

## Through Khamenei's Eyes

# Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's Unique Take on the Uprisings in the Arab World

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### ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Mehdi Khalaji, a Qom-trained Shiite theologian, was the Libitzky Family Fellow at The Washington Institute.



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**The Iranian nuclear program and the Assad regime share a commonality: both aim to undermine Western interests in the Middle East. For this reason, as much as Ayatollah Ali Khamenei values the nuclear program as a pillar of the Islamic Republic's political identity, his pro-Assad stance has taken its own place in Iran's regional policy.**

**A**yatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's adventurous approach with respect to the region provoked Saddam Hussein to invade Iran on 22 September 1980 and launch a devastating war that lasted for 8 years. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Khomeini's confident and former deputy commander-in-chief of Iran's armed forces, has said in an interview with Sadeq Ziba Kalam that Khomeini was pleased when Iraq invaded Iran: "Saddam trapped himself. Now we can solve Middle East problems forever." But Khomeini's assessment of Iran's military capability and Iraq's ties with the Arab and Western worlds was unrealistic and led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands and the maiming of millions -- not to mention the destruction of much of Iran's infrastructure. The destruction ended only when Khomeini drank his "poisoned chalice" and accepted UN Resolution 598, which called for an immediate ceasefire.... ❖

*al-Majallah*

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