CYRUS THE GREAT INSTITUTE

Iran's First 180 Days After Regime Collapse

A Constructive Assessment of the Iran Prosperity Project's Transitional Plan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The Cyrus the Great Institute (CGI) presents a constructive assessment of the Iran Prosperity Project's Emergency Phase plan, a 180-day roadmap for governance in the aftermath of the Islamic Republic's overthrow. While recognizing the Booklet as the most comprehensive effort in nearly half a century to prepare for transition, CGI identifies both notable strengths and significant weaknesses. Strengths include its focus on essential services, its structured institutional design, its commitment to de-ideologising the state and re-engaging internationally, and its prudent approach to security sector reform. Weaknesses include the absence of references, superficial or uneven treatment of complex issues, lack of definitions for key terms, inconsistencies between chapters, and a failure to plan for alternative or contested scenarios.

CGI advances an alternative legal framework to strengthen legitimacy and stability: officially declaring the Islamic Republic illegitimate; temporarily reinstating the pre-1979 legal framework and Constitution as the legal foundation while not being fully bound to all provisions; suspending Islamic supremacy; removing gender-specific succession language; and governing through the Constitution alongside provisional legal instruments. This framework culminates in a national referendum on both the form of government and the constitution.

Beyond law, the report critiques the political process for unrealistic electoral timelines, emphasizing the need for

transparency, fairness, and adequate preparation to prevent factional imbalance.

In foreign policy, it calls for recalibrating nuclear and missile commitments, adopting a balanced posture toward major powers, replacing compromised diplomats, and creating an intelligence secretariat within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On security, it stresses the need to clearly separate military, intelligence, and law enforcement functions, to establish a National Counterintelligence Center, to prevent militarization of civilian agencies, and to protect strategic assets and sovereignty. CGI further proposes that a reformed national intelligence and security service should rest on four core directorates—Domestic Security, Foreign Intelligence, Signals & Cyber, and Science & Technology—to reflect the functional complexity of modern intelligence work.

Together, these recommendations aim to provide Iran with a resilient, legitimate, and strategically grounded pathway from collapse to stability, honoring the vision of Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi while addressing the pragmatic demands of governance in a moment of historic transition.

چکیده

مقدمه

اندیشکده کوروش بزرگ با انتشار گزارش خود، طرح ۱۸۰ روزهٔ «پروژهٔ شکوفایی ایران» را مورد ارزیابی سازنده قرار داده است. این گزارش، با ارج به تلاش ارزشمند تهیه‌کنندگان دفترچه، هدف خود را تقویت قابلیت اجرایی طرح از راه بررسی انتقادی، تاریخی، حقوقی، سیاسی و امنیتی اعلام می‌کند. گزارش اصلی به زبان انگلیسی تهیه شده است، اما در این بخش، یک چکیده جامع به زبان فارسی ارائه می‌شود تا محتوای اصلی برای خوانندگان فارسی‌زبان نیز در دسترس باشد. این خلاصه تلاش می‌کند مهم‌ترین نکات هر فصل را بازتاب دهد.

نقاط قوت کلی

- توجه جدی به نیازهای فوری مردم: آب، خوراک، برق، بهداشت و ثبات پولی.
- طراحی ساختار نهادی موقت با تفکیک قوای سه‌گانه.
- تأکید بر غیر ایدئولوژیک‌سازی نهادهای دولتی و بازگشت به تعامل سازنده با جهان.
- هوشمندی در حوزه امنیت و ارتش: پرهیز از پاک‌سازی‌های کور و تخریب کامل نهادهای امنیتی و نظامی، با هدف حفظ ثبات و جلوگیری از خلأ قدرت.
- بهره‌گیری از نمونه‌های تاریخی مانند آلمان و ژاپن پس از جنگ .
- اهمیت فرهنگی: تلاش برای پاسداشت زبان پارسی سره در متن دفترچه.

ضعف‌های کلی

- نبود منابع و ارجاعات علمی.
- سطحی‌نگری یا پراکندگی در ارائه جزئیات عملیاتی.
- ناهماهنگی میان فصل‌های مختلف و تعارض در برخی موارد (برای نمونه سرنوشت رهبران رژیم سابق).
- نداشتن سناریوهای جایگزین برای شرایط بحرانی مانند رقابت چند دولت موقت یا شورش گروه‌های مختلف.
- نبود پیش‌بینی برای فقدان یا عدم دسترسی به رهبر خیزش ملی و نبود سازوکار حل تعارض با و بین نهادهای موقت.

فرآیند حقوقی

اصول اساسی پیشنهاد اندیشکده کوروش بزرگ

- اعلام رسمی بطلان جمهوری اسلامی از بدو تأسیس.
- بازگرداندن قانون اساسی مشروطه به عنوان پایهٔ حقوقی و قانونی ایران، همان‌گونه که در دوران شاهنشاهی مبنای مشروعیت و نظم ملی بود، اما بدون التزام کامل به تمامی مفاد آن.
- حذف زبان جنسیتی در اصول مربوط به ولایت‌عهدی و جانشینی سلطنت به منظور رعایت برابری جنسیتی.
- اداره کشور از طریق قانون اساسی مشروطه و ابزارهای حقوقی موقت مانند فرمان‌ها و احکام حکومتی.
- پشتیبانی از برگزاری همه‌پرسی ملی درباره شکل نظام و قانون اساسی.
- تشکیل مجلس مؤسسان برای اصلاح قانون اساسی مشروطه متناسب با نیازهای امروز یا تدوین قانون اساسی جدید.

منطق تاریخی و حقوقی

- بازگشت به قانون مشروطه به معنای احیای مشروعیت قانونی و مشروعیت تاریخی ایران است، نه بازگشت کامل به گذشته.
- این مدل همانند تجربهٔ شارل دوگل پس از رژیم ویشی فرانسه است: پیوستگی حقوقی با گذشته مشروع، همراه با اصلاحات نوین.
- این راه‌حل چالش های حقوقی، ادعاهای گروه‌های رقیب و اتهام دخالت خارجی را کاهش میدهد و پایه‌ای مستحکم برای مشروعیت ملی و بین‌المللی ایجاد می‌کند.

فرآیند سیاسی

- پشتیبانی از تأسیس دو نهاد کلیدی: نهاد اجرایی موقت و نهاد خیزش ملی. محرمانه ماندن اعضای داخل کشور قابل‌قبول است، اما درباره اعضای خارج کشور شفافیت ضروری است تا اعتماد عمومی جلب شود، شهروندان و رسانه‌ها بتوانند نظارت کنند و از نفوذ عوامل رژیم جلوگیری گردد.
- انتخابات و رفراندوم: زمان‌بندی دفترچه (۴ ماه برای همه‌پرسی و ۶ ماه برای مجلس مؤسسان) غیرعملی است. دلایل: تهدیدهای امنیتی، نبود زیرساخت انتخاباتی، و عدم تعادل میان نیروهای سیاسی (جمهوری‌خواهان/اصلاح‌طلبان با شبکه‌ها و منابع سازمان‌یافته در برابر پادشاهی خواهان سرکوب‌شده). پیامد: شتاب‌زدگی، خطر بی‌عدالتی و کاهش مشروعیت را به‌دنبال دارد. پیشنهاد: تمدید زمان، مطالعه نمونه‌های بین‌المللی، و ایجاد شرایط عادلانه برای جلوگیری از برتری یک جناح.
- قانون اساسی مشروطه باید تا برگزاری همه‌پرسی پایه حقوقی کشور باشد.

سیاست خارجی

- ابهام در موضوع هسته‌ای و موشکی: تعهدات باید در چارچوب پیمان منع گسترش سلاح‌های هسته‌ای باشد، نه فراتر از آن.
- روابط متوازن با همهٔ قدرت‌ها، بدون اولویت دادن به یک محور خاص.
- تغییر فوری سفرا در مسکو، پکن و آنکارا به‌دلیل وابستگی امنیتی به رژیم.
- ایجاد دبیرخانه اطلاعاتی در وزارت خارجه برای ترکیب داده‌های دیپلماتیک و امنیتی. نمونه‌های مشابه در جهان: دفتر پژوهش و تحلیل در وزارت خارجه ایالات متحده و اداره پژوهش و تحلیل سیاست خارجی در وزارت خارجه بریتانیا.
- لزوم گسترش همکاری‌های اطلاعاتی‑امنیتی علیه جرایم سازمان‌یافته، قاچاق و تروریسم.
- افزودن ترکیه، اتحادیه اروپا و قفقاز به چارچوب‌های همکاری منطقه‌ای.

نظامی و امنیتی

- استفاده مبهم از مفاهیم «ارتش»، «نیروهای مسلح»، «اطلاعات»، «پلیس». این‌ها باید تفکیک نهادی روشن داشته باشند.
- نیاز فوری به تعریف جایگاه فرمانده کل قوا و سازوکار نظارتی بر آن.
- تشکیل مرکز ملی ضداطلاعات برای هماهنگی میان نهادهای نظامی و مدنی، جلوگیری از خلأ یا رقابت‌های نهادی، و تمرکز بر مأموریت‌های کلیدی همچون ضد جاسوسی، حفاظت اطلاعات، مقابله با نفوذ، و یکپارچه‌سازی اطلاعات.
- پرهیز از ادغام پلیس و دستگاه‌های اطلاعاتی در ارتش، به‌منظور جلوگیری از نظامی‌گری و حفظ پاسخگویی.
- حذف چین و روسیه از فهرست «تهدیدات تروریستی» به دلیل پیامدهای دیپلماتیک.
- اولویت‌های جغرافیایی ارتش: جزایر سه‌گانه خلیج فارس، شیراز، مازندران\گیلان.
- اندیشکده کوروش بزرگ پیشنهاد می‌کند که سازمان آینده اطلاعات و امنیت ایران بر چهار اداره کل اصلی بنا شود: اداره کل امنیت داخلی، اداره کل اطلاعات خارجی، اداره کل سیگنال و سایبری، و اداره کل علم و فناوری.

جمع‌بندی

اندیشکده کوروش بزرگ دفترچه اضطرار را گامی مهم و تاریخی می‌داند، اما تأکید می‌کند که بدون اصلاحات بنیادین در زمینه‌های حقوقی، سیاسی، امنیتی و سیاست خارجی، این طرح در معرض خطر سطحی‌بودن یا بی‌اثر شدن است. بازگشت به قانون اساسی مشروطه به‌عنوان پایهٔ حقوقی انتقال، شفافیت سیاسی، دیپلماسی متوازن، و تفکیک روشن نهادهای نظامی‑امنیتی، چهار ستون اصلی پیشنهادی این گزارش برای عبور موفق ایران از دوران گذار و تحقق آرمان‌های ملی به رهبری شهریار ایران، رضا پهلوی، است.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Cyrus the Great Institute (CGI) warmly welcomes the publication of the Iran Prosperity Project's Emergency Phase plan (hereafter: the Booklet), an ambitious 180-day roadmap for governance in the immediate aftermath of the Islamic Republic's collapse. With the support and vision of Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, this initiative represents a significant contribution to the national conversation on Iran's transition during a period that will inevitably be marked by volatility and uncertainty.

The present report offers a constructive assessment of this Booklet. Our objective is not to undermine the noble aspirations that inspired its drafting, but to strengthen its operational feasibility by subjecting it to rigorous, evidence-based scrutiny. In moments of profound national transformation, the difference between aspiration and execution can determine whether a country moves toward stability and liberty, or falls into renewed chaos.

Iran now stands before a historic passage — a bridge between the collapse of tyranny and the promise of a free, sovereign, and modern nation. Our review therefore examines the Iran Prosperity Project's *Emergency Phase* framework through a multidimensional lens: historical experience, cultural and societal dynamics, geopolitics, and the strategic calculations of the international community. Attention is paid to the *political process*, *legal process*, *foreign policy* and *military & security* domains, given their outsized influence on Iran's survival and sovereignty in the critical first six months of transition.

By conducting this assessment, CGI aims to contribute to a more resilient, practical, transparent, and strategically sound pathway for Iran's liberation and recovery—one that honors the vision and leadership of Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi while meeting the pragmatic demands of governance in a moment of historic change.

2. IPP PLAN SUMMARY

The Iran Prosperity Project Emergency Phase booklet sets out a 180-day roadmap intended to stabilize Iran in the immediate aftermath of the Islamic Republic's collapse. It outlines a transitional governance structure consisting of three main bodies: a National Uprising Council serving as a legislative and advisory forum, a Transitional Government responsible for executive functions, and a Transitional Divan to oversee judicial matters. Legally, the plan proposes a *"Hybrid Option"* in which most existing laws remain temporarily in force to preserve continuity, while those deemed incompatible with the principles of the revolution, are to be repealed without delay.

The political roadmap envisions referendums on the form of government and the future constitution, along with policies to address the status of former regime officials. Economic and social stabilization measures include maintaining the provision of essential services—food, water, electricity, and healthcare— while ensuring currency stability and continued payment of public sector salaries.

In foreign policy, the plan calls for early engagement with key countries and international organizations, and the temporary recall of certain ambassadors for review. In security, it prioritizes re-establishing national security structures under transitional authority, reforming the military and police, and preventing internal conflict while securing borders. Sectoral policies cover education, energy, industry, environment, and public health, emphasizing rapid de-ideologisation of institutions and restoring international cooperation.

Drawing on historical examples from post-war Germany and Japan as well as the legal transition during the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union, the plan seeks to combine lessons from international experience with measures tailored to Iran's anticipated needs during its first months of transition.

3. OVERALL STRENGHTS

The Booklet represents a serious and commendable attempt to anticipate the extraordinary challenges that will confront Iran in the immediate aftermath of the Islamic Republic's collapse. The authors have clearly recognized that the first months of transition will not be a period for improvisation or symbolic gestures alone; rather, it will require coordinated governance, rapid stabilization of essential systems, and a clear framework to prevent social and political fragmentation. The Booklet's structured and multi-dimensional approach conveys a genuine sense of urgency and responsibility, qualities that are essential if Iran is to navigate such a volatile period successfully.

A particularly strong feature of the Booklet is its clear prioritization of the essentials for national stability. The identification of critical services—such as food supply, electricity, water, healthcare, and currency stability—as matters requiring immediate and uninterrupted attention reflects a deep understanding that political legitimacy in the early days will rest heavily on meeting the population's most basic needs. This practical focus grounds the Booklet in the realities of governance and speaks to a level of foresight often missing from post-revolutionary visions.

The institutional framework proposed for the interim period—separating executive, legislative, and judicial functions into distinct bodies—demonstrates an awareness of the importance of checks and balances even in a temporary system. The Booklet's emphasis on de-ideologising state institutions and restoring constructive engagement with the international community reflects a broad recognition that systemic transformation must reach beyond leadership change to address the cultural and structural roots of authoritarianism.

One of the most commendable elements lies in the military and security provisions. The explicit statement that the Booklet is *"designed to prevent retaliatory policies, mass purges, and the disintegration of security institutions while*

ensuring the survival of the new political order, securing borders, and preventing the return of the ancient régime" (p. 71) reflects both maturity and prudence. It acknowledges the dangers of indiscriminate purges or the wholesale dismantling of existing security capabilities—actions that in other transitions have led to power vacuums, border vulnerabilities, and renewed cycles of instability. By taking a measured approach to security sector reform, the Booklet shows that it values both justice and stability, understanding that they are not mutually exclusive.

The Booklet also benefits from its use of comparative historical examples, such as post-war reconstruction in Germany and Japan. These references demonstrate an intention to draw on international experience and historical precedent rather than relying solely on theoretical models or partisan aspirations. While the applicability of these cases to Iran's unique situation will need careful assessment, the willingness to examine and adapt lessons from other contexts is itself an important strength.

Two additional qualities further underscore the significance of this initiative. First, this is the most comprehensive and successful effort of its kind in nearly half a century—no comparable attempt has been made in the 47 years since the 1979 Islamic revolution. Its very existence reflects a historic step in planning for Iran's political future. Second, the Booklet (p. 12) explicitly aspires to use Persian terms, a conscious ambition to preserve and elevate the Persian language in its purest form. This linguistic and cultural commitment signals that the project is not only about governance and security, but also about restoring Iran's civilizational identity.

Overall, the Emergency Phase Booklet reflects careful thought, broad thematic coverage, and an evident commitment to national stability during one of the most sensitive periods in Iran's modern history. While the details and implementation mechanisms will require further elaboration and refinement, the effort to produce such a comprehensive framework deserves genuine recognition. It represents not only an exercise in planning, but also a signal to Iranians and the international community that serious preparation for the post-regime period is underway.

4. OVERALL WEAKNESSES

While the Emergency Phase Booklet presents an ambitious and well-intentioned framework, it suffers from some weaknesses which can undermine its clarity and practical applicability.

A central limitation is the complete absence of references or source citations. The reader is left unable to determine which proposals are grounded in established research, historical precedent, or empirical evidence, and which represent the authors' personal beliefs or political preferences. This lack of transparency diminishes the Booklet's authority and makes it difficult to evaluate the reliability of its recommendations.

The Booklet is also frequently superficial in its treatment of complex issues, leaving the reader to wonder *what exactly* is meant and *how exactly* the proposals would be implemented. While broad objectives are articulated, they are often unsupported by detailed operational plans or resource considerations. The result is a plan that risks being aspirational rather than actionable.

Several recommendations are presented without any supporting scientific or empirical rationale. For example, in Chapter 3, *Political Process and Framework for Transition From the Islamic Republic*, point 7.7, the Constituent Assembly is said to require *"no fewer than 70 and no more than 310"* seats. No explanation is provided for how these figures were determined—whether they are based on comparative constitutional design, demographic representation, or logistical constraints. This pattern repeats across the Booklet, where specific figures or thresholds appear arbitrary and without justification. While this level of specificity may in some cases be useful, it exposes a deeper structural problem in the Booklet: some sections entirely avoid detail, leaving key questions unanswered, while others go into such fine detail that it becomes unclear how deep or shallow the reader should expect the guidance to be.

This uneven treatment makes it difficult to interpret the overall level of operational readiness the plan is aiming for.

The absence of precise definitions for key terms further undermines the Booklet's clarity. One example i the phrase *"eligible Iranian voters"*. Are these voters defined by age? Do they include only residents of Iran, or also anyone with at least one Iranian parent?

The lack of internal coherence is another concern. As different chapters have been authored by different individuals, there are instances of direct inconsistency. For example, while the Booklet clearly states that a referendum will decide the fate of leaders of the Islamic Republic (p. 9, point 12.7), the military and security chapter (Chapter 8) repeatedly asserts that *"The judiciary must remove and prosecute ideological leaders"* and that *"The transitional judiciary must ensure fair, transparent, evidence-based legal proceedings against the architects and executors of systemic repression."*

Several provisions require approval by *"the leader of the national uprising"* (p. 6, point 4). However, the Booklet contains no provisions for what should occur if this leader is, for any reason, unable to give such approval. Furthermore, there is no mechanism for conflict resolution, whether between or within institutions, or in the event of disputes over legitimacy or authority.

Perhaps the most significant structural weakness is that the Booklet appears to be built on the assumption that the transition will proceed smoothly. There is no discussion of alternative scenarios—such as the emergence of competing transitional governments announced by other groups or faction. Without scenario planning, the Booklet does not adequately prepare for the complexities and unpredictability inherent in such a profound national transformation.

5. LEGAL PROCESS

The people of Iran, together with the opposition, broadly recognize that the Islamic Republic is illegitimate and that its legal framework is inherently unlawful. From this perspective, the last valid constitutional order is that of the Constitution of the Imperial State of Iran (hereinafter Imperial Iran), which remains the lawful foundation until a national referendum determines the country's future form of government. This chapter therefore proposes an alternative framework designed to uproot the Islamic Republic, abolish the principle of Islamic supremacy, and restore legal continuity, while offering a democratic path capable of preserving national unity and inspiring hope among the Iranian people.

This framework seeks to provide a legal solution that responds both to the will of the nation and to the concerns of Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, while uniting the diverse strands of the national movement. It also aligns with the key principles set out in the Booklet. At the same time, it is important to recognize that the Booklet's own legal framework carries risks: it may generate a legal vacuum during the transitional period, undermine the legitimacy of both interim and subsequent governments, and disrupt legal continuity at the very moment when stability is most essential.

Legal continuity should not be confused with preserving the constitutional order of a repressive and illegitimate regime. In a manner reminiscent of Charles de Gaulle's repudiation of the Vichy regime, declaring the Islamic Republic unconstitutional serves to uphold the validity of the preceding constitutional order. This approach avoids the dangers of rupture and vacuum, allowing Iran to proceed directly into national reconstruction without disrupting constitutional legitimacy.

The alternative framework outlined here rests on three essential considerations. First, the reinstatement of Imperial Iran's legal order does not exclude the

people's right to decide the future form of government through a referendum which remains intact and unquestioned.

Second, the legal order established for the transitional period should be regarded as exceptional—its purpose is to stabilize the state and guide it through extraordinary circumstances, not to replicate the normal obligations of a permanent constitutional framework. Third, consistent with long traditions of jurisprudence and political philosophy, law should be understood as a social contract: neither divine nor immutable, but subject to the will of the people and adaptable to the demands of national survival.

In this respect, the proposed legal framework not only safeguards Iran from the dangers of legal fragmentation, but also provides a principled foundation for democratic renewal.

1. Weaknesses of the Legal Framework and the Hybrid Option

a) The principle of legal continuity

The principle of legal continuity cannot be applied to the framework of the Islamic Republic, even in a reformed state. The regime's illegitimacy is fundamental, and it follows that its legal structures—designed to sustain systemic human rights violations and ideological supremacy—must also be rejected as invalid. Any reform of politically and ideologically motivated laws, such as the Penal and Civil Codes, would preserve a degree of continuity that undermines the moral and legal rupture necessary to reestablish justice, legitimacy, and public trust.

b) The irreformability of the Islamic Republic

Attempts to reform the political and ideological laws of the Islamic Republic risk conveying the false impression that the regime was ever capable of reform. This stands in direct contradiction to the principled position articulated by Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi: that the regime's very structure—its "DNA"—is irreformable (Blair, 2025). In a transitional context, the promise of a decisive break is essential to mobilize public support and generate momentum. Without such a rupture, so-called reformist factions could co-opt elements of the Booklet to argue for gradual change within the existing framework, thereby

diluting the imperative for genuine transformation. Proposals to form a constituent assembly, to revise the constitution, or to make incremental modifications over years could be used to present regime change as unnecessary or prohibitively costly. Moreover, the Civil and Penal Codes rest almost entirely on ideological foundations (Islamic Republic of Iran, 1979/1989). Reforming them would require enormous effort and time—greater than the effort required to reinstate and adapt the laws of Imperial Iran—while still producing disruptions to daily life as jurists and practitioners struggle to adjust. Such a path risks exhausting critical resources that should instead be devoted to urgent matters of governance and reconstruction.

c) The legitimacy of Imperial Iran

Disregarding the laws of Imperial Iran would sever continuity with the last legitimate constitutional order and, in effect, direct the rupture of legality not against the Islamic Republic but against Iran's own legitimate past. Such an approach risks reinforcing the narrative of 1979 and its sympathizers, who portray the Islamic revolution as the true starting point of legality, while simultaneously delegitimizing the Pahlavi era. Anchoring continuity in Imperial Iran's constitutional order rejects the sedition of 1979 and reaffirms the enduring will of the Iranian people, strengthening the cultural and historical foundations for defeating the ideology of the Islamic revolution.

d) The legitimacy of the transition

Abandoning an existing and valid legal foundation would create a dangerous vacuum, inviting competing claims to authority from groups lacking legitimacy or popular support. Such claims could destabilize the transition, exacerbate political chaos, and even open the door to accusations of foreign manipulation. By contrast, grounding the transitional system in the principle of legal continuity strengthens legitimacy and places rival factions outside the law. This approach enhances domestic stability while simultaneously reinforcing credibility in the eyes of the international community.

e) The drafting or revision of a constitution

In accordance with democratic frameworks, the Booklet should refrain from foreclosing the people's right to adopt a reformed Constitution of Imperial Iran. At present, the text of the Booklet explicitly removes the option of reform

limiting the choice solely to wholesale replacement. Such a decision, however, must remain the prerogative of a constituent assembly elected by the people, or alternatively, through a national referendum organized by the transitional authorities. Only the Iranian people themselves hold the authority to decide the final form of their constitutional order.

2. Alternative Legal Framework

The closest historical parallel to the Iranian case is the French transition following the Vichy regime, led by Charles de Gaulle (hereinafter "de Gaulle Transition"). This CGI report draws upon both the similarities and differences with that model to support its arguments. The strength and weakness of the de Gaulle Transition model lie in its direct engagement with key issues that the Brexit model, although legally significant, did not: questions of legitimacy, legality, and constitutional order. It is also agreed that the models of the Soviet Union, Syria, and Iraq do not serve as appropriate examples, as their outcomes are neither desirable nor suitable for Iran.

In the de Gaulle Transition, it was legally declared that the Third Republic (the political system before Vichy) had never ceased to exist and that its laws remained valid. Politically, however, the transition represented only a partial restoration. Ultimately, the sovereign people, holders of constituent power, could freely determine the future constitutional order through democratic means (Roux, 2013). The entire process has been qualified as a "constitutional elegance" (Klein, 2012), in which a key aspect is particularly relevant to the Iranian context: *the strategic use of legal continuity to ensure legitimacy and stability, while being only partially bound by the previous Constitution.*

Given our firm belief that secularism, gender equality, and other fundamental principles must be enshrined in Iran's Constitution, this transition process offers a historically grounded precedent for implementing these reforms and effectively secularizing the Constitution.

2.1 Declare the Islamic regime illegitimate *ab initio*
"*Vichy fut toujours et demeure nul et non avenu*" (Vichy has always been, and remains, null and void) - Charles de Gaulle, 1944 (de Gaulle, 1984).

In Kelsen theory, a successful revolution or coup d'état replaces the existing legal order (Kelsen, 1946). However, in the case of the Islamic Republic, we argue that it illegally came to power and thus its legal framework must be declared illegitimate *ab initio*[1], that is invalid from the outset, and cannot claim to represent the Iranian people. Accordingly, the legal order that preceded the rise of Khomeini remains valid and retains its legal continuity.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has publicly stated that Iran was "hijacked" in 1979—a significant characterization (Prime Minister's Office [Israel], 2015). This type of framing reinforces the argument that the regime's seizure of power lacked legality and legitimacy. Consequently, there is a strong likelihood that, following the collapse of the regime, Iran would receive support for a formal declaration of the Islamic Republic's illegitimacy by the Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, thereby strengthening the legitimacy of a transitional system grounded in legal continuity.

Such a rupture allows Iran to avoid outcomes similar to those experienced by Germany in the aftermath of the Nazi regime—a regime that, although destructive, arose within a democratic framework (McDonough, 2014). Germany continues to bear the long-term consequences of that dark history. In contrast, Iran seeks to affirm that the Islamic Republic did not emerge from an organic national evolution but functioned as an occupying force that seized control of the country.

"*As a unique entity that combines the strengths and learns from the weaknesses of other totalitarian regimes, the Islamic regime requires that the term 'occupying regime' be adapted to our time and incorporate this novel form of occupation.*" (Jalali, 2024).

This complete and unequivocal rupture or uprooting, both legal and political, and even symbolic, is essential to ensuring Iran's long-term protection and stability. It also serves to articulate and affirm the foundational philosophy of a new Iran: one rooted in secular democracy, individual liberties, human rights, peace, progress, and prosperity—everything the Islamic Republic stands in opposition to. Furthermore, such a rupture would enable the transitional system

[1] This is part of a research work with the Université de Montréal and Lund University.

and its successors to defend Iran against lawsuits brought by states, organizations, or individuals for actions committed by the Islamic Republic.

2.2 Reinstate legal continuity as legal foundation
Constitution of Imperial Iran
The Constitution of Imperial Iran reflected the values and institutional structure of Iranian society and government at the time of its adoption. Historical evidence suggests that, had the Pahlavi dynasty remained in power, constitutional reforms would likely have been pursued to secularize and modernize the text in line with Iran's evolving society and international developments (Afkhami, 2009). Accordingly, the fifty-year dormancy of the 1906 Constitution should be viewed as a strength. The transformation of Iranian society during this period means that certain provisions of that constitution are now obsolete or in need of amendment to reflect current realities. Like in de Gaulle Transition, the transitional authority would be able to suspend those outdated provisions (see Section 2.3).

Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi will return as the legitimate Leader of the Transition, whose role is defined by the constitution, in the Booklet and a transitional legal charter. One of the central responsibilities of the Leader is to serve as the guardian of the Constitution and the democratic will of the people. Only a trusted national figure can successfully navigate this role and conduct a legitimate referendum. The Leader's legitimacy must be clearly established and safeguarded, in order to preempt and neutralize challenges from detractors or self-proclaimed competitors during this sensitive period. The reinstatement of the Constitution will also define roles and address potential succession challenges, which the Booklet has completeley ommited.

This model avoids the perception of a full restoration of the past while offering a robust legal foundation for Iran's future. The transitional system could rely on this constitution to establish a legitimate and legal basis, one that respects and honors Iran's constitutional and historical legacy. Drawing upon a historically significant legal source is likely to foster greater public trust than introducing a new or unfamiliar alternative. It will also send a clear message to both the Iranian people and the international community: Iran is not the Islamic Republic, nor will it define its future in terms dictated by that regime or on its foundation.

Robert Greenway noted that "ultimately Iran will return to better days," emphasizing that as the first country in the region to adopt a constitution in 1906, Iran holds the strongest path toward a democratic future (Fox Business, 2025).

Legal continuity serves not only to ground the transitional system in constitutional legitimacy but also to confer lasting and indisputable legitimacy upon the future political order. It provides a compelling argument against present or future unfounded claims of foreign intervention and 'installed regime', reinforcing the sovereignty and self-determination of the Iranian people.

Other laws

Which laws to retain or discard from the Islamic Republic carries significant legal and political consequences. As such, only non-political and non-ideological laws —particularly those derived from or aligned with international legal standards— should be considered for retention. In contrast, politically and ideologically driven laws, such as the current Penal and Civil Codes, which directly and substantially impact the daily lives of the population, must be declared null and void.

We believe that reforming the ideological laws of the Islamic Republic still implicitly affirms the foundational legitimacy of that regime. This approach carries serious risks of moral and legal contradiction, as it conflicts with the opposition's core principle of total rupture with the Islamic Republic and with the Iranian people's demand for a secular and democratic order. In contrast, reforming the Civil and Penal Codes of Imperial Iran offers a more coherent and legally sound alternative. It allows for modernization and alignment with international human rights standards, without legitimizing the ideological and repressive framework imposed by the Islamic Republic.

The process will be significantly easier and more expedient, and a practical solution exists to assist lawyers and jurists in preparing for this transition (see below: "action"). The slogan *"Woman, Life, Freedom – Man, Homeland, Prosperity"* can still serve as a powerful catalyst and inspiration for reform, as long as it is articulated with sufficient legal precision to avoid arbitrary interpretation.

The proposed reforms must be grounded in essential principles such as secularism, equality before the law, and fundamental human rights. Moreover, they should address broader and emerging challenges and neglected issues, such as the treatment of stray animals, animal cruelty, and the conditions of shelters, that may be impacted by the transitional period.

Accordingly, the transitional framework itself should already outline protections for animals—recognizing them as sentient beings, prohibiting cruelty, and safeguarding their welfare. Drawing on the example of Belgium and other European countries, such provisions can be integrated first into the Civil Code and later into the Constitution, setting a regional precedent and reflecting the evolving moral and legal consciousness of Iranian society.

Action
Starting now, a white paper should be prepared for legal scholars and jurists, outlining the necessary reforms to the Constitution of Imperial Iran, the Civil and the Penal Codes. This document, in addition to the Imperial-era laws, will serve as a foundational reference to guide constitutional and legal reform and acquire familiarity with the laws. All interested parties—including jurists and academics—will have the opportunity to study and debate these proposals in the period leading up to the Transition.

2.3 Transitional legal order
The transition period represents a unique legal and political phase in which we can argue that governance can operate not strictly within the entire framework of the constitution, but upon its foundation. The transitional legal order differs fundamentally from the normal and stable constitutional order that will emerge following the conclusion of the transition. It should be understood as an exceptional period—a political emergency in which constitutional change becomes not only possible, but necessary to fulfill the core objective: guiding the nation from Point A (collapse of the regime) to Point B (normal constitutional order).

In exceptional times, such as during regime collapse and political transition, formal legal procedures are often insufficient and political decisions are necessary to help restore national sovereignty and re-establish a normal constitutional

order. However, these actions need not take an authoritarian form. Bruce Ackerman's theory of "constitutional moments", about informal constitutional changes is particularly relevant here (Baraggia, 2020). These moments are distinct from periods of "normal politics" (Moglen, 1993). Constitutional changes can sometimes occur through political, extra-constitutional processes that may later acquire formal legal legitimacy. Thus, it demonstrates how exceptional measures can be rooted in political necessity during transition, yet ultimately affirmed through democratic ratification and acceptance.

General Charles de Gaulle captured the spirit of this flexibility when he stated during a press conference: *"Une Constitution, c'est un esprit, des institutions, une pratique"*—A Constitution is a spirit, institutions, and a practice (INA, 1964). It is a definition that paves the way for numerous informal changes and great flexibility in a fundamental law (Conseil d'État, 2013). Beyond the formal mechanism of constitutional revision, other less visible or unwritten paths also serve to modify a constitution or interpret it.

In the Iranian context, two specific factors favor constitutional changes during the transition:

1) The reforms do not target rights and liberties, but rather provisions that conflict with democratic norms, gender equality and universal human rights;
2) The 1906 Constitution has remained dormant for over fifty years, during which Iranian society has significantly evolved.

Since the intention is to incorporate internationally recognized principles—such as secularism, equality, and democracy—there is little risk of serious domestic or international contestation of these modifications.

During the transition, the Leader and the transitional system will operate through provisional legal instruments—including executive orders, ordonnances, decrees—to fill the legal gaps and govern effectively. The Constitution of Imperial Iran will serve as a constitutional foundation to address the immediate political and legal needs of the transition. However, its revival is a legal and political decision and does not equate to a full reinstatement of the original constitutional order. Instead, it provides legitimacy for the authority and

preserves legal continuity to establish a democratic system chosen by the people.

Accordingly, the transitional authority will not be bound by every clause of the constitution. For political and practical purposes, it may temporarily suspend, amend, disregard or reinterpret some problematic provisions (and acquire legitimacy later) that are:

 a) Obsolete and outdated,
 b) In contradiction with democratic principles and human rights,
 c) No longer reflective of Iran's political or societal realities.

Unamendable or "eternal" clauses are binding only within a normal constitutional order. Once that order is partially suspended—and especially when such clauses conflict with recognized rights and liberties—they may be set aside during the transition. Moreover, the transitional authority may choose to engage with political parties, legal associations, and civil society actors to temporary enhance legitimacy for any major constitutional revision or suspension prior to the referendum.

A Charter may be drafted to address legal gaps and to outline the conditions for the reinstatement of Imperial Iran's Constitution.

Historical Precedent
In France, during the transition, Charles de Gaulle reinstated the laws and institutions of the Third Republic, but only selectively, governing mainly through ordonnances and decrees. This approach preserved legal continuity while transforming France's political order. By comparison, Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, Leader of the National Uprising, possesses a form of legal legitimacy that de Gaulle lacked, making the proposed path both more feasible and more legitimate.

3. Key Criteria of the Booklet

The framework proposed by CGI meets all three criteria of the Booklet, along with additional advantages outlined above.

Practical: It minimizes the need for extensive legal reforms and facilitates effective governance.

Stabilizing: Legal continuity with a valid and familiar framework ensures stability and security during the transition, while also securing international recognition and legitimacy. It strengthens internal cohesion.

Promising: By uprooting the Islamic Republic and rejecting the ideology of 1979, the framework delivers a form of justice to the Iranian people, as it abolishes the legal structure that sustained decades of oppression. It represents a promise kept by Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, the Leader of the transition, to defeat the sedition of 1979 and "reclaim Iran."

6. POLITICAL PROCESS

The political process chapter of the Booklet presents a framework for transition from the Islamic Republic, focusing on the Temporary Executive Team, the National Uprising Council, and the electoral processes envisioned for the post-regime period. While these are central to establishing stability and legitimacy, certain provisions require closer scrutiny to ensure the durability of the transition.

On the Two Institutions

We recognize the necessity of establishing both the Temporary Executive Team and the National Uprising Council to lead the struggle against the Islamic regime in Iran and to ensure a swift and orderly transfer of power after its overthrow. These institutions must be prepared to fill any power vacuum immediately, in order to guarantee security and stability, while also initiating Iran's sustainable development and the rebuilding of its centuries-old civilization. The absence of such bodies over the past four decades has been a serious obstacle to organizing and coordinating the national movement.

At the same time, the legitimacy and security of these institutions could be undermined if the identities of their members remain secret, as noted in the Booklet (p. 6, point 2). While we agree that members residing inside Iran should remain undisclosed for security reasons, we strongly recommend that the identities of members abroad be made public.

First, despite the deep trust placed in the Leader of the National Uprising, Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, democratic institutions require transparency to achieve legitimacy (de Fine Licht et al., 2011). Because members influence decisions, the public must know who they are. Without openness, it will be difficult for Iranians to offer full support—especially given the long history of regime infiltration into opposition movements (Khoshnood et al, 2025).

Second, in the absence of a formal vetting mechanism, public disclosure would allow the Iranian nation and media to scrutinize members abroad. This is standard practice in democratic societies, where an active citizenry and a free press serve as essential safeguards for democratic processes (e.g. Marinetto, 2003).

Finally, disclosure would strengthen the ability of members abroad to coordinate democratic forces and to influence foreign policymakers, media, and public opinion with greater legitimacy.

On Electoral Processes

We view a referendum on the form of government as an essential step toward a democratic and stable Iran. However, we are concerned about the timeframe proposed in the Booklet. It stipulates that a referendum should be held within four months of the regime's fall (p. 9, point 12.6), followed two months later by elections for a constituent assembly (p. 10, point 12.8). We consider this timeline unfeasible.

First, the immediate post-collapse period will face serious security threats, including sabotage by regime loyalists, separatist movements, totalitarian groups such as the Mojahedin Khalgh, and foreign actors. Reorganizing security forces and neutralizing these threats will take considerable time, particularly in a country as large and geographically challenging as Iran.

Second, dismantling regime-controlled electoral institutions, establishing fair election rules, determining voter eligibility, and deploying international observers would require many months. Even organizing voting outside Iran would be complicated by the uncertain status of embassies and their personnel.

Third, the existing political imbalance further complicates the situation. Reformists (republicans) already have established networks, media, financial resources, and the ability to campaign immediately inside Iran. Determining whether their assets were accumulated legitimately will take time. During the transition period, asset control efforts will initially focus on regime loyalists who pose greater security risks, delaying scrutiny of reformist-linked assets.

By contrast, monarchists have no organized presence inside Iran due to decades of suppression. Most active monarchists live abroad, and returning would require time to leave employment (often with months of notice), resolve financial and legal obligations, address family responsibilities, and re-establish themselves in Iran. We therefore believe that rushing a referendum and constituent assembly election would disproportionately benefit the better-prepared faction (republicans/reformists) and undermine the legitimacy of both processes.

Moreover, the four- and six-month timelines in the Booklet are unlikely to be viewed as realistic or credible by the international community. A fair and credible process will require a significantly longer period of preparation. That said, we recognize that a prolonged process risks generating frustration and legitimacy challenges, both domestically and internationally. Therefore, we recommend that a working group be established immediately to study international examples and propose a more feasible timetable tailored to the Iranian context.

Furthermore, as argued in the previous chapter of this report, the Constitution of 1906—reformed and adapted to present needs—should serve as the legal foundation for the transitional government until a referendum is held and, subsequently, a Mahestan and government elected by the Iranian people can assume power. This approach also addresses the concern of who should be recognized as Shah if monarchy is chosen in a free and fair referendum. Under the Constitution of Imperial Iran, the only legal option for constituting the royal dynasty is the Pahlavi dynasty, headed by Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi.

On this basis, the referendum should not ask whether to choose between monarchy and republic in abstract terms. Rather, it should ask whether to continue the constitutional monarchy or to establish a republic. In line with this, and contrary to the Booklet (p. 10, point 12.8), the constituent assembly should also be empowered to decide whether to retain and reform the Imperial Iran Constitution or to draft an entirely new one.
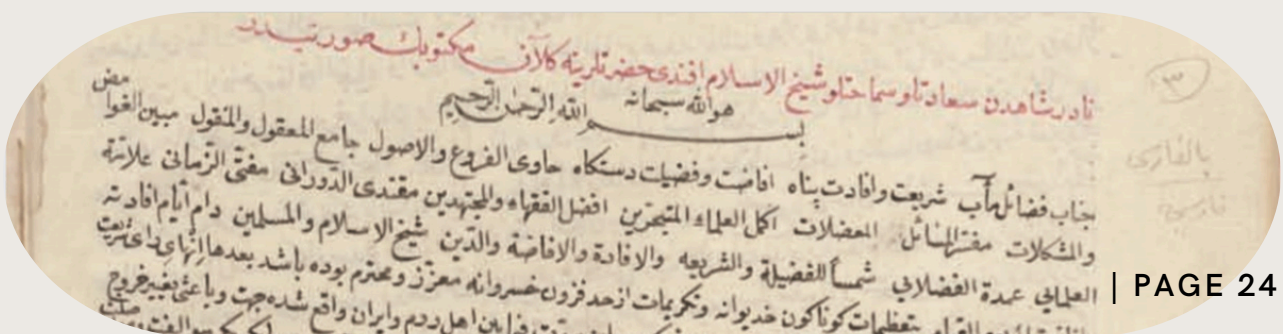
7. FOREIGN POLICY

The foreign policy chapter of the Booklet presents an ambitious and forward-looking framework for Iran's first 180 days of diplomatic engagement following the political transition. The intent to provide clear direction at an early stage is commendable, and many of the proposed measures, reflect a recognition of the urgency and complexity of the transitional period. Nevertheless, certain provisions would benefit from greater precision and strategic recalibration to ensure they both protect Iran's core national interests and maintain a balanced, credible posture in the eyes of the international community.

