



## Effects of Contract 1907/m on Iran's Policy Making

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### Abstract

*Contract 1907 was issued in 31Aug of 1907 between two governments of Russia and England in Saint Petersburg. The contract was issued under a condition, in which both powers decided to recognize each other's influence in Iran and instead, overcome their common enemy by that time (Germany), since emergence of the government was going to be a threat for interests of both governments. Hence, Russia and England did their all best in issuing such contract, so that their interests can be provided in Iran. The contract about Iran included some clauses, which divided the country practically to three spheres of influence. North part was for Russia; east south was for England and other remained were neutral. The contract was issued in most critical conditions in Iran, which was Constitutional Era. Both colonial countries were trying to control revolution and change its results in their benefit. Therefore, due to weakness and dependence of many Qajar statesmen and lack of experience of constitutionalists, the question would be raised: what effects contract 1907 has had on Iran's policy making process? Possible assumption can be as follows: efforts of Russia and England and conditions of Iran and whole world by that time have provided conditions for effects of the mentioned contract on Iran's policy making.*

**Keywords:** Embassy, ambassador, policy making, constitutionalism, parliament, prime minister, foreign minister, ultimatum.

### Introduction

As a result of previous competition between England and Russia in Asia and especially in Iran and following emergence of constitutional revolution in Iran and emergence of Germany in Europe, Russia and England changed their idea about Iran due to emerged conditions of world. On one hand, the countries came together and issued contract 1907/m and on the other hand, they tried to avoid influence of Germany in Iran and prevent its effects on policy of Qajar government, so that Iran's policy could be go toward interests of Russia and England. Hence, the main question of the study can be as follows: what effects the contract has had on the policy making of Qajar policy makers and the effects were continued to how extent? The possible assumption can be as follows: Russia and England were influenced in event of bombing parliament and applied it in their benefit. Then, the countries cause some obstructions in negotiations of second parliament and while employing Morgan Shuster. Both countries could therefore distort political independence of Iran and forced also Iran's cabinet and Qajar statesmen to accept ultimatum of Russia and dissolve the parliament. Afterwards, Shuster was expelled from Iran and the bad shadow was remained on policy making of Iran for long time<sup>1</sup>.

As a result of Iran's Constitutional Revolution in 1906, which delineated to some extent influence of foreign countries in Iran and also avoided despotism of Qajar kings, Russia and England tended to avoid development of revolution. Hence, after issuance of contract 1907, Iran's territory was divided to some new influence regions and there is no doubt that, their new

agreement affected public policy of Iranian statesmen. In most cases, their political orientation was toward their policy making process<sup>2</sup>.

Contract 1907 was issued between Russia and England in 31Aug of 1907 in Saint Petersburg city and was also signed by ambassador of Britain Ser Arthur Nicolson and foreign minister of Russia Alexander Isoleski. The contract included three kinds of agreements, among which one agreement was about Iran, thereby the two governments were responsible for respecting Iran's independence and were tended to provide equal interests for commerce and trade of all other nations. Then, both governments believed that their interests would be limited due to geographical and economic reasons in regulating some regions of Iran, which has been in boundary of Russia and England (Sistan and Baluchistan). Then, they owned main share for themselves and through this they recognized Iran's independence. Iran was divided to three separated regions including north part for Russia influence; south part for England; and finally the neutral part<sup>3</sup>.

Here, contract 1907/m is under consideration and probably function of both countries has not been only in their own regions, but also the most important issue is noting this issue and answering the question that, whether the contract has been effective in Iran's policy making or not? And if so, the effects have been to how extent and have been continued how long?

