



## Iran at the Crossroads

By Amin Saikal

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### Iran at the Crossroads By Amin Saikal

Iran stands at a critical juncture in its history. In the era of Presidents Hassan Rouhani and Barack Obama, the Islamic Republic has a unique opportunity to regain its traditional greatness as a cradle of rich civilisation and culture, with a capacity to be a very influential and stabilising regional actor.

In this incisive analysis, Amin Saikal, a leading expert on Iranian politics, traces Iran's transition from pro-Western monarchy to Islamic Republic and explores the choices open to Rouhani's moderate reformist government. The Islamic Republic has endured a difficult journey throughout its existence. But since Khomeini assumed power in 1979 it has been characterised by a degree of exceptionalism, which has seen Iran lock horns with the United States and prove itself an effective and shrewdly calculating player on the international stage. Looking to the future, Saikal does not shy away from confronting the difficult choices facing Iran today. Failure to achieve reconciliation with the United States in the coming years, he argues, will not only have serious implications for Iran's internal stability and for the future security of the Middle East, but also for America's position within this volatile and unpredictable region.

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## Iran at the Crossroads By Amin Saikal Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1581208 in Books
- Published on: 2015-10-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.55" h x .50" w x 5.55" l, .50 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 160 pages

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"This is an accessible, comprehensive book on Iranian history and contemporary politics. Saikal clearly knows Iran, and the book does a great job in conveying the depth and complexities of historical and political dynamics. A terrific addition to the literature."

#### **Professor Mehran Kamrava, Georgetown University**

"Amin Saikal in *Iran at the Crossroads* deftly assesses resilience of the Islamic regime surviving decades of domestic gridlock and persistent international hostility spearheaded by the US. Viewing the current Iran-US rapprochement in the mirror of Iranian history, religion and political culture, Saikal in this slim, highly readable book eruditely outlines steps for moving forward and warns about consequences of missing this unprecedented opportunity. A must read for general public and policy makers concerned with the future of US-Iran relations and the larger Muslim Middle East."

#### **M. Nazif Shahrani, Indiana University**

"Amin Saikal's lucid and learned interpretation of contemporary Iran is truly indispensable for anyone interested in the country and region. Quite remarkably, the book provides balanced, illuminating, and persuasive assessments of the complex and controversial internal, regional, and international challenges confronting the Iranian leadership."

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#### About the Author

**Amin Saikal** is Professor of Political Science and Director at the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies, Australian National University

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