A primary concern lies in the approach to nuclear and missile policy. The point on *"Addressing global concerns regarding Iran's nuclear and missile programs"* (p. 48) identifies this as a core priority yet provides no operational detail on how the process would be managed or communicated. Such ambiguity risks creating unrealistic expectations abroad and prematurely constraining Iran's strategic options. This concern is amplified by the related pledge to *"fully re-engage with the IAEA, inviting unfettered inspections"* (p. 49, point 1B). While robust engagement with the IAEA is a constructive step toward rebuilding trust, the commitment to unrestricted access could inadvertently compromise sensitive defense information. While there are valid arguments in favor of complete transparency—such as enhancing confidence—it nonetheless poses inherent national security risks, as excessive disclosure in the nuclear domain can reveal vulnerabilities that adversaries may exploit (Grand, 2003; Schaper, 2004). A more sustainable course would be to adhere fully to the obligations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, without exceeding them in ways that diminish sovereign control over strategic assets. In this respect, Israel's policy of nuclear ambiguity shows how a state can balance security and international obligations without revealing every detail of its strategic capabilities (Cohen, 2010).

Similarly, the sections concerning relations with China and Russia (p. 49, point 1E; p. 58, point 5D) warrant careful reconsideration.

Singling out these two states when affirming that Iran will not become a subordinate client, risks being interpreted as a pre-emptive caution or veiled criticism, potentially complicating early diplomatic engagement. As both China and Russia will be important strategic partners in the immediate transition period, principles such as non-subordination and non-interference should be framed as universal norms applying to all states, regardless of geography or ideology.

Moreover, the Booklet's current treatment of Iran's relationship with other countries and entities (i.e. Russia, China, EU) omits explicit reference to intelligence and military cooperation—dimensions that are essential for reinforcing stability, countering shared security threats, and safeguarding Iran's maritime and border interests, not least in relation to Russia. As Treverton and Agrell (2009) observe, contemporary security challenges increasingly require erasing traditional boundaries between intelligence, military, and law-enforcement functions in order to anticipate and prevent threats, underscoring the importance of such cooperation in any strategic partnership.

In parallel, the *"End of Month 3"* goal of concluding initial agreements with the United States and Israel (p. 51) underscores the importance of diversifying partnerships and avoiding the perception of over-prioritizing any single axis of alignment. While re-engagement with Washington and Jerusalem is highly valuable, it should be embedded within a broader framework that signals balanced outreach to all major powers and regional actors. This balance is also relevant to the proposal to invite UN or EU observers to *"enhance transparency and reinforce neutrality"* (p. 55, point 4E). Without clarifying whether such observation pertains to elections, government formation, security reforms, or other transitional processes, the initiative risks being misinterpreted as either purely symbolic or as an unnecessary intrusion into sovereign affairs. A clearly defined mandate would help ensure that such international involvement supports rather than complicates Iran's diplomatic positioning.

The proposed frameworks for security and intelligence cooperation could also be made more comprehensive. At present, they omit specific reference to intelligence-sharing on organized crime, human trafficking, arms smuggling, and narcotics trafficking (p. 54)—threats that are likely to intensify in the aftermath

of political change and that have direct implications for border integrity and internal stability (e.g. Savelsberg and McElrath, 2014). Likewise, the *strategic objectives* (p. 61, point 6A) would be strengthened by explicitly including the disruption of such conventional criminal networks alongside counterterrorism measures, thereby presenting a holistic vision of national security, especially since there is a clear correlation between conventional criminal networks and radicalism, terrorism, and gray zone strategy (Khoshnood, 2025; Makarenko, 2004).

The Booklet also proposes early cooperation with Israel to counter sabotage by remnants of the former regime (p. 56, point 5B), but without a clear delineation of scope or operational limits. Given the sensitivities involved, it is essential that any such collaboration be explicitly framed to preserve national sovereignty and prevent any perception of external control over internal security matters.

Additionally, the section's commitment to expand cyber, intelligence, and judicial cooperation with Israel (p. 57, point 5B) should be broadened to include military cooperation, joint training exercises, and defense technology exchange—particularly in counterterrorism, urban guerilla warfare operations, missile defense, and related strategic domains where Israeli expertise is internationally recognized (e.g. Ganor, 2021).

Diplomatic representation is another area requiring targeted attention. The current list of priority ambassadorial changes (p. 65, point 7) does not include postings to Russia, China, or Turkey—three capitals that will exert decisive influence on Iran's early foreign policy trajectory. In the cases of Russia and China, both states have maintained close political, economic, and security ties with the Islamic Republic; it is therefore highly probable that the incumbent ambassadors in these posts possess deep connections to Iran's intelligence and security apparatus.

Historical patterns show that in high-priority states, ambassadors have often been drawn from within Iran's security institutions, further underscoring the need for swift replacement (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2020). This is borne out by current appointments: the ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, previously served multiple terms on the Majles National Security and Foreign Policy

Committee, including as its spokesperson, while the ambassador to China, Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, formerly held the position of Secretary and Deputy Head of the Supreme National Security Council. Such career trajectories exemplify the embeddedness of security and intelligence networks within Iran's diplomatic representation in strategically important capitals, making their early replacement a matter of priority. Turkey, while not in the same strategic category as Russia and China, warrants equal urgency due to its shared land border with Iran and the high likelihood that regime loyalists and senior figures may attempt to flee there to regroup or organize resistance.

Furthermore, the provision allowing diplomats without formal ties to the Islamic Republic's intelligence, security, or ideological apparatus to remain in their positions (p. 66, point 7) may underestimate the degree to which institutional cultures can carry over political alignments. While retaining experienced personnel during a transition is understandable, appointing interim political representatives could help ensure immediate alignment with the transitional government's priorities and values. This concern is reinforced by both legal findings and academic research demonstrating that the Islamic Republic has systematically used its diplomatic missions worldwide as platforms for covert operations (Khoshnood & Khoshnood, 2024).

Finally, the absence of a dedicated intelligence secretariat within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (p. 68, point 8B) represents a structural gap. Such a body—responsible for integrating open-source intelligence and direct observations of our diplomats with inputs from national security agencies, assessing emerging foreign policy risks, and ensuring secure, timely communication to decision-makers—would substantially improve the ministry's capacity for anticipatory and adaptive policy-making in a volatile strategic environment.

While few foreign ministries maintain fully institutionalized intelligence departments, the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) demonstrate the value of embedding dedicated analytical capacity directly within the diplomatic apparatus. Its creation in Iran should be seen not as an expansion of covert activities, but as an essential coordination mechanism for safeguarding national interests during the most sensitive phase of political transformation.

Minor Suggestions for Revision

Omission of Turkey from strategic partnerships (p. 50, point 2C): The Booklet rightly identifies Israel and Saudi Arabia as strategic partners, citing maritime security, counter-proxy cooperation, technology exchange, and regional cohesion. However, the exclusion of Turkey is an oversight. Turkey is a major regional power with NATO's second-largest military, a complex historical relationship with Iran, and significant influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Ignoring Turkey at this level is not only geopolitically unrealistic but also a missed opportunity to stabilize relations with a powerful neighbor that will play a decisive role in Iran's security environment. Another important consideration is Turkey's long land border with Iran, which makes it a likely destination for regime loyalists and former leaders seeking to flee the country, and potentially a staging ground for organized resistance against the transitional government. This geographic and political reality further underscores the necessity of early and constructive engagement with Ankara.

Failure to mention the European Union among strategic partners (p. 49–50): In *"Strategic Foreign Policy Goals During the Transition,"* the European Union (EU) is absent. The EU is not only a potential source of economic trade, innovation and investment but also a key diplomatic player in nuclear negotiations, sanctions policy, and human rights advocacy. A transitional foreign policy must engage with the EU as both an economic and political partner.

