iran relationship in terms of security cooperation (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 97%)

- (1) Cooperative
- (2) Neither cooperative nor uncooperative
- (3) Uncooperative

37. U.S.-Iran relationship in terms of military cooperation (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 97%)

- (1) Cooperative
- (2) Neither cooperative nor uncooperative
- (3) Uncooperative

38. Negative or positive stereotypes about Iran or Iranians (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 97%)

Study of negative or positive stereotypes by which Iran or Iranians were portrayed. Negative stereotypes include: Irresponsible, extremist, irregular, terroristic, aggressive, hard-liner, fanatic, insurgent, irrational, intolerant, anti-American, anti-modern, frenzied, crazy, cruel, violent, militant, outcast, backward, outcast, dangerous, rogue, evil, hostile, lawless, and unfaithful.

Positive stereotypes include: Pro-American, pro-West, culturally rich, modern, wealthy, talented, and hospitable.

- (1) Negative stereotype exists
- (2) Neither positive nor negative stereotype exist
- (3) Positive stereotype exists

39. The way Iranian leaders were portrayed (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 97%)

Study of the stereotypes by which Iranian leaders were portrayed,

Negative stereotypes include old, sick, mortal, militant, crazy, stern, autocrat, hostile, mentally deficient, morally deficient, opportunistic, incomplete, dictator, incompetent, hard-liner, and devil.

Positive stereotypes include talented, democrat, friend, and lightened.

- (1) Negative stereotypes exist
- (2) Neither positive nor negative stereotypes exist
- (3) Positive stereotypes exist

40. Depiction of Islam or Muslims (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 99%)

Study of portrayal of Islam or Muslims to find out if they were depicted as rebellious, hostile, militant, extremist, fundamentalist, intolerant, undemocratic, terroristic, anti-American, and anti-Christian, or they were depicted as friend, tolerant, pro-Americans, and pro-Christians.

- (1) Muslims or Islam are negatively depicted
- (2) Muslims or Islam are neither negatively nor positively depicted
- (3) Muslim or Islam are positively depicted

41. Portrayal of Islam (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 97%)

Study of portrayal of Islam to see if Islam was depicted as ethnicity or as a religion.

- (1) Islam is viewed as ethnicity
- (2) Islam is viewed as a religion

42. Depiction of Iranian women (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

Study of portrayal of Iranian women to see whether they were depicted as oppressed, submissive, not respected, male-dominated, housebound, and as individuals whose rights are not protected and their veils link with violence or they were depicted as intellectual, independent, and not violent.

- (1) Women are negatively portrayed
- (2) Women are neither positively nor negatively portrayed
- (3) Women are positively portrayed

43. Study of Gans' eight enduring values, values which Gans believed can be found in many different types of news stories over a long period of time and often affect what events become news and even help define the news. (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 93%)

The first value that was studied is Ethnocentrism, which he said judges other countries by the extent to which they live up to or imitate American practices and values.

- (1) Value exists in the article
- (2) Value does not exist in the article

44. Study of the second Gans' enduring value, Altruistic Democracy, which he said foreign news suggests quite explicitly that democracy is superior to dictatorship, and the more so if it follows American forms. (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 97%)

- (1) Value exists in the article
- (2) Value does not exist in the article

45. Study of the third Gans' enduring value, Responsible Capitalism, which he said the underlying posture of the news toward the economy resembles that taken toward the polity: an optimistic faith that, in the good society, businessmen and women will compete with each other in order to create increased prosperity for all, but that they will refrain from unreasonable profits and gross exploitation of workers or customers. (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 97%)

- (1) Value exists in the article
- (2) Value does not exist in the article

46. Study of the fourth Gans' enduring value, Small-Town Pastoralism, which he said is the rural and anti-industrial values that favors small towns over other types of settlements. (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

- (1) Value exists in the article
- (2) Value does not exist in the article

47. Study of the fifth Gans' enduring value, Individualism, which he said is the preservation of freedom of the individual against the encroachments of nation and society. (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 96%)

- (1) Value exists in the article
- (2) Value does not exist in the article

48. Study of the sixth Gans' enduring value, Moderatism, which he said groups or politicians who exhibit what is seen as extreme behavior are criticized in the news through pejorative adjectives or a satirical tone. (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 91%)

- (1) Value exists in the article
- (2) Value does not exist in the article

49. Study of the seventh Gans' enduring value, Order, which he said the frequent appearance of stories about disorder suggests that order is an important value in the news. (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 96%)



- (1) Value exists in the article
- (2) Value does not exist in the article

50. Study of the eighth Gans' enduring value, Leadership, which he the news focuses on leaders; and, with some exceptions, public agencies and private organizations are represented by their leaders. (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 96%)

- (1) Value exists in the article
- (2) Value does not exist in the article

## APPENDIX B

## SHAH'S NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM

“Guess who’s building nuclear power plants?”

This is an ad from the 1970s purchased by a number of U.S. power companies using the shah’s nuclear power program to convince Americans of the necessity and safety of nuclear energy. How times change. The ad was retrieved from <http://www.iranian.com/Pictory/2006/May/guess.html> May 15, 2006.

# GUESS WHO'S BUILDING NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS.



The Shah of Iran is sitting on top of one of the largest reservoirs of oil in the world.

Yet he's building two nuclear plants and planning two more to provide electricity for his country.

He knows the oil is running out — and time with it.

But he wouldn't build the plants now if he doubted their safety. He'd wait. As many Americans want to do.

The Shah knows that nuclear energy is not only economical, it has enjoyed a remarkable 30-year safety record. A record that was good enough for the citizens of Plymouth, Massachusetts, too. They've approved their second nuclear plant by a vote of almost 4 to 1. Which shows you don't have to go as far as Iran for an endorsement of nuclear power.

**NUCLEAR ENERGY. TODAY'S ANSWER.**

BOSTON EDISON, EASTERN UTILITIES ASSOCIATES, NEW ENGLAND POWER COMPANY,  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, NEW ENGLAND GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANIES.