

4-28-2000

# Trends. United States Foreign Policy, Iran, and Mirror Imaging

Editor

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp>

 Part of the [International Relations Commons](#), [Islamic Studies Commons](#), [Near and Middle Eastern Studies Commons](#), [Other Political Science Commons](#), [Other Religion Commons](#), and the [Rule of Law Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

Editor (2000) "Trends. United States Foreign Policy, Iran, and Mirror Imaging," *International Bulletin of Political Psychology*: Vol. 8 : Iss. 15 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp/vol8/iss15/6>

This Trends is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Bulletin of Political Psychology by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact [commons@erau.edu](mailto:commons@erau.edu).

## International Bulletin of Political Psychology

Title: Trends. United States Foreign Policy, Iran, and Mirror Imaging

Author: Editor

Volume: 8

Issue: 15

Date: 2000-04-28

Keywords: Democracy, Foreign Policy, Iran, Religion, United States

A common dilemma posed by United States (US) foreign-policy decision makers concerning Iran is the tension between the rule of law and democracy on the one hand and arbitrary religious authority on the other. In fact, this dilemma suggests more about the perceptions of US decision makers than of events in Iran.

First, the dilemma as posed suggests that religious authority is incompatible with the rule of law and democracy. Yet there are those who espouse religious authority who also espouse the rule of law and democracy. In fact, there are those who claim a religious basis for the value of the rule of law and democracy. Interestingly, the forces espousing the rule of law and democracy in Iran comprise many religious authorities led by President Khatami.

Second, the dilemma as posed suggests that the rule of law and democracy naturally go together. Actually, the two are often arbitrarily conflated. Throughout history there have been democracies with problematic rules of law and non-democracies with a rule of law.

Third, the dilemma as posed suggests that religious authority must be arbitrary. Those who believe in divine inspiration, revelation, and the received word through study would surely disagree. And if logic and consistency are positively valued, the political representatives of the religious right in the US should also take Issue with the validity of the dilemma. Yet the latter support the dilemma as distillation of foreign-policy choice.

Mirror imaging--seeing others as one sees the self--is frequently a biasing phenomenon of policymakers. The phenomenon is even more unfortunate when engaged in by representatives of a superpower that is a relatively new political entity towards another entity that has a long and weighty history. Does power blind as well as corrupt? (See Benedetti, G., & Peciccia, M. (1994). Psychodynamic reflections on the delusion of persecution. *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry*, 48, 391-396; Berrien, F. K. (1969). Familiarity, mirror imaging and social desirability in stereotypes: Japanese vs. Americans. *International Journal of Psychology*, 4, 207-215; Mazlish, B. (1982). American narcissism. *Psychohistory Review*, 10, 185-202; Tense days in Tehran. (April 26, 2000). *The New York Times*, p. A26; McLaughlin, J. T. (1984). On antithetic and metathetic words in the analytic situation. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 53, 38-62.) (Keywords: Democracy, Foreign Policy, Iran, Religion, United States.)