Issues facing the Iranian State
Governmental Issues

• Progressive governmental practices at odds with traditional beliefs of clergy
  • Clergy are overseers of policy
  • Created a gridlock politically between those wanting to move Iran forward and clergy who are protecting traditional beliefs

• Political marginalization of religious minorities
  • Very little political representation for religious groups
  • Movement for secularization of Iran
Economic Issues of the 1980s and 1990s

• Very unstable economy
  • Rising debt
  • High levels of unemployment
  • Rapid inflation
  • Market vulnerability to oil prices
  • Limited public sector jobs

• 1990s economic program
  • Goal to increase influence of western educated technocrats
Economic Issues

• Rentier State
  • Oil still dominates Iran’s economy
    • 85% of exports
    • 66% of country’s earnings
    • 45-50% of government revenue

• Economic Sanctions
  • Strained ties with west have led to much of the “developed” world to sanction Iranian products
  • Also restricts the importing of western goods into Iran
  • Has allowed Iran’s economy to develop a level of self-sufficiency
Iran’s Position in Central Asia

• Iran’s status as the largest Shia Islamic state has led them to take on the role of protectors of the faith
  • Many interventions in the affairs of other countries
    • Currently Yemen and Syria
  • Led to conflict with other states because of sectarian differences
    • Iraq and Saudi Arabia primarily
  • Very controversial stance to Israel
    • Pledged to wipe Israel off the map
Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

• President of Iran from 2005-2013
• Supported by Alliance of Builders of Islamic Iran
  • Considered a religious hard-liner
• Controversial term in office
  • Accused of corruption
  • Strained relationship with west
    • Noted Holocaust denier
  • Contested election results
Iran’s Nuclear Program

- Iran insistent upon developing a nuclear energy system
- Western states worried similar processes for nuclear energy could be used to develop nuclear weapons
Civil Rights Issues in Iran

• Many educated elites and western connected professionals were forced to flee after 1979 revolution
  • Iran’s healthcare ranked 93rd
  • Introduced policies to encourage opportunities for women
    • Traditional roles and dress still enforced

• Questionable human rights record
  • Used war as opportunity to suppress opposition
    • Monarchists, ethnic groups, leftists
    • Encouragement of pro-government vigilantes
  • Torture and death penalty still in use
  • Lack of independent judiciary
  • Restrictions on telecommunications