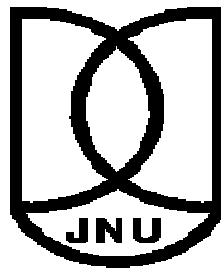


**IRAN AND THE SECURITY OF THE GULF
IN THE 1990s**

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for award of the degree for*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled "IRAN AND THE SECURITY OF THE GULF IN THE 1990s" submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.


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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


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*To
Vita and Chris*

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Finally let me hope that I have succeeded in my efforts in understanding the context, nature and patterns of security in the Gulf in the light of the changes Iran is undergoing in the 1990s.

MD. KHUSHNAM PERWEZ NADIMI

CONTENTS

1. Iran and the Gulf Security: A Historical Overview	1-48
2. Regional Security: A Conceptual Framework	49-70
3. Changes in Iran's Security Perception in the Post-Khomeini Period	71-106
4. Shifts in the Threat Perception of the Arab Littoral States	107-155
5. Changes in Iran's Attitude towards US interests in the Region	156-187
6. Conclusion	188- 191
References	192-210

LIST OF TABLES

1. Table: World Oil Reserve by Regions	19
2. Table: Structure and Terms of Security Discourse	51
3. Table: Persian Gulf defence expenditure in the 1980s	72
4. Table: Composition the Iranian Majlis, 1992, 1996, 2000	95
5. Table: OPEC members Facts and Figures, 2014	104
6. Table: Persian Gulf defence expenditure in the 1990s	105
7. Table: Gulf States Gross Domestic Product in Current Price	108
8. Table: Military Expenditure as a percentage of GDP for the Gulf States	128
9. SPOT OPEC Reference Basket prices and Spot Crude oil prices, 1991-2000	129
10. Daily Crude Oil Production (average) in OPEC Members of the Gulf	129
11. Crude Oil production in OPEC Members of the Gulf in 1990s	129
12. Table: US Bases in the Gulf	171-73
13. Table: SIPRI Estimates of Gulf State Military Spending in Constant 2011, \$US Millions, 1997-2014	175

CHAPTER- 1

Iran and the Gulf: A Historical Overview

Security has been one of the key concerns of human civilization. The problem of security assumed constant attention of the international community in the 20th century. The arrangement of the nation-states in the pursuit of adjustment, scientific boundaries and national enthusiasm remained beset with a state of turbulence and war, which has evaded any amount of search of security and stability. The Gulf is such an arena of constant security concern owing to its strategic location, resources and socio-cultural content and historical background. Iran has been an important actor in the Gulf throughout, naturally owing to its sprawling spread in its eastern flank. A historical overview of the region makes it apparent that the security of the Gulf has always been connected with the presence and role of Iran in the Gulf and with its security perceptions and concerns.

The Gulf Sub-system and Importance

The Gulf has been the extended part of the larger West Asia in the past. The discovery of oil and gas and its importance for the economy of the contemporary world has ensured a distinct identity to the Gulf region. The oil and gas resources and its export from the region which fuels the economy of the world produced the developments which led to a separate relation of the region with the rest of the world. The Egyptian influence started waning in the 1960s owing to the defeat of the Arabs in 1967 Arab-Israeli war led by Egypt and gradually the Gulf assumed primacy owing to its strategic and economic significance. In March 1957, on his visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Shah of Iran made a proposal to have a defence pact with the Saudi Arabia. It didn't work owing to its perceived linkages with the Baghdad Pact. However, the September revolution of 1962 in Yemen changed the situation and all the royalties of the region agreed for practical cooperation (Ansari 1999: 857-8). Thus, the 1970s witnessed the continued decline of the Egyptian influence in the region which gradually led to a situation which

ensured increasing role to the royalties in matters of the region. The oil wealth and its soft power (economic power) enabled the monarchies in the region to moderate the influence of Egypt and Syria and it also enhanced their role to influence issue of Palestine with their unprecedented financial capabilities.

Even prior to 1973, patterns of interactions of the states and their issues of concerns distinguished the Gulf from the larger context and issues of the West Asia. The Shatt al Arab waterway dispute between Iran and Iraq, rights over continental shelf, the conflicting claims over the territory of Bahrain and Kuwait and the many islands in the Gulf were completely involved this sub-region. The Palestine issue was gradually losing its centrality in the security perceptions of the states in the region. Thus the post-1967 (Arab-Israeli war) period made this growing drifting away of the region of the Gulf complete as the issues of concerns of this sub-region became obviously different and distinct. The British withdrawal announcement in 1968 from the region made the process apparent. The United States decided to rely on Iran under the Nixon Doctrine (1969) for the protection of security and stability of the Gulf region (Ramazani 1982: 25). The power vacuum that was created and which needed to be filled produced a separate syndrome in the Gulf distinct from the larger West Asian politics and security perception of the states of the Gulf and the international powers.

Historical Background

The historical antecedents in the Gulf and the security contours of the region makes it clear and perceptible as all the disputes and challenges to the security are rooted in the interplay of its history. The Gulf located in very important place between two very fertile ancient lands and civilizations, the Mesopotamia in the Tigris-Euphrates basin and the Nile valley Egyptian civilization. Mesopotamia had importance for food production as well as a connecting link in the East with the Western world. The fertile land of the region was able to produce surplus food which led to the rise of trade and commerce and as a result the region of Mesopotamia became the centre of international trade in the ancient time but the region had no mineral resources. The people of the Mesopotamian region were therefore forced to go to distant places in search of raw materials. Copper was

found at Magan which is located in the modern state of Oman. The people of Oman were having trading contacts with the people of Indus valley civilization and Mesopotamia. The compact size of the Gulf facilitated the trade between India and Mesopotamia.

The transport of goods and people were very easy and comfortable owing to the shape and size of the Gulf. Navigation was safe and secure which boosted trade and subsequent shared prosperity of the two regions. Magan and its people played the important role in the transit trade as middleman between the two regions. Hence this increasing trade and commerce led to the rise of the important cities as trade stations in the region. Dilmun has been the most important city and commercial centre which were located in modern day Bahrain.

The Gulf slowly became dotted with many trading centres and cities. All these cities had very close contacts with the cities in the Indus valley. Several archaeological evidences have been found in the cities and centres of both the regions. The people of the Gulf also had close relations and interactions with the people in the Mesopotamian region which are proved by the archaeological evidences. The people in the interior of the Arabian Peninsula were not sedentary groups but were basically leading a nomadic life. Unlike them the people in the Gulf coast were developed and had prosperous life based on their trade and commerce with the rest of the world. The nomadic interior felt that there was no such need of developing structures and social network. These nomadic tribes were living by roaming around the date groves and farms of the oases. But in case of scarcity these tribes led incursions into the settled centres and cities on the coast of the Gulf and Mesopotamia. Over a period of time these tribes started capturing the Gulf coastline and therefore the Gulf started to be populated by Arabs. Some of them adopted trade while some took to piracy in the region. Slowly the trade became the mainstay of the economy in the region. These incursions by the tribes changed the ethnic and social composition of the Gulf.

Iran also since time immemorial has been a strong participant in the Gulf and competition among the powers in the contemporary times. The vicissitudes of international politics and commerce in part have endowed strategic and economic significance to certain features of geographical positions of Iran, including its location on the Gulf (Ramazani 1982: 8).

Owing to its strategic location, one important aspect of conflict in the Gulf has been the indigenous peoples struggle against the outside powers who want control the region of the Gulf to serve their interests. There was growing rivalry between the trade routes of the Red Sea and that of the Gulf which was further complicated by the start of new land routes. This led to the development of the inland centres to service the increasing caravan traffic and their requirements.

With the growth of overland trade routes the nomads of the interior came into closer contact with them and it helped bring the Gulf under the Arab influence. Since then the region has witnessed intermittent hostilities and competition between the Iranian in the eastern side of the Gulf and the Arabs in the Western side. Iran's role in the Gulf from sixth century BC, when the Persian Empire rose to power, to the seventh century AD, when it was overrun by the Arabs, is largely shrouded in obscurity (Ramazani 1972: 9). Many kings like Sargon, Hammurabi, Nebuchadnezzar II and Alexander the Great led their armies to the region. During the domination of the Greeks and the Romans the region of the Gulf was not very important and therefore had limited attractions for the contemporary powers. But around 7th century AD with the rise of Islam, the region of the Gulf rose in importance as strategic region and trading centre. The military of the Caliphate was concentrated at the Strait of Hormuz which was strategically located at the mouth of the Gulf. Therefore it was easy to maintain its authority over the region, its cities, islands and ports. It is generally believed that Iran played a continuously active role from pre-Islamic times through Islamic period of its history (Ibid: 10).

The death of Ali led to the end of the four orthodox Caliphates and the period in which the whole Islamic community was reorganised into a single community. The battle of Karbala marks the watershed in the history of Islam. The death of Hussein made a rupture in the Islamic community which divided into the Sunnis and Shia (Clawson and Rubin 2005: 17). Muawiya declared himself Caliph with its capital at Damascus and proclaimed the foundation of the Ummayyad dynasty. It was not acceptable to Ali and he refused to recognize him and his claims which led to the great schism in Islam that resulted into the formation of Sunni and Shia communities. The followers of Ali came to be known as Shias. The majority faction of the Sunnis was of the view that Caliph must be elected and henceforth represented the orthodox section of Islam.

Iran under the Safavids

Shah Ismail (1400-1524) the founder of Safavid dynasty adopted the Shia subdivision of Islam as the official creed of Iran in 1501. He launched campaigns of conversion and conquest, brought vast territories formerly ruled by “petty rulers” under his control and nearly restored the ancient frontiers of the Sassanids (Ibid: 11).

The strategic significance of the Strait of Hormuz led to the attraction of the western powers. The Portuguese reached the Gulf in the 15th century when Vasco da Gama discovered the route to India via the Cape of Good Hope. In 1515, 27 Portuguese warships with 1,500 Portuguese and 700 soldiers from Portuguese India took the island of Hormuz in the Gulf. In 1623, Portuguese forces took the island of Qishm, again just two miles offshore at points. The Portuguese even established a fort at what is now the fort city of Bandar Abbas.(Patrick Clawson and Michael Rubin, 2005: 26). When Portuguese occupied the Hormuz, the Shah was in deep armed conflict with Ottoman Empire, a conflict that continued intermittently until 1639, when the first “Treaty of Peace and Frontiers” was finally concluded between the two Muslim states (Ramazani 1972: 11).

In the 18th century, Iran weakened as a power in the region which coincided with the emergence of British power at the expense of the rival Portuguese and Dutch commercial and political influence (Ibid:14). Britain’s sway over the Gulf region was relatively well established by 1770 after the British annexation and conquest of India (Muttam 1984: 33).

The General Treaty of Truce (1820) together with a series of bilateral treaties signed thereafter put these emirates under the protection of Britain, while the Qawasim of Lengeh remained subjects of Iran (Mojtahedzadeh 1994: 111). The Qawasim tribal confederation which was based in the present day area of United Arab Emirates became the principal challenger to the British. The British sea power, however, was able to destroy the naval fleet of the Qawasim. This therefore led to the signing of agreement Qawasim and other sheikhs with Britain. According to the agreements the emirates gave commitments to not to have direct contact or relations with other foreign powers as well as promise to abstain from piracy. In return Britain promised protection of the emirates from the foreign powers as well

as attacks from any corners. Later Britain extended these protection responsibilities to Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar when it repudiated the Ottoman sovereignty in 1916. Traditionally Oman was the centre of Slave trade and Britain forced the Omani Sultan to agree to abandon the activity in 1798. In return Britain helped build a navy to the Sultan. The Omani navy played a significant role in extending the Omani power and trade to east up to modern Pakistan and East coast of Africa. Gradually, however the empire declined owing to its division into two parts- Oman and Zanzibar. It led to the rise of British power and influence and in turn led to the signing of agreement in 1891 similar to those signed by the emirates.

With the turning of the 20th century, the Gulf resembled a bipolar system between the two super powers, the Ottoman Empire and the British Empire. Both had the military capabilities superior to those of the major local actors (Martin, 1984: 14). During this period the politics and security of the Gulf were driven by the imperial rivalry between the two contemporary super powers. The Russian interests in the region to reach the warm waters made the power competition intense and difficult to be managed by the local powers. The Ottoman's influence was mainly from the Euphrates River and the head of the Gulf down the east coast of the Arabian Peninsula and was administered from Basra.

The present oil rich Gulf coast of Saudi Arabia was under its al-Hasa province. The Ottomans were there up to the west coast of the Arabian Peninsula through Yemen. After the annexation and conquest of India, Britain was convinced of the "necessity for protecting the Indian sea route to and to a lesser extent, the overland route to India by way of the Euphrates and Gulf, from the sea pirates (Muttam 1984: 34). The focal point of the contest was Kuwait which at the turn of the century was the terminus for the projected 'Baghdad Railway'. Besides, it was also the point of strategic competition between the Russian and the British. The Russians wanted Kuwait as naval base and possible terminus for a railway from the Syrian coast, British secured foothold on the Arabian peninsula by the turn of the century, through the conclusion of protectorate agreement with the powerful tribal rulers of the peninsula (Bahrain, Qatar and Trucial sheikhdoms as well as Qishm and Socotra on Aden coast). With a secret agreement with Kuwait in 1899, Britain landed its army to deter the Turkish attack on Kuwait, which also warded off the Russian advances (Martin 1984: 15).

The contest over Kuwait ended in 1913 as part of a comprehensive agreement between Ottomans and the British in Constantinople Agreement. The Gulf since the turn of the century up to the World War-I was characterized by these imperial contest and competition between these two imperial powers. The Gulf system became more distinctly polarized. The British concluded series of anti-Ottoman alliances with Arab potentates (ibid: 17). The German challenge pushed Britain and Russia into the Anglo-Russian Convention in secret. Finally, on 31 August 1907, they signed an agreement. Despite a preamble promising to respect Iran's "integrity and independence" London and St. Petersburg divided Iran into three zones (Clawson and Rubin 2005: 46).

After the World War I, the Gulf became part of the imperial international system. The British political control was not complete and military presence was inadequate as its main focus was Yemen. As a result, Ibn Saud succeeded in wresting Hejaz in 1926, which the British confirmed next year coup of Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1921 repudiated the British suzerainty established by the 1919 Anglo-Iranian Treaty. This was followed by the termination of British mandate over Iraq in 1932 when it was given independence. British suzerainty remained mainly over the minor potentates of the Gulf coast. In the British loosening, security of the Gulf was not challenged from any quarter during this period. Iran was in charge of its affairs and had no formal alliance with Britain. The second decade of Reza Shah's dictatorship witnessed a further erosion of external influence in Iran. The pattern is demonstrated well by the oil crisis of 1932. Reza Shah challenged the British regarding the terms of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. Reza Shah saw in the rise of Hitler a possibility of increasing his bargaining strength with both the British and the Russians (Cottom 1988: 47).

The Iranians had the apprehensions that Anglo-Russian rivalry may turn into their strategic cooperation at the expense of Iran. To escape the impending possibility, there was a need of a 'third power balancer'. Hitler was more than willing to play the role in his pursuit of outplaying the British and the Russians to assume the centre stage as world power. In the early 1930s Reza Shah seemed to be oblivious of the developing crisis in the world as the major powers were heading towards an irreconcilable competition and rivalry. He established close relations with Germany, the most targeted enemy of Britain and Russia as well as maintained relations with two other major powers, France and the United States. Iran therefore

seemed to have lacked the feel of the international scenario towards its own security and the security of the Gulf region. In the beginning, the Soviet policy had strong and explicit ideological overtones, which later shifted to be guided by its concern for economy and the security. Towards the end of the 1920s the relations were stabilizing. Possibly even more revealing of the USSR's interest in Iran was Soviet policy regarding Iran's rich northern oil fields, generally believed at the time to be extensive (ibid: 49). During the two decades of interwar period, the Gulf region remained the sphere of the competition and rivalry between the powers. Notwithstanding these facts, the Iranian policy during the period was characterized by independence under the leadership of Reza Shah, which towards the end of the period, slowly succumbed to the power pressure and interest. The dynamic balance of power of the period in the Gulf region, mainly in relation to Iran was giving way to the emerging pattern and tendencies in the post-World War-II period. As its empire was gradually weakening, British forces and suzerainty were gradually withdrawn from the Gulf (Martin 1984: 21). Successively, many countries were declared independent in the region, Kuwait in 1961, Aden as South Yemen in 1967 and finally the Trucial islands which became UAE in 1971. As the European powers withdraw from their mandate, many new independent states came on the stage in the region around having bearing in the Gulf: Israel, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia which were already independent, increased their military capabilities.

In the 20th century, with the development of oil industry and related practices the strategic significance of the Gulf increased phenomenally. The major countries of the region like Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia had been claiming some territories in the Gulf between the periods of two World Wars. But Britain firmly resisted all these claims which enabled the emirates in the region to maintain their territorial integrity without much trouble and crisis. Britain also maintained only a small naval force just to maintain the treaty commitments and maritime peace in the region. Besides it abstained from any kind of military interference in the Gulf. But with the increasing value of the oil wealth, Britain made the commensurate expansion of its military presence in order to ensure safety and security. Towards the close of 1960s there were around 9000 British militarymen in Oman, Sharjah and the British military headquarter of the region Bahrain. British rule in the region

till the early seventies-Kuwait until 1961, South Aden until 1968, and Bahrain, Qatar and UAE until 1971 (Sidaway 1998: 228).

Iran's Perceptions of the other States of the Gulf

The Shah of Iran never found willing acceptance by Arab rulers of the region which now forms the present GCC states. The Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran was a shocking and dreadful event because the Shah of Iran was sincerely committed to stability of the region and its rulers. Afterwards, the revolutionary Islamic republic of Iran was hell bent upon to export revolution in the region. The Arab littoral states of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain are ruled by the hereditary sheikhs and kings. Therefore all the six states were very nervous and scared of the revolutionary rhetoric and slogans from the Islamic Republic of Iran. The subsequent years witnessed numerous incidents of violence and political sabotage in the region of the Gulf which were surely inspired and promoted by the revolutionary propaganda of the Islamic republic.

The attack on the Grand Mosque in Mecca was the scariest of all the violent acts during the period. Besides all the states in the region faced with the growing Shia-Sunni clashes which made the situation very volatile and the rulers were worried of the impending flare up of the events which might have risked their position and rule. In this wake the outbreak of Iran-Iraq war in 1980 further deteriorated the situation which alarmed the states in the region of the Gulf. This increasing level alarming threat and threat perception in the region led these states to an organization called Gulf Cooperation Council (Ansari 1999: 861).

The Gulf Cooperation Council declared itself neutral in the ongoing war between Iran and Iraq. But Iran took GCC as a supportive formation in the side of Iraq and therefore an anti-Iran organization. Similarly all the GCC states were of the view that Iran was there behind all the anti-government and anti-establishment acts and groups in the Gulf region. The relation of Saudi Arabia with Iran had already worsened further by clashes with Iranian pilgrims in Mecca in October 1981 (Nonneman 2004:176). By December 1981, all these concerns became more intense as the Bahrain government discovered that a group with clandestine plan were at work to overthrow the government with systematic political sabotage and violent

methods. It was announced that most of the members and leaders had connections with the clerics of Iran. Kuwait also witnessed a series of bombings and violence including the embassies of the US and France in December 1983. Even a member of Ad Dawa, an Iraqi Shia movement which had its headquarter in Tehran was captured for the act of violence. There was also an attempt to assassinate the Kuwaiti ruler by a suicide driver but was unsuccessful.

Iran neither recognizes nor had dealing with GCC as an organization. Rather it ignored its existence and tried to deal with each state separately. The relations of Iran with all the GCC states were not the same. Its relations varied from the extreme hostility to normal friendly relations. Despite all the suspicion and hostility, Iran and the UAE were able to maintain a cordial relation. Bahrain has a majority Shia population while the ruling family is Sunni Muslim. Despite being suspicious of Iran's intentions, the Bahraini have maintained an improving diplomatic relations with Iran. Qatar has no issues of conflict with Iran and therefore the relation between the two has been in the normal syndrome. So far as relations with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman are concerned, it has been complicated throughout the period alternated by periods of tensions, rivalry and accommodation.

Iranian policy, indeed, was crucial in determining the policies of the six towards Tehran and the war. All feared the impact of the revolution, all attempted to appease this new threat initially, and all then, albeit to a varying degree, veered towards Iraq in the face of explicit ideological threats issuing from leading figures in Iran (Nonneman 2004: 170). The Omani ruler was a close friend of the Shah of Iran which made the revolutionaries perceive Oman hostile to the interest of the Islamic republic. During the 1970s the Shah had assisted the Omani ruler with the military regiment to quell the rebellion against the Sultan. In addition, the revolutionaries perceived the Sultan of Oman as an American agent and their facilitator. Many of the policies and actions of Oman were regarded as pro-American like support for the Camp David Accords, permission to American crews to use the Omani facilities during their unsuccessful attempt to rescue the American hostages in April, 1980. The Islamic revolutionaries were further infuriated by Omani agreement with the US which allowed the American military to use the Marsiah Island air base and the plan of construction of an airfield in the Musandam peninsula which had a very strategic location overlooking the

Hormuz strait. The relation remained full of tension and friction but slowly made many course corrections and eventually the hostility started reducing. The course of correction of relations led to the state visit of the foreign minister of Oman to Tehran. It is doubtful that Iran has any viable claim to the Musandam peninsula. The Al Bu Said dynasty, whose sultan currently rules Oman, has been in power since 1749 (Martin 1984: 50).

Relation of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait towards Iran was marked by mutual suspicion which was further strained during the Iran-Iraq war. Both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were the financial backbone of the Iraqi war machine. They also played a significant role by facilitating logistical assistance to Iraq to attack Iranian oil sector installations. On the other side Saudi Arabia accused an Iranian hand in the protest and clandestine activities among the Shia community in the kingdom. Both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were also enraged with the Iranian attack on their shipping and navigation in the Gulf. Every year the Iranian pilgrims were staging protest during Hajj which was very embarrassing for the Saudi government. These all accusation and counter accusation marred the relations during the period. However towards the mid- 1980s there were many attempts from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to stop these atmosphere of suspicion and move towards rapprochement. These efforts led the relation to a positive direction when the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and Iran exchange visit to each other's country in 1985. Besides, these encounters led to cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the areas of their mutual interests particularly in oil price and production.

Kuwait too was amenable to Iranian overtures and welcomed Iran's apparent change of policy in 1985. Yet since the emirate did not reduce its support for Iraq threat from Iran soon resumed (Nonneman 2004: 179). On the issue of reflagging of Kuwaiti oil tankers by the United States further intensified the tension between Kuwait and Iran. There was heated exchange of accusation. Iran accused both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia playing at the behest of the United States. Only ten days later, hundreds of pilgrims died in Mecca in chaos and violence that had erupted following political demonstrations by Iranians (Ibid: 182).

Kuwait got independence in 1961 and thereafter has played important role both in the regional and international politics. It has become the member of all the important regional and international organizations like the Arab League, the

Organization of Islamic Conference and the United Nations. Kuwait has the distinction of having a parliament which plays significant role in decision making. Both the domestic and its foreign policies are having the influence of its parliament. This surely ensures a very special place to Kuwait in the Gulf region. Besides, Kuwait also involved many of the important issues of regional importance like in the issues regional border disputes and issue of Palestine. But in the aftermath of the Islamic revolution, Kuwait was faced with acute policy dilemma which was further complicated with the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980. Kuwait was not comfortable to trust the Islamic republic in the wake of its slogan. It was also afraid of Saddam Hussain and his intension and started supporting Iraq during the war both financially and logistically. This decision and pattern of actions on the part of Kuwait heavily damaged its relations with Iran. But Iranian foreign policy has always ensured a special place to Kuwait and it has managed to keep the relation with the country. A crucial point came on 2 June, 1988 when, Hashemi Rafsanjani, the pragmatic speaker of the Majlis, was appointed as acting commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The direction of policies of Iran underwent a fundamental change when he expressed the need for Iran to start making friends in the region. Both Kuwaiti and Saudi governments expressed their regret for the loss of life and called for to stop the war. When Kuwait extended its condolences to the bereaved, Iran sent its thanks in return (Ibid: 186).

The Kuwaitis came to realise their mistake when Saddam Hussain invaded the country and occupied it in 1990. More than that Iran showed perceptible maturity when it took to help Kuwait and its people in distress despite its anti-Iran role and support to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war. This approach of Iran and its action and expression in the wake of the invasion played significant role in the on the people of Kuwait and its leaders and changed their perception of Iran and realised their fault during the course of the war. As a result in the aftermath of the liberation of Kuwait, there were increased exchanges between the two countries, the bilateral relations were enhanced and diplomatic exchanges put the course of relation on the rail of cooperation. This emerging trend is surely in the interests of Kuwait as it can benefit in the field of construction, medicine and other areas Iran has the expertise. This relation would boost the interest of the two mutually leading to the atmosphere of peace and security in the region of the Gulf.

When the war was ended, Kuwait awarded Iran a US\$100 million contract to help extinguish oil-well fire. On 18 March 1991, the Iranian embassy in Kuwait reopened (Calabrese 1994: 52). There have been efforts on the part of the foreign powers to influence the policies of Kuwait and its approach towards Iran. Besides many efforts were made to create a situation which could breed differences between the two countries. But there are numerous mutuality of interests between the two countries and the leadership of Kuwait is prudently responding to the pragmatic approach of Iran and the relation remains cordial and shows signs of expanding syndrome. Any reversal of the trend of relations between the two is contrary to their interests as well as the peace and security in the region which is central to the national interests of the two countries. Therefore despite the issues of conflict raised by media, they remain committed to the interests of the two countries which is laid in the expanding ties and avoiding any action and expression which may cause harm (Parviz 2008).

Iran and its claims on Bahrain

Iran has long territorial claim over Bahrain based on two reasons. The one that preceded the Iranian Revolution was purely dynastic. The dynastic claim stemmed from Persian control over the island prior to its seizure in 1783 by the Al Khalifah Sheikhs of Utaybi Arabs. The other which followed the revolution, stemmed from Khomeini-inspired religious fervour and looked to an additional common Shiite connection (Martin, 1984:47). In 1968 Britain announced the withdrawal of its commitments and its forces. In this wake Iran claimed its sovereignty over the island once again. Before that a referendum had been conducted in 1970 under the supervision of UN in which the Bahrainis were to choose between merger with Iran and Independence. The Bahrainis voted in favour of independence and therefore got independence in 1971. Since then the issue was not taken up by Iran under the Shah. But after the revolution the issue found an echo unofficially but widely reported statement of Ayatollah Sadiq Ruhani, a revolutionary leader, in February 1979 claimed Bahrain as Iran's "fourteenth province."(ibid: 48)

The Iranian claim over Bahrain has a long history. But the fears of the reaction of the Arab at the moment is based on their fear that the Iranian military and influence can lead to the start of similar reaction in their countries as well and

may lead to crisis of regime security and stability. Tehran found the developments very tricky and based on misunderstanding. Therefore it tried to assuage the rising expression against Iran and its role but at the same time advocated strongly to resolve the issue without falling into the hands of the foreign powers and their designs which detrimental to the peace and security of the region. The social composition and political leadership is suitable to the interests and its longstanding claim over the island. The majority of the population is Shiite while the ruling family belongs to the Sunni affiliation. The majority Shiite population of Bahrain are opposed to the rule of king Hammad bin Issa al-Khalifa which they perceive inferior to Iran politically and economically. The Bahraini Shiite majority is impressed with the increasing power and influence of Iran and its role in Lebanon and Iraq. Thus the Political condition, social composition and religious configuration of Bahrain make the Iranian approach towards Bahrain very convenient. In 1980s, a military wing of the Hezbollah was found in Bahrain allegedly supported by Iran. Since then Bahrain has been accusing Iran of interference and fomenting discord in the country. Iran also promoted subversion against the Bahraini regime, most notably in December 1981 Shiite coup attempt (ibid). The activities of Iran and its support have emboldened the Shiite majority in Bahrain. Their increasing confidence may lead to their opposition into large scale protest and demonstration which can undermine the authority of the Bahrain government and plunge the country into ethnic strife. These Iranian action against Bahrain and its stability is part of the larger Iranian game plan of supremacy in the entire West Asia and the region of the Gulf in particular (IICC, March 2, 2009). This strategy of Iran is manifest in its naval presence and demonstration in the Gulf and its sway over the strategic Strait of Hormuz. This aspiration of Iran is not hidden rather it is very apparent in the expression and references of the government and its authorities. Despite all these, Iran has always refused to accept all such claims by Bahrain and the Gulf Arab states.

UAE: Dispute over the three Gulf Islands

The location of the islands of Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb on the strategic Strait of Hormuz very crucial and important as the entire oil export from the Gulf pass through it. In November 1971, Iran occupied all the three islands in

wake of the withdrawal from the Gulf (Martin 1984: 48). Iran was therefore not ready to leave its claim and finally took over Abu Musa and constructed a military base and missiles were positioned to defy any future dispute in the island. The Gulf Cooperation Council member countries recognised the ownership claim of the UAE over the island. This is the main issue of contention between Iran and the GCC states. The issue of disputes over ownership of these three islands of Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb is not a recent phenomenon. Rather the disputes go back to the 16th and 17th century rivalry between the Ottoman Empire, Iran (then Persia) and local Arab sheikhdoms. In the recent history the issue was revived during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi. He made the claim of Iranian ownership of the islands which were then part of the sheikhdoms of the Trucial states (Sharjah and Ras Al-Khaymah) which are presently the constituent of the United Arab Emirates. Given the strategic location and economic significance of the islands, Iran under Reza Shah tried to claim ownership over them. These islands have immense strategic value to ensure the control over the Strait of Hormuz. Therefore the Shah wanted to claim as much portions and islands as possible. The discovery of the red oxide of commercial value and quantity in Abu Musa made the island more attractive to Iranian frame of interests.

Iranian Naval Power and its Threat

By the turn of the 20th century the Gulf came under complete control of the British naval power. Once took the power in Iran, Reza Shah gave special attention to the development of a strong navy of Iran to challenge the British naval supremacy in the region which was essential for achieving the ambition of Iran in the region. Soon the Iranian navy became the threat to the local Arab sheikhs and their powers. The Shah (Reza Shah) took to his plans as he was confident with his new naval power and occupied the Hinjam Island in May 1928. The action antagonised the rulers of other islands and their population. Afterward a fleet of newly founded Iranian navy was sent in 1928, to recover Abu Musa and the two Tunb's and put an end to the problems there (Mojtahedzadeh 1994: 113).

There was number of negotiation between Great Britain and Iran over the status of Abu Musa and the Two Tunbs but remained unresolved. During the Second World War the issue remained unattained and the status quo was maintained. The Iranian ambition in the region got a new life with the

announcement of the military withdrawal of the Great Britain from the Gulf in 1968. The British announcement sent alarm bells to the Arab sheikhs in the region. The largest Arab kingdom Saudi Arabia was particularly alarmed by the decision which would make the kingdom vulnerable to the Russian aggression, Iraqi revolution and Iran's regional hegemon ambition and its increasing military and naval build-up. Iran under the Shah was trying to get the recognition of its regional ambition with his systematic and consistent diplomatic efforts. In this wake the US declaration that in the wake of the British withdrawal from the region Iran is the only capable regional to fill the gap and ensure credible peace and stability in the region. The US president also made the announcement which was favourable to Iran's claim and ambitions in the region that the US would disengage militarily from its overseas presence and instead assist the smaller states through economic and military aides to enable them to defend their security. The Gulf had the crucial strategic importance owing to its oil and their export. Therefore, the US proposed to have closer ties in the Gulf mainly with Iran and Saudi Arabia.

In order to escape major intervention by the powers both the Arab states of the region and Iran decreed that they were capable of protecting their own security (Hussain 1985: 348). In this context, a number of territorial claims and disputes came into light. The most vexed one was the issue of Bahrain and Iran's claims of its sovereignty over the island. The British government tried to find some amical solution before their departure. From the very outset, Iran had based its claim over Bahrain, Abu Musa and the two Tunbs on the as per the recognition of Arab Federation sponsored by the British (Ramazani 1975: 423).

The Shah of Iran accepted the referendum result conducted in Bahrain in which the Bahrainis voted for independence instead of merger with Iran, which had been endorsed by the United Nations as well. Saudi Arabia had convened a conference on the Gulf Security of all the parties and the Shah of Iran participated. The Iranian cooperation was necessary to ensure that power is smoothly transferred to the Arab sheikh in the region. But Iran was particular about its claim over the islands and by virtue of its superior military and naval power captured and occupied the three islands before the commencement of the Conference (Pasha, A K 2000: 173).

Sharjah owned the largest of these islands, Abu Musa while Ras Al-Khaymah owned the two Tunbs (Greater & Lesser). The rulers of both Sharjah and Ras Al-Khaymah were the members of the Qawasim tribe and they were rulers in the eastern side of the Gulf near Strait of Hormuz under then Iranian kings. Thus comes the Iranian claims that the islands historically were part Iran. With the rise of the British power only that the Iranian were denied their rights and were not allowed to bring under their control. As the possibility of oil increased in the region, the value of these islands increased from strategic point of view. Therefore Iranian realised the difficulties as well as importance to occupy the islands. In a surprised operation it used all its powers the army, navy and air force and successfully completed the occupation of the islands. The Iranian operation was very surprising loss of the Arab contention. It not only strained the relations of the Arab states with Iran but also started an arms race and competition in the region. The power rivalry started between Iran and Saudi Arabia and which remains the feature of the Gulf in the 1990s as well. Britain had a plan that it would unite all the lower Gulf sheikhdoms into a larger whole. But it was not a total success as Bahrain and Qatar didn't agree for the same. But the rest of the Trucial states of Sharjah, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Ras Al-Khaymah, Fujairah, Ajman and Umm Al-Quwyan were merged into the United Arab Emirates in 1971(Badeeb 1993: 21). Given the condition Iran was forced to accept that in the absence of better options. Therefore the issue and the dispute around the islands and its ownership is not new. The relation of Iran with the Arab states of the region has been marked by suspicion and distrust throughout the 20th century. Till the withdrawal of Britain in 1968, the British power was the guarantor of peace and stability in the region and the Arab sheikhdoms.

The dispute, Iran in 1992 once again has exacerbated the issue when it refused entry of the Arab residents who were not native of the island. But dealing of such delicate and sensitive issue with military power is detrimental to the peace and stability of the Gulf region. Given the current volatile situation in the wake of recent upheavals in the Gulf, especially the 1991 Kuwait crisis there is an urgent need of restrain and use of diplomatic channels by the concerned parties to resolve the issue without endangering the region into another crisis.

The location of the Gulf makes it a strategic junction linking the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. It also provides a link to the Mediterranean sea, Red Sea, the Indian ocean and the Pacific ocean. (Sajedi 2009: 77). Therefore

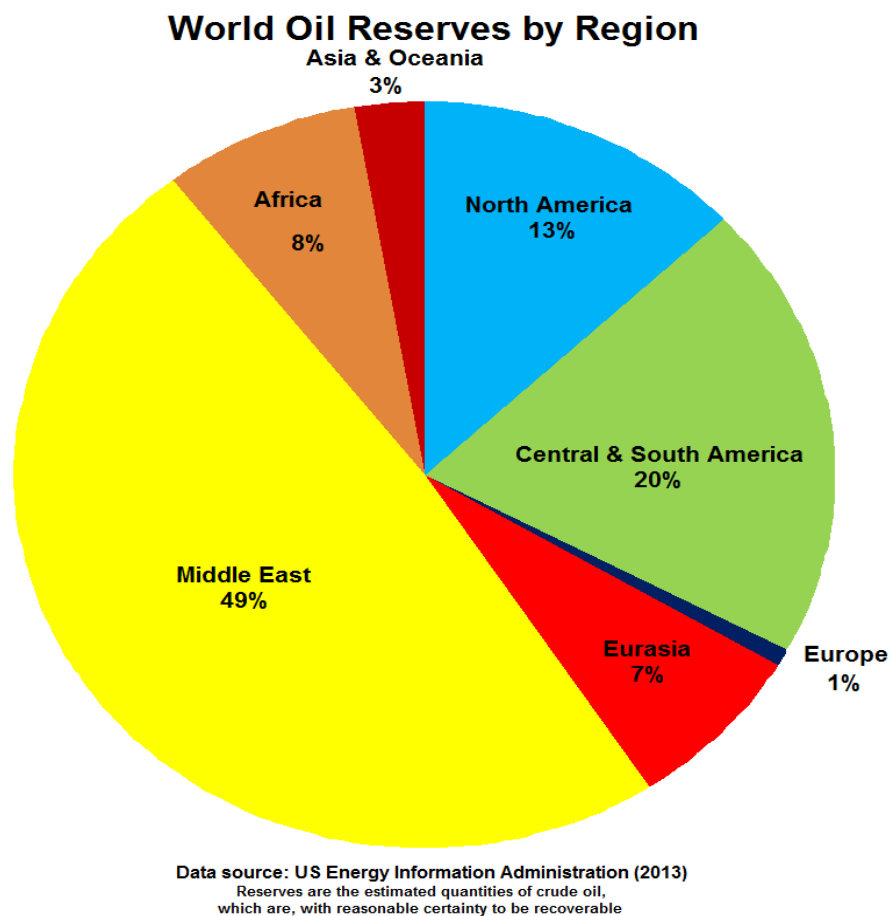
the Gulf has always at the heart of the international trade and attracted the attention of the powers in the region and its security. Hence the security of the region has always been integral to the issue of the world security (Naaz 2001: 2257).

Owing to its central location, the Gulf has been the artery of the international trade transporting commodities from the region to the rest of the world and receiving the imports from all around. Thus it made important for the powers to control and ensure security and stability in the region. All the western powers were in the pursuit of controlling the region but it was the Portuguese who managed to put her hold first in the region of Gulf. This slowly led to the commercial and then political rivalry of the western powers in the region. The rivalry started around 16th century among the European maritime powers of Holland, Portugal, France and then Britain. This completion of the powers was further complicated by the ambitions and entry of the Ottoman in the region and it managed to bring Baghdad and Basra under its control (Mikhin 1988: 43).

Importance of the region phenomenally increased at the turn of the 20th century with the discovery of oil. Oil was first discovered in Iran and it led to the formation of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in 1908 for exploration of oil. Britain wanted a secure access to the oil and therefore wanted its own company and its regulation as per the needs and requirement of Britain. But the discovery of oil in other parts of the region made region important for the all other powers as well (Sajedi 2009: 78).

Industrial development and the growing needs of the energy which could have been satisfied by the oil resources of the region changed the geopolitical significance of the region and its security. The region assumed added significance in the post second world war period. The two super powers gave huge priority to the region and its control as well as its security. During this period, with the decline of Britain and its withdrawal from the region, the US took the position of the decisive power in the region. The US has taken utmost care with its policies, engagements and alliance arrangements in the region to ensure stability in the region. The Super power rivalry and intervention and the intra-regional crises and conflicts were mainly perceived as the security threat in the region till 1990. With the disintegration of USSR and end of cold war the external threats has reduced during the 1990s. But the region remains vulnerable to the regional crisis and conflicts. The period has also witnessed the rise of extremism, terrorism which are posing a

very dangerous syndrome with the growing procurement of weapons of mass destruction in the region. This has caused alarmed among the economic powers and the industrial countries for their energy security which can be realized only with the oil resources of the region. The flow of oil tankers and their safe passage in the Gulf therefore is the utmost concern of the whole world which makes the security and stability of the region a genuine need of one and all in the region and beyond. Besides, the population of the region are also fully dependent on the import of the essential commodities which all are also passing through the Gulf and reach to the destinations in the region. Thus the region has become one of the important strategic regions of the world with its oil resources which can run the economies of the world.



(Rubin 1999: 43). The inter-linkages of economics and trade in the world have immensely enhanced the geo-economic importance of the Gulf region owing to its energy resources. Given all the contemporary considerations, geopolitical speaking, the region has assumed the centre stage of international politics and the strategic completion among the power as its control makes essential for economic development and energy security. The Strait of Hormuz is the only narrow entry

point into the Gulf which makes the security of Hormuz of paramount importance in the geopolitics of the contemporary world.

The control over this artery of trade is *sin-quo-non* for the stability of trade and industries worldwide. Any breach of its security will have many-sided repercussions. Because the economies of different countries are interlinked and this makes all involved mutually responsible for the security of the region. The mistake or misadventure of any can harm the security of the region and therefore a chain effect which can reach and far and wide. Any imbalances will equally dent the countries of the region, which are dependent on oil revenues and the rest of the world in need of oil from the region. It naturally warrants a responsible and well-considered approach of all, particularly the states of the region for security of the region based on mutual respect and cooperation. Secured and safe supply of oil and gas has been the most important goal of the United States. The regions significance can be gauged from the fact that around 50% of oil reserve and 40% of the gas reserve of the world are buried in the region. Given the dependence of the US economy and energy consumption region and its security assumes highest priority in the policy concern of the country. The Gulf with its energy resources therefore is integral to the economic and energy security of the US. As a result, the US took special care to keep control over the region and its resources through different doctrines and policies to ensure stability. The US policy towards Iran emerged out of the cold war that was developing after the World War II. President Truman played an important role took personal interest that led taking shape of the American policy towards Iran and in the Gulf. The policy was devised with serious considerations of the Soviet interest in the region, possible propensity of expansion and the levels of threat so that in case of the need the United States can deter the Soviet move in the region (Lenczowski 1990: 13).

On 12 March 1947, President Harry S. Truman of the US said "It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. We must assist free people to work out their destinies in their own way. Our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes" (Sajedi 2009: 83).

During the 1950-51, the crisis started with Iran's accusation that the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company is not providing the due and sufficient revenue to Iran. Soon the protest assumed proportion of mass protest of the nationalist forces and the Shah was forced to leave the country. The period also witnessed the rise of the Iranian communist party, the Tudeh party and its activities. The US government proclaimed its neutrality in the dispute from the very beginning. It did not, however, propose to stay aloof (Lenczowski 1990: 34). When the Shah left the country the United States was required to take appropriate action and position on the issue. It was followed by the stopping of the American military aide to Iran which has been made with the Shah. The US intelligence started observing the situation in the country and with the assistance of the opposing elements in the country toppled the government of Prime Minister Mossadig on 19 August, 1953. The Shah was helped to come back and enabled him to assume the power and authority.

To ensure its hold in the region the US declared a well-considered policy known as the Eisenhower Doctrine in January 1957. This venture proceeded from the assumption that, with the defeat of Britain, it had become necessary for the United States to take some sort of initiative and that the decline of the British power had created vacuum which the USSR would try to fill which the United States must deter by assuming the position on its own (Calvocoressi 1990: 229). The US would therefore devise a strategy to give assistance to the capable country as well as group of countries in the region to ensure the stability in the region by effectively filling the thus created power vacuum. The US kept the direct involvement also open by making it clear that in event of the any crisis the US would not hesitate from deploying its military for protection, territorial integrity and political independence of the countries of the region on request. This was a clear stand on the part of the US to any aggressive design in the region specially the expansion of internal communism in the region.

The era of rapid and increasingly drastic change began with the dramatic announcement of the British government in 1968 that it was planning to give up its security commitments "East of Suez" (Magnus 1984: 12). The US was worried about the impending consequences of the British withdrawal. The region had become very vulnerable to the expansion of communism in the opinion of the United States. Besides the security of the smaller states and kingdoms were in

danger and were very susceptible to the interference by both the regional and external powers. The US did not want to take over the security of the Gulf directly owing to its engagement in Vietnam. For Iran it was a historic moment to realise its longstanding goal of assuming the role of regional leadership. Being the American ally it was ready to take the responsibility as the US wanted to assign the responsibility to an ally only in the region. Any direct involvement might have been counterproductive. It was assumed by the US that history of colonialism in the region would make the involvement of the West very unpopular and also might lead to the rise of popular antagonistic sentiments towards the West. In addition, responsibility to be given to a pro-western regional government was in consonance with the US policy direction in the wake of Vietnam experience when disengagement had become the central concern of the US policy makers. Therefore the American administration was strongly of the opinion that the US need to protect its interests in the Gulf but without direct involvement. Thus there was an urgent need to fix the capable allies in the region. Both Saudi Arabia and Iran were appropriate American option, Iran being the most populated and Saudi Arabia being the richest state in the region which a needed criteria to deter the threat of the communist expansion.

To maintain his exceptionally intimate and credible ally of the US in the region the Shah was to conform to the American view that his primary concern was to oppose Soviet expansionism (Cotton 1988: 144). As part of the 'Nixon Doctrine'(18th Feb,1970) the US made it clear that it would engage anywhere as and when there is a need of defending the allies and their development. Still the US would not involve in any direct decision making and their execution. It would also take all the possible measures for the protection of the free nations and their independence. The US would make it policy to participate anytime and anywhere for a good cause and where the American interests were involved. Such an evolving policy relied on the states of the region, especially Iran, to guarantee against the possibility of direct Soviet aggression (Magnus 1984: 12).

Thus began the American assistance to Iran which led to the construction of a network of military bases in the Gulf and around. The Chabahar naval base in the Gulf of Oman which opens in the Indian Ocean was the largest naval base. Appropriate measures were taken to improvise and equip it with effective defence and military preparedness. In addition, Iran received numerous types of arms and

weapons of advanced quality from the US. The US goal was to enable Iran so much militarily that it could ensure a credible peace and security in the region and safeguard the American interests. The basic contours of the US policy remained based on the 'Nixon Doctrine'. Accordingly the US would provide the required economic and military assistance to its regional and local allies to ensure the security and stability of their regions as well as ensure the American interests in the respective region. But the Doctrine would not stop the US from direct intervention as and when it is demanded or it chooses so.

A cautious policy of limiting direct commitments of US military support was an outgrowth of the lesson of Vietnam (ibid). The United States was conditioned to adopt such a policy in the light of the American involvement in Vietnam which had become very unpopular in the country. The public opinion was sharply divided over the US policy in Vietnam which had led to the heavy losses on the part of the US military. Therefore the US administration viewed it seriously and reached to the conclusion that any direct participation of the US in the Gulf would infuriate the public opinion against the government. But to ensure the American interests in the region the US might resort to arial and naval support in the event of the regional ally fails to protect the US interests and their own defence. Still the option of direct involvement of the US military as a last resort for the security and stability of the region remains.

In the context of Cold War the British announcement of its withdrawal from the region would create a dangerous vacuum in the region. Because in the US perception, it would lead to the dangerous expansion of communism in the region which was very detrimental for the peace and security of the region and US interests in the Gulf. Thus the goal of 'Nixon Doctrine' aimed at safeguarding the US interests by supporting the orderly political development, regional cooperation and aiding the regional allies enabling them to their territorial integrity and independence as well as peace and security with necessary regional network and cooperation. Therefore states of the regional mainly Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia were encouraged cooperate among themselves and with others in the region to ensure peace and stability in the region. To keep the region secure, undertook to enable Saudi Arabia and Iran to modernise their military to keep the required military preparedness to soldier the responsibility of regional peace and security.

Besides the United States would have a credible presence in the region as a symbol of American power and interests in the region. As part of it, the US kept a naval contingent in Bahrain. The key principle of this US policy was basically to equip the regional allies namely Iran and Saudi Arabia as the US surrogates for its interests and security of the region. Thus the policy came to be known as the 'Two Pillar' policy. The US concerns were in line with the concerns of both Iran and Saudi Arabia as all of them were sharing the aim of protecting the region from the possible Soviet interventions and communist expansion. The combined military power of Iran and the financial prowess of Saudi Arabia were perceived as reliable to serve the US interest in the region of Gulf.

Iran in Twin Pillar Policy

Iran was surely the superior pillar for many reasons. It has larger population, comparatively developed and diversified economy and a credible military prowess. The Shah therefore always considered Iran as a paramount power in the region. Iran was opposed to any external interference and non-regional powers to assume the leadership in the region. It strongly supports the point that only a regional power must take the charge of the security of the region. Thus the perception of Iran was in line with the objectives of the American policy under 'Nixon Doctrine'.

But Saudi Arabia was financially powerful with oil revenue and had considerable hold in the Arab world. The US made these two states its security pillars with their own regional ambitions, to maintain the regional balance of power. The Shah of Iran in the wake of the withdrawal of British in 1971 declared that Iran is ready and able to fill the gap and take charge of the security of the Gulf (Cotton 1988: 144). He astutely and deftly executed his policies in this regard to arm Iran to perform the role. As the U.S. was willing to provide the Shah all kinds of military assistance and technological support, Iran wasted no time and received the weapons and military technology as much as possible in a very short span of time.

This however was the very goal of the US strategy under the 'Two Pillar Policy' which gave the responsibility of the regional peace and security as well as the protection of the American interests in the region to these two allies as pillars of the US policy (Entessar 1998: 1430). As perceived and designed, the "twin pillar"

policy was able to ensure the US goals in the region as the designated pillars were able measure up to the thrust of the 'Doctrine' to enhance the area's stability. The policy had the tacit support of the whole industrialized world whose entire economic engines were moved by the Gulf oil. Their interests lied in the uninterrupted supply of the oil and therefore ensure the stability of the region at any cost.

The 1973 Arab-Israeli war caused severe jolt to the US policy in the Gulf. On 16 October 1973, the Saudi Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (Omar Saqqaf) in Jiddah had called in the representatives of the nine members of the European Community. He wanted their governments to pressure the US to be 'even-handed', otherwise Saudi Arabia would cut back oil production and urge other Arab oil producing countries to do the same (Zahlan 2009: 56-57).

The oil embargoes and subsequent crisis of the 1970s and its effects on the US and European economies made the importance of the oil in the world economy and therefore it raised the strategic significance of the oil-rich Gulf region. Thus policies on oil assumed central focus and strategic significance. Thus the war forced the West to change perception change and made re-evaluation of US approach and policies warranted changes and readjustment in consonance with the changing pattern in the region and its security. The Palestine issue was very close to the Arab heart. The emotive content and its potential to destabilise the region was apparent to the West. In this wake, on 17 October, Kuwait called a meeting of oil producers, including all the Gulf States except Oman. They agreed to cut oil production using September 1973 level as the starting point. The next day, Saudi Arabia announced its decision to reduce oil production by 10 per cent (ibid: 57).

The regional consideration of politics and sentiments were added to the US policy so that the 'Twin Pillar' can function. Situations continued to be in flux for some time but remained stable till the Iranian revolution. Until the end of the 1970s the tenuous maintained balance of security was suddenly disturbed by a series of events in the region and ended rationale and relevance of the Nixon Doctrine. The end of the Pahlavi monarchy in February 1979 completely undermined the regional balance of power¹(Mafinezam and Mehrabi:2008: XI).

¹ There was division of opinion in the US administration. the State Department's Bureau of Human Rights was headed by Patricia Derian publicly deplored aspects of the Shah's rule, particularly

The two events changed the situation in the Gulf and security perceptions of the states concerned. One was the invasion of Afghanistan by Soviet Union on 25th December, 1979 and Iran-Iraq war in September, 1980. The security of the region was in extreme state flux and therefore the United States was decided to revise its policy and led to the unveiling of a new policy by the United States. The new policy which was announced on 23rd January, 1980 came to be known as the Carter Doctrine. The 'Doctrine' stated it in a very clear terms that the US has a vital interest in the region of the Gulf and therefore the pursuit of intervention in the region by any would amount to an assault on the United States and its interests which the latter would deal with all possible means and force (Magnus 1984: 26-27).

The Iranian Revolution in 1979 affected very badly the existing US policy in the region as it led to the removal of the staunch supporter of the US, the Shah of Iran and which rendered the 'Two Pillar' policy paralysed and defunct (Ramazani 1979: 822). Because without the Shah, the *Nixon Doctrine* based on its two-pillar policy, had become a lame policy. The sudden change of events made the American policy entirely out of place developed over a period of time.

The Nixon Doctrine was rendered meaningless with the exit of the stronger pillar of Iran with the fall of the Shah and Saudi Arabia was incapable of carry out the responsibility alone. The revolution in Iran and subsequent crisis in the country made Iran more vulnerable to the soviet intervention which the US wanted to deter at any cost. In such case the security of the Gulf and stability in the region would plunge into an unpredictable vortex. The situation became more complex and tense for the US when the USSR attack Afghanistan and occupied the country in December, 1979. The Carter administration was gripped with the fear of the Soviet invasion of the Gulf and beyond into the Indian Ocean. The serious consideration of the consequences of the invasion and the possible US options in this wake were weighed exhaustibly because the invasion of Afghanistan in the US perception only

SAVAK, President Carter's Ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young had respectful opinion about Ayatollah Khomeini, whom he once referred as 'saint'. The American Ambassador to Iran, William Sullivan, a veteran diplomat of many years' experience and an acute observer of the stresses in Iranian society, sought to steer a middle course through the official U.S. debates on Iran. These split opinions made the Shah take the ambivalent decisions, his policies became paralysed and enemies were embolden to challenge his authority.

was a preparatory exercise to invade the Gulf and its strategic resources of energy. The US position had severely been weakened with the fall of the Shah of Iran.

The Carter Doctrine and the New Policy US Policy

The policies of the Shah was always in line with the US policies and interests in the region .Even in the toughest time of US policies in 1973 Arab oil embargo the Shah remained with the US and its policies despite the immense pressure in the region. This made the Shah the darling of US policy maker in the region and considered as a prudent statesman credible ally in the region. Iran was maintaining a working relationship with Israel earned Iran the position of respect and prestige in the area and in the world affairs in general.

During his visit to Iran in December 1977, President Carter made a statement praising Iran as “an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world.”²In a definitive statement of US policy it was made clear that US was ready to repulse any outside intrusion in the region with the use of force as well. Thus apparent that in the changed context the Carter Doctrine rebalanced the US position and ensured it paramount place as the protector of its interest and the region at large. The Carter Doctrine made the assistance many states of the region with genuine interests like Egypt, Israel, Jordan and then Sudan and North Yemen instead of only Saudi Arabia as in the earlier policy. This correction made the US base of support diverse and widespread in the region and played significant role for the US interest in the region and its security (Ramazani 1979: 824). At the time of declaration of the Carter Doctrine the US position was not strong enough to secure its interests in the region. Therefore the announcement was the expression of the policy vision which was ensured flesh and blood to deliver the intent of the policy with appropriate capacity so that the US must appear seriously committed to both its allies and enemies. The seriousness of this declaration (Carter Doctrine) was emphasized by the deployment of major naval units and by the establishment of and

² Carter,Jimmy(1982),Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President, Banthan Books, New York,p-436 cited by Lenczowski, George(1990),American President and the Middle East, p-188. Accordingly it apparent that American policies were based on contemporary exigencies which therefore overlooked the simmering domestic discontent in Iran and led to the Revolution in 1979.

the efforts to secure facilities for the use of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) (Magnus 1984: 26-27).

Accordingly the US in order to counter the soviet expansion in the region signed agreements with a number of countries that include Kenya and Somalia in the east African coast and Oman and Pakistan. To ensure that the preparedness of all these countries are upgraded Saudi Arabia was chosen for the deployment of AWACS aircrafts and an Amphibian Ready Group (ARG) was placed in the Arabian sea. These considerably enhanced the air defence capabilities which were urgently needed in the wake of the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war. Hostage crisis Of 1979-80 was another concern of the US policy. The issue was very sensitive and the US administration were tried their best for the releases of the hostage. Experts and diplomats were engaged for negotiation with assistance of the friendly states in the Gulf. But the hostages were released on the very last day of the President Jimmy Carter in order to embarrass the US government. The Carter Doctrine was endorsed and pursued by President Reagan which considered the USSR as the main factor of concern and source of threat in the Gulf. There was a realization that there was a lack of effective policy and the failure of the earlier policies that allowed the expansionism of the USSR endangering the security of the Gulf.³ Simply opposing and containing Soviet expansionism was not enough. The United States should stress concern for human dignity and freedom and US policy should stand with sensitivity to American honour (Cotton 1988: 156). The Reagan administration embraced the idea of “strategic consensus” in the region. The Shah’s departure from the Gulf political scene created a security vacuum (Pasha 2000: 159).

The Gulf States were not in favour of the new US strategy based on ‘Strategic Consensus’. Historically the urge for cooperation in an institutionalized form, among the Gulf countries has emanated from a common threat posed by a country among themselves (Ibid: 151). Therefore the Gulf states remained concerned with the regional threat itself. The Iranian Revolution and its revolutionary threats made them look for a forum to share their common problems and perception and possible move. There were several developments during 1979-

³ The US support to Israel during the Palestinian conflict and war had weakened the faith of states in the region towards USA. The Shah’s request for arms purchase were not satisfied while the large supplies were made to Israel. This led Shah to approach USSR for fulfil it’s needs. The USSR’s occupation of Afghanistan made the Russian threat as US policy concern as containment in the Gulf.

1981 which include Camp David Accord, Revolution in Iran, the invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR and the start of the war between Iran and Iraq which completely changed the security context and the threat perception in the region. Faced with this grim security perception of the Arab Gulf littoral states led to the formation of the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) (Ibid: 155). The basic aim of the GCC was to develop cooperation among the members to deal with the threat in the region and enhance the possibilities of security by ensuring the economic development and political stability in the region. All six members were vulnerable and shared some aspect of their political makeup and outlook, including a basic pro-western foreign policy and security stance (Nonneman 2004: 167). The new US policy was based on the twin principles of further enhancing the relations with the regional allies and upgrading the strength of RDJTF. With the loss of Iran after the revolution Saudi Arabia remained the only pillar of the US interests and policies in the region. Thus Saudi Arabia and its defences were strengthened by new loads of arms export to the country including the AWACS aircrafts. Given the sensitivities of its own people and the rivalry of the other states of the region, Saudi Arabia preferred the US help from distance and avoiding the construction of the US bases in the country. Arms sales to Saudi Arabia and strengthening of the RDJTF were the two main strategy of the American policy during the period .In the US perceptions the Gulf was exposed to the expansion of USSR. Hence US policy in the 1980s remained committed to respond directly to ensure security in the region in the wake of any impending Soviet or Soviet-backed intervention.

The Iran-Iraq War (1980-88): the implications for Gulf security

The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980 completely changed the security set up of the Gulf. This war was going to change the course of politics, balance of security and threat perceptions in the region and reset the course future dynamics of relations in the region (Ibid). The Iranian revolution of 1979 exacerbated political difficulties between Iran and Iraq (Mclachlan 1994: 61). The intensifying dispute between Iran and Iraq erupted into full-scale warfare in September 1980, signalled by the Iraqi invasion of Iran (Ibid: 64). Once the war started, the Shatt al Arab was fast occupied by the Iraqi troops. The waterway was in the Oil rich Khuzestan province of Iran and therefore was a very bitter blow to the Iranian position. The

major goal of the Iraqi government was to remove Ayatollah Khomeini from the position of authority in Iran whose revolutionary ideas were cause of major concern in the Shia majority population in Iraq. The spread of these ideas were very dangerous for the Iraqi regime of Sunni minority. So far as the security of the Gulf is concerned it was reaching to the lowest ebb and any effort towards containing the confrontation meeting the dead end. The war, is greatly compounded the pattern of intermittent fighting between the two states and their territorial claims in other states of the region. Its origin laid in the politics and diplomacy of the breakup of the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the century. Regionally, both side have extended the strategic rivalry for control of the Gulf itself and made claims on the territories of various Gulf States (AmosII 1984: 49). At the early stage of the war, the other Gulf States were very marginally affected. The main concern of the Gulf States (GCC) therefore became to end the war while they were very much in agreement with Iraq. The second imperative was to prevent an Iranian victory and therefore they gave a substantial active support to Iraq. A third and related imperative now became to find a means to shore up their collective security: the decision to create the GCC (Nonneman 2004: 175).

The defence of the states, territorial integrity and sovereignty were the main aim of the GCC states. To assist the war machine of Iraq, the GCC states provided aid and civil supplies. In this regard Saudi government sent the military shipments to Iraq and the financial aid altogether to the tune of \$10 billion (Ibid: 176). Soon the war was turning the side as the Iraqi side was losing the initial pace in war. Although the Iranian military response to the Iraqi invasion was slow to halt the actual penetration of Iranian territory at first, there was an increasing tempo of Iranian initiative and success after 1982 (Mclachlan 1994: 64).

The course of war led to huge destruction both the sides. The major loses were the destruction of the oil facilities which affected the oil production and the prices very badly. Thus the reduced oil revenue caused financial consternations. The assistance from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states were a great relief for the Iraqi establishment but not for Iran. Still by 1986, Iran offensive were very successful and managed to occupy much of the Faw peninsula. But the Iranian offensive could not lead up to the port of Basra which would have been crucial for the Iran against Iraq. The momentum soon lost the steam and the Iraqi counter

offensive pushed the Iranians back. 1987 witnessed a new warfare, the tanker war. The high speed boats equipped with killer missiles of Italy made the warfare dangerous and bloody. This tanker war made the navigation in the Gulf very dangerous. Kuwait used the protection cover of the US, which escorted the Kuwaiti vessels with its naval security escorts.

The US intervention during this tanker war provided cover extensively to protect the right of freedom of navigation, and concomitant actions by other Western powers and the USSR, internationalized this conflict to such an extent that it had a virtually independent existence from the land war (Ibid). These patterns made the Gulf a scene of power politics and confrontation, a manifestation of growing geo-economic and geostrategic importance. The US was very determined to ensure the safe passage in the Gulf. Therefore it ordered the US tanker convoys to make navigation hazard-free. The ships and tankers of Kuwait were escorted by the US taker convoys with the US flag on the Kuwaiti ships. Similarly Britain and USSR also provided the cover of their flags to avoid the attack and ensure the transportation of oil uninterrupted during the period. There were incidences of minor clashes in the Gulf but there were no major incidents because Iran did not make any attempt on the US flagged ships of Kuwait. It was in mid-April 1988, however, that the gradual escalation in the war reached a decisive turning point. In this final phase of war, Iran experienced mainly reverses, including recapture of Faw peninsula on 18 April and Majnoon islands on 26 June (Nonneman 2004: 185). The combination of the military, regional and domestic Iranian trends in evidence during this final phase in the end led to an Iranian acceptance of resolution 598 on 18 July 1988 (Ibid: 186).

US Policy and Role in the Gulf in 1980s

In 1980s the main thrust of the US policy was to ensure that the RDJTF was adequately and appropriately maintained with sufficient supplies and military logistics to rebuff the threats from the USSR effectively. Besides a special care was taken to ensure its viability in the longer term basis as well as make the requisite supply available for the reinforcement to the forces. The United States put into action its military power and organization in consonance with the need of the time

and policies in the region. In January 1983, a new and unified military arm, known as the US Central Command was put in place which was basically the transformed RDJTF to meet the challenges more effectively (MacDonald 1984: 103).

The CENTCOM was surely the improvised system than the RDJTF. As a unified controlled from the US was a credible instrument in the US hands. The main aims of the CENTCOM were to ensure the uninterrupted access to the oils in the Gulf and blocking any interferences or influence of the USSR, political or military in the region and any state of the region. Besides the US made it open through the 'Carter Doctrine' that it would take any measure with all force to ensure safety of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The most important goal, however, was to keep the strait of Hormuz open even in the wake of impending Iranian threat to stop shipping through the waterway.

Almost coincidentally with the turn of the fortunes of battle away from Iran, the Israelis in June 1982 invaded Lebanon (Cotton 1988:240). With the policies and instruments in place to deal with the security in the Gulf while the Iran-Iraq continued, US administration became involved in the state of Israel and Lebanon for sometime. In remarkably short period of time, there was a major reversal of fortunes. By mid-1984, the United State's very presence in Lebanon was evaporating (ibid: 241). In between, position of Iran got embolden in the war with a series of successes and victories. By the mid-1980s the US concerns therefore once again coming back to the Gulf. There was a change in the balance of the war but the US objective during the Reagan presidency during the war was to defend its strategic and economic goals and the protection of its vital interests in the region to maintain freedom of navigation in the Gulf. Besides, support to the efforts by the international community for mediation, the steps to contain the hostilities and the support all measures and efforts towards the security in the region of the Gulf.

With the changing pattern of the Iran-Iraq war there were difficult times to deal with the situation. For sometime, it seemed that the war was turning into a stalemate and it pushed the US into a policy dilemma. Thus the situation of the conflict was not suited for the US to take a position in the conflict. Because both the belligerent countries were out of the frame the US policy as the revolutionary Iran was blindly opposed to the Americans while Iraq has been the Soviet ally. The hostage crisis had further limited the US options. The US was very open to the fact

at least that victory of Iran was detrimental to the American allies and interests in the Gulf. As of mid-1986, hostility toward Iran appeared to be crystallizing in Washington. A tilt towards Iraq, though denied officially, was unofficially admitted to be a definite policy (Ibid: 243).

The war was tilting to Iran's favour which intensified the concern of the US. Hence it adopted the policy of active campaign for increasing prohibition on arms sales to Iran. The US tried to influence upon its allies to desist from arms sales to Iran. Above that ,it also started sharing intelligence with Iraq which was surely a stand taken to stop any possibility of Iranian victory.

More practically, it could be seen in a boycott of arms sale to Iran and a serious effort to persuade all arms producers of the wisdom of this course of action. The argument most consistently stressed was that some such prohibition was essential if Iran was to be induced to make peace (Ibid) The initial approach of the slowly changed and therefore the perception and policy of the US. It was perceived that the fall of Iraq would be detrimental to the security of the other states and the US interests as well. Therefore Iraq was assisted with the relevant intelligence information. But the assistance remained limited to this intelligence sharing only and no arms and ammunitions were neither transferred nor any other logistical supports. Besides, to ensure the overall security of the region supported the other non-belligerent states also with the necessary aid to stand against the odds of the time in case of attack on them particularly from the revolutionary of Iran.

The period (1980s) also witnessed the punishment of Iran by the US sanctions because of Iran's non-compliance with the international laws and conventions. Therefore the Iranian economy suffered heavily owing to these US sanctions which were becoming very damaging in many ways (Amuzegar 1997: 185). In November 1986, it was revealed the US were in secret deal of arms transfer and selling to Iran which was totally in contrast with it's very publicised policy towards the country. The policy evolved from very specific and intense concern with gaining Iran's cooperation which was considered as necessary step for the safe release of hostage held in Lebanon (Cotton1988: 245). It was found out that this deal was made for deeper reasons and strategic benefits of the US. To maintain good relations with Iranian governments to buttress Israeli position in the wider politics of the West Asia. Besides, the soviet invasion of Afghanistan had made the US very

concerned with the possible extension of the USSR into Iran and then to whole Gulf region. Therefore the US administration argued that the deal with Iranian “moderate”, pragmatists who would move Iran back into a more easily recognizable anti-communist stance, one that would resemble the idealized image of the policy of the late Shah (Ibid).

The problem for the US diplomatic strategists at this point was to regain control of the regional dynamics (Ibid: 246). The revelation was big embarrassment for the US which undermined its credibility among its allies in the region as well as the feeling of betrayal in the region made it very difficult for the US win back the confidence and play the needful role for the protection its strategic goals and interests. The major consequences were that the war continued to rock the region unabated. All the important oil installations of Iran came under the Iraqi attack and the US allowed these happen without any protests. These resulted in the beginning of the tanker war started by Iran which made the situation very dangerous for the non-belligerent states and safe shipments of oil to the rest of the world.

The US moderate Arab friends chose to depict the Iran-Iraq conflict as the Arab’s self-defence against unprovoked Iranian aggression (Ibid). For the US it was very difficult to take a stand. In such a situation the US was in a great difficulty as it support to the Arab GCC states it would earn the hostility of Iran and it would be possible defend its any move favourable to Iran to its Arab allies in the Gulf.

The US therefore decided to play role during the tanker war which would rehabilitate its credibility in the region. It offered to escort the Kuwaiti tankers with its naval escorts and reflagging of them. It benefited the US in many ways. It did not allow the USSR to get the opportunity to find favour in the region by reflagging the tankers and boosted the falling confidence of the Iraqi side in the face of the taker war started by Iran. The most crucial was the winning back the trust of its Arab allies who had been feeling betrayed with the secret arm sales deal with Iran. At a press conference on 20 July 1987, Kuwaiti crown Prince Shaikh Shaad came out explicitly and strongly in support of Iraq and same day the UN Security Council issued Resolution 598, the strongest call yet for a ceasefire and for step-by-step resolution of the conflict (Nonneman 2004: 182). The US policy of containing Iran was based on the assumptions that the victory of Iran would lead chain effect of falling of the other states in the Gulf. Reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers were made

therefore to ensure that Iraq was not defeated which could result in a disastrous consequences for the region. It was only in mid-April 1987, however, that gradual escalation in the war reached a decisive point. The intensification of the US military confrontation with Iran's forces in the waters of the Gulf more or less coincided with a string of Iraqi military success (Ibid: 185). The period had witnessed several occasions when the US and Iran were face to face but it seemed that neither were interested in any kinds of military fights. By the end of 1987, it became clear that Iran and the US did not have conflicting interests in the region rather their strategic aims were common. The safe and continuous flow oil was an essential shared aspect of the interests of Iran and the US. Even they shared the approach towards soviet and its possible intervention which both wanted to deter with all force. The major problem of the US with Iran was in the potential infection of the revolutionary ideas in other states of the region. However their basic conflict was in their approach towards the security of the Gulf. The US neither wanted to get embroiled into a escalated conflict with Iran nor want to leave the security of the Gulf to the terms of Iran based exclusion of the external powers.

The reflagging of the tankers managed the very explosive situations and did not allow it to worsen further. The US administration started pursuing the diplomatic channels to break the tension in the Gulf. First, it tried to enlist the support of West European allies for its policy which was responded by many of the European countries that included Belgium, France, Britain, Italy and others. These countries agreed to send their ships in the region. Their response was based on the fact that they wanted to show influence on US policy in the Gulf as well as wanted to demonstrate their solidarity with the US interest which involved .The US also played a diplomatic role to get the support of other countries and coordinated their efforts in the UN to stop this dangerous conflagration in the Gulf. It was not only destabilising for the region and its states rather had a worldwide impact owing to its strategic and economic significance. As a result the UNSCR 598 was passed by the Security Council it was accepted by Iraq while avoiding outright rejection, Iran insisted on prior condemnation of Iraq as aggressor and claimed that the resolution reflected the Iraqi formula for settling the conflict (Nonneman 2004: 182). It earned Iraq support of the US and its allies. Soon the Iranian position was weakened due to many reasons which included the series of Iranian defeats, Ayatollah Khomeini's ill health and the growing pressure of the war torn population. The combination of the

military, regional and domestic Iranian trends in evidence during this final phase in the end led to Iran's acceptance of resolution on 18 July 1988.

Iranian Perception and Position in Gulf

The substantial Western military presence in the Gulf remained a problem for Iran and its approach to the security of the region. The Gulf possesses a unique geographical location and the oil reserves of the region have made the most important strategic region of the world. Therefore the region has assumed centrality in the US national security and its strategic policies. The rest international community are also dependent on this region for the energy security and therefore accept and respect the dominant US role in the region which ensures the uninterrupted flow of the oil from the region. US interest in the Gulf and its stability of the Gulf has got entrenched in the perceptions and policies of the United States. The security and stability still remains to be desire of the people of the region. Iran remained concerned as it views its security integrated with the security of the region.