Missing reference to the Caucasus in regional cooperation frameworks (p. 50, point 2D): The section on *"Multilateral Regional Cooperation Frameworks"* references the Persian Gulf, Levant, and Central Asia but omits the Caucasus. Given the region's strategic role in trade corridors, energy transit, and border security—and its proximity to conflict zones—this omission is an oversight. Post-collapse Iran will face both opportunities and risks in the Caucasus, making it essential to explicitly include it in regional frameworks.

Regional visits by interim leaders (p. 52, point 4B): The table of planned regional visits omits Russia, which appears to be an oversight. Re-engaging Russia should be among the highest priorities for Iran's interim leadership, particularly given our shared maritime border and the strategic importance of stable relations.

EU engagement (p. 57, point 5C): The Booklet states that *"all European citizens"* should be released from detention in Week 1. This provision would benefit from greater precision. It is unclear whether the scope includes dual nationals, individuals currently under investigation, or those convicted of serious offenses (e.g. homicide and trafficking). Without such clarification, the proposal risks creating legal ambiguities, potential security challenges, or perceptions of preferential treatment that could undermine public trust.

Exclusion of Georgia from Central Asia and Caucasus outreach (p. 63, point 6C): The Booklet proposes diplomatic outreach to Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, but notably omits Georgia. Given Georgia's strategic position as a gateway to Europe, its role in regional transit and energy projects, and its potential as a diplomatic bridge between Iran and European institutions, its exclusion limits the completeness of the outreach strategy. Including Georgia in this framework would strengthen regional connectivity and broaden Iran's strategic options.

8. MILITARY & SECURITY

The military and security chapter of the Booklet addresses matters central to protecting Iran's sovereignty during the transition, and its ambition to unify and professionalize the country's defense, intelligence, and law enforcement architecture is commendable. However, its current formulation contains conceptual ambiguities, structural conflations, and operational gaps that risk undermining its objectives. The most fundamental of these is the tendency to use "military," "armed forces," "intelligence services," and "law enforcement" almost interchangeably, as if they were one entity. These institutions have different mandates, oversight structures, and modes of operation (e.g. OECD, 2008). Yet in this chapter, proposals are often assigned to *"the armed forces"* without clarifying whether this term refers solely to the Artesh, or whether it is also meant to encompass civilian intelligence services, law enforcement agencies, or other auxiliary formations. For example, on page 75 it is stated that *"armed forces must treat any ethnic, political… as a national security threat and respond accordingly,"* but the text does not define the boundaries of which institutions fall under this mandate. Such ambiguity blurs legal responsibilities, risks assigning inappropriate tasks to the wrong institutions, and creates openings for both inefficiency and abuse. The chapter would benefit greatly from treating the military, civilian intelligence and security organizations, and law enforcement as distinct pillars, each with its own sub-section, responsibilities, and structure.

This lack of structural clarity is compounded by the absence of a clear statement on who will serve as commander-in-chief, and what checks will govern their authority. Without such definition, proposals on force restructuring, integration, and command reforms rest on uncertain ground. Relatedly, some recommendations touch on highly sensitive matters but offer no operational detail. On page 71, for example, the plan calls for *"reconstituting the military forces by integrating the organized revolutionary cells and with the help of defectors previously identified and vetted through the defection platform and other means."*

This raises immediate questions about how such vetting will be conducted and who will carry it out. These are not procedural footnotes—they are essential safeguards against infiltration and political compromise.

The framing of threats also requires recalibration. Pages 71–72 focus on the need to combat armed threats from former regime loyalists, which is valid, but this focus should be expanded to explicitly include separatists, hostile organizations such as the Mojahedin Khalgh, and criminal networks. While separatists are mentioned elsewhere in the plan, placing them here alongside regime loyalists would acknowledge that threats to national unity can come from multiple sources. Similarly, page 72 calls for reinstating counterintelligence units immediately, which is important, but counterintelligence cannot function in isolation—it is part of broader intelligence and security structures (Prunckun, 2012). A narrow focus risks ignoring the analytical, operational, and protective functions that must underpin it. The same applies to the proposal on page 78 for a *"professional military intelligence unit"* tasked with countering espionage and hostile infiltration. While military counterintelligence should handle infiltration and espionage directed against the armed forces, counterespionage—addressing intelligence operations targeting the state as a whole—should be the primary domain of a civilian intelligence and security service. As Bruneau (2001) emphasizes in his study of new democracies, excessive military involvement in counterintelligence risks perpetuating authoritarian legacies and undermining democratic control. To prevent gaps and inter-agency rivalry, a National Counterintelligence Center should be established as an immediate priority. This body, structured as a joint inter-agency authority, would coordinate military and civilian counterintelligence efforts, ensure real-time intelligence sharing, and provide unified strategic direction for counterespionage across all state institutions. Research on NATO intelligence cooperation has shown that the problem is rarely a shortage of information, but rather the absence of mechanisms to integrate it across military and civilian pillars. Fragmentation produces duplication, blind spots, and rivalry, while cultural barriers between agencies often prevent effective sharing. To overcome this, NATO has moved toward fusion centers and joint coordinating bodies that align operational and strategic priorities (Ballast, 2018). A National Counterintelligence Center in Iran would serve as an institutional safeguard, ensuring unified direction and preventing counterespionage from being left to fragmented silos.

Some structural proposals need more clarification. Page 74, point 12, suggests merging *"all armed entities, including the Artesh (conventional army), IRGC, and other forces, into a single, unified, centralized, and accountable military structure."* The term *"other forces"* is undefined, and if interpreted to include the police or civilian intelligence, it would erase essential institutional boundaries. Moreover, Iran's security landscape has been shaped by deliberate coup-proofing: the Islamic Republic maintained parallel organizations such as the IRGC and Artesh precisely to guard against internal threats. As Quinlivan (1999) shows in his comparative study of Middle Eastern states, such coup-proofing strategies may strengthen regime survival but consistently undermine professionalism and warfighting capacity. A democratic transition must avoid both extremes: not reproducing authoritarian-style fragmentation, but also not concentrating all coercive power into a single structure that could enable renewed military dominance. Iran should indeed consolidate its national defense into one professional military, while keeping police and civilian intelligence agencies institutionally distinct to preserve accountability and prevent militarization.

The force restructuring tables, particularly on page 79, reveal further gaps. They fail to indicate who will assume the functions of disbanded units—if the Quds Force is dissolved, for instance, which body will take over its operational role? While IRGC intelligence is to be dissolved, certain capabilities and vetted personnel could be integrated into reformed structures, such as incorporating Quds Force intelligence into a new military intelligence department. The tables also contain factual errors: "Military Service Organization" should read "Public Conscription Organization of NAJA," FARAJA Intelligence is listed twice, FARAJA Counterintelligence is omitted, and the intelligence and counterintelligence arms of the Judiciary are absent. Discussion of police intelligence omits its critical role in combating conventional crime.

Certain inclusions could also damage Iran's strategic posture. On page 85, Russia and China are listed alongside terrorist organizations like Hashd al-Shaabi, Hezbollah, and Ansar Allah—a categorization that is both diplomatically inappropriate and inconsistent with the balanced foreign policy advocated in our chapter on the Booklet's foreign policy section. These states should be removed from that list. Similarly, page 92 refers to *"UN-verified training and reforms,"* but cooperation with the UN should be limited to what agreed regulations require,

in order to protect sovereignty. The same table (p. 85) calls for a *"National Security Crisis Management Center"* composed of domestic and international experts. While consultation with international experts is valuable, their role should be advisory only—not as embedded members of a core national security body.

The formulation of the National Intelligence and Security Service on page 90, which presents domestic and foreign divisions alongside cyber *"units,"* is insufficient both conceptually and practically. From a comparative perspective, intelligence organizations that aspire to democratic legitimacy and operational effectiveness cannot be reduced to such a skeletal structure (Lowenthal, 2022). This description neither reflects the functional complexity of intelligence work nor provides a feasible model for Iran's security environment. If the intention is only to signal the establishment of a national service, the Booklet should limit itself to that broad statement. However, if the goal is to outline the institutional architecture in detail, a more robust framework is required.