Clearly answer of the question is so easy and it should be considered that effects of the contract have been mostly in what policy making cases and how the effects could change Iran's

policy making process. The contract, being a secret, was published by HablOI-matin Newspaper for the first time. The newspaper has states in this regard as follows:

“Both countries become together first in secret and then newspapers published provisions and interests of the contract, until that, one month before and in a hot weather, during which all statesmen went out of city, England’s minister stopped along with Russian minister in the city for this purpose. The hot weather was modifying provisions of the contract. The main part of the agreement is related to Iran’s function and other issues were also modified. However, Iran’s issue has been significantly under consideration and also they hope that all provisions of contract would be signed by both countries until early next fall”

Apparently, the mentioned contract has been published in England with delay. Eduard Brown confessed about delay of the contract and wrote: “the contract has been published in England in October of 1907.” HablOI-matin has written in this regard as follows: “provisions of mentioned contract were published in 24Sep in Reuter and other newspapers of European media. Then in 26Shaban the contract was read in Iran’s National Parliament”

As a result of issuing the contract in England, many parties started to criticize it and some people believed that the contract was in benefit of Russia. However, the reality is that both governments had to decrease tensions as much as possible, since Russia was failed against Japan in 1905 and faced also many internal protests. England faced many losses in its war against Boers and on the other hand, German Empire, Wilhelm II invited them to war in Tanjeh Port in Morocco<sup>5</sup>.

## Methodology

Applied method in the present study has been in kind of descriptive-analytical research. Applied data has been collected through referring books, references, and available papers, then main goals of the present study has been analyzed and investigated.

## Results and Discussion

**Reaction of Iran’s parliament and policy makers against the contract:** First reaction of Iran’s policy makers, either in government or in Parliament, was at the first protest-oriented. Iran’s foreign minister Moshiro Doleh has rejected provisions of the contract in a letter to England Ambassador Marling. He mentioned also that Iran was an independent country and didn’t recognize provisions of the contract about Iran at all.

However, Mr. Marling has stated in his letter to Ser Eduard as follows:

“Ser, Anglo-Russian contract, which has been issued in

parliament in 5<sup>th</sup> day of month, has been read. A brief negotiation was also done in this regard. Style of the negotiation was in kind of moderate talkies”

In statements of England officers, some clear differences were observed, since on one hand they referred rejection of contract on behalf of Iranian statesmen and on the other hand, they claimed that negotiation of parliament has been on moderate contract. However, the reality is that agents of parliament have been against the contract; although, among cabinet members some individuals were silent against Anglo-Russian contract of 1907.

Russians have claimed in regard with essence of the issuance of contract as follows: “Anglo-Russian contract about Iran has been useful for England more than us. It also seems that, in order o sign such contracts, which would provide equal benefit for both parties, no barrier would be existed”

On the other hand, they have claimed clearly that the two parties were trying for many years to issue a contract between themselves, so that they can provide independence and safety of Iran. The mentioned contract was signed under a situation, in which Iran has been under Constitutional Era. By that time, Iran was waiting for results of its revolution and suddenly people’s view and vision was changed into negative view. Eduard Brown believed that the pessimism was created as a result of lack of distributing the contract in parliament on right time<sup>6</sup>.

Maybe HablOI-matin has been the one and only newspaper, which has disclosed the contract contrary to claims of England and has also warned Iranian people about policy of Russia and England. The newspaper has also asked people in some comprehensive articles to be aware of political tricks of the two countries. They warned also them to appreciate their freedom in constitutional era and to avoid disputes. An effective article in this regard has been as follows:

“Clearly, when two persons are in opposite points and interests of each of them are against interest of other party, they would try to destroy imaginations of each other. However when goals and targets become together, so no dispute would be existed<sup>7</sup>. Thinks would be same as each other and also interests would be equal and hence, there would be no war and dispute. If a party has provided a boat for traveling and the other invites you both of them would take you in same direction. England and Russia have similar targets and they want in fact to create faction and discord among Iranian people and nation and achieve to their goals”

The mentioned paper included two main points as follows: first, author believes that policies of both countries is similar to each other, since the two governments should become together, so that they can make unit policy about Iran; second, the author mentions that for this policy, both states tend to make faction between cabinet and agents of parliament and tend also to make

dispute among people, so that they can achieve their goals as soon as possible. After death of Mozafar Al-din Shah, Mohammad Ali-shah came to the throne. He was grown up among Russians and was pioneer of Tsar. He was searching for a reason to close parliament and finish constitutionalism totally. Negligence of king about parliament was clear from this issue that while coronation he didn't invite agents of parliament and cause delay in signing constitution<sup>8</sup>. Murder of Amin Sultan and unsuccessful terror of Mohammad Ali-shah, were the best excuses for king to show reaction. Embassies of Russia and England, along with king, have had a meeting with Moshiro Doleh foreign minister of Iran through Marling (England's charged of affairs) and they have stated to him in this meeting as follows: "some administrations want to achieve their negative goals and targets through depriving king from trustable and intimate individuals."