Iran's claims of leadership and security in the region are based on the certain facts. It is sitting on the eastern flank of the Gulf spread over 1259 kms. Iran has a large number of islands under its control which provides it with the strategic position over the Strait of Hormuz. Compared to other states in the Gulf Iran possesses superiority in the naval power and the technological know-how. Iran has been the dominant power in the region throughout. All these factors had made to qualify as the leader in the region in the US policy.

The first decade of the Iranian Revolution (1979-1989) demonstrate that the goal has remained the same but it has completely changed the perspective and course of pursuit of Iran's Gulf policy. The Iranian professor in US, R K Ramazani points out that there were four major factors that contributed to poison the Iran-GCC relationship. First, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's ideology led Iran to take on both superpowers. The United States, the "Great Satan", the Soviet Union was the "Lessor Satan". Second Iran's domestic politics contributed the crusade to export revolution. Freelance revolutionaries threatened the Arab sense of security. A third factor was the Iraqi invasion of Iran in 1980 Saudi Arabia and Kuwait

bankrolled Iraq's war efforts. A fourth and final factor was the policies of the superpowers. The United States tilted increasingly towards Iraq and the Soviet Union also supplied arms to the old ally, Iraq.⁴

Iranian officials perceive that the US policies have been the factor which had allowed the region to achieve the security based the states of the region. The interference and the presence of the foreign powers had been responsible the insecurity of the region and therefore a genuine security could be achieved only with the exclusion of the foreign powers. The contention carries sound basis too if we see the broad contours of the US policy in the Gulf which comprises – maintaining access to oil at moderate price, preventing the emergence of regional hegemons, preserving regional stability, preferential access to the oil resources and also the security of Israel (Fuller & Lesser 1997: 42-45). In the perception of Iran a genuine security of the Gulf is possible only with the security maintained the states of the region only. The cessation of the Iran-Iraq war, the death of Khomeini and the end of Cold War towards 1980s and the fresh wind of globalization in the emerging new world order would usher in at least measure of confidence building. Iran perceives that the Gunboat diplomacy of the US in the Gulf which helped Iraq were responsible for the instability in the region and the source of threat (Entessar 1998: 1451). Thus it is apparent that the mistrust and hostility between Iran and the US has been the main source of tension in the Gulf. Therefore a prudent change in the policies and approaches of the two countries can lead to a durable peace in the region. Connecting the Gulf to the Caspian sea Iran assumes a vital position as cultural bridge and a geopolitical arm for the whole world. The stability of the region around Iran therefore depends on the stability of Iran and due consideration its policies and its role in the region of the Gulf (Mafinezam and Mehrabi 2008: xi).

Survey of Related Literature

Buzan, Barry. (1987), *People, States and Fear- The National Security Problem in International Relations*, London: Macmillan.

⁴ R K Ramazani (June, 1998), "The Emerging Arab-Iranian Rapprochement: Towards an Integrated US Policy in the Middle East", Middle East Policy, volume.6, no.1, p.45-46 quoted by Abdullah K. Alshayji: Mutual Realities, Perceptions and Impediments Between GCC States and Iran, p.226, in Lawrence G Potter & Gary G Sick (ed.), 2002, Security in the Persian Gulf: Origin, Obstacles and the Search for Consensus, New York: Palgrave.

The central concern of the book is to understand the national security problem. It underlines the need building theories and concepts of security. It points to the fact that it is difficult to resolve the problem of national security without a well-developed concept of security. National security has been constant problem of states and a matter of concern in international relations. So it draws attention in this regard and emphasizes that a fully developed concept of security would lead to a constructive solution.

Hegla, Haftendorn (1991), “The Security Puzzle: Theory -Building and Discipline-Building in International security”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 35: 17.

The article deals security and national security and underlines the need of theory-building and discipline-building in international security. It explains the ambiguity in the absence of security concept as well as the challenges in the national security approach. Because of ones own national security of a state generally it does not take other’s security into consideration. It talks about a possibility of a global security and identifies some assumptions and questions to be clarified in future research. It discusses relationship between international security studies and international as well.

Buzan, Barry, Waever, Ole & Jaap de Wilde (1998), *Security: A new Framework for Analysis*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

The central concern of the book is the widening of the horizon of security by questioning the primacy of military and state in concept-building of security. It has accommodated the voices and concerns as well as the views of different organization involved in policy making some of represents the state also. The book gives adequate and appropriate consideration to the opinions and views of different schools and streams of academia as well that include the international political economy, feminist concerns along with the traditional security and strategic studies. The traditional narrow visions of the security were being questioned with the rise of newer agendas in the international relations like the economic relations and environmental issues. Later the issues of identity and transnational crimes in the 1990s were warranting the revision of the traditional and narrow approach of

security. The book has effectively brought the concept of security, from the narrow confines of the traditional state. The military-centric view towards security with a comprehensive framework for analysis of situation to make security a balanced instrument of durable peace is its major concern. The security of the Gulf needs comprehensive and broad-based understanding of the issues of this small and vital region of the world.

Buzan, Barry and Wæver, Ole (2003), *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The book deals with the contemporary and post-cold war situation. It points to the fact that security in international relations is showing perceptible change in its pattern. The period witnessed the emergence of regions and regionalism in international relations and assuming significant role in the affairs of the regions. Thus security has also been assuming the regional pattern. The chapters deal with the different regions and their security perceptions and patterns in the overall structure of the international security. It therefore combines the security patterns and its operation in the region with the overall security of the international system. This approach is highly appreciable which avoids the extreme oversimplification of view of a unipolar world and extreme regionalist view on the other. It provides a pragmatic vision of the merging regions and their security concerns and relating those with the higher security of the whole international system. This approach is distinctly useful to understand the pattern of perceptions of security in the region of the Gulf in the 1990s which require to understand its regional needs and requirements of the concerned parties and actors in the region and its impacts and consequences for the international security system.

Sushil Kumar (1999), "Rethinking Security in South Asia", *International Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2

It analyses the inadequacy of the Cold war security view and framework in the Third World with special reference to South Asia. The Cold war framework of analysis is not able to explain the security requirement in post-Cold war Third World countries. It, therefore, in the changed post-cold war context, require a shift from the Realist State-centered security to a people-centered security constructs.

Bahgat, Korany & Dessouki, Ali E. (1984), *The Foreign Policy of Arab States*, London: Westview Press.

This book deals with the inter-state behavior in the region. It is a compilation of studies of foreign policy behavior based four levels of analysis-domestic environment, foreign policy orientation, decision-making process and foreign policy behavior.

Peter Marigold (1990), *National Security and International Relations*, London: Routledge.

The book deals with the nature and content of National Security. It finds national security as an ambiguous symbol and too elusive to achieve as well. Because they all are the artificial construct of the security planners made in a state of fear. It is further compounded by disingenuous debates on security. So to ensure maximum security, policy makers need to be rational, imaginative and to have a clear view of the problem.

Muttam, John (1984), *Arms and Insecurity in the Gulf*, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers.

The book provides the conceptual framework and understanding of the arms race in the states of a region and it's contributing factors. It analyses the patterns in detail from historical, economic, national interest to the psychological factors. It makes appropriate logical explanation of the factors to an arms race and its consequent bearing on the security dilemma of the states and the region as a whole. Thus it is very enriching to understand the security and regional security in the right perspective. It facilitates better appreciation of nature and dynamics of regional arms race in the Gulf and therefore probes the options and possibilities of peace and security in the region.

Ramazani, R.K. (1972), *The Persian Gulf: Iran's Role*, Charlottesville, USA: University Press of Virginia.

The book is a valuable work to understand the role of Iran in the Gulf today and its claims by an appreciation of the Iranian perception of that role and it's major patterns and trends based on an objective analysis of the historical facts in this regard. It analyses the Iranian aspiration and attempts for the leadership claim and role in the region by throwing lights on its continuous role in the historical

perspective and geographical location. The book starts with the spectacular celebration of 2500th anniversary of the foundation of the Persian empire in 1971. The celebration also coincided with the end of British supremacy in the Gulf which once again provided Iran the opportunity to play the leading role in the Gulf and its security. Therefore the book provides appropriate historical insight into the understanding of Iran's claim and role in the Gulf.

Suwaidi, Jamal-al (1996), *Iran and the Gulf: A search For Security*, Abu Dhabi: ECSSR.

The provides a comprehensive details of Iran ranging from its unique political institutions, Shiite political thought, regional ambitions and changes in revolutionary tone and approaches in the post-cold war period which is co-terminus with the period of the study 1990s. Each chapter deals with Iran's role and importance in the Gulf and its security. It covers Iran's changing approach towards all the Gulf States and the countries of West Asia. The book markedly explains Iran's security perception in the region of the Gulf- regional resolution of differences and dispute and exclusion of external power and factors.

Sick, Gary G and Potter, Lawrence G (eds.). (1997), *The Persian Gulf at the Millennium*, London: MacMillan Press.

The book deals with various aspects of problem in the Gulf as well as prospects. It broadly covers oil, border disputes, political economy, military capabilities and the nature of governance in the region. Thus provides ample understanding of the problems as well as the needs of security and stability of the region.

Ehteshami, Anoushiravan (1995), *After Khomeini: The Iranian Second Republic*, London/New York: Routledge.

The book is valuable piece of analysis of Iranian politics, foreign policy and security options and policy in the post-Khomeini period. It deals very analytically the changes in the domestic arena, regional developments and international changes having impacts on Iran and the region. It traces the changes in the tones of revolutionary Iran and the perceptible course of constructivism and reforms in the actions and expressions of Iran. It analyses the changes in the Iranian approach toward the GCC states, Western/US interests in the region and therefore patterns of changes towards the stability and security in the region of the Gulf.

Ehteshami, Anoushiravan (2013), *Dynamics of Change in the Persian Gulf: Political Economy, War and Revolution*, New York: Routledge.

The book provides analytical description of interplay politics in the region in view of Arab- Persian perspective as well as regional aspirations of Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. More than analyzing the causes and consequences of war and revolution in the light of these contending and conflicting aspirations among the regional states it explains the geopolitical and strategic significance of the region and explains the interests of the powers in this context. US policies since the world war II through its several Doctrines from 'Truma Doctrine' to 'Dual Containment' has established that US is a permanent factor in the stability and security of the region. Therefore a pragmatic acceptance and accommodation of the three main factors/actors GCC, Iran and US only can have the chances of durable peace in the region.

The Emirates Centre For Strategic Studies and Research (2004), *International Interests in the Gulf Region*, The Emirates Centre For Strategic Studies and Research, Abu Dhabi, ECSSR.

The book seeks to analyze the interests of the different powers and their causes. It analyses the policies of the powers in the historical context. It explains how these interests have played role in the politics and perceptions among the states in the region. How the discovery of oil have changed the strategic significance of the region. It has led to the interference of powers in the region and even in the internal matters of several states. This has become important therefore to give due consideration to these interests of the powers in the region to understand the wars, crisis and even the possibility of peace and security in the region.

Pasha, A.K. (2000), *India, Iran and GCC States, Political Strategy and Foreign Policy*, New Delhi: Manas Publication.

The book covers wide range of issues of Iran and the GCC states in the broad perspective of political economy and foreign policy. It throws a detailed and analytical light on the religion and the state power in contemporary Iran in its historical background .Oil resources in the region and its role in the strategic importance of the region has explained. Relation of Iran and Saudi Arabia has been analyzed in the political economy perspective which makes the understanding of the issue abundantly clear. Iran-GCC relations, Iran and he Arab World in 1990s and

Iran's Kuwait relations has been dealt in the light of end of cold war, end of Iran-Iraq war , withdrawal of USSR from Afghanistan. Thus the analysis of the book is of immense assistance to understand the emerging patterns in the relations of the states in the region, mainly between Iran and other GCC states and their impacts of India. It also provides for policy options for India towards the region in the wake of the changes.

Clawson, Patrick and Rubin, Michael (2005), *Eternal Iran: Continuity and Chaos,*

Fifth Avenue, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

The book is an in-depth and careful analysis of Iran's domestic politics with appreciable bearing on its relations with the rest of the world. It is exploring the pattern of conflicts and tussle between the Shah and Khomeini in the past to the contemporary tension between the Reformists and the Traditionalists in domestic politics of Iran and the bearing on the foreign policy of Iran and mainly towards the West. The book is analyzing the patterns of continuity and change in the historical perspective to understand its foreign policy approaches and behavior.

Marschall, Christin (2003), *Iran's Persian Gulf Policy: From Khomeini to Khatami,* London: Routledge Curzon.

The book provides the nature and patterns of Iran's policy in the Gulf and towards the other Gulf states. It provides the evolution of revolutionary policies of the Islamic Republic and how over the years it faced challenges and crisis. It covers all the major changes and challenges of the period starting from the revolution, the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf Crisis (1990-1991) and longstanding issues of disputes and conflicts such as the issue of Abu Musa and Tunb and the problem of Annual Hajj pilgrimage. The book traces the evolution of the Iranian policy in the region with due consideration of national interest of Iran, its religious and Islamic ideology and revolutionary agendas and expressions as well the regional and external factors during this period. There was emergence of moderation in revolutionary tone of Iran towards other Gulf States in the late 1980s which were getting apparent in 1990s. But this pattern was constrained by the increasing shift of the Gulf Arab states towards US after the Gulf Crisis (1990-1991). It was further hampered by increasing US presence, its policy of Dual Containment and dispute over the Abu

Musa. It also traces the changing trend in Iranian policy in the region after the election of President Khatami. His policy of regional cooperation and the warm welcome of other states in the Tehran Islamic Conference and high level diplomatic exchanges and contacts have been described properly.

Mirhosseini, Seyed Mohsen (2014), *The United States Security Policies towards Iran in the Persian Gulf: The United States and Islamic Republic of Iran struggle on security arrangements For the Persian Gulf Region*, Scholar's Press.

This research mainly analyses the policies of United States during the presidencies from President Carter to George Bush. It examines the policies of these presidencies towards the region of the Gulf and traces the patterns of implication on the security challenges and prospects of the region. It particularly dealt with the US policies in the light of Iranian approaches and policies to the security of the Gulf. How far these policies of the US are impacting the security in the region? How the regional rivalry and disputes among the Arab states and Iran has led to the intervention of external powers? In brief the research is concerns with the Iran regional policies, responses of the other states and the US interests and its policies and their overall impacts and implications for the security of the Gulf.

Marie, Joseph J.ST. & Naghshpour, Shahdad (2013), *Revolutionary Iran and the United States: low-intensity War in the Persian Gulf*, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

The book deals with these two countries relation and policies towards each other in the absence of a formal relation between the two. The author describe the relation as low-intensity war which the two countries are engaged in since the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Accordingly this low-intensity war is being fought in the arenas of economy, military , diplomacy and politics of the region. It examines the different basis of Constitution and democratic claims of the two countries which led distrust and suspicions. It also examines the relations based on different level of analysis to explain the low-intensity war. These issues and examination of conflict and dispute areas help understand the challenges and possibilities of security in the region of Gulf.

Robert O Freedman (ed.) (1995), *The Middle East after Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait*, Florida: University Press of Florida.

The “Operation Desert Storm” and the role of the western allies in the wake of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait is the main concern of the book. The third chapter focusses on Iran mainly the period from August 1988 ceasefire to April, 1992 Majlis election. It analyses the role of Iran during the second Gulf War, changing content and expression of Foreign policy under President Hashmi Rafsanjani. Besides it also gives an insightful view of the future challenges in the emerging context in the post-war period.

Afrasiabi, K.L. (1994), *After Khomeini: New Directions in Iran’s Foreign Policy*, San Francisco: Westview Press.

The book deals with the major emerging trends in foreign policy in Iran after Ayatollah Khomeini .It analyses these foreign policy expression and change patterns. The author talks about the broad changes and its implications. It also envisages the future contours of Iran’s foreign policy. It finds Iran’s policy in the Gulf region positive and pragmatic and has made certain assumption in this regard.

Lenczowski, George (1990), *American Presidents and the Middle East*, California: Duke University Press.

The book is valuable to understand the policies of the United States towards Middle East after the World War II. It is an enlightening analysis of the eight presidencies and their policies towards the region. It therefore throws light on the interest of the US in the wider region and the Gulf in particular. The sources are primarily the Presidential memoirs and the memoirs of their collaborators or foreign statesman have made the book very important to know about the American policies, its major thrusts, continuities and changes and their causes. This provides valuable insights into the contemporary US policy priorities in the Middle East and the Gulf. Therefore it makes it convenient to foresee the moves and actions of US in the region of Gulf, towards Iran, GCC states and the Gulf security in the larger context of Middle East.

Seliktar, Ofira (2012), *Navigating Iran: From Carter to Obama*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

The book reflects the policies of the six US presidents towards Iran from Carter to Obama. It offers analysis of US foreign policy considerations, intelligent inputs, complex interactions paradigms and ideological consideration in the formulation of

US policies towards Iran during this period. It explains the methodologies involved in the making of these policies and their consequences. Therefore the book is valuable for the better understanding of US interests in the region which is the basis of its policy concerns towards Iran all throughout these six presidencies.

Tazmini, Ghonchen (2010), *Khatami's Iran: The Islamic Republic and the Turbulent Path to Reform*, New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers.

The book is of immense value to find the real intentions, process and the result of reforms and policies of President Mohammad Khatami .It contextualizes the actions and policies in the in light of the overview of Khatami's personality and its development, intellectual background of the policies and the explanation of policies issues like on social, political and foreign policy. The analysis is made on the basis of historical, local national and international experience. The book is notable for its appropriate focus and concern to unravel and understand the President Khatami's reforms and its implications for the peace and security in the region.

Cordesman, Anthony H & Hashim Ahmed S. (1997), *Iran: Dilemmas of Dual Containment*, Colorado: Westview Press.

The book provides an important insight on western view of Iran and the related threat perceptions. It analyses the degree of threat Iran poses to the US interest in the region and its security. In light of these analyses it probes the possible policy options to deal with these threats .It analyses the strategic importance and future of Iran by reading its possible role and capabilities in the Gulf and its security to ensure the US/western interests. It proposes many possible policy and options to influence the Iranian behavior to bring it in line with the US interest and the interest of region's stability and security during 1990s.

Cooper, Andrew Scott. (2011), *The Oil Kings: How the US, Iran and Saudi Arabia Changed the Balance of Power in the Middle East*, New York: Simon & Schuster.

The book analyzes the role of oil and oil policies of US, Iran and Saudi Arabia. It has viewed and analyzed the issue from the perspective of the US oil policy which has become the central concern of the US national policy. It analyses the policy perspectives of Iran and Saudi Arabia on the issue of oil and how these two countries played the important role in the making and implementing the US oil

policy. It also traces the implications of all these policies in the security structure of the Gulf region and its stability. It therefore provides a right context to understand the complex interests of US, Iran and Saudi Arabia in finding the possibilities of accommodation of all these interests leading to stability and security in the region.

Freedman, Robert O. (ed.) (1993), *Middle East after Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait*, USA: University Press of Florida.

The book written immediately after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait analyses the possible implication assumptions on different countries in the Middle East and the Gulf in particular. It tries to give picture of emerging possibilities as the action would be major blow to the Iraqi aspiration of superpower in the Middle East. It changing anti-US policies and demands were nearing to the Iranian perceptions and demands. The changes were happening in the wake of decline and disintegration of USSR which would make the balance in favor of US in the Middle East and the Gulf. This emerging pattern make it convenient to analyze the Iranian aspirations in the Gulf region and possibility of accommodation of interests with that of the US and Saudi Arabia which would result in durable peace in the Gulf.

CONCLUSION

The region of the Gulf has been an arena of constant security concern owing to its strategic location, resources and socio-cultural content and historical background. Given its long coastline in the eastern flank of the Gulf Iran has been an important factor in the Gulf throughout the history. The spirit of geography warrants the due role of Iran in the peace and stability of the region. Thus the examination of the concepts of security and the emerging patterns and importance of regional security in the 1990s makes the analysis of security of the Gulf given its strategic significance an important area of interest .In this pattern of change, assessment of long-term interests of Iran in the region, perception of revolutionary Iran is important to understand the changes in the foreign policy and issues of regional security in the 1990s. The broad pattern that emerges from this examination provides that the Cold war concepts on security and regional conflicts are no more relevant. The changes in domestic politics would have an immense impact on Iran's Gulf security perception, economic reconstruction underway in Iran and its

calculated neutrality in the wake of Kuwait crisis has enhanced its credibility. The growing anti-west and anti-US sentiments in the region would also influence the Arab security system. The moderating tone of Iran towards US makes the Gulf in the 1990s in the course of peace and security.

CHAPTER- 2

Regional Security: A Conceptual Framework

The security and its understanding have always assumed the central concern in international relations and its practices. The international theorist therefore has given the utmost attention to the idea and issue of security. The problem has been the constant concern of the International Community in the twentieth century as it has been beset with turbulence and war. Still the term security is not certain both in content and format. Therefore, there is no unanimity on the concept of 'security' and remains to be matter of contention and debate. Traditionally the security has been seen discussed as the main aspect of the state. According to the realist security is a derivative power only that does not allow the understanding of the complex aspects of the security in totality and reduces it to merely synonymous with power (Buzan 1991:8). Generally, as a result, all attempts towards security analysis and description are based on the concept of power and peace. Instead of theory building, the general trend has been the analysis of specific problems and case studies. In the absence of satisfactory framework to analyse policies and explain behaviour, the character of security has remained essentially a contested concept, which defies an agreed definition.

In general parlance, the term security is commonly regarded as a pre-condition of ordered human existence. The pursuit of national security has been a matter of highest priority and the reason d'être of the state. In the absence of a viable theory of security, there has been the dominance of broadly two approaches in understanding and explanation of security based on peace and power. Many perceive the security as the derivative of power belongs to the traditional school of realism in international relation whose proponent was Hans Morgenthau. This perception of security is of the view that it is based on the capabilities and its pattern in the international system. Besides, it also delineates the behavioural motive of the actors. Unlike the realists, those who approach security through peace belong to the Idealist school. For them the problem of security should be dealt in totality .They are holistic in approach and therefore focus directly on the major threat to security which has surely been the war and advocates it's elimination through cooperative behaviour both at the state and

societal level. Naturally, the two approaches are characterised by polarized perception and conflicting prescriptions.

Since the Second World War, the Realists have been in the forefront among the international theorists and played the central role in the construction of international political order and security and their perception of security was based on a state-centric approach which was in line with Cold War pattern. The realism does not give place to the moral considerations and believes that state is the rational actors in the relations and the national leaders take the major decision based of their rational consideration of their national interests (Travis 1994: 249). The period was dominated by the Cold War syndrome and therefore even the local and internal crises of the countries were seen as part of the East-West completion. These trends obscured the real issues and concerns of the regions and reduced their autonomy of interests and factors of interests. Notwithstanding the approaches, there are certain elements, which need examination and explanation for the proper understanding of security, its factors and aims and objectives.

To begin with, we must try to understand the target that is the entity that needs to be secured. Needs to ascertain the core values or aspects associated with, to be protected or enhanced of the entity concerned. The concern here is with the goals and values that decision makers of the community consider vital and seek to protect under the label of security. In addition, we need to understand the types of threats- political, military, socio-cultural, economic, or environmental. Besides, to gauge the nature of the security problem as well as its level whether the security problem in the zero-sum syndrome or relative in nature. In the light of these all aspects the approach to security and coping strategy can be developed so that the security can be attained in its entirety. Thus emerges the four elements-the entity or referent, core values, threats and its nature and approach to security. These four key interrelated elements- referent, core values, threats and nature to security problem and approach to security-constitute the structure of security. The major terms of the discourse of security are constituted by them (Alagappa 1998: 16).

Structure and Terms of Security Discourse (Alagappa 1998: 16)

Elements of Security		Illustrations
Referent (Who?)		Communal, religious, or other group, society, regime, nation-state, state, regional community, world/planet
Scope/ Domain (What?)	Core Values	Political independence and territorial integrity: social harmony, internal order, political stability, national unity: socio-cultural essence of nation: economic security (safeguarding prosperity, promoting economic growth and modernization, international competitiveness, distributive justice etc): safe environment
	Types of Threats	Political, military, economic, socio-cultural, environmental
	Nature of Problem	Zero-sum, distributional, political, market failure
Approach (How?)		Competitive (self-help), cooperative security: community security

A meaningful discussion of the four elements of security also requires investigation of the domestic and international political environment. Because environment has significant, if not defining, impacts on collective security, threat perception as well as the approaches adopted to deal with. There are four system-level theories that attempt to explain the different political behaviour and threat perceptions and the security structure. The two, Neo-realism and Constructivism are the main contending theories and the other two; Neo-liberalism and Commercial Liberalism are falling between them (Ibid).

Neo-realism:

It understands that anarchy as the ordering principle of international system. International politics is competitive and conflictual. Survival of state is problematic and the highest end of the states. Thus they attribute selfish behaviour of the states to “the anarchical structure of the international system” (Travis 1994: 259). Self-help is the basic principle of action for security. It accepts that state behaviour may be

conditioned by attributes and interaction at the unit level. It privileges the international material structure in explaining state behaviour.

Constructivism:

It contests the logic of anarchy and privileging the material capabilities. To them, anarchy is socially constructed and can be transformed. Further Constructivism posits that international structure is social, comprising shared knowledge, material capabilities and state practices.

Neo-liberalism:

It contends that a higher degree of cooperation is possible under anarchy. Institutions can alter conception of self-interest, reduce uncertainty and stabilize expectations. State behaviour can be constrained through operational rules. Institutions can facilitate peaceful change.

Commercial Liberalism:

It is viewed that anarchy of the system and its negative effects would be reduced by the network of economic exchanges and the consequent interdependence. This would gradually minimize the hazards of unpredictability in the international politics and international relations. This growing interdependence, rather than insecurity born out of anarchy affect the international disposition and behaviour of the state. The various systemic theories have often presented as competing and incompatible paradigms. Debates are on in the academic circles which are mostly futile and unreal. The reality of international politics is complex and changing and it is not uniform throughout the world. No single existing theory can adequately capture and generalize full reality. Kenneth Waltz admits that “realist theory can by itself handle some, but not all of the problems that concern us” (Waltz and Keohane 1986: 331).

The security is not a fixed phenomenon rather the concept of security keeps evolving with the developmental evolution of international relations. Therefore the conceptual framework and the idea of security bear the influences of its historical contexts. State has been interconnected and security is distinctive of the international system established by the Westphalia treaty. The 19th and 20th centuries have witnessed numerous changes which have transformed the context of security and its nature. These changes have incapacitated the state to deal with the issue of security in the changes context. The industrial revolution and the subsequent innovations in

weapons and war materials increased the extent of destruction. Naturally therefore a large section of population has suffered in order to deter these impending dangers. The emergence and development of nuclear and airpower have further added to the elements of destructive power and vulnerability at large and therefore needs to develop larger strategy and security mechanism to cope with the newer range and types of security issues and problems.

The process of decolonization had also impacts on the state vis-à-vis the security, as newly independent states are not capable enough to assert its authority over the whole territory. The period of Cold War has been characterised by militarization, rivalry and crisis. The international Relation was plagued with these destructive patterns and the security was the major casualty in the absence of a practical concept of security. The Soviet collapse has left space for the activities of non-state actors and henceforth need has arisen for non-state based understanding of security. The increasing pace of globalization has further pushed the security complex complicated and difficult with the rise and increasing role of non-state actors.

The security situation is witnessing an increasing complex pattern owing to numerous internal and external factors. At times security of the states are assuming inexorable dimension as the policies made beyond the borders affect the condition and the threat perceptions in the country. In such situations the states are in a very difficult condition to ensure security and hold the confidence of its people. For example outbreak of war in the neighbouring country has numerous spill-over effects which make the security of a country vulnerable for which it does not have control over the causing policies. As a result, in the issue of security the authority as well as the centrality of the state is on the wane. There is a rise of factors of security threat from conflicts within the state which has multiple regional ramifications and international dimensions like refugees, price rise in oil, terrorism, narcotics, trafficking and transnational crime.

The non-state actors, their growing clout and spread have inevitable bearings on the matter of security both national and international. The rising multiplicity and their coordinating network are posing severe threat to the security. In such context of threats and their perceptions security is no more a only concern of a state rather the growing complexity of the threats need broader securitizing system than that of the states .The Report of high Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, contained

a far-reaching proposal to settle the security dilemma with collective security based on following conclusions (United Nations 2004).

- **Collective vulnerability:** Threats accepts no boundaries
- **National limitation:** The states can no more deal with all their security threats
- **National fallibility:** Given the growing complexity of the threats, states neither can nor able to secure its people without having impacted the countries and people beyond their boundaries.

In such a situation, there is an urgent need of shared responsibility on the part of the nations to ensure their respective countries as well as ensure protection of their citizens. The United Nations General Assembly has echoed the concern of this shared responsibility and collective security in its 60th summit in a very unambiguous way. It reiterates that an effective cooperation among nations to devise collective mechanism to deal with the growing trans-border and trans-national threats. Such a menace of our contemporary interdependency of the global world warrants appropriate levels of dealing from national, regional to global level (United Nations 2005: 20-22).

In the post-Cold war period, there is a growing awareness among the practitioners and academic circle of International Relations about broadening the concept of security. In the recent years, UN has come up with many discussions on the issues of security in the summit level conferences and appointing of High-Level Panels. The conclusions point to the stretching the security framework to the human security and questioning the primacy of state capacity and role in ensuring the security in the contemporary changing pattern, scope and nature of threats. The framework of security must ensure a decent human existence and the sufficient human dignity in the security construct. This new approach to security would broaden the very framework of security. Besides, there is an attempt in the academic circle broaden the horizon of the security and the range of threats by including all the issue from traditional to contemporary concerns like military threats to economic, energy, environment, human rights, migration, refugee and so on in order to develop a single conceptual framework of countries in particular and region and the globe at large. Other than that, there was a debate about what are the levels of security and which level need focus of concern and concentration. IR theorists like Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde have made deep evaluation of the issue of level of security

for locating the threat and ensuring resolution mechanism. There are five most frequent levels in IR are- *First*, International Systems, *Second*, Intermediate sub-system, distinguished by certain nature, relationship, interaction and interdependence. The territorially coherent subsystem can be region like the Gulf. *Third*, Unit level: State level *Fourth*, Subunit level: local level, *Fifth*, Individual level. (Buzan, et al. 1998)

Notwithstanding the changes in our time, security continues to rank high in every country worldwide. Security consumes still enormous resources, energy and attention, which justifies the very rationale of state and governance. The end of Cold war and its militarized state has not altered the threat perception but surely has contributed to the regionalization of international politics. During the Cold War, threat perception and in turn security approach were subordinated and interlinked with the Soviet- US confrontation and security syndrome. Unlike the Cold War era, the global pattern and perspective have watered down in the Post-Cold War period. There is a growing role of the regional and local mechanism as the in the absence of east-west competition. Therefore security and the threat perception also have assumed the regional and local syndrome (Alagappa 1998: 4).

Thus, security has assumed the regional pattern. Barry Buzan and Waever Ole of the Copenhagen School have developed the theory of Regional Security Complex which they say, based on the growing regionalism in the Post-Cold War period. The main point of this Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) is that threats spread more easily to a short distance and not the long distance. Therefore the regions are more characterised by interdependence of their security as a security complex. As a result, security interdependence and security engagements are more needed and effective between the states of the region rather than the states of a region with the one beyond the region (Buzan & Waever 2003: 4).

As per the RSCGT, the threats and the security dilemmas are located in a particular geographically defined region. The states in the region are interlinked and interdependent owing to their interrelated threat perceptions and security concerns. In such a situation security of one state cannot be ensured without giving consideration of those of others in the region. The security characteristics of the region are dependent on the power distributions among the states and the history of their relation

with one another in the calculus of rivalry and cordial relations (Buzan1991: 189-194).

The idea of the regional security and its regions are premised on the rational perception of international security which is basically concerned with the interdependence of human life in terms of their aims of security and threat perception (Buzan et al 1998: 10). Security can neither be understood nor be ensured in isolation. Therefore a proper understanding of security and its analysis is possible in a particular context. The contemporary countries are characterised by their interdependence. The interdependence bears a global pattern. As a result the issues of threat as well as the politico-military threats are not limited in nature rather goes beyond the boundaries of the states but does not travel long distances and remained limited to its proximities so far as their implications are concerned. This assumption is the basis of the RSCT. Barry Buzan (1987) researched on security in the context of region and led to the emergence of the Copenhagen School.

Threats and threat perception are concentrated into geographical regions as the threats do not travel long distances and remained limited to area. In such condition the states of a particular region finds themselves in an interdependency of threat perceptions and therefore an inevitable concerns for a collective security as the security of one is related to other. No individual pursuit of security unmindful of others can ensure an effective security and bound to fail as it is not based on the practical understanding of the characteristics of threats. Thus apparent, the security of a region bears genuine and practical interdependencies of the threats and their perceptions. In this way, these interdependencies are found within the region and between the different regions. Hence in the study and analysis of security, factors and characteristics for a genuine understanding of the security of the region and the idea of regional security assumes paramount significance.

Hence, it appears deserving to understand briefly 'regions' or geopolitical region. In his book, *Geography and Politics in a World Divided*, Saul Cohen says that, "geopolitical regions are subdivisions of strategic region, and tend to be relatively homogenous in terms of one or more criteria of culture, economics and politics" (Mojtahedzadeh 1996: 319-320). Thus, the sub-system of a territorial region has assumed significance as an important area of study and analysis in the field of security in international relations. Therefore, threat perception level and security

theory naturally needs to be attempted at such sub-systemic levels instead of based on state-centric form. The RSCT has significantly broadened the concept of security by taking security from the traditional actor of state to new actors in the society and to the new sectors beyond the traditional political and military framework. The social security forms an integral component of security and assumes significance. The ambit of security is expanded into five sectors- military, political, economic, society and environment. It needs to be understood and emphasised that regions and regional arrangements will remain important as the states are formed on the basis of territory (Buzan et al 1998: 197).

Thus the RSCT does not endorse the state-centric and military- political focus of the realists construct. Rather broadened the scope of different actors and sectors of security which assigns the primary role to the security regions in threat perceptions, institutional structure to deal with them and the social basis of security community and their concerns.

The most notable contribution of the Regional Security Complex Theory has been their advocacy for assigning the due role to the regions. This has played important role in field of international Relations to give appropriate place and consideration to the regions and their possible role in the better understanding of the security and threat perception and their possible solutions. The aim of the theory (RSTC) is to consider the region as a new level of analysis in International Relations given the actual location of the issues and events which has bearing in the theory and practice of the discipline of international relations. This new level of the regions would take the appropriate middle position between the existing polarity of the super powers and the global approach. So that we can avoid the extremes of these two existing approach and can allow ourselves to view the issues and events in the variegated context of the region. In this way the issues of threats and security can be resolved in the regions separately as a building block to the security of the whole at the global level. Thus in the post-Cold war period the regions need the due place to ensure the effective network of peace and its mechanism. In the security complex of a region the threat perceptions and the security solutions are inevitably interlinked and any individual efforts without considering the whole complex and its requirements are bound to be ineffective (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 44).

Most proponents of the RSCT accept that the principles and ideas are relevant and have effective utility in explaining and understanding of the factors and causes of threats, its perceptions and the possible solutions. Regions have their own different traits and patterns and therefore it would respond to the global factors differently. The uniform applications of the global approach to the problems of different regions will not have the intended effects. There is essential need of grasp of regional dynamics for a complete understanding of these effects and outcomes. The Constructivists have made the facts of security more clear when they hold that the security interests of states are not based on their material factors only. Rather the cultural factors play a very significant role in the development and formulations of national security of a state (Katzenstein 1996:1). It is further underlined that national security and their pattern and culture grow in a defined socio-cultural milieu (Katzenstein 1996: 9).

