

# The Current State of Iranian Affairs: A Candid Discussion

by [Mehdi Khalaji \(/experts/mehdi-khalaji\)](#)

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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**O**n November 15, 2011, Reza Akhlaghi of Foreign Policy Association interviewed Mehdi Khalaji and Ramin Jahanbegloo regarding the institutionalization of violence in Iran, the regime's foreign policy, internal corruption, and a variety of other issues. The following is an excerpt from their in-depth remarks.

AKHLAGHI: In Iran's evolving post-2009 politics, how do you assess the Iranian government's theoretical and ideological needs? I bring this up because there seems to be an uncertainty and shift in the ideological direction of the ruling class, namely characterized by the IRGC. Given the continuous internal crises in the Islamic Republic and the ensuing political tugs of war, do you think they stem from a crisis of ideology? In other words, do you think the Islamic Republic is suffering from an ideological bankruptcy?

KHALAJI: I think the ideological crisis in the Islamic Republic started after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini when his successor [Khamenei] lacked the necessary religious and political credentials. Additionally, there were irregularities in the transitional period. Khamenei came to power based on the criteria outlined in the revised constitution, though at the time the revised constitution was not yet ratified. These problems during the transitional period caused a crisis in the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic. But we must bear in mind that the Islamic ideology of the Islamic Republic, based on the notion of Velayateh Faqih (rule of jurist), is inherently contradictory and paradoxical because it gives authority to a single jurist who can overrule both Islamic law and constitution any time he wishes. In other words, the notion of Velayateh Faqih is self-destructive and leads to a new form of autocratic rule...

**[Download the complete interview \(PDF\).](#)**

**<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/html/pdf/KhalajiInterview20111115.pdf>**

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