Compromise between parliament and king was impossible, since on one hand king was himself against parliament and on the other hand, Russians were also his followers. England tended also to support constitutionalism like Russia, since it was to its benefit by that time and in those conditions.

#### **Bombing of the parliament; the first result of contract 1907:**

Mohammad Ali-shah, who tended to face parliament, had to dismiss Amir Bahador under the pressure of National Parliament. Afterwards, Amir Bahador became refugee of Russian embassy and as a result, Russia and England could interfere clearly: "clearly, they started to support beaten of parliament and finally, 3 weeks later, Baharestan was bombed by Cossack Brigade"

Ambassadors of two governments of Russia and England, Hartoig and Marling, had a meeting with Iran's foreign minister and informed him that, if he don't leave opposition against king, Russia would interfere. In this situation, it is natural that the announcement of Russia was accepted. Hence, one can observe that after that parliament could force king to live according to law, Russian and English embassies tried to take benefit of situation, since they tended to turn the situation back to its initial mode. King went to garden under support of both governments and issued order of arresting constitutionalists. Then he announced curfew and parliament was bombed by Liuchow, commander of Cossack Brigade<sup>9</sup>.

23 of Jun 1908: however, Russia had denied its interference in parliament event, some people believed that collapse of parliament and basis of constitution has been designed by empire. According to Pitter Awry: "there are many evidences, which show that Russian ambassador was opponent of this issue; although, Colonel Liuchow was officially under control of king, not Russia. Clearly, there has been interference of a foreign military power in this regard"

Through assessing two mentioned ideas one can conclude that, if Russia has not interfered directly in this event, it has at least

supported the event. At the first, English government had protest; although, based on contract 1907, it couldn't do anything and tried to make relation between king and constitutionalists. The constitutionalists started to resist and claimed that action of Mohammad Ali-shah in bombing the parliament has been a fight against constitution and destroying basis of constitution. They stated: "new murder of revolutionary people of Iran by Red Army has been a sign for formal occupation of Azerbaijan"

Constitutionalists tended to move toward Tehran; although, foreign countries and especially Russia thought that the issue was ended and believed that king had control on situations. Hartoig has claimed in his telegraph in 16Jun as follows:

"Without any predictions, one can confirm that king was successful in providing relative peace. Using the opportunity, one can easily provide peace in the country and modify offices gradually"

Russians claimed that king had not applied violence and had promised to provide constitution; while, many constitutionalists became refugee of England Embassy while being chased. This caused a misunderstanding between England and Iran and Russians tried to solve the disputes among mentioned parties by Hartoig. They tried also to confirm England about apology of Iran government<sup>10</sup>.

By that time, England wrote a letter to prove its goodwill to Russia as follows: "refuge to consensus would be clearly for political purposes. Hence, you should not allow that England Embassy can be applied as refuge place"

The action of England was confirmed by Russia and also king confirmed it; while, two states asked king to implement his promises and start parliament elections. In telegram No.287, Ser Eduard Grey told to Nicolson ambassador of UK about agreement of two parties as follows:

"The two governments have become surprised that king didn't any action in regard with publishing of election rule. Both states hope that the action can be done as soon as possible"

Coordinated actions of Russia and England have been provided; while, Russia has took benefit of situation and move its forces toward Iran and apparently, England had no objection. In addition, king was also under pressure of Russia and England Embassies for the fourth time on 10May of 1909. By that time, king sworn that he was committed to constitution; although, the action was not effective in avoiding constitutionalists to occupy capital of the state. Russia and England tend to encourage king to implement his promises on one hand, and believed on the other hand that they should grant a loan to solve his financial problems. Meanwhile, they were also afraid of this issue that the loan can make his situation stronger against constitutionalists. Several telegraphs were arrived to embassies of two states from

different cities, in which they had claimed that granting loan to king was against constitution and was not formally identified. Finally, revolutionaries decided to move toward Tehran and remove the king from kingdom. Russia and England, which were frightened of repeating the revolution, tried to contact with commanders of revolutionaries in the way and avoid them from entering Tehran<sup>11</sup>.

It could be mentioned that, by that time maybe some Khans of Bakhtiari tribe had traveled to London before travelling Tehran and have had negotiation with England's Foreign minister. They were growing thought of Bakhtiari Government instead of Qajar.

The conditions were increasingly going to be more critical and the two states tended to change the situation in a form that, they could achieve their own goals whether constitutionalists or Mohammad Ali-shah was successful. Hence, Russians went to Mohammad Vali Khan Tonekabon's Commander of north forces and English contacted Bakhtiars. Some evidences are existed, which show that England has encouraged Bakhtiars to occupy Tehran. England Ambassador has stated while contact of ambassadors with Bakhtiars as follows: "go toward Tehran and be sure about everything"

The second way that the two states took was to have meeting with king and cabinet members and forcing the king to implement his promises, which have been as follows: first, dismissing the prime minister; second, issuing order of general amnesty; third, issuing order of elections; and finally, form a cabinet from trustable individuals in two states. They promised king to give any required support in order to solve mentioned problems. In response, king dismissed prime minister and informed England that he would elect individual, who was confirmed by England Foreign Ministry. Eduard Grey has sent a letter to George Barkley in this regard as follows<sup>12</sup>:

"King has confirmed that he would select an individual as his prime minister, who is confirmed by England Foreign Ministry." however, apparently Foreign Ministry of England had informed king that he had to select a prime minister and also a foreign minister and both of them had to be accepted by ministers of Russia and England. For the second time, king wrote a letter and claimed that constitution should be applied according to Islam's needs and requirements. SamsamOl-saltaneh has stated in response to king statement that he was agree just with traditional constitution. Sir Barkley has written to Sir Eduard Grey as follows: "my Russian assistant has written that he has applied his words' influence to commander as much as possible but no change has been created"

King was ready to dismiss prime minister but he avoided from granting position of foreign minister to SA'dOI-doleh following order of the two states. After that the governments informed him that he would be left alone if he deny their orders, he had to grant post of foreign minister to SA'dOI-doleh<sup>12</sup>.

Local administrations informed consuls of England and Russia that they must force king to accept conditions of constitutionalists. King claimed in this regard as follows: "9 months I occupied the city and now that my enemies are going to be failed, how I can leave them and also import food to Tabriz? You have to expel your forces from the city." Then they replied instead as follows: "due to circumstances, such method is totally out of this domain"

Finally, the manuscript of king was published in 9<sup>th</sup> May of 1909. Reestablishment of constitution and national parliament was again confirmed and two states were trying to provide friendship and peace two nations. Apparently both commander and general had certain tendency to occupy the capital of the state. England believed that 400 Caucasian were going to influence, not Russian government. Movement of Sardar Asad was in order to force ministers to implement constitutional system in proper manner<sup>13</sup>.

Ambassadors of two countries gathered together for the next time and asked him to avoid entering Tehran, so that situation wouldn't become more critical than before. When they were disappointed, England's foreign ministry asked his ambassador through telegraph in 23 Jun of 1909 to have less interference in these affairs. Finally, constitutionalists entered Tehran and after disputes between them and fans of Mohammad Ali-shah and their failure, king became refugee of Russia.

**Russia's ultimatum, certain impact of contract 1907:** Unorganized economic condition of Iran forced constitutional government to borrow loans from foreign banks, but Russia and England provided a condition, in which parliament had to be irrespective. As Shuster said: "the condition, in which two governments wanted to grant a heavy loan to Iran, was so dangerous and as a result, parliament had to be irrespective about it"

Mentioned states were not satisfied by this and also they prevented any country, who wanted to grant loan to Iran. For example, request of loan from Perlot Bank London was rejected through interference of England and Russia.

Foreign relationship was another issue, which was existed for government and parliament. Making certain policy against two powers, which were banded together based on contract 1907. On the other hand, providing security in the country has been related to the mentioned states; since, "lack of safety could be related to Iran's foreign relations. By that time, results of the contract affected directly political affairs and most events were related to it"

In order to solve financial problems, all people hoped to employ foreign experts, since solving of financial problems could lead to solve other problems gradually. Commander presented program of government to the parliament, but he was criticized because of his agreements with Russia. Commander was not

pleasured by this issue that his power was been limited by parliament. Another issue was exodus of Russian forces from North Iran, which was significantly considered. Democrats believed that government has been factor for exodus of Russian forces from Iran and accused government to have agreement with imperialists<sup>14</sup>.

Political adjustment of Russia with England has been in a range that they replied Iran that if Iranians want to empty north of Iran, they should have friendly behavior with Russians. The conditions made Iran to hide the conditions from parliament; although, media published it and democrats opposed. Movements of people were continued and government had to reject the conditions and collect costs from people. Therefore, in such conditions, an important and vital issue for improvement of Iran's financial situation was employing foreign counselors. Morgan Shuster entered Tehran in May 1911. Entrance of Shuster to Iran led to acceleration of disputes between constitutionalists and Russia and England, since mission of Shuster after contract 1907 was proving Iran's independence, which was ambiguous based on mentioned contract.

Hence, since the first steps, Shuster faced many problems, since he was citizen of U.S and two governments of Russia and England were not happy from entrance of a third force to Iran. Said Shuster: "nearly everybody, who had meeting to us, used to apply term "Enteric" in a certain part of negotiation; for example they used to say that cabinet would enteric against you"

Parliament was ready to have cooperation with Shuster and issued and signed a manuscript on 1911, which was accepted by majority of votes. The document gave some financial authorities to Shuster. Primary efforts of strange factors and their followers faced failure and Shuster was happy on this issue and said that: "the first effort of strange elements and their enteric, which aimed at making barriers against our success, faced hard failure". Embassies of Russia and England used to send some people to have meeting with Shuster, but he used to reply that: "my job concerns with Iran and what can be my business with Russia and England?"

Shuster had to choose two options, either interference of foreign governments or act independently. He selected the second option and Iran's parliament supported him. Iranian people believed that Shuster could be more and less a solution for economic problems; while, some people were pessimistic to him and believed that he could make U.S to interfere Iran's affairs. However, Shuster was separated from U.S and was employed in Iran government by National Parliament.

Reaction of Russia against decision of parliament about granting wide range financial authorities to Shuster was that, the government started to come together with Mohammad Ali-shah in order to enter Iran to give back its power. Commander left also Tehran and went to Rasht. This was reason of weakness of

Shuster and failure of him through assistance of cabinet members. Cabinet tended to limit authorities of Shuster, but Samsam Ol-saltaneh said to one of the English officers named Barkley that they were afraid of reactions of big powers against Shuster's actions.

Adjustment of the two states was in a range that England used to be coped with Russia while being under pressure of Russia. For example, about employment of Meijer Stocks and English officer by Shuster, UK started to protest and opposed with the issue. However, by this Shuster was aimed at changing balance in policies of two governments against Iran. Shuster sent gendarmes to the center of government in order to implement his policies and 2 Russian officers were injured. Russia's reaction according to statement of Shuster was as follows: "on 2 Nov of 1911, Russian prime minister, Paklioski Qezil, came to Iran's embassy and made protest on behalf of his respective government that gendarmerie had to remove treasury from central part of government and submit it to Iranian Cassocks"

On the other hand, Iranian political officers, especially Bakhtiars, were not satisfied by king, since he believed that paying money to them was depended on victory against Mohammad Ali-shah. Thus, they threatened him for several times and asked him to resign. Shuster said that he would resign just as a result of request of parliament. Iranian foreign minister asked consultation with parliament and government and also obtaining feedback of Shuster. Shuster replied: "however subjects of Russia are all out of rule and unjust, the transaction would be so difficult, if Iranian cabinet is constant in maintenance of its independence and rights"