But in the question of security, RSCT holds that realists have the dominant position of explanation but not the sole explanations of the issue of power which is integral to the idea and concept of security. The world has changed in many ways and approach in the Post-Cold War period. The very perception on the national interests, security and therefore the change is also apparent to deal with the issues in this new context. The regional level security systems are active in every part of the world in one form or other. They differ so far as the conflict pattern, security regime and security community is concerned.

Regional Security Community Theory

The regions and their importance as security units are also explained by the Regional Security Community Theory. In 1957, Karl Deutsch propounded the idea of the security communities. Karl Deutsch and other collaborators were working on the emerging patterns of security in the area of North Atlantic. On the basis of their studies came the idea and concept of Regional Security Community (RSC). Accordingly, any region or a group of states owing to their high level of cooperation and integrations achieved over a period of time has reached to the realisation that it is no more realistic to fight to resolve their areas of disputes and differences.

The is therefore underlined that such regions or group of states have developed advanced levels of interdependence and seek only peaceful change without

undermining the already achieved mutual expectations (Deutsch et al 1957: 5). Thus apparent, a region or a group of states of a region forms a security community where violent means like war has lost acceptance and relevance as a security community has attained the realisation that any issue of differences and disputes among the members can surely be resolved by a peaceful mechanism and methods. A RSC has developed multiple and dependable web of dependencies on one another. So any resort to violent methods not only fails to resolve the issues of difference rather will also undo the achievements in the preceding phase.

In such situations, the peaceful methods and solutions based on mutual benefits are the sure methods to development and progress. This requirement of peaceful resolutions of problems needs network of institutional developments and the standard procedures. Such stages of understandings are based on the genuine community feeling with common interests and mutual trust. The idea is very important as it has the potential of dealing with the problems of many problems in different regions of the world but it has not yet been recognized as a main conceptual framework of security in international relations.

Deutsch alongwith his colleagues tried to understand broad pattern and interactions what led to the community formation. They mainly focussed on the types and intensity of interactions and transactions within regions. They reached to the conclusion about the security perceptions of states of a region that these are no more based either or conditions of zero-sum game and therefore weigh their interests and pros and cons of their action on one another. Their calculations are based on holistic view and long-term implications. In such conditions, the overall interests of the whole region and the community take precedence over narrow vision of interests of a state of the region.

The Security Community is characterised by common perspective on the issues of threats and security which is based on the high level of trust among the member states of the community. In such situation, the member's propensity and behaviours are not fettered by the realist thinking and zero-sum behaviour in their concerns to national interests and security. Rather they take into consideration the interests of the community partners as well as the capabilities of all to deliver certain action and decision.

During 1950s, IR was dominated by Realism. Therefore the RSCT could not get attention to become a mainstream approach. The power was considered as the most important component of security. The contemporary cold war rivalry and competition made the east-west competition the most dominant perspective of analysis and perception of threats and security. The alternative currents of Security Community could not gain attention and any consideration during the period. It is only after the Cold war that the very Cold War perspective started losing the relevance, the emerge interests in the alternative views. Thus the Regional Security Community got the attention of theorists of International Relations. In this regard the ideas of Constructivism and its spread and growing acceptance played an important role in the popularity of the Regional Security Community. The many more new and contemporary ideas like Democratic Peace made the Security Community to catch the imagination in the post-Cold war period. In explaining the traits of a Security Community, Emanuel Alder and Michael Barnett provide that members possess three major characteristics. These are the Shared identities, values and meaning; multiple and direct relations and sense of reciprocity based on their prudent longer term interests (Adler and Barnett 1998: 31).

On the basis of these characteristics of the shared values and identities, mutual interests and multiple ways of interactions, a security community was believed to be very viable and effective in ensuring the security of one and all in a region which has geographically defined extent. With these approaches, many studies have been conducted in different parts of the world. The most important among them are on the US-Canada and ASEAN etc. As a process to a security community, the most important requisite feature is the shared identity and values which needs to be strengthened with the consistency in interactions in a large number of regular aspects like popular contact, many-sided governmental interactions and the economic relations on a sustained basis. The process of integration will get momentum with the demonstrative initiatives of the actor in the region. In this, the role of the leading regional states and power assumes significance which can ensure confidence among the other states in the region. It leads to mitigation of the issues of differences and that reduces the propensities of short-term gains. As a result the larger goal and the interests of the region gains precedence over the narrow and short-term gains of the individual actors. It therefore lays a sound basis of the growing cementing integration

of the interests of all the states in the long-term and leads the region towards a security community. Thus the process leads to the development of idea of interests of the system in which a principle finds a prominent place that an action of any one actor must consider the interests of others involved in the actions and decisions. In such approach the most important spirit of a security community is the sense of collective interest that assumes centrality in the actions and behaviour patterns of the actors of the region.

Types of Security Community

The process of evolution and the formation of communities provide all the security communities were not same. Karl Deutsch divides them into two categories, the Amalgamated security community and the Pluralistic security community. The case of Amalgamated communities is not very common in the contemporary times but refers to the ideal community. Such amalgamated communities are formed when many independent states willingly come together, integrate and lead to the formation of a single government. The best example of an Amalgamated security community is the United States when the original thirteen colonies agreed to form the federal government by ceding some of their powers. Amalgamation of such kind is not always successful and do not last. The failure of the union between Sweden and Norway is the example of such unsuccessful attempt. Therefore, Amalgamated security communities are rare and not very common.

The other possible alternative way of community formation is referred to as the Pluralistic security community. The most important aspect of such community is that they do not go for total integration and common government formation. Unlike the case of the Amalgamated security community the member states do not shed their sovereignty. The US and Canada provides an example of a pluralistic security community where both the countries are independent sovereign countries, had fought in the past but the growing sense of identity of interests and shared goal of peaceful development makes any violent clash and fight between the two a very unlikely possibility. It therefore appears that formations of the pluralistic security communities are easier and practical in our contemporary time as it does not involve the renunciation of the sovereignty. It has been found that the security communities grow

through different phases of formation from the nascent to the mature phase (Adler and Barnett 1998: 48-57). In the nascent phase, regional powers in the region realise that a security community is desirable and possible. Then begins the search of options and weighing of options as well as testing their appropriateness in the light of the threat and threat perceptions in the region. But the creation of such a community needs some preparatory work to create a climate of acceptance by all. These can be started by creating a scenario of security threat or making security threats reduced. In either case the other states would find it prudent and pragmatic to be part of the security community or structure. Regional powers therefore have a very crucial place and decisive factor in the initiation, germination and formation of security perception of the region concerned through its appropriate expression and actions. In this perspective, in the region of the Gulf Iran as a major country of the region has a very crucial position and responsibility to create the atmosphere of a sense of community with the due emphasis on the shared concerns of security and issues of common interests and benefits of working together.

The formation of the regional institutions and their network provides the necessary channels of interactions among the member states which lead to the growth of mutual trust and deepening of the sense of togetherness. Such common structures and the subsequent interactions develops the interdependence among the states and their interests and slowly leads to the promotion of shared expectations of peaceful transition to security community with the larger goals of security which they were not able to achieve in their respective individual pursuits. Thus emerges the regional concerns and regional interests and the idea of regional threat perception and the possible regional security. In such context all the actors of the region introspect and realise their failure in the past and their cases. The foremost realisation is of their own mistakes for their failure in the light of the growing idea of regional interests. Gradually, it will be clear that national interests of each one of them cannot be achieved without a prudent consideration of the whole region in entirety. In fact, the regional interest is the balanced sum-total of the individual national interests of the members of the region or community. Now the growing regional network of institutions and structures are able to provide the realistic peaceful resolutions of outstanding differences and disputes and reduces drastically the possible resort to violence.

According to Alder and Barnett, depending upon the integration levels, the security communities at the mature phase can be divided into the 'Tightly' and 'Loosely coupled' communities. The security communities do not bear the identical features and characteristics. There are security communities where the possibility of wars among the members is very unlikely. The countries of Southeast Asia appear to be such a community. While in other security communities where both the possibilities of conflicts and interstate wars are unimaginable.

Conditions leading to Security Community

An assured condition that the member states will not fight wars and resolve their issues of differences and disputes in a peaceful way is the most important characteristic and significance of a security community. Such integration of states into a security community will provide the building blocks of a peaceful world where the developing conditions would eliminate the necessity and utility of wars altogether. (Karl Deutsch et al 1957) It is perceived that the structure of the international system should be arranged in such a way that the possibilities of wars are eliminated and the states will be promoted towards the formation of a security community.

A security community of pluralistic kind was formed owing to their security concerns due to the threats from the impending danger of the Second World War. Among the two most important factors for the pluralistic security community are the participating states are capable to understand other participating states' requirements and are able to respond appropriately to one another's demands and policy actions in a peaceful and pragmatic manner without taking any steps which push them into violent positions of war. The common membership to the international organizations helps build such capacity as the issues of their concerns are able to be resolved without many tensions. The other factor is the compatible political system and therefore political value and its importance among the participating states. But the empirical analysis is showing the requirement of a liberal political value system and thus produced level of trust are not the necessary condition. Earlier the importance attached to the liberal value system was an overemphasis of the condition.

Unlike integration the process of amalgamation needs more relevant conditions. Karl Deutsch estimates that there are at least eight conditions that need to

be satisfied for an amalgamated security community to succeed. The important among them are a shared way of life, compatible main values, socio-political mobility and capable political elite and stable political system and institutions. The politically conscious and the supportive population is another condition. The willing population is considerably in the side of the decision of amalgamation and capable to run the relevant institution for the fructification of the process. On balance, therefore, we (says Deutch) found the pluralistic security communities more to be promising approach to the elimination of war over large are (Deutch 1957: 128).

Given the strategic significance of the Gulf there is a need for a well-considered security arrangement based the needs of all the concerned states of the region to ensure stability. The littoral states of the region is beset with numerous and enormous mistrust and misunderstanding. The period of 1990s has witnessed numerous significant changes of paramount significance for the world and the Gulf in particular. The changes in the regions needs to be utilised by the states in the region particularly the major states like Iran for the possible arrangement of security based on the consideration of the needs and views of all concerned. Otherwise the region which has been in turmoil for decades will be further drifted away to an irreversible state of chaos and insecurity. So the region is in an urgent need to reap the benefits of this period of change when the rivalry of cold war is replaced by the winds of global cooperation warranted by the emerging process of globalization.

Thus there is a relevant condition and need of a necessary realisation and conceptualisation of the relevant ways and means by the states in the Gulf and their political elites. The region of Gulf, given its geographical position and its strategic significance and mutuality of economic interests needs to develop arrangement security and stability. In such condition, perception of the Gulf as a security community is a theoretical proposal to set the regional frame of thinking in the region to move out of its existing state of security flux and building possible alternative of peace and stability in the region.

It should be assessed realistically and practical steps needs to be taken in the right earnest. Given the notion and requirements of a regional security community the possibility of Gulf developing as a security community sounds very difficult and far-fetched. For a better and safer future all the states would find the idea in consonance with their national interests and security and a possible outlines of such a community

will be a reality in the region of the Gulf. Such a possible future is largely dependent on certain preconditions.

The foremost is the \political reform in the region which in turn provides space for democratic approach of debate and discussion. This would, in turn, promote cultural exchange and economic engagement. The diversity of political system and their capacity to change needs to be considered by all and should be respected. But the real onus lies in the major states like Iran to take the lead and pursue a regionally viable policy which are able to instil confidence among other states of the region. Over a period of time such pursuit would possibly be reciprocated by its neighbours. This pattern with the sustained efforts by the major states therefore would take the region towards possible peace and stability. Perhaps such a reality can come in the future because every state and actor has dependable expectations of peaceful change to serve their interests and which, in turn, would lay the ground of a regional formations and growing regional interdependence and usher in a regional security community.

Constructivism has significantly contributed towards these fresh approaches towards security and security of a region in the context of social factors, identity and their role in threat perception, policies and security pattern. Constructivism has played a big role in bringing identity at the centre of discussion in international relations. According to the Constructivists, a unique understanding and expectation of the self is called identity. Thus identity can be explained as an understanding of one's own self and about others as well as the underlying relationship between these two the self and others (Fearon and Wendt 2005: 66).

For the Constructivists identity is the most important social aspect that every action is the product of the identity of the person. Thus there is an inevitable relationship between the identity of a person and his or her actions. The norms at the domestic and international levels mutually produce the identity. These intellectual aspects which are surely normative plays role in ensuring a particular identity to the countries of their own. This identity also constrains the interpretation of their capabilities and act on the basis of these understandings. Such identities based on social milieu have their own particular understandings of themselves while interacting with others. But the identities based diverse basis lead to shape the behaviours of the

actor differently and influence their actions both internal and external (Price and Reus-Smith 1998: 1264-5).

According to the Constructivists, interests are formed and shaped based on the identities and therefore national interests are determined by the governments on the basis of their identities. Not only that, the identities decides the government and thus the interests and preferences of the government are determined by the identities for themselves and in their perceptions and dealing with others. They try to understand the relations of identity with interests on the basis of role assumed by the government and its institutions. Accordingly, the specific national interests are created by specific national role which are the products of the specific identities. The Constructivist believes that there is a strong relationship of foreign policy with social constructivism. As per them, the actors have their own world, decide their own way and analyse and execute as per their own identity. Therefore unlike the realist and liberals who overlook these, the constructivism make the aspirations of human beings direct by giving the focus to the human beings who make their own choices (Smith 2001: 83-85).

Constructivism has brought the ontological security of Giddens into the arena of international relations. The Ontological security underlines as primary as well as necessary condition for the identity and understanding of the self. The identity of a person is not fixed but it shaped and refined with the passage of time with person's view of thing and reaction to the things and phenomenon they are to react to through their responses and endeavours (Giddens 1991: 243-53).

The sense of security of an individual is largely based on the trust among the others. Such trust is therefore is very basic to the maintenance of peace of an individual (ibid: 38). Thus it is apparent that the individual is based on a situation when the individual is assured of the rest of the world and believes that it exists the way the individual wants the world to be. There is nothing to regard the identity as a fixed phenomenon. It is dynamic and always in the process of shaping with the encounters with the time and conditions. Still it is not like that it is completely fluid because it is always regulated by existing pattern and everyday happenings (Kinnvall 2004: 144). Thus it is perceptible that there is a pattern of relationship between

identity and action which is in the dynamics of development strengthening each other (Giddens 1991: 350).

As per the Constructivists, like the individuals, all actors in the society even the states follow the identity security alongwith their physical, territorial and financial security. Therefore, like any social actors the government needs a proper understanding of their identity, their goals, interests and preferences. They must be clearly aware of these which will impact their actions which patterns their identity (Mitzen 2006: 358-59). Hence the countries with their identity perspectives are safe. This security based on identity plays a very important role in the motivational factor for foreign policy alongwith the need of physical security. This identity security can be maintained with the certain habits and their due development (ibid: 342). There is a need, therefore, of patternisation of needful behaviour and interactions of a country with other countries to do away with the security uncertainty which keep threats and environment of threats are kept under control (Steele 2002:520). The basic trust level and the system of trust ensures that a country is able develop and determine its relations with other countries. This trust system keeps the countries aware of their threats and the dilemmas of security and therefore easier to take steps to ensure the security. Such a trust system is referred to as an epistemological cocoon (Giddens 1991: 42). Thus, with the appropriate trust system, a state can behave according to the pattern of behaviour needed for security. In such situation countries can introspect, revise and rearrange their routines and behaviour to safely attain their goal of security. Whenever there is some kind of lack of confidence and decisiveness the concerned countries resort to their own possible actions based on their rationality. These happen when the countries start taking the routines itself as their goals and get trapped in rigidity (Mitzen 2006: 357).

The member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have developed their own security identity and have accordingly formed certain habits and routines which produce a set of behaviour which makes them perceive other states of the region as their rivals. Hence this pattern of rivalry becomes habitual behaviour and does not allow the peace and security to prevail in the region.

The region of Gulf is characterised by instability and absence of security structure and for long has been the spectre of hostility, arms race and growing tendency of militarism. This situation can be altered only by their existing routines

and security behaviour which would lead to the change in the threat perceptions of all the states in the region as they would stop considering one another as their rivals. Thus their rivalry behaviour would give way to the cooperative behaviour and in turn, result in security in the region.

Unlike the rationalists who stress the primacy of the economic factors and actors, the Constructivists give primacy to the social factors and social identity and their role. Accordingly, there is a national identity which is the basis of policies and behaviours of the nation-states in the international relations. It is further emphasised that identities represents the patterns of domestic and foreign policy behaviour of the states. There is no fixed and prior identity of the states or the government says the constructivists. Thus the perceptions of the constructivists appear more in line with the conditions in the post-Cold war period. Therefore, the realist's view that national identity is predetermined is losing the acceptability as the concept of security is strengthened with placing the identity security alongwith physical security. In the 1990s the identity security assumes primacy in the understanding of the national, regional and international behaviours. In the contemporary trend the idea of the Gulf as region appears *sin quo non* for the security and stability in the region of such economic and strategic importance.

In the post-Cold war period of 1990s, regionalism has appeared as the basic trends of international relations. Thus, regional security and the concerned framework of security assume significance in the period of the study. The pattern of threat and possibility of stability needs regional approach and solutions. The Gulf is a similar case of a region with distinct geography, history and cultural traditions. Iran large state in the region and its threat perception and security pursuit are bound to be interrelated with the region both in effects and consequences. Thus, Gulf security needs to contemplate and include all the interests of all the concerned in the region. The United Nations Organization is based on the national membership. But an examination of its functioning makes it apparent that it works based the spirit of a region. Regional associations and organizations play a very dominant role in its policies and actions. Considerations for regions are obvious in its organizations and in the allotments of key official positions. Therefore, United Nations has also come to seriously consider the issue of security in the regionalized frame for effective cooperation and stability. Given the importance of regional organizations, the United

Nations has started work with the regional organizations. In 1992, the then Secretary General, Boutros Ghali under Agenda for Peace, emphasised the increasing role of the regional organizations to assist the UN in bringing peace and security. It was proposed that involvement of the regional organizations would share the responsibilities and the issues of peace-making, peace-building and preventive diplomacy that can be done with ease with such division of labour. As a result, there has been increasing approach of cooperation of the UN with the regional organizations during the period of 1990s. The period also witnessed the regional approach on the part of the UN to discuss the issues of security with the regional organizations. Such discussion has considerably deliberated on the role on regional organizations to international peace and security and the matters of peace keeping and peace-building missions (Thakur and Langenhove 2006:236). Despite the present impasse in the Gulf, the region is certainly inching towards the regional concerns and the futility of the artificial collective security structure and mechanism are losing credibility. Security under the GCC umbrella is merely an instrument of politics as it does not stand the logic of collective security. Because collective system involves such an arrangement that can withstand the potential threats of any level and in such condition the sources of threat would never tend to challenge the collective system (Morgenthau 2007: 452).

Rapid developments in the Gulf sub-region have been occurring just as regional-level analysis of international system has emerged as a significant feature of our understanding of international security (Ehteshami:2013: 5).The area owing to its strategically significant waterway of the world has attracted the attention of the analysts and the strategic research. The region remain unique in the sense that unlike other regions of the world where the regional actors tend cooperate, the countries of Gulf compete with one another and has led to intervention of the world powers time and again.

CONCLUSION

The period of 1990s witnessed changes and shifts of profound significance in the world at large and in the region of the Gulf in particular. In the 1990s the post-Cold war condition has turned the responsibility of regional order and security on states of

the region. The region needs to find some understanding among the regional states irrespective of their differences; rivalry and conflicting interests to reach an all-inclusive regional arrangement of security that only can ensure the real stability, which would also serve the extra-regional interests in a better way. The end of long Iran-Iraq war have changed the threat perceptions of the Gulf states and needs more realistic interactions to develop new thinking of security and stability in the region. In the post-Cold war 1990s, the security requisites have changed as the Super Powers are less willing to engage in the local hot spots due to their own domestic compulsions and the reduced willingness and penetrative quality in the distant regions like the Gulf. The period coincided with the death of Ayatollah Khomeini and the pragmatic changes in the domestic political pattern in Iran, one of the important factor and actor in the peace and security of the region.

The West Asia peace process has separated the region and its threat perceptions from the larger regional security to the limited sub-region of the Gulf. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait has further pushed the threat perception patterns towards the sub-regional security of the Gulf based on the idea and practice of the spirit of geography. With the Iraq being aggressor and down during the period of 1990s, stature of Iran has been raised strategically which all the states of the region have come to realise. This finds manifestation in the visit of the Kuwait Foreign Minister to Iran and expression of repent about Kuwaiti support to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war in the decade of 1980s. Iran's positive response and consideration of the situation and support to the United Nation Security Council Resolution 598 point to the fact that sub-regional behaviour on the part of the actors for security of the region. These developments put into focus that national security of all the states in the region is interdependent. Their national security can be ensured only if they all make due adjustments of threat perceptions and security concerns of others in the region. Durable peace and stability hinges on this pragmatic and futuristic vision, which is almost in line with the regional security perception of Iran.

CHAPTER- 3

Changes in Iran's Security Perception in the Post-Khomeini Period

The Gulf is the most volatile region of the world where global economic and strategic interests intersect with the regional political aspirations. By means of its immense hydrocarbon deposits and the contrasting policies of the constituent states, it will continue to figure prominently in the annals of strategic studies and international security analysis (Suwaidi 1999: 1). Iran by virtue of its history, geography, economy, population, ideology and regional aspiration would continue to play an important role. Hence perception of security by Iran is important for the stability of the region. More than that its perceptions, perception of Iran by other states of the region as well as concerns of the powers with stake in the region is equally important. Besides, domestic political structure and legacy of Arab-Iran suspicion and the conflicting interests with the external powers mainly the United States are instrumental in the security perception of Iran in the region.

Towards the close of 1980s, numerous significant changes unfolded, having bearing on the region particularly on Iran. These changes ranged from domestic scene to the regional and international level. These also find responses in Iran's security perceptions commensurate to the changes. The end of devastating Iran-Iraq war, followed by the death of Khomeini, eventually led perceptible change in the coalition of forces in the Iranian politics and in turn, the security perception in the Gulf. The successive Iranian governments started responding to these changes with increasing moderation in their policies and unambiguously it was pragmatic in approach and expression. Regionally, the Iran-Iraq War was eventually brought to an end in 1988, which relieved not only the warring states but also the whole region and the world at large of the looming uncertainty. In addition, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 completely changed the psychological and diplomatic arrangement of the region. The incident was of paramount significance, which has continued to effect dramatic changes in the diplomatic map of the region with worldwide ramifications. All these changes appear to interplay with one another and have had considerable impacts on the security perception in the region, particularly that of Iran. The 1980s also

witnessed the war between Iran and Iraq and therefore both countries incurred the huge expenditure in defense. The below chart showing the relevant data of military expenditure of major Gulf countries during the period.

Table Persian Gulf defence expenditure in the 1980s (\$ billion)

Countries	1980	1982	1984	1986	1988
Iran	5.6	15.5	14.9	5.9	2.7
Iraq	7.1	8.0	14.0	11.6	7.1
Saudi Arabia	17.8	27.1	22.9	17.3	14.4

Source: IISS, *The Military Balance*

In addition, Iran's economic policy of self-reliance had devastating impacts owing to Islamic revolutionary politics, nearly a decade long war with Iraq and finally the massive destruction of earthquake. So the recovery and reconstruction of the moribund economy has come to assume place of priority in the years after Khomeini. The lack of the sufficient capital became an explicit fact while making the economic plans and programmes of reconstruction were necessary priority. The onward looking strategy marked a dramatic departure from the revolutionary self-reliance promoted by Khomeini (Afrasiabi 1994: 38). This growing economic pragmatism and liberalization in Iran has had a profound bearing in its approach to the region and beyond.

Death of Khomeini on June 3rd, 1989 was marked by end of a decade of political, social and cultural transformation underway in Iran since 1979. This change was revolutionary in two respects. First, well-entrenched socio-political elite had been ousted and much of it had fled the country, replaced by elite drawn from a section of religious leadership. Second, among the regime supporters, the new leaders had succeeded in altering the very basis of Iranian cultural and political identity. The post-Khomeini period has marked the close of turmoil in Iran and beginning of a new era based on moderation and pragmatism. The exit of Khomeini was also significant from the point of view of Iran's relations with the West and the US in particular as there was a growing expectation that such branding of the US as 'Great Satan' by Khomeini would lose its political support and the phase of hostility between Iran and US would be turned around.

For Iran, start of 1990s has brought in numerous changes which would boost its waning standing and confidence in the region. The failure of Iraq in its pursuit to

destroy the Islamic republic was a practical gain for the country. In addition, the disintegration of USSR was significant as it was a matter of extreme security concern for Iran and major threat to its national security (Tarock 1999: 43). There is a need of pragmatic considerations of issues and interests by both Iran and the US in order to attain their goals in the region. There is a channel of indirect communication between the two countries which is surely a welcome development for the security of the Gulf. The success of such communications needs that the pragmatic trends in Iran gets the desired pace and momentum. At the same time the US approach also needs to be reassessed and take the desired new direction towards Iran and the region in the changing scenario of the 1990s in the region and the wider world (Hunter 1998:1).

The Islamic Republic of Iran is based on theocratic political system and institutions. The religion, religious personalities and institutions play a dominant role in the governance of the country. The legitimacy of the republic is based on the concept and office of Vilayat-i-Faqih and the popular sovereignty on limited scale. Ayatollah Khomeini as vilayat-i-fiqih took Iran away from the contemporary democratic traditions and movements in the contemporary world. Khomeini's revolutionary political theory was a total break with the past and was based on the leadership of a just *Faqih* in the Islamic state.

Islam as a religion is unique in the sense that it provides for a system of governance for its followers. It has a divine law which is not only to be followed by the followers and analyzed by the competent religious leaders but also be used as a source of law and rules to form government and the concerned affairs to be managed according to these divine laws. As a natural corollary, the head of the Islamic state must be a man of deep faith and well-versed with the Islamic laws and its appropriate delicacies to base the government and run the country in a true spirit of Islam and its laws. Thus the Vilayat-i-Fiqih of the Islamic Republic of Iran must have a flawless high religious position which the Islamic constitution of 1979 in its Article 107 referred as Marja al Taqlid which means a source of religious emulation. It seems befitting as per the goal of the Islamic state that he is capable of interpretation and therefore to be respected and followed by the followers. Such position and criteria can only be fulfilled by the a few shia clerics of the higher echelon in Iran. As per the revolutionary constitution, God is the source of all political power, the absolute sovereignty remains with the God and therefore popular sovereignty is limited in nature and practice (Ehteshami 1996: 143-162.82-83).

In principle, the constitution is considered as the fountain of sovereignty and administration should be based on the people and their opinion manifested through the election. But given the position and authority of the Supreme Leader, the Vilayat-i-Fiqih and the Guardian Council, the very idea of popular sovereignty is very limited. The power of the Council to negate the opinion of the parliament and vetting of the contesting candidates is apparently contrary to democratic credentials (Milani 1997: 82-83).

The constitution of 1979 blurred the religious rule with the secular trends in Iran. Slowly the secular principles and practices were dominated by the religious rule under the guidance of the Vilayat-i-Fiqih and the supervision of the Guardian Council and their unfettered powers and authority which across the political system and administration. This is obvious with the power of the Vilayat-i-Fiqih to appoint the head of the judiciary and the defense forces.

Iran in the 1990s and the Pragmatic Trends

The Islamic Republic is based on the religio-political tenets of Islam in the Iranian Shia perspective. In such political system the secular political ideology has no place. As a result, secularism as an ideology is opposed to the Islamic system in Iran and cannot stand in the existing Iranian political system. But the trend of secularization in the Iranian society is gaining ground. The liberal social behavior and the attitude are finding expression in the less regulation of dress code and the reducing trend in the interference of the government in the lives of the common people unlike the period of 1980s. There is relaxation in the censorship of art and the press. Despite all these positive trend towards social liberalization and cultural relaxation, the real change and reforms in Iran has go a long way as the Parliament, the Judiciary and the Councils in the framework of the Islamic constitution remain under the tight grip and regulations of the conservatives. Thus Iran in the 1990s a liberal trend is in the need of systematic change of its political system in a democratic line and removing the grip of the religious forces and institutions.

The political landscape of Iran and the concerned political culture is also witnessing the similar changes. There is growing pattern of greater political freedom and social relaxation as an agenda of the newer political organizations which are gaining grounds in the Iranian political behavior. Such political organization like the Servants of Construction, a newly formed political faction is pitching for democratic

reform in the political system and every aspects of life in Iran for a pragmatic break with the revolutionary past. The group has been successful in getting the considerable number of seats in the Majlis and played a significant role the landslide victor of the President Khatami in 1997. The main issues of the group which it stands for are political reforms, increasing participations and role of women and the taking the economy out of the sluggish pattern. They are trying to pattern the Iranian society in its thinking on the prudent democratic political course so that it can participate in the race of development at par with the rest of the world. This political trend is very popular among the youngsters, women, middle class and the new and contemporary business group who want to participate in the world economic system and make their place as part of a vibrant Iran. This trend and the undercurrent of change found expression in the presidential election, 1997 when the conservative under the leadership of Nateq Nuri was defeated and the Mohammed Khatami won a landslide victor with the decisive around 70 percent votes (Nonnemann1997, 27 June: 18-20).

The victory of President Khatami was not the end of the opposition of the conservative forces in Iran. The institution of Vilayat-i-Fiqih assumes a dominant position in the entire political system of Iran and therefore the hold of the clergy on the system. The conservatives were strong both in the Majlis and the judiciary which was the biggest hurdle for the reformist agenda of the president Khatami. The victory of President Khatami had made the conservative determine to oppose the government reform policies and actions as the trend was a dangerous signal for their control over the Islamic system of Iran. They came up with many campaigns to discredit the liberals and their leaders. Charges of corruptions and immorality on the members and leaders of the Servants of Construction were one of the most important course followed by them. In this regard the trial of the liberal Tehran mayor, Gholamreza Karbaschi for the alleged corruption charges was part of the same designs. They used the judiciary to contain the liberal trends in different fields. The judiciary had a close supervision of the press to stop the liberal forces and their spread who were stressing the need of the freedom of expression and press. Notwithstanding, the popular liberal aspiration remains a formidable factor in Iranian society and it's reflection in politics and foreign policy approach and its security perceptions in the region is a natural corollary.

The examination of the relations between the political and the religious institutions evinces the growing pattern of the secularization in Iran in the 1990s. In simple term, secularization is the process which is characterized by the weakening of the hold of the religion in the political institutions and its processes. This process is generally is started by the government in order to strengthen its position in reference to other institutions particularly the religious ideas and practices. Such process is finding its initiation in the late 1980s when the changes were made to maintain the balance in favour of the state and the religion could be pushed to its place. Ayatollah Khomeini himself once remarked that the Islamic government was empowered to make the necessary changes in the religious issues and its practices in the interests of the community. This power apparently includes both the domain of constitution and the sharia law. This was a significant observation of paramount relevance which tilted the balance in favour of the political leadership since the establishment of the Islamic state (Zubaida 1993:23). This emboldened the secularization process in Iran in 1990s.

After the death of Khomeini, the issue of finding an appropriate successor added momentum to the process. There was no suitable successor available to the post of Vilayat-i-Fiqih. To deal with the situation the constitution was amended and the criteria of becoming the the Fiqih was downgraded. As a result, the succeeding Faqih need not to be a Marja any more. Thus the authority of the Supreme Leader was no more having the highest combined position of the supreme religious and political leadership in the state. Hence the position of the Supreme Leader was just above the political office. Further, the post of the Prime Minister was abolished and the responsibilities were added to the presidency. This change made the authority of the president enhanced and upgraded. Thus the downgrading the position of the Supreme Leader and upgrading the Presidency made the balance in favour of the political institutions and a requisite fillip to the process secularization in Iran during the period of 1990s. Thus, political arm of the government was able play more dominant compared to the religious institutions and practices in the country. The 1990s also witnessed a perceptible division of powers and functions between the Supreme Leader and the political executive and there is an increasing trend of the Islamic state turning into a state with normal functioning (Ehteshami 1996: 146). Changing composition of the legislature is reflecting the growing independence for political institutions in Iran. The steady decline in the strength of the conservative religious forces namely the

clerics in the Majlis is testimony to the process of secularization in Iran during the period. It is notable that, the period shows the growing number of people with technical background are joining the ranks of the political institutions and entering the Majlis. As a result, the religious institutions are losing their hold in the Parliament and their numbers are less than half and in the reducing trend. The policies of the government are reflective of the liberal forces at work and bear pragmatic content. This pattern of change is evident both in the domestic and the foreign policies. In the latter, the certain aspects remain intact like the policy of non-alignment but the policies supporting the Islamic movement are either on the margin or on the way out without sound. The issue of the Islamic countries and the Islamic issues had been the priorities of the Islamic government since the revolution under Ayatollah Khomeini. The policies were carefully adopted to avoid any issues and practices which were dominated or regulated by the West. Thus, the trend was in the direction of separation and self-imposed isolation as well. But the 1990s is experiencing a reverse pattern in the foreign policy of Iran. There is a deliberate and pragmatic effort towards reintegration of Iran with prudent policies of cooperation. This pursuit of cooperation is made in the arena of economic relations, political cooperation and the cultural exchanges. These are the sure indication of foreign policy of Iran are in the pragmatic mode during the period with many-sided positive impacts. The role of Iran towards the issues and events in the 1990s like the Palestine peace process, Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and its general cooperative behavior towards other states in the Gulf and wider West Asia bears its changing pragmatic approach. Besides there is perceptible urge in Iran about the possible rapprochement with the United States and the West at large. This new direction in the foreign policy of Iran can be understood with the fact that foreign policy of Iran under Khomeini was based on the principle of 'Neither East nor West' which is being replaced by a new principle which may called as 'Both North and South' (Ramazani R K 1992: 93).

Soon after the war with Iraq, the Iranian economy was in tatters and warranted immediate corrective action. The population had doubled since 1979 revolution, resources were dwindling and Iran was being drawn into the tide of globalization. Iran was experiencing the global culture of consumption and expectation were rising steadily (Tazmini 2010: 35). Fortunately, coming of Rafsanjani as president in 1989 was marked by numerous economic reforms and serious implementation. Under Ayatollah Khomeini, the focus of the Iranian economy was self-reliance and justice

based on Islamic tenets which are undergoing change in the 1990s. The economic policies are reshaped in order to deal with domestic concerns of development and in line with the global trends. Thus the economy is characterised by process of de-regulation, privatization, export promotion export and foreign investment. As a result the elements of the Islamic state is being replaced as the policy followed is based on the practical popular requirements and not based on religious idealism. Iran in its pursuit is no more different from the other normal states in the region. Engagement with regional economies and beyond was emphasized as an essential need of economic recovery from losses made during the war. Due to the changes brought about by him, Rafsanjani went on to serve two terms what came to be known as the 'era of reconstruction' (Ansari 2007: 11).

The legacy of the old Khomeini era is found continuation only in the domestic arena. The most important lingering policies are the conservative dress codes, press censorship and hold of Islamic tenets on education and law. But these areas are also under the pressure from the strong wind of change. The liberal democratic forces are becoming stronger and more vocal against the old regime policies especially in the social, cultural arena and on the issue of freedom of press and expression. The burgeoning young population is consolidating their demands for a more liberal socio-cultural environment and flexible political system. We can say that, there seems to be a process of pragmatism which is perceptibly visible in Iranian political practices. The changes and the amendments which have been brought about for the institutional reforms to deal with the emerging challenges immediately after Ayatollah Khomeini have considerably consolidated the political institutions and therefore the religious hold on the institutions and policies are steadily reducing. Thus the government is increasingly becoming strengthened in its policies especially in its economic approaches and foreign relations. Such liberal trends, however, is encountering difficulties with the lingering Islamic practices. The most troublesome is the practice that all the political entity must believe in the Islamic system and practices. Any voice and expression against the existing system amount to disqualification of such group, parties to participate in the political system and its process. With the abolition of the post of Prime Minister, President Rafsanjani's position was strengthened and was therefore better placed to pursue his mandate for change. With such enhanced power he started his presidency from the greater position of authority (Ansari 2007: 12).