The CGI therefore suggests that four directorates should form the backbone of any modern integrated intelligence agency (e.g. Andrew, 2018). A Domestic Security Directorate (DSD) would address counterintelligence, including counterespionage, counterterrorism, security vetting, information security, protective security and close protection, and the physical security of facilities vital to national security. A Foreign Intelligence Directorate (FID) would be responsible for foreign intelligence collection through human, technical, and liaison channels, and for producing analysis not only of threats but also of broader developments in priority countries—including both adversaries and partners—as well as monitoring international and transnational actors. A Signals and Cyber Directorate (SCD) would encompass national signals intelligence—both defensive within the domestic domain and offensive against foreign adversaries—while also leading cyber defense of critical national infrastructure, attributing hostile cyber actors, and conducting cyber operations against external targets. Finally, a Science and Technology Directorate (STD) would focus on research, development, and the application of advanced technologies for intelligence purposes, including cryptography, surveillance tools, biometrics, and artificial intelligence.

Finally, important structural elements are underdeveloped or undefined. The National Guard mentioned on pages 90–91 is not explained—its position relative to the military, its command structure, and its legal status are all unclear. More broadly, the chapter leaves unanswered who will conduct vetting, by what standards, and with what role for diaspora Iranians. It does not explain who will select the leadership of security institutions, nor does it adequately emphasize information protection as a key counterintelligence task. Several abbreviations, such as NSRB and STSc, appear without explanation.

Minor Suggestions for Revision

Flexible vetting criteria (p. 73, point 5, bullet 3): The Booklet states that *"those who successfully pass this… at the discretion of the transitional government's leadership and in accordance with flexible criteria"* will be accepted. It is unclear what these criteria are, and whether the leadership will be directly responsible for each individual's approval.

Military media activities (p. 74, point 13): The Booklet states that the military should not engage in media activities. However, a PR function is essential for communicating with the media about military operations and security threats, and for countering disinformation.

Religious extremist threats (p. 75, point 14, bullet 2): While various threats are listed, the plan should explicitly add "religious" to encompass extremist groups and remnants of the Islamic Republic's ideological networks.

Hybrid warfare preparedness (p. 75, point 14, bullet 15): Training recommendations should also include preparation for gray-zone warfare. These conflicts blend military and civilian tools, making them complex and difficult to understand without specialized training.

Defense budget transparency limits (p. 75, point 16, bullet 3): While financial reporting is important, full transparency in defense budgets can expose the strengths and weaknesses of the armed forces. Limitations on public disclosure are necessary to protect national security.

Payroll detail scope (p. 77, point 5, Phase I, key actions): The Booklet mentions paying salaries for military personnel, teachers, and healthcare workers. If payroll continuity is important to include, it should also mention other critical categories such as police and oil sector workers, or otherwise avoid overly specific listings.

Naming intelligence services (p. 77): The Booklet proposes a new intelligence body, the National Intelligence and Security Service, translated in the Farsi version (p. 86) as "Sāzmān-e Ettelāʿāt va Amniat-e Melli." Its acronym, SAVAMA, recalls the Islamic Republic and should be avoided. An alternative is "Sāzmān-e Āsayesh-e Mihan", with the acronym SAM, aligning with the Booklet's call for original Parsi titles.

Limits on public reporting (p. 78, Phase III, key actions, bullet 8): The call for *"transparent public reporting"* should acknowledge that not all information can be made public due to national security considerations.

Internal intelligence superiority (p. 86, point 9, Phase 0): Achieving *"internal intelligence superiority"* will require building new structures immediately, leveraging both diaspora Iranians and in-country assets who can contribute. Preparatory work must begin without delay.

Artesh deployment priorities (p. 88, Phase A/B1): The plan lists deployment sites but omits Shiraz, the Caspian regions of Gilan and Mazandaran, and—most critically—the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf. Securing these islands is urgent, as their loss to the United Arab Emirates would be hard to reverse given its international backing.

9. CONCLUSION

The Cyrus the Great Institute welcomes the Iran Prosperity Project's ambition to offer a framework for Iran's future. Yet ambition must be paired with clarity, feasibility, and accountability. Our review of the IPP Booklet reveals critical shortcomings: vague institutional definitions, lack of oversight mechanisms, and timelines for referendum and constitutional reform that underestimate the security and logistical realities of transition.

At the same time, the Booklet provides a valuable starting point for dialogue. By addressing its gaps—most notably in defining the separation of military, police, and intelligence roles; establishing transparent oversight mechanisms; and calibrating political processes to the realities of post-regime conditions—the framework could evolve into a credible roadmap.

CGI remains committed to supporting efforts that safeguard Iran's territorial integrity, ensure a secular and democratic constitutional order, and restore national sovereignty. We will therefore not hesitate to be of assistance to the Iran Prosperity Project—now or in the future—in the preparation of projects, booklets, or initiatives that concern Iran's destiny and the proud legacy of the Iranian nation. A successful transition cannot be built on haste or ambiguity; it must rest on institutions that are accountable, transparent, and resilient.

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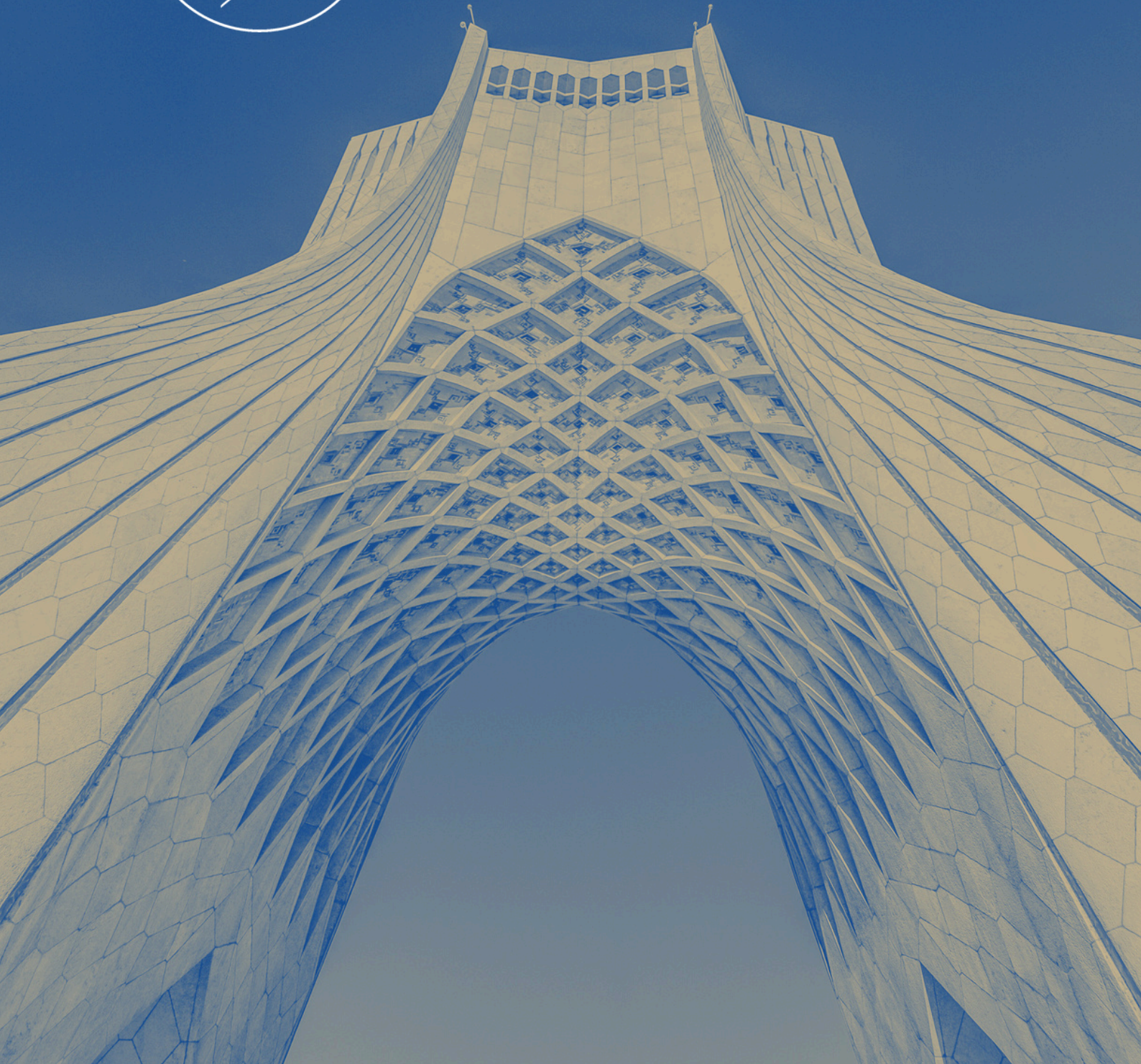
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