Iranian cabinet rejected firstly Russia's ultimatum in 6 Nov of 1911 and instead, asked for further search for Center of Government Issue. England at the first step of its collusion with Russians, opposed toward inspector through employing Likfer, who was one of the common people in UK. Afterwards, parliament allowed Shuster to select 10 American individuals as financials directors. Russians reinforced their relations with Iran through supports of Mr Jayres (secretary of consulate). They claimed that if their requests were not accepted during 48h, they would cut their political relations with Iran. After a while in Nov of 1911, Russia cut its political relations with Iran; problems were created in cabinet and complexities were developed. Samsam Ol-saltaneh, as a result of Russia warning, resigned himself and some individuals from officers. After consultation, cabinet members accepted tricky advises of Eduard Grey in regard with acceptance of Russia's request. Then they sent a written sentence for Shuster as follows: "you should submit properties of government to Russian officers and remove gendarmes totally. Hence, mentioned properties were rejected and complete receipt of other things was received"

Clearly, England had collusion with Russia and also forced Iran to accept Ultimatum of Russia. A new cabinet was formed by that time, which all members of it were unit in apologizing

Russia. The first individual was Vosogh Ol-doleh Iranian diplomacy head, who went personally to Russian consulate to say sorry. Following the first ultimatum, second ultimatum was created and apparently, Russian prime minister informed Vosogh Ol-doleh about it. The determined time for response to the ultimatum was 48h. Some part of provisions in the mentioned ultimatum according to Shuster is as follows: "Shuster and Likfer have been dismissed completely and other officers, who have been selected by Shuster, would also be dismissed later. Iran has to take admission of England and Russia in order to select foreign officers for its services"

**29 Nov 1911:** Parliament formed a meeting in order to speak on this issue. Some people were opposed to accept ultimatum and some people instead, agreed with it. Board of Government and prime minister were among proponents. Vosogho Ol-doleh Foreign Minister suggested that parliament should accept resignation of cabinet or an impartial commission should be formed in order to solve the problem. After collecting votes a commission was formed, which was based on acceptance of Russia's ultimatum. Acceptance of Russia's ultimatum was against desires of people and their agents. In other words, it can be also considered as a coup d'état, which was managed by SamsamOl-saltaneh against the parliament, so that ideas of Russia and England could be provided.

Following acceptance of ultimatum, parliament was suspended. Issue of parliament about acceptance or rejection of ultimatum was considered as battlefield of democrats and Etedalion (moderate-oriented). As a result, democrats overcame and Naser Ol-molk didn't repeat elections again. Cabinet started to disarm people and in dissolvent of parliament, contract 1907 was recognized by Iran. Hence, Morgan Shuster had to leave Iran toward Europe through Anzali Port in 11Jan 1912. Apparently, effects of contract 1907 had remained for a long time in Iran's policy and decision making processes even after dismissal of Shuster. While dismissing of Shuster, UK rejected employment of an English citizen, determined by Shuster. UK announced opposition of Russians in this regard to Eduard Grey through telegraph No.253: "event of Meijer Stocks (to that extent, which is related to contract 1907) may lead to reinforcement of relations between England and Russia and this would be equally against the benefit of both parties."

Responding to mentioned telegraph, Eduard Grey has confirmed legitimacy of Russia's protest and has asked for employment of an impartial individual instead of him. Therefore, the two governments suggested Iran to determine Swedish officers for formation of Gendarmerie instead of Meijer Stocks. After the action, according to letter 2 No.365, Sir George Barkley asked Iran to stop its requests; otherwise, UK would support Russia in order to take its actions in North Iran. Contrary to its efforts, Iran couldn't attract positive idea of the two governments in order to employ Stocks and had to employ another person from an impartial country<sup>15</sup>.

## Conclusion

As it was mentioned before and based on original references such as HablOl-matin newspaper and Blue Book and its provisions, policy of Qajar government has been changed completely before and after issuance of contract 1907. It means that, before issuance of the contract, Qajar statesmen made nearly independent policies under effects of new conditions and pressures of constitutionalists. However, over the time and based on requests of Russia and England after issuance of contract, they were in regard with interests of the two states. A clear sample in this regard can be dismissal of Morgan after ultimatum of Russia and employment of some experts, agreed with Russia's policies in ministries and public offices of Iran. The policies were also effective in separation of Iran from Germany. However, cooperation of England and Russia was constantly clear in next decades. They used to defend interests of each other in Iran and also they follow the way now and then.

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