The broad nature of the Islamic Republic is said to be in line with the social context and religious nature of the contemporary Iranian society. The reforms in the political practice are largely in response to the changing context of Iran- domestically and also at regional and international levels. This power tussle of the conservative and the liberal forces in Iran are tilting in favour of the latter. The liberals seem well set to grow in the coming years and their influence in the political system and its practices are sure to grow and deepen. This pattern in 1990s in Iran is on irreversible path as it is the result of the changes in its environment. It is therefore a natural outcome of the conditions and all the skepticism about its continuity, accommodation and strength would be cleared by the course of time. This changing pattern is having commensurate changes in the security perception of Iran as well.

The starting point of the pattern of change can be traced in 1988. In the final stage of the war with Iraq, Iran suffered a series of defeat from the beginning of the year. Military expenditure had severely strained the financial health and military defeat also pointed to cracks in the policy pursued as the revolutionary enthusiasm was thinning out of zeal and determination of the previous years. Thus, the ground was ready for a change on the road of pragmatism, as Iran was looking for coming out its growing isolation and plays its due role. The end of the war seemed to have removed the factors of the old Iranian foreign policy and therefore it marks the end of confrontational position necessarily entailed certain change in its posture (Ehteshami 1995:145). The reality of Iran in the late 1980s were producing the situation when change appeared unavoidable. The Soviet policy in the mid-1980s removed the Soviet fear in the region and eventually the disintegration of USSR in 1991 completely transformed the geopolitical environment of Iran. The timely change of leadership at home smoothed the way for making of revised policy and taking them to the desired course of regional security and stability in the Gulf.

Thus, the conciliatory approach that started in the second half of the 1980s, emerged as a comprehensive strategy, based on peaceful co-existence and economic cooperation in the region and the reintegration with the rest of the world assumed primacy with the new presidency of Hashemi Rafsanjani and the new Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. The changes took ground with the acceptance of the Security Council Resolution no.598 which ended the destructive course of the war with Iraq. This marked the beginning of the transition era which would lead to attempts by the

republic's first generation post-Khomeini clerical leadership at the reintegration of Iran into the international order.

Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-1997) as Iran's New President

In the constitutional framework of the Islamic republic, the Supreme Leader is the supreme authority. The constitutional amendments and the abolition of post of the Prime Minister have made the office of the president considerably powerful. Such Presidents have also aroused powerful opposition and at the same time produced profound impacts as well. The changed condition has also been the scene of factional fights between the groups mainly those who are in support of the president and those who are opposed. This rivalry has further been sharpened by the dispute over the authority and position of the Supreme Leader and the President. Thus there is a need of courageous leadership and piloting of the practical policies and their implementation. Rafsanjani presidency marked the beginning of a new era of Iranian politics especially after Khomeini. The changed position of the president enabled Rafsanjani to take bolder position on political issues and in the economic scene. Now there was only two powerful positions of the president and the Supreme Leader which was convenient to come to have agreed solutions and devising new course in the changing scenario of the 1990s. Traditional bazaar element and merchants were the support base and political strength of the new president. Astutely learning from the failures of the Shah, President Rafsanjani tried to broaden his social base and deepen its roots by connecting his policies with the needs and demands of the powerful bazaar and merchants who had played a decisive role during the 1979 revolution (Ansari2007: 12-13).

End of isolation of Iran was pursued with a pragmatic approach on foreign policy based on the real economic interests of Iran. As part of this economic liberalization was promoted, control of state was reduced and foreign investment and private competition were encouraged. The key economic institutions were manned and headed by the requisite technocrats. Besides, the policies were made to tap the talents of women and young population by relaxing the socio-cultural restrictions. Thus naturally these sections which are part of a vibrant nation became the supporters of the new regime and change in the 1990s. Simultaneous happenings of two events had the paramount significance on the new direction of the policies adopted by the new regime of the pragmatists headed by Rafsanjani. These were the policies of Glasnosts

and Perestroika adopted by the USSR President Gorbachev and its worldwide impacts, which drastically changed the geopolitical environment of Iran. The change of leadership (with the death of Khomeini) in June, 1989 enhanced the chances of the new regional policy and the international approach of the pragmatist's alliance in Tehran over the Maktabi revolutionary forces. The emphasis of the leadership in the immediate was on 'Constructive Diplomacy'. The subsequent 1990 crisis in the Gulf occurred when Iran under the leadership of Rafsanjani had just taken the plunge towards amelioration of relations with the actors involved in the region both the regional and external levels with the exception of Israel and the US.

As a result, there emerges the 'pragmatism' in Iran's regional and international outlook and policy perceptions. Action also begins towards restoration of relations with its neighbours and the West. The policy of export of revolution of the 1980s was replaced by reconstruction in domestic arena and peace and stability in the region. Iran began to see these improvements as essential ingredients to break diplomatic isolation and gain its credibility in the region and its security. This was essential to long-term approach in the region as the perceived normalcy in the Gulf only would remove the need of the military presence of the external powers and stakeholders as the regional states and the actors would not have fear of revolutionary rhetoric's. This would also spur Iran's regional position and its ambition to assume the role of guarantor of regional security and stability without the need of the external powers and their military presence. The pursuance of the policy would take Iran ahead of its competitors in the region as the policy would lead Iraq without western support and the easing away of military presence of the West would hasten Saudi Arabia's rapprochement with Iran. It appears that Iran's own security and development had become integral to the security of the Gulf. The pragmatist policies toward atmosphere of the long –entrenched crisis of suspicion, mistrust and fear among the actors became important and thus for the stakeholders both the regional and the external (Milani 2004). Thus the Rafsanjani presidency embarked on a policy of cooperation and coexistence for the genuine peace and security in the region.

The condition in the Gulf was compounded by the degenerating relations of Iraq with the West and the security perception and priority of the western powers as well as the Western alliance partners in the region. Iran was hard pressed to go ahead with its developing pragmatist policies and its perceived role in the Gulf security. The crisis made the West more vulnerable as far as its security concern in the Gulf is

concerned. In the same way the Arab Gulf states found the security of the region vulnerable despite the pragmatist diplomatic overtures of Iran in the recent years given the Iranian posture in the recent past. It can be said that emerging scenario was the testing time of the new policy direction in Iran and it's will to implement them to achieve the intended aims and goals. For Tehran, the western position in Iraq was a doubled-edged sword, although an unexpected event in 1990- the invasion of Kuwait- was to come to Iran's aid, changing the threat perception of West Asia sufficiently for Iran to present and test its new regional policies vociferously (Ehteshami 1995: 151). Iran, unlike Iraq's military path of regional domination, launched its diplomatic offensive directed towards accommodation and cooperation with the Arab Gulf states. The crisis tilted the psychological and diplomatic balance in the favor of Iran.

In desperate need of higher oil revenues to finance the reconstruction of its war-ravaged economy, Iran became primarily interested in regional stability, cooperation with the other Gulf countries and protection of its national interests (Milani 1991: 238). The significance of this Iranian friendly gesture was in the fact in the wake of the crisis, ensured a new opportunity to Iran. The Gulf states found in this gesture a possibility of assured security and a ready counterweight to the new belligerent face of Iraq. Notwithstanding this fact, the Gulf States were not completely prepared to relinquish the military alliance with the West. This approach of the Arab Gulf states was opposite to the Iranian perception of the Gulf security which was earnestly based on the exclusion of the external powers and the regional solution of the problems of the region as well as its security structure and arrangements. This point has since been complicating the issue for the GCC states as the Iranian talk of Gulf security and also the role to be played by Iran in such an arrangement. Moreover, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar have welcomed the Iranian gesture and have been positive on Iran's potential to any security mechanism in the Gulf.

Kuwait Crisis and the Iranian Neutrality

Despite host of danger, the Iraqi adventure in Kuwait entailed for Iran, it surely raised Iran's security profile and the significance of its stabilizing capabilities and potential in the region. The Kuwaiti invasion brought Iran the opportunity to do away with its predicament of a pariah state in the region. The Iranian stand during the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq unlike its policies of 1980s was appreciably neutral. Besides this neutrality, it also supported the UN position and made vehement condemnation of the

Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Apparently, the stance found beneficial appreciation in the region and beyond. This played a significant role in downplaying the influence of the Maktabi element in the domestic arena and the return of the western military forces in the region. By supporting the successive UN resolutions and measures, Iran demonstrated its desire to avoid any regional and international measures that might have drifted the Gulf under the complete dominance of the US.

Unlike its earlier position, Iran regarded the UN as the preferred international forum of conflict resolution. Besides, Iranian position was on the side of UN held by the West unlike its earlier policy directed towards demise of the ruling Al-Sabah family in Kuwait with the revolutionary Islamic forces in the country. Iran was unequivocal on the issue of invasion of Kuwait as far as use of force is concerned to secure the withdrawal of Iraqi forces was ambiguous. It also did not give military assistance to the coalition against the invasion to push Iraq out of Kuwait. With this posture and the position of not participating directly in the military coalition, Iran could have played the role of mediator in the spirit of its 'Constructive Diplomacy'. But the level of military deployment by the coalition made the situation completely unsustainable for the policy and Iran was left with little choice but to support the UN-sanctioned war for the liberation of Kuwait (Ehteshami 1995: 153). In the process, Iran maintained its positive neutrality so that the very action of the coalition forces should make its regional arch rival too weakened to rise again to challenge its position in the Gulf. This policy of careful and watchful patience brought the desired fruit.

The coalition action and the patient piloting of its position and the stance made the elusive expectation of Iran a reality. Iraq capitulated to Iran fully and accepted the full acceptance of UNSCR (United Nations Security Council Resolution) 598 and the 1975 Algiers Agreement concerning their border dispute. The UN Secretary General declared that Iraq was the aggressor in the Iran-Iraq war and was a clear vindication of the long-awaited Iranian stance. Also neutrality obtained for Iran the renewed diplomatic relations with Jordan and Saudi Arabia and some positive contacts with Egypt and Morocco. It also brought an unexpected gift from Iraq: an assortment of Soviet-made military aircraft, which included a number of advanced fighters and fighter-bombers (Ehteshami 1995: 154). The Iranian position made stride beyond the region as well. Iran got closer to the European community and consequently led to the western participation in the reconstruction of the economy. Thus the Kuwait crisis put

Iran into the sharp focus in the region and its growing moderation in foreign policy came to the diplomatic light of the international community. Furthermore, as long as Iran remained neutral, it could afford to sound militant and act moderate. This was particularly important in the Leader- President's scheme of marginalizing the Maktabi elements, which were ready to throw caution to the winds and join Iraq in its 'holy' war against the west (Ehteshami 1995: 154). Thus apparently the geopolitical reality of Iran in the Gulf makes its aloofness from the Gulf events impossible and hence importance of Iran was enhanced in the security of the Gulf. The pursuit of the relative supremacy of Iran in the region and its security has been the policy of the Pahlavi Shah. In the wake of the Kuwait crisis, Iran is seeking to restore this position with cautious support for the military action with UN sanction and the patient neutrality is its clear demonstration to the international community as a constructive and responsible actor of the region with sensible policy stance and the spirit of dialogue. It displayed Iran's ability to act alone sensibly without the alliance of West. Iranian approach to the stability in the Gulf may also suit the Western concern and interest in the region.

The Gulf and its eight countries have many shared commonalities which make it pragmatic for the region to develop system of regional security. In this regard, under the UNSCR 598 term, 1987, which brought about ceasefire, item eight in particular asked of the General Secretary "to examine in consultation with Iran and Iraq and other states of the region, measures to enhance the security and stability in the region" (Ehteshami 2013: 232). Many states took interests in this regional security proposal seriously like Oman. Iran also made effort in this regard but failed to materialize

Iran's Gulf policy of cooperation and good-neighborliness with the monarchies in different fields including the defense and security of the region found many takers in the region. Notwithstanding, there is a substantial amount of skepticism in the region about Iran's recent overture due to its earlier revolutionary rhetoric and policy pronouncements. There were voices of emergence of Arab Security arrangement in the region known as "6+2" i.e. GCC and the Egypt and Syria. The first draft of the Damascus Declaration which was issued after the meeting of the foreign ministers of Iran, Iraq and other states of the region emphasized the building of an Arab Order to strengthen the joint action to ensure security in the region (Ansari 1999: 864). Such an arrangement is not only against the Iranian policy of the security arrangement with relative superior role of Iran but rather seemed aligned against its

interest and long pursued policy and role in the region in accordance with the geopolitical significance of Iran in the region. This approach of the Gulf sheikhdoms of finding alternative of Iran was hard to understand despite of its policy of cooperation and engagement to develop an arrangement of regional security in the Gulf without the support of the external factors. Iran, therefore, took this approach as negation of the legitimate right of Iran in the region owing to its geographical location and presence in the Gulf. No development in the region and the world can reduce the geopolitical importance of Iran in the Gulf. Iran is, therefore, keen to pursue its policy in the region and its security, whatsoever the approach of the other stake-holders remains in the region. This makes relations between the Gulf sheikhdoms and the US on one side and Iran on the other an uneasy and difficult condition for accommodation and a durable arrangement of security in the Gulf.

In this condition, Iran's approach of sharp reaction to this may aggravate the situation against it further and its long-desired role in the Gulf could be derailed. The new Iranian establishment need to remain persistent with the policy of rapprochement and cooperation with Gulf states so as to ameliorate its image in the regional perception as well as reduce the possibility of direct confrontation with them which may in turn, lead to the confrontation with the West that could upset the position of Iran in the region and also its aims and security. Iran was to benefit from the new opportunities while remaining committed to regional security and cooperation in both the north and the south. In the Gulf, Iran continued its rapprochement with the GCC members and Iraq (Milani 1994: 342). Therefore the 1990s witnessed Iran's continuous pursuit in the direction of regional arrangement of peace and security. In February, 1994 Javad Zarif, the then deputy foreign minister of Iran made a proposal to the GCC that they set up a joint security forum as a means of alleviating tensions between the two sides. The issue was seriously pursued by Tehran and was underlined by Dr Ali Akbar Velayati, the then foreign minister of Iran during his UN General Assembly Address in September 1994 called for the forum to discuss confidence-building measures. Later, Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi emphatically declared that his country "was ready to engage in a serious dialogue with its Gulf neighbors to free the area of weapon of mass destruction and establish peace and security...reducing

arms expenditure and increasing transparency in military programs” (Ehteshami 2013: 233).¹

Iran cannot change the western interests in the region nor its unilateral action can force them to withdraw from the region. Only the improving relations with the Arab Gulf states may hold the western forces to go against it. However, United States military presence in the Gulf and Washington’s recent policy of containment poses a great challenge to Iran (Milani 1994: 342). The requisite course for Iran at the moment is to maintain its momentum of policy of moderation and pursuit of winning confidence of the Gulf Arab states by erasing their earlier fear from the revolutionary Iran and its radical rhetoric. The policy seems to be in the right direction as the Iran has resumed diplomatic relation with Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Morocco. Its strategic neutrality sides it with the Western coalition to push Iraq out of Kuwait and extended help to release the US hostages from Lebanon.

Hashemi Rafsanjani: An era of Reconstruction and Reform

The Rafsanjani presidency began with central aim of reconstruction of the war-ravaged economy and actions were taken to make Iran prepared for making economic engagements (Ansari 2007: 13). The new regime was strongly of the view that economic engagement would be strengthened by the liberal economic policies, which in turn would lead to increasing relations with the neighbors and clear the wind of suspicion. As a result, Iran can get the rightful place and role in the emerging security system of the region. In this connection, the programme of development was based on a Five-year plan, Foreign investments were encouraged and private participation was promoted. The restrictions on foreign currencies, price regulation and import rules were relaxed and a number of commodities under the regulation were reduced. Privatization was promoted and even a large number of state-owned enterprises were privatized.

Policy of Moderation in Social and Cultural Policy

The approach of moderation entered the social and cultural fields as well. To improve the international image, policy of moderation was promoted in the social and cultural

¹ Kamal Kharazi, cited by Marschall, Iran’s Persian Gulf Policy, p.171-These pursuits and declarations on the part of the Iran from its higher political levels like foreign ministers underlines the seriousness on the part of Iran towards security in the region along with other states in the region which surely a very constructive change in its approach to the security in the region.

arena as well. This process of relaxing of the regulation and control started spilling into other areas of life. The liberal policies entered into the field of arts, press, intellectual endeavours and women issues. Policies were geared to serve the people, their welfare and freedom under the dynamic leadership of the Culture Minister, Mohammad Khatami. Such journal like Zaman, Kiyān and Goftego which were important for the issues of women and literary pursuits were ensured autonomy. Numerous soul-searching discussion and debates were organized on such issues like role of civil society, democracy, individual freedom and role of religion. This liberal process helped the Iranian film industry which scaled the international reputation with numerous international recognition and prizes. Notwithstanding, the Kuwait war had transformed the balance of power equation in the Gulf. The US influence was further entrenched with its increasing military presence. The end of Cold war and the successful Kuwait campaign embolden the US approach and its position in the Gulf. Soon the euphoria of the New World Order led to the announcement of the new doctrine of 'Dual Containment' in the Gulf arrayed against both Iran and Iraq (Ansari 1999: 865). Despite occasional harsh rhetoric by some clerics, Iran has largely come to accept the United States military presence in the Gulf as a fiat accompli (Milani 1994: 343). Iran remained consistent with its approach towards rapprochement with its Gulf neighbors whom it continued to assume as the way forwards to stability and security in the region. Iran has tried to persuade the GCC states to distance themselves from the United States, arguing that without Iranian participation, no regional security arrangement will succeed (Milani 1994: 343).

Due to the frustration on its approach towards the regional security as the GCC appreciate the Iranian presence but not able to accept working in full cooperation towards the regional security. These conditions had impacts on the domestic composition and competition as well. This led to the numerous political differences and strict restrictions were imposed on the political dissent. The mid-1990s witnessed the very strong political clampdown on political adversaries and the critiques of the establishments. Several intellectuals were arrested, tortured and many were found dead in mysterious circumstances. The government remained silent on such heavy and violent restriction nor there public condemnations of these acts and happenings. President Rafsanjani maintained silence out of political expediency and the Supreme Leader amassed considerable power and consolidated his authority. The

liberal policies and processes received setbacks as the western onslaught and powerful mass campaign were organized and started to reverse the trend in the country.

Then followed the planned attacks on all symbols and signs of the West like book stores and theatres. Moderate intellectuals with tolerant and pluralistic views on Islam like philosopher Abdolkarim Soroush and his lectures were targeted and vandalized. During the period of 1993-1995, several journalists who had such moderate and tolerant views about the changes and were holding the opinion that Iranian society should be freed from the clutches of the clerics were targeted, sentenced to lashings and many were sent to jail.

The economic policy of reconstruction also fell into rough weather. As the process led to the increasing expenditure it resulted in the weakening of currency control and rising inflation and consequent depletion of the foreign exchange. As a result, the government was forced to take steps to stabilize the economy. The corrective measures led to import reduction, employment layoffs and restriction on private sector. These measures and policies considerably harmed the economy as well as the credibility of the government under President Rafsanjani and its ability to pursue the liberalization and reconstruction of the economy. There were several instances of social turmoil and rioting. Thus the policy of moderation and cooperation with the Gulf States were losing the support bases. The United States and Saudi Arabia, the driving force behind the GCC, recognized that a viable long-term security arrangement must include Iran, but this is a step that neither power is prepared to take at this juncture (Milani 1994: 345).

The Israel Factor and Iran in 1990s

The intent of normalization of relations with rest of the world was soon put to test. Iran's Hezbollah links and opposition to the Palestine peace process in 1991 were huge stumbling block in its constructive foreign policy started by the presidency of Hashemi Rafsanjani. Opposition to the large and growing US military presence was complicating the situation as in the post Kuwait war the US was determined to defend its interests with every possible means. Iran failed to gain the confidence of the western world and therefore tried to satisfy its need by turning towards the east mainly China and South Korea. But the West was closely monitoring the Iranian approach and actions. The revelation of the Iranian nuclear program complicated the situation. Evidence of Iranian links in the Buenos Aires bombings and Jewish

Community Centre in 1992 and 1994 respectively made it further worse. Thus its image of moderation and cooperation in the region and policy of engagement beyond were being overshadowed with the actions and expression reminiscent of the revolutionary days. This also evoked similar reaction which started marring the path of conciliation and cooperation. Iran is seen as a dangerous sponsor of terrorism and supporter of the fundamentalist movements that threaten the survival of pro-American regimes (Milani 1994: 342).

The fatwa had been issued by Ayatollah Khomeini against Salman Rushdie, the British author of the novel 'the Satanic Verses' which allegedly contained the element and ideas offensive to Islam. It had damaged the Iran's standing in the international relations which Rafsanjani and his policies failed to mend. The changing perceptions of Iran about Gulf security and policy of cooperation in the region were not limited by these damages done by the previous years. The Israeli lobbies and groups with their active work and influence in the US administration also obstructed the Iranian efforts of reintegration in the international community. Before the Revolution, Israel had very close relationship with the Shah bound by economic, political and military understanding. Besides, the Israeli intelligence had been playing substantial role to maintain Shah's secret agencies and intelligence to keep the Iranian position up so far as its competitor in the region is concerned.

The Revolution disrupted the channels and networks and the Islamization and revolutionary pronouncements had important ramification for Israel. In the 1980s, Israel still was in secret communication with Iran and concerned with removing the Iraqi threat. The Iran-Iraq war crippled both the countries both economically and militarily. Israel systematically planned strategies and influenced the US policies which resulted in the pronouncement of the US economic sanctions against Iran. Iran was projected as supporter of international terrorism. Its stance on the Palestine peace process and its pursuit of defence strengthening were successfully referred as inimical to the international community (Sasan 2003: 227).

The US policies in the 1990s are the telling pattern of the Israel's created perception and campaign. The Operation Desert Storm and the successful completion of Kuwaiti liberation changed the power balance in the region and the US also changed its policy of 'Balance of Power Game'. Now the new policy designed to contain the both the Iraqi and Iranian regimes which came to be known as policy of Dual Containment (Knapp 2010: 49-59).

Thus the 1990s is also characterized by the increasing presence of US military under the policy against Iraq and the Islamic Republic that upset the approach and pace of Rafsanjani's policy of pragmatism and peaceful coexistence ushering in the regional security. In 1995, the US fifth Fleet was positioned in Bahrain which further compounded the situation in the Gulf and its security. This played an important role to support the US naval activities and keep its regional allies secure and maintain their trust only in the US support for their security. The development practically downplayed the Iranian gesture of cooperation and the responses of the Arab littoral states in the regional spirit needed for the progress of regional security in the Gulf.

Thus all the policies of engagement and cooperation of Iran started losing the initiative back home as well. In the face of such US policies and lack of support of the policies in the region, the conservatives gained strength and consolidated against the policies of Rafsanjani. The Supreme Leader, Khamenei was also putting his weight in their stance against the liberal policies. The US reactions were also becoming debilitating. Economically, Washington had brought pressure to bear on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, albeit not always successful, to deny development loans to Iran. In 1993, for example the United States vetoed the Boeing Corporation's decision to sell sixteen jetliners to Iran (Milani 1994: 342). Still the Iranian government remained consistent with their policy pursuit of engagement. Therefore Tehran tried an opening of engagement with the US and a deal of one billion was made with Conoco, a US oil company for the development offshore oil fields in Iran in 1995. The US administration was not amenable to this engagement gesture on the part of Iran. Rather to forestall the deal, an executive order was issued by the President Clinton. According to the order the US companies were barred from investment in the oil sector of Iran. Conoco made it clear that they regularly appraised and updated the administration since 1991 when it started its work as per the deal in Sirri island of Iran in the Gulf by using a Dutch subsidiary. To add that, J Michael Stinson, Conoco Vice President said that the agreement was totally consistent with applicable US laws. But the Senator Alfonse D'Amato responded to the Conoco claims in his press release on March 27, 1995. He explained that owing to Iran's terrorism supportive stance, human right abuses and pursuit of obtaining weapons of mass destruction its isolation cannot be broken (Lorenz 1995: 38-99).

Mohammad Khatami

Though not able to attain its ultimate goal, the Rafsanjani presidencies had laid the ground for liberal domestic policy and a pragmatic foreign policy. It has also prepared the psychological foundation and many institutions and organizations to take the policies forward. The most important political organization which took birth during the period was the Executives of Construction which defined the aims of reform and the role private sector in the reconstruction and development of Iran. It would also be playing a significant role in the subsequent presidency of Khatami and his policy and reforms. It was launched on the eve of the 1996 parliamentary election by some cabinet ministers of Rafsanjani and high officials. The main goal and pursuit of the group was economic development of Iran and the participation and partnership of the private sector in the process. They were totally characterized by pragmatic approach without a semblance of idealism of the revolution. The group gained political ground as well and won as much as eighty seats in the 1996 Majlis election. It played a decisive role in the electoral campaign of Mohammad Khatami with their political experience and electoral skills which resulted in the landslide victory of Khatami in 1997. The vision of President Khatami was based on careful pragmatism that included the due promotion of the role of the civil society, strengthening of rule of law, economic development and integration with the world economic system and reintegration into the comity of nations (Tazmini 2010: 18). His election campaign was echoing the rule of law, respect for rights, tolerance for diverse views, as well as special attention to the needs of women and youth.

The emphasis on an opening to the outside world was an unprecedented attraction in Iran since the Revolution. The turnout was also as high as 80 percent. Khatami won 70 percent of the votes. The result was the clear indicator of the preference of Iranian public and mainly those of Iranian youths. His second term of presidency started in 2001 with many-sided enthusiasm and expectations. It inaugurated the era of discernible reforms with multiple impacts. Youth were the mainstay of Khatami's landslide victory. The political implications were significant.

The period was characterized by dialogue and cooperation with the West and the wider world. In an interview with the CNN reporter Amanpour (Jan7, 1998) President Khatami explained the significance of the dialogue of civilization. He said "in terms of dialogue of civilizations, we intend to benefit from the achievements and experiences of all civilizations, western and non-western, and to hold dialogue with

them. With our revolution, we are experiencing a new phase of reconstruction of civilization. We feel that what we seek is what the founders of the American civilization were also pursuing four centuries ago. This is why we sense an intellectual affinity with the essence of the American civilization” (CNN January 7 1998). This proposed dialogue was a call for an international public forum that very much mirrored the emerging public space in Iran. In practical terms, he was of the opinion that the paradigm would be resulting in ‘reduction in international tension as well as ‘a détente with the outside world’ (Tazmini 2010: 83).

Khatami presidency started the new era of political liberalism. The political climate was characterized by openness and popular aspirations for the first time since the revolution. Government took the path of pragmatism and allowed the freedom of press and liberal treatment of political associations. The role of the intelligence regulation was relaxed and it was ensured that democratic freedom must be in place. The local councils are constitutionally provisioned but elections were never held. The new government made the necessary arrangement and organized the elections for the local bodies. Meanwhile there was economic constraints to sustain these all programs as the prices of oil was dropping drastically. The government policies suffered owing to shortage of capital and finance. His ideas on economic front were focused. His economic advisory team was vacillating between the policy of liberalization and state-controlled options. Slowly the divide was managed in favour of liberalization. Taxation and the import rules were simplified; exchange rate was stabilized and unified. Private participation was promoted even in the field of banking and insurance. The investment fund was created out of the government revenue mainly from the oil revenue. To ensure pace to economic development privatization was encouraged and many non-performing government industries were privatized. The Revolutionary romanticism slowly was on the way out and the pragmatic economic concerns were becoming focus with the increasing moderation of government and its policies (Suwaidi 1996: 331).

President Khatami sensed the difficulties of the foreign policy and adopted a cautious and moderate approach particularly towards Israel and the issue of Palestine peace process. His reference to a dialogue of the Iranian people with the people of united states was an appreciable changing Iran’s stance towards US and possibility of talk at the government level. More notable was his outright disagreement with the fatwa of Ayatollah Khomeinin against Salaman Rushdie and he finally declared it to

be over. This action was of paramount significance and led to the resumption of relation with the European countries. Thus the Islamic Republic was boosted diplomatically that made it convenient to make economic engagement possible. Besides, to keep the diplomatic momentum on, he declared the Iran's willingness to suspend nuclear fuel enrichment. This played an important role in Iran's pursuit of reintegration into the international community by breaking the psychological barriers against Iran. These bold steps and actions played a moderating effect on the US and its approach. It became apparent when the US President, Bill Clinton in the light of the changes in Iran's policy and steps, remarked that the US was looking for 'a genuine reconciliation' with the Islamic Republic which is undergoing a positive change and pursuing reform under the new president (Brian NYT June 19, 1998).

The Iranian concern for security of the Gulf and its appropriate role gained expression in its pronouncements and the policy advocacies. Foreign Minister, Dr. Kamal Kharrazi, made the concern apparent in his speech at the Asia Society on September 28, 1998. He said that, "As the largest source of world energy the Persian Gulf is in dire need of durable peace and stability. "The security of the Gulf is vital to sustain international economic and industrial development" (Kharrazi 28 September, 1998).

The change in the official expression tone of Iran was manifest. The revolutionary rhetoric and slogans were increasingly being replaced by the calls of dialogue and cooperation both regionally and internationally. The overtures from a moderate President of Iran also drew attention in the political circle in Washington. This influence found expression when Madeleine Albright, the US secretary of states called Iran to work together for delineating "a road map leading to normal relations" (Barbara NYT June, 1998)

The new President not only distanced himself from the revolutionary voices and linkages but also denounced terrorism and any forms of violence. These were appreciably noticed by the West and created the conducive atmosphere for rapprochement and reconciliation. The Iranian public support for PLO leader Yasser Arafat rather than the more radical leaders and groups was a welcome change in the West and Washington in particular. Ms Madeleine Albright appreciated when she said, "Iranian officials welcomed Chairman Arafat to the Islamic Summit in Tehran and said that although they did not agree with the logic of peace process, they would

not seek to impose their views and would accept what the Palestinians would accept” (Albright: June 17, 1998).

The victory given the US-Iran relations attracted a fresh interest towards Iran in the US. It is apparent, given the many vital interest stake the sidelining Iran will not be beneficial for the United States. Iran possesses the second largest gas reserve and major actor in the oil sector which makes Iran central to energy security (Wright and Bakhash 1997: 125). President Khatami appreciated these remarks at highest political circles in the United States but at the same time cautioned that it must be complemented by the changes in the policy and their implementation. The Iranian president noted the US approach and appreciated the changing perceptions of the US officials . In June, 1998, Madeleine Albright had remarked about the possible road map to be drawn by the US and Iran jointly and possible resumption of relation. The remark was not followed by some concrete policy pronouncements or diplomatic action so that Iran could have responded accordingly in the direction (New York Times, September 23, 1998).

Political landscape and trend was in the positive changing pattern was manifest with the 1997 presidential election which is not only notable for the victory of Khatami but also for the defeat of the Nateq Nuri, the powerful conservative Majlis speaker. The wind of change in favour of the reformist continued and the reformists managed to win the more seats than the conservatives in the Majlis election in 2000. The reforming trend in Iran and its politics was congenial to the resolution of the disputes with the other states increasing their sense of trust and security which is an inevitable factor for the security of the Gulf (International Herald Tribune, Bangkok, Feb 18,2000). The two consecutive victory of the reformists both in the Presidential election in 1997 and the Majlis election in 2000 were very significant development which would bring about change in its domestic policies and that in turn have similar effects and expression in its foreign policy. The changes in the domestic politics throughout the decade of 1990s can be understood and analysed with the changing composition of the Iranian Majlis after every election during the period.

1992 IRAN MAJLIS ELECTION and COMPOSITION

PARTY ALLAINCE	SEATS WON	PARTY ORIENTATION
Combatant Clergy Association and Allies	150	Conservative
Combatant Clerics of Tehran and Allies	0	Reformist
Independents	120	-----
TOTAL	270	

1996 IRAN MAJLIS ELECTION and COMPOSITION

PARTY ALLAINCE	SEATS WON	PARTY ORIENTATION	REMARKS
Combatant Clergy Association and Allies	110	Conservative	-40
Combatant Clerics of Tehran and Allies	80	Reformist	+80
Executive of Construction Party	80	-----	New Party
TOTAL	270		

2000 IRAN MAJLIS ELECTION and COMPOSITION

PARTY ALLAINCE	SEATS WON	PARTY ORIENTATION	REMARKS
Combatant Clergy Association and Allies	74	Conservative	-36
Islamic Iran Participation Front and Allies	216	Reformist	+56
TOTAL	290		+20
* Independents are considered as allies as per their support			

Dieter Nohlen, Florian Gortz & Christof Hartmann (2001) Election in Asia: A Data Handbook, Vol. I

Cooperation initiative of President Khatami in the Gulf

The policy of cooperation and engagement was to remove the atmosphere of fear and build a sense of confidence in the Gulf and the states by projecting Iran's changed image in the 1990s. The Iranian military capability should be perceived as guarantor of safety and security of the region and states of the region. The atmosphere of mistrust and hostility are detrimental to both Iran and the region. Iran's Foreign Minister highlighting Iran's perspective on the Gulf security remarked that, "National interest of Iran cannot be divorced from these realities. "Thus, regional stability and

prosperity are not simply an option but an absolute necessity for Iran” (Kharrazi 28September, 1998).

The eighth summit of Organization of the Islamic Conference, 1997, was the scene of remarkable changes in Iran and its responses in the region. The policy cooperation and engagement pursued by the President Khatami was evident in its success with the impressive participation in the summit at Tehran. The unprecedented turnout and the presence of the Saudi crown prince Abdullah was an unmistakable changes in the policies of these two powerful countries in the Gulf. This atmosphere of cordial cooperation was further strengthened when the Iranian Supreme Leader said that “Iran poses no threat to any Islamic country” (Ayatollah Khamenei, December 1997). The remark of the Iranian Supreme Leader was unprecedented and therefore received warm welcome from all quarters. This was positively analysed as the possible renouncement of political rivalry and end of threat perception from Iran. The policies of Iran and its main aim under President Khatami was to bring peace in the region and ensure security and stability in the Gulf. The Iranian policy of moderation was geared to bring Iran to the centre stage of the world by reintegrating itself in the international economy and increasing participation in the international organizations particularly the UNO and the Economic Cooperation Organization (Saidel 1998-99: 421-448).

The OIC summit, 1997 provided a significant opportunity to the new President about the changed approach and policy priority of the Islamic Republic. The invitation to the Gulf States found the equivalent responses. Saudi leader started his address President Khatami as brother when he said, “ My sincere thanks and appreciation to His Excellency, brother Muhammad Khatami, for the warm welcome and generous hospitality with which we have been received since our arrival in this country” (Abdullah 1997). The political and diplomatic gap between the two important countries appeared on the horizon and Iran seemed to be on the right track of confidence building in the region .

The Foreign Minister, Kamal Kharrazi underlined the changes undergoing in Iran towards its foreign policy and the support of the people for the same. He said that, “Recent polls have shown consistently that a significant majority of Iranians strongly support the direction of our foreign policy” (Kharrazi, Kamal 28 September,1998). The policy of moderation and engagement that started by the Rafsanjani presidencies was continued by President Khatami. These policy approach

was the product of the national interest of Iran in the 1990s which is made very clear when President Khatami said that "Iran's détente policy is not at all tactical but a strategy that Iran believes that the interest of the country, region and the world is linked with stabilization and expansion of the policy" (IRNA, March 5, 2000). The major focus of Iran in 1990s are the political moderation and economic development which form the basis of its policies both domestic and foreign policies. Thus the policy of cooperation and engagement are the instrument of these policy priority and national interests during the period. The Khatami presidency was in earnest pursuit of building cooperation and confidence so that a conducive climate of regional cooperation and engagement with the rest of the world can be achieved. Iran used all the opportunities to point out that the region must progress from process of building trust for cooperation in the region which is a necessary condition for durable peace in the Gulf so that regional stability could lead to the prosperity of all. Therefore establishment of a relationship of cooperation with the neighbouring GCC Gulf states has been the central focus of the Iranian government under President Khatami. In this pursuit Iran prime priority was to engage the major states in the region, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and even Turkey. Iran, however, gave utmost priority to Saudi Arabia where the relation has been characterised by rivalry in the region and beyond, because given the shared interests and the security stakes in the region involves pragmatic sense of partnership. The revolutionary Iran with its slogans and policy pronouncements had created a huge amount of misperception towards Iran in the region particularly in Saudi Arabia. The tone and slogans of the Islamic republic under Ayatollah Khomeini towards Saudi Arabia were very hostile and debilitating. The relationship was further complicated with the Saudi support to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war which had very devastating impacts on Iran. The demonstration and protest staged by the Iranian pilgrims and the responses of the Saudi government made the situation on a very hostile path.

The active diplomatic offensive produced congenial environment since the 1997, OIC summit in Tehran. The Foreign Minister, Kamal Kharrazi remarked that, "On the bilateral level, Iranian- Arab relations are improving. Our relations with all Persian Gulf Arab states are evolving to a solid bond, in line with the strong wish and desire of our nations. Our ties with Saudi Arabia are serving particularly to strengthen security and stability in the Gulf and the Muslim world at large" (IRNA March 5, 2000).

Resolution of the disputes and conflicts through peaceful methods in the region it is essential to have a better relation between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The most important difficult part of the difference between the two countries is in the ideological orientations. In post revolution Iran there has been consistent efforts of the Iranian establishment to demonstrate its contribution to Islam and its culture. It has been seen by Saudi Arabia as challenge to its standing as leader of Islam and the Islamic world. Therefore it has led to a leadership competition between the two countries in religio-cultural aspects of Islam. The policies and expression of moderation on the part of Iran has brought the perception fear down but the ideological rivalry remains intact. The visit of President Khatami to Saudi Arabia in 1999 has played significant role in bringing the two countries closer with better understanding of the shared interests and benefits of their cooperation. The Khatami administration's focus on the relations in the Gulf and pursuing of cooperation with the states in the region has created a congenial environment for a shared participation of the states in the Gulf towards the security of the region. The Iranian foreign minister has stated that "active pursuit of this policy priority has resulted in a gradual but steady transformation of Iran's relations with its major partners in the neighborhood, region and across the globe" (Kharrazi, Kamal 28 September, 1998).

The policies of Iran in the 1990s which was gained pace and sharp focus under President Khatami considerably filled the yawning between Iran and its Gulf neighbours since 1979 revolution. These diplomatic and policy pronouncement was followed by high-level visits. The visit of Khatami to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states in the region was part of the processes and to a large extent was able to heal the wounds of the past. This is evident from the Saudi king who described the visit of the Iranian President as ground-breaking which would pave the way for closer relationship with Iran. It was further said that this gesture of Iran is cordially appreciated and the Saudis were eager to cooperate which is in the best interests of the people of the Islamic world. This visit and the Saudi response is a very significant step towards peace and security in the region. The Saudi government decorated the President Khatami with the highest award of the kingdom. The Iranian president also proposed a joint defense agreement which was seen as a welcome move. Besides, the visit led to the start of a new consulate in Riyadh. These development were surely signs of a turning point in the relationship of the powerful states in the Gulf which is

crucial for the security in this strategic region (Saad, Al-Ahram Weekly, 20-26 May 1999).

The growing closeness gained added pace when in February, 2000 Ayatollah Khomeini was invited by the king of Saudi Arabia for the pilgrimage of Hajj. The invitation received due response from the Ayatollah and the relationship between the two most important states in the region started a new beginning. The prospect of the rapprochement enhanced the possibility of peace in the region. The issues of disputes in the region particularly the ownership claims of Iran and UAE over the islands of Abu Musa, the two Tunbs continues to vex the process of genuine rapprochement among the states in the region. Iran has taken very aggressive position and action towards the islands in the 1990s to establish its military position and civil authority on the islands (Teitelbaum 1998). Besides, there are other issues of disputes and disagreements also which do not allow the relation to reach to its logical culmination. Iran is firmly opposed to the Saudi role and support to the Taliban in Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia is a very close ally of US and the military presence of the latter is in contrast with the Iranian policy of exclusion of external powers from the region and considered it as an obstacle to the regional peace and stability. The situation is further complicated with the fact that Iran does not have relation with the United States. The proposal of dialogue of people of Iran with the people of United States by President Khatami has failed take any concrete policy pronouncements of action . The US-Iran relations remains characterized by mistrust and enmity. In such scenario it appears that Iran's relations with Saudi Arabia is dependent on the content and direction of Iran-US relations. Thus there is a need to examine these three countries and their interests in the region and analysis of their relations in relation to one another. The bilateral relations between Iran and US would remove the suspicion Saudi Arabia towards Iran and Iran's towards Saudi Arabia. A pragmatic understanding and a prudent adjustment of this extraneous factor of US is crucial for better relations among the states of the region and its security.

Khatami's Reforms and the Hardliners

The process of pragmatism and moderation in Iran under Rafsanjani and Khatami had been the target of the conservative forces and hardliners who have considerable clout in the important institutions of the country- the Revolutionary Guards, the security establishment and Majlis. The conservatives are vehemently opposed to the reforms in

the domestic arena and moderation in foreign policy particularly towards the United States (Freedman 1999). Several reformist newspapers (Salam Daily, Khordad,Zan, Hoviat-i-Khish and Neshat) were closed down. The factional rivalry played the role towards the ban of the reformist newspapers by hardline judiciary. Many important persons who helped the election victory of President Khatami were targeted and trapped into false cases of corruption. The most publicized was the case of Tehran Mayor, Gholamhossein Karbaschi.

The role of the mayor was crucial for the victory of Khatami in 1997. This victory was a massive defeat for the conservatives and wanted to fix it with their action against Khatami supporters and his support base. Gholamhossei Karbschi was allegedly was charged with corruption. The case assumed huge political battle between the conservative and the liberal elements in the country. He was sentenced for imprisonment of two years .Many supporters and close members of Khatami attracted numerous troubles including attempts of assassinations. The conservative used the Supreme Leader to hold the policies of President Khatami particularly moderation towards Israel and the US. The situation continued to disturb the government policies. The Majlis election 2000 gave majority to the liberal coalition.

The balance of numbers in the Majlis created a sense of hope among the reformists. At the same time it produced an added anxiety in the conservative section as the took it as overall reduction of their hold across the system with the possibility of liberal press, cultural modernization, downgraded revolutionary guards and a reformist judiciary would undermine the content of revolution in the social fabric and political system of the country. Most objectionable was the limits on the supreme leader's authority and position in the system of governance of the Islamic republic. Within a span of three months the reformist received the wrath of the judiciary when it very systematically framed those media organizations and around twenty publications met their closer. But the process was brought to standstill as the Guardian Council rejected the oversight authority of the parliament over any institution like judiciary, national radio and defense forces that fall under the authority of the Vilayat-i-Faqih. The efforts of the Majlis to pass a more liberal press law was stopped by the injunctions of the Supreme leader Then followed the arrest of journalists and intellectuals who had been the advocates and supporters of the reform process. President Khatami and his government was made virtually helpless to protect them. Then followed events of open clashes between the protesting students of Tehran university and the security

forces. These all are the very clear indicator of the fact that the winds of reform were on hold and were not allowed to move in the desired direction for the time being.

US Concerns and Policy

Since World War II the Gulf has always been an area of strategic interests in the foreign policy of the United States. This strategic concern has assumed centrality in the post-cold war period. The aftermath of the Kuwait war had created a very vulnerable situation in the Gulf. Iran, as a major power of the region, has always claimed that the security of this strategic semi-enclosed body of water should be left to local powers, now felt encircled by the United States and became apprehensive of this huge military especially naval presence. The United States did not hesitate to show anger and discontent on various occasions against Iranian authorities. This had made the situation, very tense between the two countries, and it even became more unbearable. Iranian decision makers became quite aware of the gravity of the situation and began contemplating ways and means to attenuate the sensitive atmosphere overshadowing the security of the Gulf region. To understand Iranian view on the matter of the Gulf security, one should comprehend the very basic roots of the revolution and also the circumstances that led to the rise of fundamental differences between the two countries.

In brief, the United States, which historically had a low military profile and naval presence in the region for many years, at the beginning of the 1990's, right after the second Gulf crisis in the beginning of the 1990s started to build-up its forces in the region. Though the US presence and the build-up was for temporary missions, the increasing US presence became more visible and therefore an annoying factor for Iranian authorities and other Gulf States. The Americans have created a web of security agreements with the Arab Gulf states and promoted the sales of the weapons and military devices to the Gulf states. Besides, it has enhanced and consolidated its hold in the Gulf with increasing numbers of US base in the region, strategic positioning of its forces and defense system. The positioning of the Fifth Fleet in Bahrain has made it clear that US is determined to deter any troubles to its interests in the region and more particularly containment of Iraq and Iran which it considers as main threat to the peace and security of the region (Suwaidi1996:333). More than this, US security concern of the Gulf involves its concern of access to oil and its secured passage in the Gulf.

This was further complicated by many other issues and policies of US in the Gulf , military presence and alliance with the Arab Gulf monarchy and keeping them always against Iranian perspective of the Gulf and it's security arrangement and rejection of the Iranian regime and the democratic efficacy of the Iranian political system and process. The Clinton administration has labeled the Iranian government as a “backlash” state along with Iraq and Libya as governed by individual and political regimes that are irreconcilable with the US conception of the ideal of governance. Reacting to this denigrating of its political system and process the Iranian public opinion and government rhetoric continue to demand the frequent and vehement condemnation of United States for the foreseeable future which fuel the public opinion in the US to condemn and punish Iran.

In the post –cold war period, the West Asia Peace process has continued to pit Iran and US in the opposing camps. Iran is opposed to the Peace Process, which it considers as unequal and based on the beneficial argument of Israel and supports the Lebanon-based Hezbollah forces opposed to any negotiation with Israel. These Iranian positions on the important issues of US West Asia policy and engagement makes the US suspecting Iran as inimical to its interests in the region. This has produced a fast stream of academic and public debate in the interface of the media, which is painting the views of emerging pattern of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. Such an academic and public debate has been responsible for the creation of false ideological perceptions and this completion has created a wedge between Islam and the West. This twisted misinterpretation has been used to justify the policy of ‘Dual Containment’ of Iraq and Iran (Ibid).

With the death of Khomeini, the Iranian claim to ideological and political leadership of the Muslim world has been sapped considerably. Political factionalism has reduced the strength and loudness of the claim. Meanwhile, in the post-Khomeini period is also a pragmatic and reformist political group is emerging in the Iranian political scene and assuming considerable prominence in the popular imagination and support. Many revolutionary stances have been scrapped especially like the politico-religious noise about Satanic Verses and Salman Rushdie, destruction of Israel, export of revolution, *etc* has been overshadowed by pragmatic socio-economic programs which have been adopted. Revolutionary rhetoric against United States continues to be used as a tool for political legitimacy of the Islamic Republic. Undoubtedly the tone and pitch of opposition is perceptibly declining. United States in the post-cold

war seemed to be confident and to intent to bring the desired outcome of the many lingering issues of international significance like West Asia peace where it found Iran as nagging obstacle. As a consequence, Iran has emerged as a force and political system opposed to the US vital interests and political pursuit. The US policy of isolating Iran has created an integrated voice of all in Iran across political divide as unified political consciousness against all pressures. This makes the Iranian approach towards nuclear capability an urgent option to deter any such pressures which is able to impact on national security, regional security and Iran's role in the process of international relations and constraining it's economy and also it's due role in the regional security. In 1992, Iran has made an agreement with China on nuclear energy cooperation and the latter under the agreement would give the former a 300 megawatt pressurized water reactor (al-Alkim 2000:82).

Iran asserts nuclear option is essential to reduce its dependence on oil and making it available for export. Iran had started the Bushehr nuclear power plant with the assistance of Germany, way back , in the 1970s. It is argued by Iran that being a NPT (Nuclear proliferation Treaty), it is allowed access to technology .The population of Iran is rising fast and it needs energy at the commensurate faster pace. Hence it has started option of civil nuclear energy to satisfy the increasing demands. The U S and allies developed coordinated opposition to Iran's nuclear pursuit and its hold in the international organizations to checkmate any Iranian moves and actions in this direction. The US attempt to stop the transfer nuclear technology from Russia and the funding from the countries like Japan for the construction of hydroelectric dam is perceived by the Iranians as strangulating Iran economically and maligning it's international image especially it's fruitful and beneficial relations with countries of the world.

Iran and other Arab Gulf States

The United states and its allies are perturbed with the growing confidence of Iran and its pursuit of supremacy in the region (Knapp 2010:49). Notwithstanding, Iran's policy of confidence building towards littoral states of the Gulf during the 1990s to some extent, has been successful. So far as the United States is concerned the normalization seemed still far. The seizure of an Iranian merchant ship under the pretext of search for hostile destination and other incidents in the Gulf has created a situation of threat and suspicion, which keep on accentuating tense relations between

the two. This surely undermined Iran's policy of confidence-building towards other States of the Gulf. But the majority of the states in the region including Iran is the OPEC members which keeps their interests in the mutual benefits. The population of these OPEC countries makes the stature of Iran significant and important. The table below is of immense relevance to understand the situation.

OPEC members Facts and Figures,2014

Countries	Area in 1000 sq km	Population in million
Iran	1.648	77.336
Iraq	438	36.005
Kuwait	18	4.092
Qatar	12	2.226
Saudi Arabia	2150	30770
UAE	84	8.528

OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin 2015

There are a number of security dilemmas among the Arab states in the Gulf. The 1990s has witnessed the increasing build-up of the American forces since the Kuwait crisis. The positioning of the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain has finally made the US presence in the region to the unprecedented levels (Knapp 2010:49). The American policy and its increasing presence and expanding intervention has produced the simmering's of disapprovals in the Arab Gulf states. Though Saudi-Arabia is the most important traditional ally of the US in the region has started expressing discontent against America in the wake of the US intervention in Iraq. These changing conditions in moderating the Saudi perception and approach toward Iran are signs of growing pragmatic approach towards the security of the region. The United States changed its stance towards the Saudis owing to its suspicious Al Qaeda links. Iran appears to be pragmatic as it has taken the US military presence a fiat accompli. Still it seemed difficult to comprehend, the future pattern of the Iran-US relations while their interests in the Gulf and in its stability is paramount. But one thing is certain that the traditional regimes of the Gulf, which once the feared the Islamic revolution in Iran which pushed them towards the Americans for protection, now feel much more insecure by the US policy of Democracy Promotion in the region. Iran's policies of constructive engagement in the region and Saudi Arabia concern for security can be better understood by the pattern of their defense

expenditure during the period. If Iraq's defense expenditure is also considered and analysed, the threat perceptions and the security requirement and the behavior of the concerned states can provide a better picture and understanding. The chart below highlights the same.

Table Persian Gulf defence expenditure in the 1990s (\$ billion)

Countries/Year	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999
Iran	4.3	2.0	3.0	4.7	5.7
Iraq	7.5	2.6	1.3	1.3	1.5
Saudi Arabia	35.4	16.5	17.2	18.2	21.9

Source: IISS, *The Military Balance*

CONCLUSION

Although the Iranian policy of rapprochement with the Gulf littoral States, has so far not reached to some major success towards the security in the region but based on the present trends, the growing closeness and engagement on matters of common interests, certain pattern seems plausible. The growing regional inhibition at least, at the popular level towards the American presence and interventions would play significant role in the narrowing down the gap between the Iranian regime and the Arab littoral States. This growing pattern of behavior points to the features and nature of sub-regional thinking and security. This would surely usher in regional security and stability in the Gulf. This, in turn, would lead to the security in the larger region of West Asia and beyond. Iran's growing relations with European Union and Russia and China makes the tough stance of US gradually untenable. As a result, the United States appears to be silent of the dual containment and evinces interests to resume relation with Iran. There is a policy of limited rapprochement between Iran and the US but in the public pronouncements and general expressions there is an emerging sign of positive approach and symbolic actions on the both side of US and Iran. The response of Iran during the Kuwait war with its strategic neutrality and endorsement of 598 UNSCR have surely attracted the US attention towards growing responsible behavior after decades of revolutionary rhetoric and pronouncements. Throughout the decade Iran has not reacted sharply to the US actions in Iraq and the region except some humanitarian and morally bound expectations from the parties involved in the crisis in the wake of health issues of Iraqis and the children in particular owing to the sanction in that country.

Beyond the disputed matters and controversial issue between Iran and the Arab littoral states, the former could interact with the Gulf States on many areas of common interests. The period is dotted with such gestures, expressions and official visits from both the sides. These courses of actions can lead to amicable relations in the Gulf, which could promote the security of the region for the littoral States as well as extra-regional parties. The mutual entente on matters of maritime boundary delimitations, regional coordination and cooperation on the matters of maritime environment of confidence building through gradual strengthening social, cultural, economic and strategic ties among the regional states would take the region towards greater cooperation, stability and regional security. The pattern of events, policies and actions in the 1990s are moving in the mending mode and amicable process. These are the syndrome which are capable to best serve the Gulf littoral states and interests of the powers ,West Asia and the wider world.

CHAPTER 4

Shift in the Threat Perception of the Arab Gulf States

The Gulf remains the area of strategic importance despite rapid changes in the region and beyond. The Islamic Republic of Iran which enjoys a strategic status due to its location and values is recognised as an important regional power (Dehshiri and Majidi 2008-09:101). Most of the factors for Gulf security remain the same but some recent happenings in the region and the rest of the world have certain perceptible changes in the interest-equation of the actors and the stake-holders of the region and the external actors. The 1990s began with many incidents having considerable bearing on Iran and the region such as death of Ayatollah Khomeini, cessation of Iraq-Iran war, end of Cold War, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and consequent Operation Desert Storm, the Arab-Israel peace process and globalization. These all have reset the new power equation in Iran that have influenced the opinions of the Gulf States and also about their stakes in security as well as towards one another. In this context, the perceptions of the Arab littoral states about their relations and security of the Gulf has received significant and notable attention. In the wake of Kuwaiti crisis, their perspective on the security evinces shifts of substantive significance. The actual threat to the region in the 1990s crisis has brought the region to the centre-stage of international concern and the littoral states are in the process of introspection and taking stock of their stakes, role and possible arrangements for the security of the region.

At the outset, the Iranian Revolution changed the balance of equation and the security perspective and arrangements in the Gulf. Since then the security of the region has been mainly based on the interaction of several complex factors having bearing on the region. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the US policy based on Carter Doctrine, Iran-Iraq war and the subsequent formation of the Gulf Cooperation Council and upgradation of Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) are other significant events impinging on Gulf security. These internal, regional and the international factors concerning the region characterized the fluid security of the Gulf. The threat perception was therefore marked by confusing and irresolvable variations. The level of differing opinions can be gauged with fact that every stake-holders had

their own opinion. The Arab regimes saw the threat mainly in the Iranian Revolution and its radical slogans and ideals and also the Arab-Israel dispute and Iran-Iraq war. Iran perceived the threat in terms of the Super Power intervention in the region and their alliance with the Arab littoral states which were seen as the corrupt and conservative regimes of the region. The western perspective was mainly centred on the Cold war syndrome with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the pattern is amply exemplified by the Carter Doctrine (Darius 1984:1). Notwithstanding these fact, the Gulf states are very significant for the world economy. Despite their small sizes their economic strength is very high. The figure below shows the economy of the states in terms of their GDP.

Gulf States Gross Domestic Product in Current Price (USD Billion)

Countries/Year	1997	1998	1999	2000
Bahrain	7.316	6.994	7.581	9.061
Iran	106.351	97.869	104.656	96.44
Iraq	0	0	0	0
Kuwait	30.35	25.944	30.123	37.721
Oman	15.232	13.393	15.002	18.91
Qatar	11.298	10.255	12.393	17.76
Saudi Arabia	170.878	151.955	167.053	194.808
UAE	76.202	73.394	82.865	103.893

Source: IMF Data, *World Economic Outlook Database*, October, 2014

Changes towards the close of 1980s

The situation made significant turnaround towards the close of the 1980s with the events- internal, regional and extra-regional with huge bearing on the Gulf. The Iran-Iraq war gave way to the normalcy with acceptance of ceasefire under the UNSC Resolution 598 in 1988. The withdrawal of USSR from Afghanistan eased the Cold war pattern in the Gulf, which was further lightened by the demise and disintegration of the USSR, *i.e.* the end of Cold war. Thus, these momentous developments all impacted considerably the threat perception of the Arab littoral states and their approach towards the regional security and stability. Ayatollah Khomeini's death and change of guard in Iran perceptibly mitigated the revolutionary content and tone of the Islamic Republic. The revolutionary focus of foreign policy based on the tenets of 'Neither East nor West' was losing the support and credibility and in the changing

context Iran adopted a new foreign policy vision of 'Both North and South' (Ramazani 1992).

The post-Khomeini Iranian regime in its moderation towards the GCC states has made a dent in the older threat perception of the Arab littoral states and their approach towards Islamic Republic. Iran had formally accepted the UNSCR 598 on July 17,1988 when it informed the Secretary General, United Nations in this regard describing the move as a necessity to ensure safety of people, bring peace and security in the region and the wider world (United Nations Resolution: 598). The unconditional Iranian acceptance of the UNSC Resolution is the turning point in the Iranian relation with its estranged Arab littoral states. These states, till then, were suspicious of the Revolutionary Iranian regime and sceptical about its approach towards them. Rather they were scarred of the revolutionary slogans of death to Sheikdom and export of revolutions in the region. The Iranian acceptance of the UN Resolution marked by the maturity on the part of the leadership as Iran was drifting fast into diplomatic isolation in the region and beyond. The Commander -in -Chief made it clear that the Iranian approach was at fault and needed practical introspection and fresh thrust of policy to be pursued by Iran to break its growing and debilitating isolation which had crippled Iran economically and arrested it's development and due place in the comity of nations. This realization made it's headway in the perception of the circles of policy making and led to increasing moderation in its policy pronouncements.

Iran's diplomatic offensive in GCC

Iran now pursued diplomatic offensive for constructive engagement with the Arab littoral states. Decades of grievances were being buried with the earnest practical needs of the hour and in consonance with the changing contours of the regional security which entailed security for all with broad based cooperation. With this Iran launched its diplomatic exchanges with constructive approach and the pronouncements. The Iranian diplomats in the region were charged with clearing the clouds of doubts in the political circles of the region and lay the ground of trust and constructive cooperation with them. Iran's acting foreign minister, Ali Mohammad Besharati visited UAE, Oman and the other Gulf states with a delegation and handed

over messages from President Rafsanjani on the regional developments as well as Iran's stance towards UNSC Resolution No. 598.¹ Several high-level foreign ministry officials also visited other Arab states to work for normalization of Iran's ties (Pasha 1988: 1042-43).

The Gulf littoral states were largely concerned with Iran's intention of exporting of the revolution in the region. President Rafsanjani with its policy of moderation and reform made the intent of Iran clear that Iran is not concerned with the export of Islamic revolution with force and intervention in the region. These political expressions at the highest level of the Islamic Republic were to ease the suspicious relations of Iran with the Arab states in the region. To cap it all, emphasis on policy of moderation and constructive diplomacy paved the way towards improvement in the Iran-Arab ties. The Iranian policy posture had some corresponding reaction and expression on the side of the Arab states. Still Iran's policy could not make considerable headway and remained in the sidelines of the consideration of Arab mainly the littoral states so far as its intention in the region and security is concerned.² The Iranians remained committed to a peaceful foreign policy towards the Gulf States and the stability of the region. They maintained peace with Iraq and highlighted its importance to others in the region to ensure peace and regional security. Even then crisis pattern in the region kept on widening and which resulted in the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Iran's ties with the Gulf States made significant headway after 1988, which were strengthened by exchanges between the two countries and channel of communication at the highest levels. The pattern rapidly improved relations between the countries. This syndrome of relations between the two regional hegemon the Arab Gulf states found it prudent to normalise relations with Iran as well as ensuring it the place of importance in the region and the security arrangement of the region. Bahrain had the view that GCC relations with Iran would have the positive pattern in the future and therefore were at work towards mending its policy priority towards

¹ These all diplomatic efforts made the Arab littoral states significantly sensitive towards Iran's changing attitude and moderation from its revolutionary slogans which would change the approach of the GCC states towards Iran in the wake of regional changes after Iraqi attack on Kuwait which would make the GCC states vulnerable.

² The Suspicion is deep-seated, rivalry of Saudi-Iranian rivalry for leadership, territorial disputes like Abu Musa and Tunb island with UAE and US interest in the region and it's support is more reliable in the wake of the increased vulnerability in the region after Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Iran. In the same vein, the other GCC states also were intent to have relations with the Islamic republic. The Iranian efforts towards moderation and the voices of the peaceful existence and constructive engagement with the states of the region had a slow response. Still the Iranian unilateral and consistent efforts in the direction had takers of several kinds and numerous complementary voices as well. Iran's Gulf policy has recently become moderate and pragmatic in orientation. In large part, it is because of Tehran's belated recognition that it cannot radically alter the region's political landscape. The major thrust of Iran is pursuit of cooperation with neighbouring Gulf States and the security of the region based on the national interests of one and all in the region (Pipes and Clawson 1992: 124-42).

When the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein made sudden peace proposal to Iran the other states in region tried to cut this overture which would have been very detrimental for them and their security. On August 22nd 1990 Sheikh Sabah, the foreign minister of the invaded Kuwait visited Tehran. He carried the repentance of the Kuwait regime for their mistaken support for Saddam Hussein against Iran during the war between the two. The message was directly conveyed to the Iranian foreign minister, Ali Akbar Velayati and President Rafsanjani. This visit was followed by similar visits from other GCC states to Iran. All these visits were clear indication of the Arab Gulf states concerns of not making Iran react against them owing to their past stand against Iran during the Iran-Iraq war. These indicate the shared concerns of all in the region and regional security. Iran also responded in the pragmatic manner and put aside all the past actions and expressions of animosity. Therefore such overtures and high-level visits led to the meeting of the GCC foreign minister with the Iranian foreign minister, Ali Akbar Velayati in New York on September 29th, 1990 in Iran office at UNO. All this resulted in the normalisation on November 19 1990 of relation between Iran and Kuwait and Fawzi al-Jasji was appointed as the new Ambassador of Kuwait in Iran.

To boost of confidence among the states in the region, Iran conducted a joint military exercise codenamed as 'Piroozi' in December,1990 which included many thousand troops, many helicopters and dozens of warships and speedboats in the spread over whole area of the Gulf. This was followed by the diplomatic offensive of Iran in the capitals of the Gulf states. The diplomatic visits were led by the Iranian foreign minister, Ali Akbar Velayati and an atmosphere of trust was set in motion.

This visit was well-timed in the wake of the annual session of the GCC .There was a talk on making GCC a seven member group obviously with the inclusion of Iran. Rafsanjani opted for “Active Neutrality”, to maximise benefits for Iran and its national interests keeping Iran’s stance of not taking the sides of either party Iraq or USA. This is more apparent from its condemnation of Iraqi invasion and that Iraq must withdraw unconditionally from the country (Suwaidi 1996:92).

The close of 1990 witnessed an unprecedented turnaround in the politics of the Gulf states. The annual summit of the GCC from 22nd to 25th December, 1990 was marked by an astonishing action of the GCC when it invited the Nasrollah Mirzaiee, the Ambassador of Iran to Qatar. The Doha summit also assumes importance as for the inclusion of Iran in the deliberations and the ‘Relations with Iran’ was given a importance in the Communique of the Summit. It stressed for the need of improving relations with Iran based on the policy and commitment of peaceful neighbours with trust and mutually reinforcing respect for sovereignty of one another. Thus it was the very conducive opportunity of Iran’s reconciliation with the GCC and therefore the Doha summit, 1990 can be regarded as a new beginning in the Gulf and its security. There was an inevitable contradiction in the Iranian goal and that of the GCC states. Iranian ambition of a regional power in the Gulf has been cause of suspicion and consternation in the region. In the 1990s Iran did not want to continue with its image of suspicion in the Gulf capitals and therefore it maintained its strategic neutrality during the Kuwait war. This was surely a timely message of the changed Iranian approach of regional unity and regional solution of regional problems and the proposal of regional security arrangement in the region evoked some positive responses and complementary high level visits were made by the Gulf Arab leaders to Iran with positive approach to the Iranian proposals. The year 1990 is an important in this regard when UAE, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait leaders made visits to Iran with the positive messages from their respective Governments. In September 1990, Foreign Affairs Minister went to Iran and carried the UAE President Shaikh Zayed’s message to his Iranian counterpart, Hashmi Rafsanjani. It was followed by the foreign minister of Oman who carried the message from Sultan Qaboos to his counterpart in Tehran.

The situation seemed to be conducive for the Iranian approach and these visits surely boosted to the direction. These visits were the platform where all issues

concerning the Arab Gulf states and Iran in the context of its contemporary crisis and possible security arrangements were discussed with references to Iranian positions and role in the region. These visits were sure to bring results to the Iranian stance in the context of the region.

The other important visit was that of the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, which was mainly based on the spiralling crisis in the Gulf and the possible role of Iran in the crisis with reference to the future relationship with the Gulf states. Tehran responded to the visits in such a way to their visitors that Iran had a natural role in the region and any arrangement of security of any reckoning without Iran is neither possible nor practical. All these visits were described as constructive by the concerned states and Iran welcomed all their suggestions and propositions but found their desire for Iranian participation along with the western powers and their forces as opposed to their interests and the policies. Tehran emphasized that only regional political will and defence mechanism can ensure the security and stability in the region. Iran's Gulf policy had thus become moderate and pragmatic in orientation, in large part because of Tehran's belated recognition that it cannot radically alter the region's political landscape (Milani 1994: 328).

In September 1990, the Foreign Minister of Iran, Mr. Velayati met the GCC ministers in New York, USA and discussed issues of collective concern in the region and the matters of their policy priority and prospects of cooperative relations among the GCC states and the Islamic Republic. More significant was the meeting of Iranian foreign minister, Ali Akbar Velayati and his Saudi counterpart that discussed their bilateral issues in areas of disagreements and the ways to smoothen them and strike a new course based on mutual interest and the reinforcing benefits for both the countries at the same time making the region secure and stable. The talks were frank and transparent needs and interest of the parties. Iran was willing to proceed for all the matters involving the region but was committed to regional arrangement and the regional solution and vociferous against the presence and involvement of the foreign powers and their forces.

Iran and smaller GCC states

Tehran pursued its effort at improving relations with its smaller neighbours even after its relation with Saudi Arabia deteriorated (Christin: 2003). With this, the pace of progress towards normalization of relation of Iran with the GCC states was not in consonance with the urgency of the crisis and the then expectation of the former that Iran should participate in the coalition of forces which includes the Western powers mainly the US against Iraq. But these diplomatic encounters and expression and discussions were significantly instrumental in clearing the fears and doubts of the Gulf States. Rafsanjani opted for what Jamal Al Suwaidi calls “Active Neutrality” in order to reap the maximum benefits for Iran and its interests without taking the side of the US or Iraq (Suwaidi 1996:92). Iran remained consistent with support for the peaceful and regional solution of the problems of the region including the issue of Iraq. This policy content, formulations and timely expression by the Iranian establishment made significant impact on the views and approaches of the GCC states and seemed enthusiastic to normalize the relations with Tehran. The Doha summit of the GCC (1990) was the place where the voices of normalization with Iran found profound voices and support.

This support for Iranian policies at Doha were adequately received by Tehran with complementary welcome note and appreciation with further clarification on cooperation, engagement and the shared responsibility for the security of the region and prosperity. Iran was opposed as also alarmed at the presence of the Western forces, their plans in Iraqi imbroglio and its impending implications for the security of the region and Iran in particular. Iran was concerned that western presence and designs were at loggerheads with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the region as well as stability of the region. Besides, Iran was unequivocal for not only the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait but also towards the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq as well. Dismemberment of Iraq would have dangerous implications and consequences for the whole region and its security, as it would disturb the political equilibrium in the region. GCC sensitivity to Iranian concerns was reflected by a desire for closer ties with Iran, which was mentioned repeatedly in the GCC ministerial communiqué. At the December (22-25) 1990 GCC Summit in Doha, Oman’s Sultan Qaboos had been charged with promoting a dialogue with Iran as part

of his responsibilities as head of the “security committee” designed to formulate the GCC’s future security requirements (Ayalon 1991: 145).

All these remained as an issue of high concern in the political circle in Tehran and almost all the capitals of the region and situation continued to drift towards the crisis and eventually led to the invasion of Iraq by the western coalition forces under the leadership of the US. Iran remained consistent with its policy of neutrality and did not participate in the invasion. Still it maintained that Iraq must abide by the resolution of the UN Security Council. The situation was quite fluid and the GCC states were sceptical of Iran’s policy pronouncement of neutrality and adherence to it. Many doubts voices were expressed in the public domain as well. The most notable is that of the Foreign Minister of Kuwait who remarked that Kuwait has good relations with Iran. Iran has assured that they would maintain their neutrality and would not make an intervention in the war process. The statement contained some scepticism about the Iranian intention concerning its neutrality.

Despite scepticism and uncertainty on the part of some GCC states, Iran maintained the professed neutrality with due spirit of its policy towards the region. This surely enhanced the image of Iran in the regional states and seemed that Iran was able to end its revolutionary isolation and find a place in the security arrangement of the region at the end of the war. The opinions of the Arab states in the wake of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and perceptible decline of revolutionary overtones of Iran was on way to ensuring Iran a position of importance and responsibility in the security and stability of the region. The matter was found significant mention and consideration in the Damascus Declaration which represented the Arab solution to the Gulf security predicament (Suwaidi 1996: 142).

The Saudi response was important as a large and important Arab country in the region. Many a time the Saudi government came with such remark as the revolutionary threats of Iran of the yester-years has subsided in the recent past and described Iran as sister Muslim country. On the bilateral level, Saudi Arabia and Iran exchanged high level visits following restored diplomatic relations between them

(Ayalon 1991:145). These changes, though not very substantial, carried significance given the rivalry and suspicion since the Iranian Revolution.

The Iraqi crisis was doubly dangerous for Iran.³ Iran used the crisis, however, towards its confidence-building process in Gulf region with its steadfast commitment to peaceful co-existence and cooperation in the region. The Iraqi misadventure and the parallel Iranian commitment to neutrality transformed the antagonistic basis of relation of Iran with the Gulf Arab states into accommodation and cooperation. The latter came to perceive Iran as an effective counterweight to Iraq in the Persian Gulf region. The non-interventionist and neutralist stance of Iran made the Gulf Arab states to no more rely on the Iraq as protector in the region. However, these states were not so assured of their capabilities to defend themselves on their own and not ready, therefore, to break with their military alliance with the Western countries. The issue of continued US-Gulf states alliance tends to complicate the Iran-Gulf states normalization process. Arab states were open to Iranian participation in any Gulf security arrangement. Iran was, however, opposed to the participation and engagement of extra-regional power in such arrangement. Iran was firmly poised with the policy of regional arrangement without external factors.

Iran and GCC in post-Kuwait crisis

The Iraqi adventurism in Kuwait raised the regional profile of Iran and brought the importance of its stabilizing influence in the region. Iranian support for the UNSC resolution on Iraq and pragmatic neutrality ameliorated its international standing. Despite Iran's significant diplomatic achievement during the Kuwait crisis, the war in 1991 and the subsequent developments in the region forced a number of uncomfortable policy decision on Iran. The old '6+2' (the GCC), Egypt and Syria Arab configuration, intended to provide security in the Gulf was revived in March 1993. Iran saw the Arab states design of Arabizing the Gulf and its security by sidelining Iran. It appeared to be apparent that in the post- crisis arrangement Iran would not find the place rather the Arab Gulf states were in search of a counterweight to Iranian rising position in the region. Iran was perturbed with the impending

³ It made the GCC states more suspicious about the intention of big and powerful states like Iran which would make Iran constructive diplomacy difficult in the region and the crisis resulted in the massive intervention of external powers which is very upsetting for Iran approach of regional solution of regional problems and disputes and regional arrangement of security in the region.

deployment of Egyptian and Syrian military in the Gulf. Iran given its long-standing interest in the Gulf assumed the development as attack on its direct interest in the region of the Gulf.

The security of the Gulf and unhindered Iranian access to it, form a major element of Iranian regional policy (Afrasiabi 1994: 155). Iran's diplomatic achievement of winning cooperation of the Gulf States started melting down soon after the Iraqi crisis. The early enthusiasm of Kuwait, Oman and the Saudi Arabian and other GCC voices of normalization with Iran was gradually replaced by scepticism and decline so far as the issue of Iranian participation in the Gulf security arrangement is concerned. Nevertheless, 39th Ministerial Council meeting of the GCC ministers reiterated their eagerness to find a common platform for constructive cooperation between the GCC and Iran. (Pasha 2000: 140) They also looked forward to the beginning of a stage of cooperation that serves the common interests of their peoples and to ways of strengthening prosperity and stability in the region.

The Kuwait Crisis brought about a new situation.⁴ In 1991, Syria and Egypt were enthusiastic about tying up with the GCC (revival of the GCC+2) for the security arrangement in the Gulf. This emerging alliance was apparently against Iranian approach and interests in the Gulf. The issue produced obvious consternation in the Iranian leaders but the implementation suffered setback and differences occurred and soon the alliance failed to materialize. Iran used its contacts in the region and relations with the Saudi Arabia put on the track of normalization. Ali Akbar Velayati, the Iranian Foreign Minister visited Riyadh and had constructive discussion with his Saudi counterpart and the issue of Hajj was resolved and the diplomatic contacts were put on track. Despite these signs of normalization, Iran was not considered for any arrangement of the Gulf security. Iran kept on reminding the Arab states about its seriousness and fallacy of any Gulf security without Iran and dangerous implications of their alliance with the United States and other western countries.

Iran's approach towards the various issue of Gulf security remained cautious and maintained its call of cooperation and coexistence in the region. Iran kept its presence alive with its strong voices of concern for states of the region and regional cooperation and regional solution of the problems. Iran made its position clear on the

⁴ The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait made the GCC states desperate to find durable and reliable arrangement of security in the region to defend against such crisis like what happened in Kuwait.

issue of Saudi- Qatar border dispute and tried to impress upon the parties involved by taking the side of Qatar.⁵ At some point of time Iran was insisting on its inclusion in the GCC to better served the aims of the organization and the region and its security. Tehran expressed willingness to participate in the discussion on the issue of Abu Musa despite the denouncement of Iran on the same issue. Remaining firm on its policy of normalization and cooperation in the region, Iran kept its diplomatic offensive open and continued. By 1993, Western demand and assertion on the area was on steep rise and some voices of agreement were simmering. Iran made its renewed attempt and Iranian Foreign Minister made a tour of the states in the region. Tehran was largely successful in Bahrain and Qatar where a series of agreement were made on a wide range of issues. The Saudis were not happy with these developments. These were the consequences of Iran's constructive approach in the Kuwaiti crisis. Iranian diplomatic efforts at their summit in Doha on December 22 and 24 (1990), resulted in the change of views of the GCC states who wanted to deal with the Iraqi danger by developing improved relations with Tehran (Marschall 2003: 110).

Kuwait was concerned about the isolation of Iran. It always voiced the importance of Iran in the region and therefore role in the security arrangement in the region, which explains its periodic interaction with Tehran. This policy took the Kuwaiti Foreign Secretary, Shahin to Tehran in early August 1993 not only to consolidate bilateral ties but also to discuss development in the Gulf over which Iran had expressed concern. Iran emphasized the need for regional cooperation which it hoped will pave the way for regional security. The Kuwaiti Speaker acknowledged Iran's help to Kuwait not only during the occupation but also in extinguishing its oil wells. On the issue of security, he said that in the region it would be impossible without Iran's participation and cooperation with other regional countries and with help from Iran and other regional countries Kuwait will be able to create a security system because, as a large powerful country, Iran has an effective role in providing peace in the region. He also called for closer co-operation between the two on OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) on oil price policies.

These trends of cooperative responses were neither in all the Gulf States nor were consistent. Meanwhile Iran was becoming desperate to have some coordination

⁵ Qatar has close relations with Iran and have several common economic interest and endeavour in Oil, Gas and Shipping Industries. Unlike other GCC countries ,Qatar has always refrained from criticizing Iran's domestic and foreign policies.

over oil price and production between OPEC states. The improvement of relation with the GCC was not consistent .But the unwillingness on the part of the Saudi Arabia was making its efforts futile. The Iranian policy had almost been unsuccessful in eliciting the cooperation of the Gulf States, Iran seemed to turning to the policy of accommodation with Iraq when Javad Zarif, the then Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran went Iraq the in October, 1993(Pasha 2000: 140).

GCC Pursuit of Security in 1990s and Iran

The Gulf States had their own concerns about the security of the region given the recent reasons and events of security crisis in the region. Foremost is the fact that the dangers to the regional states come from within the region. The two recent wars in the region, the Iran-Iraq war and the Kuwait war were the telling evidence. These states remained vulnerable to the outside threats- regional or extra-regional. The regional antagonisms accelerated the foreign deployment, which further intensify the security problem in the region. The GCC states need foreign support for their protection. The procurement of the weapons cannot ensure security in the region. Above all the GCC states were too politically weak to defend themselves to face the two regional powers without foreign assistance. There is a lack of confidence and cooperation among the Gulf States and unified approach to deal with the challenges. As a result they have failed to react positively to the new reality in the region and falling back on the Western policies and their help. Thus in the early years of the 1990s, the GCC states have entered yet another stage in their elusive search for regional stability. The three approaches may be identified analyze this investigation (Kechichian 2001: 400-401).

The first approach depends primarily on key western powers to prevent any Iraqi and Iranian expansionist ambitions from materializing. This is the most realistic outlook because of the balance of the international and regional powers in favour of the West. In the present unipolar world, regional initiative neither encouraged nor tolerated. Washington's so-called "Dual Containment Policy" towards Iran and Iraq fall within this outlook.

The second approach is that the security of the Gulf is part of Arab national security. This approach was articulated through a very limited Arab participation namely Egypt and Syria, the so-called (GCC) 6+2 (Damascus Declaration). Given the

fundamental difference between the Gulf and the Levant was less practical and moreover it was mainly shepherded by the Americans rather than Arabs. Since then Egypt and Syria pursued their own private agendas, which did not converge with the GCC states. Not surprisingly, the (GCC) 6+2 system caused uneasiness in Iran, which regarded this new Arab Alliance as a danger to their putative role in the Gulf region.

The third approach, though least accepted, is in fact the most realistic because of geographical and historical truths as well as the lesson learned from both wars. Moreover, as the threats come from the region, it is the responsibility of the states in the region to work for its security. More importantly, the proposal called for the creation of a regional cooperation mechanism to include all Gulf countries including Iran and Iraq. This is the hard reality for the Arab Gulf states that geography of the region makes it a fact that these states cannot change their neighbours. Iran and Iraq are there forever and have their own aspirations of regional powers. The GCC states given their size and capabilities are not able to contest it. Therefore, the 1990s shows a considerable amount of political and diplomatic acceptance of the fact on the part of the Gulf States. They were concerned about the on-going situation in Iraq and wanted a peaceful transition to political stability and gradual streamlining into the process of the region. Any aggravation would have dangerous implications for each and everyone in the region. There is no doubt that Iran is a geographical reality and its stability and engagement with GCC in the region will have constructive impacts on the region's stability and prosperity. In April 1991, President Hashemi Rafsanjani met King Fahd in Riyadh. This meeting was followed by the return visit made by Prince Saud al Faisal, the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia to Iran in June 1991. This was the first visit of a senior Saudi official since the fall of the Shah (Suwaidi, Jamal S 1996: 143). Therefore, the Arab Gulf states are not very sure of the consequences of such western policies as 'Dual Containment'. Any stretching of the policy can push forth a dangerous trail of events upsetting the entire region. Besides, the Western interest, mainly those of the US are not going to over. Therefore the GCC states pragmatically developed their relations with Western powers on realism and requirement for the regional stability. Iran has tried to persuade the GCC states to distance themselves from the United States arguing that without Iranian participation, no regional security will succeed (Milani 1994: 344)

These perceptions are amply apparent with a brief light on the Saudi Arabia's policies and recent views and statements. Saudi Arabia owing to its size, population and resources emerges as leader among the GCC states. Saudi Arabia's western alliances are increasingly becoming untenable. The popular perceptions are opposed to any such alliances which are becoming very vociferous and louder. Even the Saudi establishment is finding it difficult to defend. The large section of the populace even the liberal educated class are turning away and view these alliances less pragmatic and no more beneficial to continue with.

There is an emerging trend in the region including Saudi Arabia that the security conception of the West in the Gulf are not based on the realistic issues of the security of the region and interests of the regional states. A pragmatic security vision based on the shared interests of all in the region is the need of the hour, which may not conform to the guiding principle of Western policies. In the 1990s, the West's Gulf policy is based on the 'Dual Containment' of Iran and Iraq and insists Saudi Arabia was expected to endorse it.

American policy and perceptions of GCC states in 1990s

There is a departure in the approach of Saudi Arabia towards the western policies and the security of the Gulf. The Saudis continues to support the western policy for the alliance maintenance, which is mainly based on its views of regime survival. In reality, Saudis share the emerging views of the other Gulf States and its people and evinces growing scepticism towards the Western policy of the security of the Gulf largely based on the containment of Iran and Iraq. To cap, there is an increasing belief that the western policies of containment have destroyed the Iraqi people and pushed them into a distressing plight. This perception is finding easy support owing to the American policy of protection and support to Israel which is the sure cause of the Palestinian plight and excesses of the Israelis on them. This perceived American connivance weaved the people of the Islamic world, particularly the Arab world against the West and their policies and presence in the region.

Another perception is that the West produces an exaggerated pattern of dangers from Iran and Iraq to create a situation of hyper fear among GCC states in order to cater to its arms industry. This state of inflated fear on the part of the Gulf

states will make them ready customers of West or US arms, which they can sell at exorbitant prices. More than that some view that, United States deliberately prolonging this containment policy of Iran and Iraq, so that imminent dangers in the region would keep the GCC states dependent on them and they can easily serve their own interest in the region with a façade of a benefactor of the region. The growing reasoning in Saudi Arabia is that effective and durable security policy of the Gulf requires inclusion of both Iran and Iraq. This growing perception in the popular domain creates a widening gap between the perception of the ruling establishments and the people at large. A security framework under the Saudi leadership could emerge with views and suggestion of the large section of the society but the Saudi government is sceptical about such popular participation on such sensitive issue of policy and does not approve such political processes (Peterson 2000: 11-12). This is the root cause of the Saudi & GCC problem on Gulf security. Since these regimes are family based created by the British and now aided by US they want regime security to be assured by the West and not by the legitimacy road of popular support and endorsement because the families rule the states as their fiefdom.

UAE's Gulf security perceptions and positive views on Iran

The UAE is an important country in the Gulf and possesses certain strong views and voices in the GCC and Gulf related issues and on matters of security concerns. In the 1990s the UAE adopted a very positive views of the region and with due awareness with its responsibilities towards its citizens stood for the positive neighbourliness in the region with moderating leadership as and when required. It has voiced its views on the aims of strengthening existing bonds and resuscitating and restoring the bonds where there have been mistakes in the past in the region. It stands for the increasing confidence-building measures in the region to develop a relationship of reciprocal ties, which support mutually beneficial policies. An exchange of goods and services and increasing trade and cultural exchange in the region would lead to the building of trust and confidence which not only herald the era of prosperity but also ensure nurturing of the respect for others and lead to stability in the region. UAE perceive the good relations with Iran and Iraq in the natural spirit of the geography of the region, which may take the region out of the present state of security flux to peace and stability. Qatar views that a practical policy of regional security must include Iran

otherwise given Iran's location and spread in the region no other security arrangement can ensure security(Marschall 2003:110)

In the 1990s, the changes in the expression and tone of Iranian approach, which evinces changes in its revolutionary overtones and emergence of the spirit of moderation and professed policy of co-operation in the region, UAE welcomes it cautiously. The political establishment in the UAE is impressed with the Iranian desire of cooperation want to use the wind of change in Iran to resolve its long continuing disputes over Abu Musa Islands. Towards Iraq, Sultan bin Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan has stated that, "We must forgive past errors, open new pages and eradicate the scourge war from our area. To accomplish these objectives, it is essential that we look at Iraq with a human face rather than the cold and calculating realpolitik perspectives that can seek to reward the strong and punish the weak. Our vision is that of peacemakers who are committed to freedom, the pursuit of cooperative ventures and the establishment of permanent foundations for the next generation of Emiratis" (Kechichian 2001: 384).

The UAE dispute with Iran over the Iranian occupation of the three islands has been evading any resolution so far. The former advocates the direct and full dialogue between the two and reach to some amicable solution of the long-standing problem and cooperate together to towards regional issues of security and all other issues of the region's concern. Over the years the UAE along with other states of the region played a vital role towards mitigating the influence and blocking the spill over effect of the Revolution. During 1980s, when Iran was isolated in the region and also from the rest of the world, the UAE played a very significant role keeping the channels of communication open. This gesture, on the part of the UAE, ensured Iran a diplomatic breathing space and got the feel of the region and the world. In the 1990s as well these channels including the trade of limited scale kept the relations alive and sustaining. To be sure, the UAE paid a heavy price for that policy, including assorted smuggling activities that drew the ire of the international community, but we did not punish the suffocating Iranian people. As neighbours and fellow Muslims, we simply could not turn a blind eye on their pain, and did whatever we could to help alleviate it (Kechichian 2001: 387). The UAE, therefore, eagerly waits for the complementary responses from the Iranian side for the resolution of long contesting problems.

Besides, the former extend hands of friendship in the spirit of the historical ties to peace and to fail the external forces to exploit the differences between the two.

The UAE is having alliances with external powers but it has the awareness about the weakness on the part of the littoral states of the Gulf that foreign powers gains dominance in the region. Given the intervention and influences of the foreign powers throughout the history, the UAE is concerned with the US presence in the region and want the states of the region to settle their territorial disputes and engage in multiple ties with one another in a spirit of mutual cooperation and reinforcing benefits to all. In this inclusion of Iran and Iraq is not only important but they must assume their responsibilities with overall interest of the region which is also vital for their national interests as well.

Despite all these concerns for regional unity and cooperation for security of the region, UAE remains in alliance with the West. Given its own self capabilities and the state of competition and rivalry among the regional powers, UAE relies on its western allies and have due consideration of their interests also as we share the aim and objective of maintaining stability in the region. At the same time, it has the knowledge of the policy intentions and statements of the West particularly the US in the region - short term and long term. Repeatedly, UAE tries to sensitise the Americans on many of their policies, which has the implication to touch the sentiments of the region and can have detrimental reactions.

The Iranian expression has undergone considerable reduction in its revolutionary fervour and challenges in the region and impressed the countries of the region in the wake of the Iraqi adventure of Kuwaiti invasion. Still its actions remained the same, which the UAE largely senses in Iran's policy of procrastination so far as the dispute over Abu Musa is concerned. Noticeably, Iranian intentions were clarified with the August 1992 Abu Musa encroachment, when Tehran took several unilateral actions. By engaging in such acts, the Islamic government has demonstrated that irrespective of the ruler, Iran's claim to regional leadership remains unchanged (Kechichian 2001: 412). The revised perception in the Gulf is that despite the great shifts from a monarchical to a revolutionary republican system, Iran's goals in the region have neither shifted nor changed (Suwaidi 1996: 138). For some time, as natural this long-standing disputes retarded the growing trust and confidence. But the overall trend of change in Iranian policies and approach witness the unmistakable

break with its revolutionary past. Therefore Iran's image overall remains the same of that moderation and engagement in the region and the rest of the world.

Iranian policies in the region in 1990s and perception of the GCC states

The scepticism on the part of the Arab littoral states is based on their perceptions of Iran and its policies in the Gulf. The point must be noted that the GCC states are apparently aware of the geographical reality and the subsequent intention of the Iranian policies and its overture. This stand of Iran has therefore endured several regimes and regional changes and international balance of power. Therefore the GCC states are also determined by the same logic of the unchanging aspirations and intention of Iran in the region. The very size and weight of Iran will keep alive fears of a constant ambition to exercise hegemony in the Gulf (Tripp 1992: 52-53). After early 1990s when Iraq was down and defeated, Iran was on its way to go as far as possible gain its long pursuing aspiration to assume the position and role of regional Hegemon as Iraqi prostration was seen by Tehran an opportunity to fill it without much hindrance. There is fear in the Arab Gulf circle that in order to attain this Tehran may enhance its militarization programme to the detriment of them. Therefore potential role of Iran becomes more relevant with the growing uncertainty in Iraq in 1990s (Chubin 1992: 62). The pragmatic consideration make it apparent that GCC states need to deal with this geographical reality and Iranian presence with its ambition of regional leadership. Responsible posturing of Tehran from the very beginning of the 1990s unlike its revolutionary past evinces the possible adjustment of skepticism of GCC states with the regional aspirations of Iran.

The GCC states were very confused about Iran's intentions and were of the opinion that with Iraq vanquished, Iranian challenge is unquestioned in the region. Tehran delaying the negotiation on the dispute over the Abu Musa Island and perhaps planning to use it as base for the three submarines bought from Russia. With such installation on the Island would give Iran dominant position to monitor the activities in the Gulf as well as a commanding position at the entrance itself. Iranian Navy also had hinted to the fact that the Island is being use as base for the missile batteries. This suspicion on the part of the Gulf States and the indirect acceptance by the Iranian

Navy in 1996, made the Arab Gulf states totally pattern of security predicament and in a state of dangerous dilemma towards their relations with Iran.

Iran wanted to resume talk with UAE and thus started the advisor level talks between the two in September 1992. But the issue of the disputed islands did not allow the talk to concentrate on the issue of security in the region. It was followed by a very bold step by Tehran when Iran's Supreme National Security Council expressed willingness to discuss and revisit the 1971 agreement. But it made it amply clear that Iran is opposed to condition of any sort. Response of UAE in the similar vein would have taken the matter towards a peaceful direction and the relation would resume the course of normalcy. Unlike the situation got worsen when the UAE decided instead to recourse to the legal route and put up the islands dispute in the International Court of Justice. Iran's found the UAE response very upsetting and its stand therefore toughened further. The issue slowly went out of the range of bilateral solution when it got the endorsement of the GCC summit in December 1993. Then GCC summit chairman, Sheikh Muhammad, tried and took utmost care and caution to requestingly urge Iran to consider the issue and its gravity and its importance for the security of the region. He made it very clearly when he pointed out that all the states of the region share the interests and responsibilities with the Islamic Republic. Only aberration is the issue of disputed islands which needs amicable solution to satisfaction of parties concerned so that the region can remain stable and secure. The GCC has regularly keeps the issue on its agenda and discussions are made and used to be the part of the resolution as well. The policy changes in Iran during the 1990s moderated the approach of the GCC states on the issue of the island. This changing syndrome found expression in the Kuwait Summit of GCC in 1997 when it made a clear mention of its appreciation of policy changes (GCC Communique 1997). These all the indicators of positive approach were perceptible at the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) Summit in 1997 which made the issue further clear and emphasised the need of mutual respect and neighbourly behaviour are the realistic basis of GCC-Iran relations. It pitched for a bilateral solution of the issue between Iran and the UAE which would make the region better, safer and on the path of peace and security.

GCC position on relation with Iran remains positive and that of cooperative engagement. It emerges apparent from the closing statement of GCC, December 20-22, 1997 which reads, 'Starting from the firm positions of the Gulf Cooperation

Council member states to build up good relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran on the basis of good neighborliness, mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, and in view of the positive indications and statements emanating from the Iranian ranking officials on the orientation of the government of Iran to open a new page in relations with the Cooperation Council member states, the Supreme Council discussed the new developments in relations with Iran. It expressed hope that the immediate future will see positive and tangible developments in relations between the two sides with a view to build mutual confidence and establish relations on solid foundation to ensure security and stability in the region' (GCC summit Dec,1997).

Despite the Arab states increasing military purchase of the advanced weapons, the Iranian build-up with regular declaration of the need to have nuclear weapon made the suspicion level among the Arab states about the Iranian regimes and their plans in the region. The defence Budget also witnessed substantial increase to \$5.7 billion in 1999. The official figures indicate that Iran's defence spending has almost tripled since 1993. The during the period did not find the difficulty as expected by the West owing to the policy of 'Constructive Engagement' the European Union (Freedman 1999).

With the declaration of the "Dual Containment" policy in 1993, Russia and China has made efforts to expand their involvement in the Gulf. Iran has used the opportunity and catered their interest by engaging in the developing the capacity to produce the Russian and Chinese weapons and tanks *etc.* Another notable development in the Iranian favour was that both Japan and European Union was willing to continue with their economic engagement with Iran because Iran had a very strong and deep trade relations with them (Gregory 1994). The defence expenditure of the state highlights the behaviour of concerned states and their threat perception. The chart below shows their defence expenditure as percentage to their GDP in the later half of the 1990s.

Military Expenditure as a percentage of GDP for the Gulf States

Country/Year	1997	2000
Bahrain	3.96	3.57
Iran	3.34	12.91
Iraq	0	0
Kuwait	8.09	7.15
Oman	12.97	11.11
Qatar	12.74	7.74
Saudi Arabia	10.61	10.25
UAE	4.38	5.66

Sources: (2014) Chapter Seven: *Middle East and North Africa, The Military Balance*, 114:1, 297-354, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/04597222.2014.871884> ; IMF Data, World Economic Outlook Database October 2014

The controversy of Iranian Nuclear program has made the Gulf Arab states suspicious towards it. There were many opinions regarding the nuclear program of Iran- some holding the view of Iranian financial inability to attain the same and others that it would be difficult for Iran to acquire the technical capability in such a situation of sanction regime and diplomatic isolation. But the Arab Gulf states are genuinely concerned with the nuclear Iran which would surely go to produce some dangerous security problems in the region given the long-standing aspiration of dominance in the region.

The second term of Hashmi Rafsanjani showed signs of hardening approach in the foreign policy unlike his first term indication of coexistence and cooperation in the region. This was mainly the manifestation of frustration on the part of Iranians who were not receiving the expected responses in the region. The GCC states remained in the defence alliance with the West mainly the US that was opposed to the Iranian perspective of the security of the Gulf by the states of the Gulf only without the involvement of the foreign powers. They not only remained in the security lap of the US but also further strengthened it with renewed Treaties and allowing the US to develop further the military build-ups in the region. These all were surely contrary to the Iranian interests and the aspirations. The developing pattern of foreign policy seemed to be in response to these denials of appreciation of the Iranian moderate posture in the early 1990s and the critical neutrality in the Iraq-Kuwait crisis. The incident of Khobar, a complex housing the personnel of American Air Force stationed in Saudi Arabia led to the nineteen deaths which changed the course of Iranian policies and its due appreciation abroad. It was found that the government of Iran and its agencies were involved in the planning and its execution which was also clearly mentioned by

the US court's judgement that mentioned the hand of Hezbollah unit of Saudi Arabia (Carol 2006) The Iranian agents also killed five oppositionists aboard and were caught smuggling a large mortar into Belgium for attacks in Europe. All these incidents played an important role in depressing the slow but growing acceptance of Iranian policy of moderation the early 1990s. The immediate situation was tough for Iran to convince the GCC states about its changed approaches but remained consistent with its policies of engagement and kept on pursuing its declared path of moderation and without giving any reactionary statements while defending its position. The period of the 1990s also witnessed the lack of coordination in the oil prices which seemed like a price war costing the economies in the region mainly between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Iranian position was becoming untenable to sustain its economic policies and maintain the political balance at home between the hardliners and the reformists.

SPOT OPEC Reference Basket prices and Spot Crude oil prices, 1991-2000(\$/b)

Year	OPEC Reference Basket	Saudi Arabia spot crude oil price(Arab Heavy)	Iran spot crude oil price (Iran Heavy)
1991	18.62	14.02	16.33
1992	18.44	15.22	16.72
1993	16.33	13.03	14.08
1994	15.53	13.65	14.56
1995	16.86	15.58	16.26
1996	20.29	18.44	18.49
1997	18.68	17.17	18.00
1998	12.28	10.90	11.45
1999	17.47	16.44	16.93
2000	27.60	25.24	26.02

Source: OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin, 2000

Daily Crude Oil Production(average) in OPEC Members of the Gulf (1,000b)

Countries/Year	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Iran	1,067.7	3,829	1,467.4	3,135.3	3,661.3
Iraq	972.2	1,548.6	2,646.4	2,112.6	2,810
Kuwait	1,691.8	2,989.6	1,663.7	858.6	1,996.1
Qatar	174.6	362.4	471.4	405.6	648.2
Saudi Arabia	1313.5	3,799.1	9,900.5	6,412.5	8,094.5
UAE	---	779.6	1,701.9	1,762.6	2,174.7

Source: OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin, 2015

Crude Oil production in OPEC Members of the Gulf in 1990s(1,000 b/d)

Countries/ Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Iran	3,401.9	3,431.6	3,425.2	3,596	3,595	3,596	3,603.4	3,714	3,439	3,661.3
Iraq	281.8	526.2	659.5	748.7	736.9	740.4	1,383.9	2,181.1	2,719.8	2,810
Kuwait	190.1	1,057.2	1,881.8	2006. 6	2006.6	2005.6	2007.1	2051.5	1,872.7	1,996.1
Qatar	391.2	423.2	390.3	378.7	389.8	393.1	405	618.1	608.5	648.2
Saudi Arabia	8,117.8	8,331.7	8,047.7	8,049	8,023.4	8,102.3	8,011.7	8,280.2	7,564.7	8,094.5
UAE	2,093.6	2,241.1	2,159.3	2,166 .5	2,148	2,161.3	2,160.7	2,244.1	2,048.8	2,174.7

Source: OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin, 2000

Iran and Bahrain

Iranians were behind the training a group of Bahrainis who were planning to topple the government in Bahrain. The group was caught by the Bahrainis and Iranian hand in the same made the improving relations derailed and had the repercussion in the whole region. The Iranian support to the Hezbollah continued and the concerned violence made the international community more and more opposed to the Iranian nations and all its policy. The Iranian actions seemed to be out of desperation as despite its moderation and the neutrality in the beginning of the 1990s, the language of the United States becoming increasingly harsher towards Iran. The Iranians were disappointed with the Bush administration but the succeeding Bill Clinton administration took a very hard policy. By then the US had almost strengthen her position with the stationing of its massive army in the Gulf and wanted to serve its interest without hindrance. The Iranian aspirations were at loggerheads with that of the US were apparent. The latter declared that Iran needs to have credible changes in its policies and approaches at home, in the region and towards the larger world only then US would think over its relation towards the Islamic Republic.

The situation was turning to the better trajectory by 1997 when Mohammad Khatami, a moderate political face won the presidential election (CNN, May 24, 1997). President Khatami was committed to reform and political moderation in Iran to do away with the negative impacts of the revolutionary period. He declared that Iran needs to pursue its foreign policy based on the requisite of Iran's national interests and the regional security which is integral to Iran's national interests. As a result Iran

also received perceptible shifts in the approach of the West .Thus the suspicion and the bellicosity of the first half of the 1990s was giving way to the increasing appreciation of changes in Iran (Freedman 1999). He also expressed his hope to establish a dialogue between Islam and other civilizations in an effort to achieve detente with the outside world. The Khatami government favours greater cooperation with Arab states in the region as well.

The year 1997 has been dotted with high level exchange of visits between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The Islamic Republic of Iran was the host of the OIC Summit that year. The Iranian foreign minister, Ali Akbar Velayati went to Saudi Arabia in March to give invitation to the Saudi Leaders for the summit. The former Iranian President Hashmi Rafsanjani went to Saudi Arabia for Hajj pilgrimage in April. It was a personal visit but had inevitable significance with his stature who started the reform and moderation in Iran. Notably again, in order to reciprocate in the similar gesture the Saudi Crown prince, Abdullah went to Tehran for the acceptance of the invitation for the summit in June. He also represented his country in the summit in December and he said in his address “the believers are but a single brotherhood” Relations surely took a new and positive turn (Crown Prince Abdullah, 11th OIC Summit, 1997). The 1997, Tehran OIC summit was important on many counts. It was marked by the largest so far. It was also unprecedented in the representation of the members. Their head of the states or their head of their governments of all the members participated. This meeting provided an important opportunity to Iran to demonstrate its changing goals and approach in their domestic politics, regional goals and the rest of the world. In February, 1998, the former President of Iran, Rafsanjani went to Saudi Arabia as an official visit. The visit had many-sided significance from the point of the regional security. Sheikh Salman al Khalifa also reached Riyadh to meet the Iranian former president. This gesture and meeting is of paramount significance given the Bahrain’s allegation of Iran’s hand in the protests and support to the opposition elements in Bahrain. Therefore the event marked the beginning of tension-reduction in the relations of the two countries. The willingness of cooperation from all sides were in display. The Saudi response was also very encouraging in the direction of normalization in the region. It seemed apparent in May 1998 when Saud al Faisal, the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia went to Iran and the relation between the two regional powers assuming the pragmatic direction that was realistic basis of security

in the region. The visit marked by the signing of numerous agreements from trade to sports between the two countries.

Besides Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, relation of Iran with Kuwait was also showing increasing signs of closer ties. Kuwait was more forthcoming for cooperation with Iran and was also working towards bringing other GCC states on board. Kuwait also gave requisite consideration to the approaches and friendly gestures of Iran. It showed willingness to have a joint Iran GCC military exercise in the Gulf. Iran also proffered its cooperative hand of mediator in the border disputes between the countries in the region. The issue of Saudi-Qatar border dispute which needed a prudent mediation and Iran seemed appropriate and willing to take the role for an early and amicable solution. Similarly owing to its rivalry with Saudi Arabia, Oman was more responsive to the Iran's overtures of engagement and cooperation. Notwithstanding the relation of Iran with UAE could not gather steam in much of the period of 1990s owing to Iran's occupation of the island of Abu Musa. However, the two countries have agreed to discuss at the end of the period. In 1999, Khatami made official visits to Syria and Saudi Arabia. Khatami had pledged particular attention to the improvement of relations with states in the Persian Gulf region.

President Mohammad Khatami's Arab visit

Despite the mixed and uncertain responses to Iranian policies in the region, the Iranian diplomacy remained focused to its goal of engagement and cooperation in the region. This is followed by personal touch of the president himself to these diplomatic offensives and the Khatami embarked his visits to the countries of the region. Analysts agree that President Khatami's high-profile visit to Iran's former enemy has so far been an outstanding success. The king said: "The door is wide open to develop and strengthen relations between the two countries in the interests of the two peoples and the Muslim world"(BBC News, 15th May, 1999).

The aim of the tour of the Iran's president was enhancement of relation of Iran's relations in the region based on the spirit of cooperation and overall security of the region. Iran's President met today in Saudi Arabia with the kingdom's Crown Prince, taking a crucial step in a process of fence-mending that is every bit as

significant and tricky as the warmer relationship he has begun with the West (Jehl 1999).

The visit had significant result particularly the visit to Qatar which led to enhancement of the engagement with the signing of several agreements in different fields between the two countries that includes investment, labour, sports as well as tourism. This is notable for the fact that Qatar has always in favour of inclusion of Iran in the security of the region and stressed the need for closer defence ties between Iran and the GCC states. Therefore this assumes historic significance and the Iran want to repeat that with other states of the region. The visit is also important for the endorsement of the two countries to have joint meeting of their military officials (BBC World, May 20, 1999). The visit of Khatami to Saudi Arabia could not clinch the number of agreements but involves paramount significance as the visit marked the contact between the two crucial states in the region at their highest level. The visit was described as the move towards building trust and confidence between the two countries which lead to similar process with other states of the region. The Prince Saud al Faisal, the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia expressed the expectation that this approach would bring solution to the vexed issue of the islands disputes between Iran and the UAE. Both the sides was full of expectation of a growing sense of cooperation which will ensure their relation in different field their mutually reinforcing interests. The visit has therefore initiated an atmosphere of willingness between the two countries and around the region and could lead to a durable peace and security in the region. Hence despite the hurdles of the opposition by conservatives in Iran and the Arab alliance with the United States, the visit has considerably produced rethink in the region and spurred the possibility of peace in the region (BBC World, May 20, 1999).

Relation with Saudi Arabia in 1990s

The relations with Saudi Arabia has been throughout characterised by conflictual claims of religious leadership and their national interests. Thus their rivalry is not limited in their interests and ambitions in the Gulf but well-beyond. The intensity of the rivalry can be gauged from the fact that they dispute over what the Gulf should be called. The Iranian continues to refer it as Persian Gulf while the Saudi prefers to call

it the Arabian Gulf. The Iranian revolution has further compounded the situation and Saudi Arabia is accusing Iran on several issues. The problem of the Shia population in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia has been the most vexing concern of Saudi Arabia. Similar claim is made by Saudi Arabia regarding the Iranian hands in the subversive protest activities of the Shia majority population in Bahrain. The Saudi Government perceives these activities of Iran with fear and therefore ready to deter any devastating consequences which may stake the very existence of the regimes in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. In this scenario the policy of containment of Iran in the first half of the 1990s is coterminous with the Saudi concerns about Iran. Thus the condition is very natural for the Saudi- US alliance and the support of the Saudi Arabia for the policy in the region. There is, however, a pattern of change in the policies of Saudi Arabia in the second half of the period. There is also a process of rethink in the US about its policy in the region and towards Iran in particular. The Saudi change of policy is mainly laid in the new leadership in the kingdom. The , Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, the Crown prince wanted to have some substantial change in the foreign policy direction of the kingdom which he found necessary to match the foreign policy with the domestic expectation and expediency.

Thus emerged the new direction in the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia. The top focus of the new policy was Gulf region and reconsideration of its priorities based on its independent national interests in the region. This policy change and its adoption by Saudi Arabia was very pragmatic but the policy was to face toughest challenge towards Iran. The very timing was also very constraining given the fact Saudi Arabia was convinced of the Iranian hand in the bombing of Khobar Towers in June 1996. Still notable that there was no official claim on the part of the Saudi Government against Iran. But this is also correct that the Saudi allowed the issue of Iran hand to come to the public and did not take steps against such accusation. It took a new turn in March 1988, when the Nayef bin Abdulaziz, the interior minister of Saudi Arabia declared the case of Khobar bombing closed .The announcement was taken as Saudi's point of view only by the US and the latter considered the case open to investigation.

This approach on the part of was most probably to reduce the possibility of further tension between Iran and the US. This makes apparent the favourable change in the Saudi policy towards Iran. Even the Saudi Interior Minister Nayef publicly

refused to confirm the Iranian connection in the attack. This emerging pattern on the part of the Saudi was in the constructive direction towards security and stability in the Gulf. This action also reflects Saudi determination to give priority to the aims of its new policy goals of regional interests through regional cooperation. The Saudi government was not very sure of the American policies towards Iran and its impacts in the region which in turn may go against the Saudi interests. There was a US rethink on its policy towards Iran in the face of the European resistance to the US containment policy. Saudi Arabia found it prudent therefore to shelve the issue of Khobar attack which otherwise might have forced the US to take retaliatory action. Such a scenario was against the interests of the all with their stakes in the Gulf. The overall condition made it possible to make Saudi Arabia agree for the hosting of the OIC summit in Iran in 1997.

The OIC Summit demonstrated, that the turnout-the "full house," as one Iranian newspaper put it-demonstrates the failure of the U S. effort to isolate Iran (Kramer December 9, 1997). The event was of utmost significance for Iran as the acceptance of holding of the OIC summit in Iran was equal to the acceptance of Islamic Republic which legitimizes its revolution. "One of the most important of our duties at this historic meeting is to review our present conditions and problems with honesty and candor, as we proceed from our faltering present to a future fraught with challenges and opportunities. We have to realize that the way we deal with these changes and opportunities is bound to have a direct impact on our Nation's destiny and the kind of future that awaits us" said Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. (Abdulaziz 1997)

The growing relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia based on exchange of high level visits and mutually reinforcing policy pronouncement and expression took the pattern of sound rapprochement direction. The past suspicions and apprehensions were diminished with the Iranian diplomatic offensive with the visits of its foreign minister, Al Akbar Velayati to the capitals of the Gulf state. This process of reconciliation was confirmed with the enthusiastic participation of the states in the OIC summit, in Tehran in 1997 (Afrasiabi 2006). The visit found quite enthusiastic responses in the Saudi press. The mutuality of interests and common goal of the two nations were central to all the analysis and reportings.

In addition to the geographical reality the two countries are common in so many aspects, and therefore had shared security interests as well. These are the beginnings and appear in the constructive engagement course which would gradually remove their tensions and hostility in the past and would lay the foundation of pragmatic cooperation based on their national interests. These common interests are natural and geographical reality which goes beyond mere common border and their aspirations which can't be attained their cooperative endeavour which only can bring peace in the region. Saudi Arabia and Iran are faced with the identical conditions of danger for their aspiration in the region and beyond .The Saudis needs US support but the increasing US military presence and its tightening grip in the wake of containment of Iraq has created repercussion in the Saudi public opinion. Therefore it would be prudent to assume their responsibility directly themselves to ensure peace in the Gulf without the help of the external powers.

The 1997 Presidential election was the most welcome development in this changing policy pattern and atmosphere of the region. Election of the moderate president with such majority was a clear indication that change of policies and approaches in Iran had unmistakable popular base and support. Naturally therefore there were rising hopes within Iran, in the region and abroad with this change of leadership. The received the echoes of positive responses and willingness of cooperation in the region. It also found due reception in Europe and the US where talks of relation with Iran without the baggage of the past hostility were gaining momentum. This finds significant boosts when the US President, Bill Clinton expressed expectation that the election of President Khatami in Iran “bode well for the future” (Clawson et al 1998)

Saudi response was apparent with the congratulatory messages. Traditionally the two countries were at loggerheads so far as oil policy is concerned. But there emerges a pattern of common concern and approach. In June, 1997 there was an common move by both the leading producers of the OPEC which urged the members to follow the quotas assigned to them and avoid the violation which was the loss for both the countries. Consultations were made with several high level government official as well as the Saudi clerical influential who have been an ardent critic of Iran and its policies. This is change in the approaches and the response on both side are significant towards peace and security in the region.

These development resulted in the resumption of the direct flight between Jeddah and Tehran in September, 1997. This very significant in the sense that it was the flight was resumed after almost after two decades. This flow of change gained the necessary pace and strength during the OIC Tehran summit, its participation level and the changed expression of the participation which marked by willing enthusiasm.

The most notable fact of the 1997 OIC summit was the emerging change of attitude of the larger Islamic world. The participation marked the silent acceptance of Iran in the Islamic body and therefore the success of the policies pursued by Iran in the 1990s. The ideological rival Saudi Arabia not only participated in the summit but also expressed willingness of cooperation. Thus the process of reconciliation was set in and Iran was on the track of its pursuit of regional engagement and cooperation. The rapprochement with Saudi Arabia seemed complete and the latter even was willing for Iran's rapprochement with the United States.

The top religious clerics of the two countries, General Mufti Shaikh Abdallah bin Baz, the top Saudi Wahhabis cleric had meeting the highest leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenai. The meeting is significant as the two leaders discussed issues of mutual concerns of the two countries. The meeting with Khatami made the discussion more constructive. This meeting has profound relevance as the conservative elements in both the countries were represented in such issues concerning both the countries in particular and the region and its security at large. Besides, , in the light of the meetings and developments, Sheikh Abdulaziz al Tuwaijri, the then deputy of the SANG(Saudi Arabian National Guard) viewed the Iran and Saudi relation in the direction of cooperation and coordination benefiting the region in terms of peace and security. This in turn would make the two nations assume their rightful place in the comity of nations .Many Saudi newspapers called for an unprecedented suggestion during the visit of President Khatami to Saudi Arabia that all the states in the region that must include Iran also should have a pact of non-aggression. Iran and Saudi Arabia made a significant headway towards cooperation when in May 1998 the two countries signed agreements for cooperation in different fields. The process received boost with the arrival of the Iranian President Khatami in Riyadh during his tour of the states in Gulf in May 1998 (Joint Saudi-Iranian Communique 1999).

The election of Khatami had given numerous expectations to the people. He came to the power with many promises and plans which he was not able to fulfil

owing to the low oil prices of the period which Iran wanted arrest at any cost. Hashemi Rafsanjani along with few ministers reached Riyadh in February, 1998. He was received in Saudi Arabia with open arms and had important discussion including the oil price decline which needed cooperation of the two. (Tehran Times, 26 January, 1998). The visit was significant on many counts. A joint-commission was established to examine the areas and possibilities of cooperation of two countries. There was meeting of the Rafsanjani with the businessmen of Saudi Arabia where the issues trade and commerce between the two countries were discussed and possibilities were assessed particularly for the flow of labour Iran to Saudi Arabia. The vision and goals of cooperation set by the visit added momentum to the process of contacts between the two countries.

An incident occurred during Rafsanjani's visit which could have had debilitating impacts. The imam of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina made many negative remarks about the Shia sects to Rafsanjani obviously to denigrate the Iranian faith and claims. But the issue was handled so carefully that exhibits the growing maturity and confidence between the two countries here was a reaction in Iran against the incident including several fatwas were issued forbidding Iranians to the Madina mosque. Khatami government and his hajj committee pragmatically prevailed and played down these reactions and managed the situation from getting the things worse. The Saudi response was also appreciable who managed the controversy by removing the imam. In this wake, Rafsanjani made a categorical response by saying that there is no contradiction between Shi'ism and Saudi Arabia. This appears apparent that the two countries and their government had risen above these emotional and religious claims and counter claims and were able to handle the elements of of oppositions in their respective countries. The subsequent period was marked many more exchange of visits. When the Iranian football team qualified for the World Cup the Sports Commission of Saudi Arabia called them for the pilgrimage arranged by the commission. The process of closer contacts found appreciation in every quarter. Even the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenai made appreciation of the growing relation and wished for the greater pace in the future. The aim of Saudi Arabia was to build a secure and stable context in the region of Gulf to fulfil attain its national interests. In the wake long-drawn and inconclusive US containment of Iraq warrants the pragmatic approach and policy on the part of Saudi Arabia. To this Iran emerges

as an important and plausible option which the growing high level visits in the recent years created more room for cooperation. The main Iranian perception of security in the region is to keep Iran under check and exclusion of the external powers from the region. Saudi Arabia's threat perception from Tehran has apparently reduced given the exchange of visits and the concerned pronouncements in the two countries. Iran and its cooperation were vital for Saudi Arabia for checkmating Iraq and cooperation in the stabilisation of oil prices critical for its economy.⁶

There was a lingering scepticism among the Gulf states about the Iranian policies and its consistency. Sheikh Hamad bin Isa, the Crown Prince of Bahrain jovially talked to an official of the US that "in Iran you have three people in charge: you have Khamenei, who is in charge of religion and terrorism. You have Rafsanjani, and he is in charge of business and terrorism. And then you have Khatami, and he is in charge of internal politics, moderation and terrorism" (New York Times, 12 April 1998). This shows the concern of the GCC states towards Iran and its political system and different centres of authority. But this concern comes out of their curious engagement attitude towards Iran.

Saudi-US towards Iraq in late 1990s

By 1998 there was marked shift in Saudi stand towards the policy of the United States in respect of Iraq and its continued subjection. The US made many attempts to persuade Saudi Arabia to allow the use its airbase for striking Iraq. But all such attempts failed including the ones made by Madeleine Albright, the then Secretary of State, and William Cohen, the US Defence Secretary. The Saudi's were perturbed with these demands which were totally against the popular wishes in the country and therefore was rejected as it could have led to disastrous reaction. In this wake perception of Iranian pursuit of peaceful coexistence made the Arab states positive about Tehran. "It (Tehran) has accorded removal of tension the highest priority in its foreign policy. In line with the principles of the Islamic Revolution, Iran is determined to follow its balanced policy of expansion of relations with its neighbours

⁶ The situation appears to be very promising for regional security as Iraq is down, Saudi Arabia shares Iranian pursuit of stability in the region in the growing security flux and public concern of western concentration in that country.

and other countries on the basis of respect for independence and equality of rights” (Khatami, September 21,1998).

Saudi showed unwillingness to the military action against Iraq but remained opposed to Saddam and his regime. Saudi press lined with the view of overthrow of the Saddam regime as it was the Saudis perceived the Iraqi regime as the cause of troubles for the people of Iraq and the entire region and its peace. There was a growing scepticism in Saudi Arabia about the intention and the will of the US to get Saddam out of the reins of power in Iraq. Sanctions did not have any effect on Saddam .It is causing suffering for the people of Iraq.

Saudi Arabia was strongly of the opinion that exit of Saddam Hussein is essential for its own national interests and security of the region. There was a constant demand on the US from Saudi Arabia to remove the Iraqi leader from position and final delegitimization of his regime. The Saudis find this a necessary condition to attain its goal in the region. Saudi’s leadership in the GCC is obvious and unchallengeable. But all the GCC members are not unanimous about their approach to Iraq, Saddam and the US policy of ‘Dual Containment’. Therefore by ensuring the decline of Iraqi power and authority of Saudi Arabia was basically to establish its leadership in the region.

Iran and other GCC states

So far as the policy of dual containment is concerned, Qatar never endorsed it rather its views verges on to its disapproval. The government of Qatar was very clear in this regard and believed that given the situation Qatar cannot attain its national interests with having the enemies in the region. Regional stability and security is the pre-condition of development any and all in the region. Iran has a consistent pragmatic relation with Qatar which it tries to pursue in the other states of the region. Coordinating naval exercises and naval visits are point of cordial relation. Qatar has also been playing important role in Iran’s diplomacy in the West. Its role has been very constructive towards rapprochement of relations of Iran with the United States in particular. Role of Qatar is also notable for its aid and assistance to the Iraqi people and also has maintained a principled relation with Iraq. These all approaches and

actions speak of an emerging pattern of concern in the region towards regional accommodation and possible stability.

Iran has faced accusation of Bahrain for the problem of its Shia population and there has been constant tension between the two countries. But with the change of approach of Iran and its growing rapprochement with Saudi Arabia has constructively influenced the Bahrain's stand. Thus its approach also is undergoing a significant change during the period. Bahrain has also responded very pragmatically to change of leadership in Iran and its policies in the 1990s. It has been assured by the new Iranian leadership of not interfering in the domestic issues of Bahrain which has considerably reduced the suspicion of Bahrain towards Iran. This process was strengthened by visit of Rafsanjani to Qatar in March 1998. Bahrain has also maintained realistic relations with Iraq and made it very clear it would maintain its neutrality against any move against Iraq. But later it proved to be otherwise when the United States anchored its Fifth Fleet in Bahrain and it started functioning as largest US base in the region which was mainly used against Iraq. This response on the part of Bahrain suggests that despite differences and past experiences on the issue of security all the countries of the region are aware of the cooperation all the states needed to build the security in the Gulf. National security of all is associated with the regional security in totality.

Among the GCC states Iran has the closest relation with Oman which has maintained the relations throughout. It has played significant role in creating a sense trust among the GCC states about Iran with its relation with Iran. Besides it has always been vociferous against the anti-Iran policies of the US and containment of Iran. They advocate that any outstanding issues of difference must be resolved by dialogue. The Omani approach has been very pragmatic so far as the security in the region is concerned. Iran being the largest state in the region and its historical role must find due place any genuine security arrangement in the region. In other words Iran's isolation is imprudent and would jeopardized the security in the Gulf. Besides the navies of the two countries are having practical cooperative arrangements to deal with the threat and their national security which has common and identical concerns. Oman has always called for caution to deal with Iraq and to defuse the crisis through direct talks and negotiation between US and Iraq.

Kuwait has supported the United States after Iraq invasion, but its approach with respect to Iran is regional and pragmatic. Kuwait sees Iran important and necessary to ensure balance against Iraq in the region. Kuwait is naturally dependent on America at the moment. Nevertheless, given the reality in the Gulf it finds both Iran and the US in the side of its security. Thus want to continue its relation with the US without being opposed to Iran.

The relation of Iran is not sailing in the natural direction owing to their conflicting claims over the three islands of Abu Musa, the Greater and lesser Tunbs. In the 1990s the situation has further been complicated when Iran took control Ab Musa and declared its unquestioned authority. Its driven away all other people and built physical structure for ensuring its position unchallenged. Naturally therefore the UAE has always been in the side of Iraq to counter the Iranian power in the region to strengthen its position in the island disputes. However, the 1990s provides a very difficult scenario for the UAE as Iraq is down and Iranian stature is growing in the region. It tried to bring the GCC together to persuade US to change its approach and policies towards Iraq and maintain the balance of power in the region.

The period 1990s is also significant for the changes in the approach of the GCC states towards both Iran and Iraq. The Soviet aggression has been the major factor of fear to the Gulf states and therefore its alliance with the US for their protection and security of the region. But in the Post-Cold War 1990s such policy factor is over and therefore their approach towards the US and its continued necessities and relevance as the end of Cold War has changed the threat perceptions in the region. Thus emerges the reasons of change of the policies of these states in the 1990s which is marked by increasing rapprochement towards Iran and rehabilitation of Iraq.

Thus the changed situation warrants changes in the approaches and policies to respond to the needs of the outcomes of the situation which must make a pragmatic balanced consideration of the stake holders in the region, Iraq, Iran, GCC states and the interests and concern of the United States. With the pattern of reform, constructive engagement and dialogue under President Rafsanjani and Khatami, the United States appears set to reset its relation with Iran and produce a new basis for constructive cooperation in the light of the changes in the region and the world with these regional

allies. This would pave the way towards better solution of Iraq and stability and peace in the region.

The emerging confidence in the Iran–Saudi relation has been boosted significantly. The visit of Iran's President to Saudi Arabia where he met with the kingdom's Crown Prince, taking a crucial step in a process of fence-mending that is every bit as significant and tricky as the warmer relationship he has begun with the West (Jehl 1999). His state visit to Saudi Arabia is clear evidence of growing understanding between the two major countries in the region for peace and security. President Mohammad Khatami made a pilgrimage in Mecca's grand mosque.

The relation between Iran and Saudi Arabia had dipped to a new low when there was demonstration by the Iranian pilgrims at the Grand Mosque and the following police action what led the death of around four hundred pilgrims from Iran. This poisoned the course of these large countries in the region and therefore the peace and security in the region. It is only after the visit of the Iranian President Khatami that there emerges the sign of rapprochement. It has also been acknowledged by the Saudi government that the visit has marked the beginning of fresh start of relation between the two countries. King Fahd made it clear that the Saudi Arabia is r is open to develop and strengthen relations with Iran which surely in the interests of the two countries which in turn would benefit the whole Muslim world.

Thus began contacts between the two countries at different levels and in the different field. It assumed significance when Prince Saud al-Faisal, the Saudi foreign minister and Kamal Kharrazi, the Iranian foreign minister started talks to examine the possibility of multiple engagement. The Saudi Prince was of the opinion that the possible extent of ties between the two countries has no limits and he described the meeting extremely constructive which need ground work rebuild trust and resume the constructive path of development of the two countries. The immediate need was to begin the confidence-building building measures. There is a need to settle outstanding problems between the two countries peacefully and amicably. There is a need of strong political will, on both the sides to reap the benefits of co-operation. Therefore the visit has opened the window of mutual cooperation and future course of security in the region and turn to the wider region of West Asia and the world. This has been a great outcome of the constructive diplomatic course of Iran in the 1990s.

Oil is the mainstay of economies of the Gulf countries. Iran and Saudi Arabia have many common and shared interests in the oil sector as well as a strong basis cooperation and mutual benefits. In the wake of this new enthusiasm the two governments also tried to build on their cooperation to deal with the falling oil prices. There were wide ranging talks including coordination in oil production limits and its pricing which was followed by signing of the relevant documents. Thus it appears to be clear that the mutuality of interests of the two countries assuming primacy and the relations between the two major countries in the region were growing in the desired direction direction which would lead to the peace and stability in the region. These talks between the two largest oil exporters was able to influence the OPEC members to limit the production in order to arrest the falling price (Cordesman 2001)

The pattern of improvement in the relations was surely a positive direction towards the security of the region. The slogans and rhetoric of the revolutionary Iran had led to the suspicion and hostility between the two states. The violent incident at Mecca and the possible hand of Iran in the Khobar attack further worsened the relation. Iran also alleged the Saudi role that creating wedge between the conservatives and the reformist in Iranian domestic politics. Iran is the staunch proponent of the exclusion of external powers in the region. Therefore Saudi alliance with the United states and its bases is the most important point of objection of Iran. Iran for long wants regional solution of disputes and urging for a regional defence pact of the Gulf states. On the issue of Palestine, the Iran stand is unmistakably in the side of the Palestinians and President Khatami expressed support for the resistance of the Palestinian groups (BBC News, 17 May 1999).

The post 1997 the situation in the Gulf was in the positive path. Saudi Arabia was not only trying to move towards engagement with Iran but also urging the other states in the same direction. The Saudi king stated that cooperation among the states are mutually beneficial for all the states. Therefore improvement of relation with Iran assumes significance because without Iran any regional cooperation is not possible. There was sharp reaction from the UAE who had disputes with Iran over the ownership of the islands. But soon these criticisms were overshadowed by the increasing reform in Iran and its policy of engagement with the states in the Gulf. The change in Iran was reinforced by its pursuit of improvement of relation with Europe and the US as well (Freedman 1999)

The presidency of Khatami was particularly concerned about the issue of cultural liberalism individual liberty. The administration was were having the support from such groups as the intellectuals with left orientations and the new reformist group of the technocrats who had their number of members in the Majlis as well. Besides the younger population and the feminist groups and voices were backing the new government's agenda of reform. This moderate domestic tone was finding patient consideration in the Gulf region. The expectations among the Arab Gulf States were in the pragmatic orientation favourable to the Iranian changing pursuit of peace in the region. Relation with Saudi Arabia was improving steadily. Contacts between the two were taking many routes and eventually in September, 1997, led to the resumption of air flights between Iran and Saudi Arabia (Cordesman 2001).

During the first presidency of Khatami, there was a visible division between the conservatives and reformists. Conservatives still had the majority in the Majlis and the Supreme Leaders and other constitutional bodies were strongly in the side of the conservative. The former president, Hashmi Rafsanjani played a significant role of bridge between the conservatives and the reformists. He was appointed by the Supreme Leader the head of the powerful Guardian Council and hence had a big role to play in the politics of Iran. His Servants of Construction was the strong proponent of reforms and therefore a significant support for the reform agenda of the Khatami government. Thus Rafsanjani held a very prominent position in the arena of political competition between the reformist and the hardliner during this period. Yet the period was also important for some power play between conservatives who managed to deal many reverses to the reformists. The most criticised is the impeachment of Abdollah Nuri, the interior minister in June 1998 and his conviction owing to be reformist paper's publisher. The hardliners with their influence in the Guardian Council managed to remove the reformist candidates from the fray and gained majority in the Assembly of Expert's election in 1998. This majority had tremendous importance as it has the power of supervision of the Supreme Leader as well as of the future Supreme Leaders.

There was an expectation in the country and beyond that Khatami and his reform agendas would take the country out of the revolutionary mould. His mission in the region to assure the states that Iran was not the factor of threat for them succeeded considerably. He was able to communicate the message of this change to

the neighbouring states in a very convincing way and therefore the responses in the region was in favour of Iran. The series of visits to these states and in turn, to Iran made the path of rapprochement so frequented that cooperation was emerging as the only option on which the national interests of all the states in the region were dependent upon. The increasing relations with Saudi Arabia was the very crucial factor in the process as it made it possible for the two major powers in the region to convince others about the benefits of peace and security in the region (Cordesman 2001)

The improving relations between the Saudis and the Iranians had assumed so much pace that the two were thinking of the defence and military agreements. This followed the exchange of the military officials between the two and in 2000 eventually the Defence Minister of Iran went to Riyadh on the invitation of the latter. The Khatami presidency has also witnessed considerable changes in the Iran's stand on the issue of Palestine and the concerned process of peace between the Arabs and Israel. At the same time Iran was promoting its cause with numerous ways its desire of rapprochement with the US as well. The thinking of rapprochement found voice when Kamal Kharazi, the Foreign Minister of Iran made it public that there was a need of cooperation between the two countries in different areas of shared concerns like terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Besides Iranian economy is in need of the US fiancé, capitals and its business houses for recovery and development (Wright 1998). These open pronouncement and public statement by such high-ranking Iranian Minister carries a paramount significance on the perception of the Arab Gulf states about genuine intention of the Iranian policy of moderation in the region. Meanwhile President Khatami's CNN interview and his emphasis on "dialogue between Civilization and Culture" (Joint Saudi-Iranian Communiqué 1999) helped ameliorate perception of the Gulf states about in a very positive manner.

Iran also pursuing a policy of confidence building throughout the 1990s with considerable results and attach great importance to relations with our neighbours. "Throughout history, religion, and culture have created strong bonds of amity between Iran and its neighbours. Although there have been ups and downs in relations with some neighbours, the general trend is positive. We are determined to strengthen and deepen our relationships with our neighbours. Our region cannot afford to experience another disaster like those of early 80's and early 90's. Incidentally, the

Iraqi imposed war started 20 years ago today. However, the interests of peoples and their prosperity should be above all other short-term interests” (Kharrazi 21 september, 2000). The core concern is apparent in Iran’s approach towards the GCC states. It tries to remove the scepticism and threat perception in the region from Iran and seeks pragmatic approach of all the states in the region of the Gulf for peace, stability and security. The emerging pattern in the region appears on the path of understanding and cooperation. Thus Iran no remains the cause of threat in the region as its own interests are in dependent on the security of the region.

US policy on Iran and impacts on GCC states

Throughout the 1990s, US policy towards Iran had significant bearing on the threat perception of the GCC states from Iran and therefore their measured responses to the Iranian pursuit of engagement in the region. In January 1989, George W H Bush, the US President in reference to Iran said that, “Good will begets good will. Good faith can be a spiral that endlessly moves on.” (George H.W.Bush, January 20,1989). During the Clinton presidencies there was no reference of any kind of moderation towards Iran. Rather the period witnessed the coining of very hostile words and references towards the Islamic Republic like the rogue or terrorist state. Such references were common in the US from the US Congress to the media. Domestic political division between the White House and the Congress with the Democrats and the Republicans respectively was creating worst scenario for Iran as it resulted competition between the two to oppose Iran for political mileage. These US stance had significant on the perception of GCC states from Iran.

The general policy of the US in the region was based on maintaining a balance between the two most powerful countries in the Gulf-Iran and Iraq. This mainly ensured by playing one against other. But the 1990s presented a very changed equation of power in the Gulf. Iraq was fettered with the UN sanctions and crippling economic sanctions and Iran ravaged with the long eight year war. As a result the regional powers were in a state of prostration and not in a position to challenge or trouble the US interests in the region. This naturally made the United States dominant power in the region. Thus instead of balancing two- Iran and Iraq, the US administration found it prudent to contain both and that led to the promulgation of the

policy of 'Dual Containment' on May 18th,1993 outlined by the US National Security Council staff, Martin Indyk. Allies of the US were not in line with the containment policy of the US.

The Iranian overtures of change and engagements were not finding takers in the region or beyond. Thus there was a sense of scepticism in Iran about the relevance of the policies which were compounded by the domestic political tussle between the hardliners and reformists. By mid 1990s there was a mood of political reconsideration and the policy of 'Containment' was eroding the wave of reform in the country. In this situation it was found that Iran was in nuclear pursuit and had a deal with Russia for the necessary skills, assistance and nuclear programme technology. This information turned the situation totally and the US Senate Banking Committee under the chairmanship of Senator D'Amato led to the imposition of trade ban on the Islamic Republic. Despite this ban many US companies continued doing trade with Iran particularly in the oil sector. The review of the administration policy found that the ban is not followed by the US companies which had a very negative impression about the sincerity of the American policies and their international perception. Therefore the US administration was on the watch and set to ensure the ban in strict and exemplary for the rest. The situation came to public light when Conoco, the US Oil company made an agreement with Iran for the development of its oilfields in the Sirri island in March 1995. On March 15, 1995, an Presidential Order led to bar the company for making investment in Iran including its subsidiary companies. The agreement of Conoco did not fall under the Executive Order but it came out of the deal on its own and the TOTAL, the French company took over the deal alongwith the Malaysian company, Petronas. These caused huge economic loss to Iran. But these policies earned favourable responses both in the region and beyond.

While speaking to the World Jewish Congress in 1995, the President Bill Clinton declared that the US would put a ban on all US investment, trading links with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thereafter an Executive Order was issued on 6th May,1995 which banned all US links with Iran through goods, capital and services (Sasan 2003:230) The US was concerned with Iranian policies and stands on many issues. The most important in that was the Iran's stance on the issue of Palestine and which was the cause of problem in the ongoing peace process. There were instances of Iran's support to numerous groups and organizations in the region who were even

using violence to torpedo the pursuit of peace on the issue which was necessary for the lasting peace in the whole region of West Asia. Besides the issue of acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by Iran was cause of alarm in the entire region and making the efforts towards security difficult. The US was growing convinced that the way to deal with the situation is to withdraw from all relations with Iran. The condition led to the signing of the Executive Order. The remark the US President makes the intent clear that “the executive order I plan to sign next week will cover not only the energy sector, but all United States exports to Iran and all investments by American firms and the branches they own or control”(Alikhani, 2000).

The international community was divided on the issue of punitive ban on trade with Iran. The biggest challenge to the US policy came from its allies like the European Union and Japan. They had very dense dependable trade and commerce relations with Iran and therefore not possible to break the process. Thus they continued with their relations with Iran. Meanwhile many countries in Asia including China enhanced their import of oil from Iran to meet their growing economic necessities. The US administration found the trend untenable and unmanageable and led the Congress to believe that some extra measures were to be taken and followed strictly to have genuine intended impact on Iran. Hence it led to the introduction of bill in 1995 for the imposition on ban on the foreign companies which had links with Iranian economy in any form. There emerged a division of opinion between the US Congress and the administration on the issue as the latter feared that such a ban would lead to the opposition of the European and other countries. But it was forced to accept that the step was necessary for crippling the Iran’s economy which would stop Iran from funding terrorism and acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

The second term of the President Clinton remained unchanged and continued to isolate Iran. It was further made clear when Madeleine Albright, then Secretary of States of the US said in January, 1997 that the policy of the United States would neither be reviewed nor be changes so far as Iran was concerned. But such remarks could have made to divert the attention of the talk of policy change towards the Islamic Republic by many US officials and the retired bureaucrats of the US administration. This became obvious and public when Robert Pelletreau, the Assistant Secretary for the Near East expressed hope on 24th October,1996 that the given the changes in the scenario of the Gulf in the 1990s, Iran was expected to start the

political contacts with US. These hope and expectation were being expressed by many influential persons like Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft, the ex-National Security Advisors and Richard Murphy, the former Secretary of States for the Near East. They were of the opinion that “the United States should offer some incentives to Iran in order to moderate its behaviour” (Brzezinski 1997). Besides the large business houses and MNCs of the US were also finding the sanction policy of the United States negative to their interests particularly in energy sector of Iran.

Since revolution, Iran’s policies have been detrimental to the U S. interests in the region. Many in US administration held the view that election of President Khatami has opened a window of opportunity to end the two decades animosity and resume the path of mutual benefits based on their shared interests and responsibilities in the region. President Clinton made a remark which was unprecedented in many ways. He expressed his concerns that hostility between the US and Iran is disadvantageous for the people in both the countries. It was in the media that with Khatami’s election, the United States used the Saudi channel to send diplomatic messages to Iran. The trend of opinion in the US remained amenable to change towards Iran. The role of Iran and its diplomacy in the issue of Tajikistan earned appreciation of the US and many other Western countries. Such expression in moderating tone is indication of a rapprochement in Iran-US relations. The CNN interview of the President Khatami on 7th January, 1997 raised the hope when Khatami urged for rebuilding the trust between the people of the two countries (Khatami January7, 1998).

President Khatami during his interview urged for the contact of people between the two countries but he did not say about the talks between at the government levels. The US administration found it very inconvenient to respond. Some opined that resolution of the issues between the two countries can be done with the dialogue between the governments of the two countries. Some found the expression of the Iranian president constrained by the configuration of the domestic politics in the country. Therefore the United States decided to respond as the demand of the situation to carry forward the relation in the arena of cultural exchanges in order to fill the gap and ensure pace to the process of rapprochement. There was also opinions and expression in the US to proffer more to speed up the process initiated by the Iranian president.

There is a growing realisation in a large section of the people in the United States that closer ties with Iran is key to the resolution of Iraqi issue and can play a significant role to bring normalcy and peace in the region. Even some strongly feels that the United States must try to reach out to Khatami and complement significantly to his engagement policies because the conservative hardliners are powerful in many institutions in Iran and can dominate over the policies of the President and cause tensions in the region of the Gulf. But there is also a strong view that faster response to Iran would embolden Iran and capabilities which will be very difficult for the US to deal with. Besides such a step will be very unpopular domestically in the united States because large number of Americans find the Iranian government responsible for the 1979-81 hostage crisis as well as the American hostages in Lebanon. Therefore any step in the direction need proper consideration and proper gauging its political tenability.

The US administration started sensing that the new Iranian president either unwilling or unable to initiate the government level talks. The US wanted some speedy dialogue process to deal with Iraq and serve its other interests in the region. Such intention found expression in the speech of Madeleine Albright, the secretary of states on 17th June, 1998 in the Asiatic society when she talked about the start of the dialogue between the two countries to rebuild confidence and trust and delineate “a road map leading to normal relations” (Albright 17 June, 1998). This approach was soon endorsed by not other than the President Bill Clinton. He made an unprecedented remark that the US is looking for ‘genuine reconciliation’ with Iran which is ‘changing in a positive way’ with the coming of President Mohammad Khatami (New York Times June 19, 1998). These new trends of reconciliation had appreciable positive bearing on the states in the region of Gulf and their pursuit of engagement with the Islamic Republic.

The changes in the US approach are perceptible. The most notable action of the US in this regard happened on 18th May, 1998 when granted sanction waiver to the French company, Total. The official explanation of the US government was that the step was taken to avoid the division of policies of the US and European Union which were underway during the period. Whatsoever, this move on the part of the US government was a part of incentive to Iran. The US was of the increasingly of the opinion that Iran can have significant role in the Iraq imbroglio. In this regard the

remark of Madeleine Albright is important that “ The UN., regional organizations and coalitions have countered threats to peace during the Gulf War and in peace keeping operations around the world. Iran would be welcome if it is willing to make a constructive contribution” (Albright, June17 1998).

The US Administration took a significant step on 7 December, 1998 and Iran was taken out of the list of countries with drug production which had crippling economic impacts on Iran. Therefore move was a great relief for Iran and was viewed as part of US incentive to Iran. The change in the US perceptions about Iran has made favourable impacts on the perception of the Arab Gulf states towards Iran. GCC source said countries such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia favour Tehran’s efforts to improve relations with Arab states (Middle East Newslite, May 10 1999).

There was an increasing realisation in the US about Iran as nation of great civilization and contributions to the world. Even the President Bill Clinton expressed the fact that for long the Iranian nation has been suffering from the negative views and campaign of the West. His remark was taken by many as acceptance of the US role in Iran to serve its interests even at the cost of Iran. These patterns were finding similar trends in the Gulf. Khatami’s five-day official visit to Saudi Arabia is a significant milestone in the process of changing perceptions of the Gulf States. The issue was strongly underlined by Iran and Saudi Arabia during the visit of President Khatami to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (Joint Saudi-Iran Communique 1999)This endorsement by the two major countries in the region had salutary impact on other states in the region.

The US government during the period tried to gain contact the Iranian on many issues of concerns. There was talk of such steps of the US administration in the press. The reports was later verified by the government and was mentioned that the Iran was contacted to reach to the truth of the Khobar attack in 1996.The investigation concluded that there was most probably the hand of the Iranian official but that cannot be proved. Besides the incident happened prior to the Khatami presidency, it was allowed to be closed without confirmation .It was proved that Iran had been requested by the US administration to allow its officials time to time to ensure contacts of people between the US and Iran(Washington Post 22nd December, 1995).As a result of these contacts of consideration on side of Iran and US had apparently given Philip

to the growing confidence in the region and Saudi-Iranian relations have since improved substantially.

Another positive development occurred in December 1999 when the US government allowed Boeing to sell spare parts to Iran but strictly for the civil passenger planes. However the US government maintained that permission was based on the provisions of 1995 Trade sanctions.

The Responses of Iran

There was warm appreciation of all these US action. The Government Iran and many other leaders found it very encouraging steps on the part of the United states. The expectations were on the rise and there was sense of change in the general mood in Iran. Amidst this there was also a growing opinion that the US must be more forthcoming so that pace of rapprochement can gain speeded up. The voices of scepticism also side by side existed in Iran. The hardliners including Ayatollah Khamenei perceived these as deception and the enthusiast as unaware of the real intention of the United States. Even the government of Iran had no reference to any government level contacts between the two countries. Mr Kamal Kharazi, the foreign minister confirmed this point of view in his Asia Society speech o 28th September, 1998. But it was maintained that the two countries could cooperate on such issues like Afghan problem and its resolution and drug trade. It was further mentioned that the US needs to reset its policies pragmatically in relation to Iran and the larger region of Gulf and West Asia.

The two countries have still evaded all the constructive political and diplomatic overtures. But the public pronouncement surely made headways beyond differences. The President Khatami remarked that “it (Iran) has accorded removal of tension the highest priority in its foreign policy. In line with the principles of the Islamic Revolution, Iran is determined to follow it’s balanced policy of expansion of relations with its neighbours and other countries on the basis of respect for independence and equality of rights” (Khatami UNGA 1998). These played very constructive role in sending messages of peace, cooperation and co-existence to the countries of Gulf region and changing their perceptions about Tehran and its goals in the region.

On the issue of Palestine and the Peace Process, President Khatami had maintained that Iran wants the peaceful resolution of the Palestine issue with the satisfaction of the parties involved except in the event of the gross partiality. Accordingly Iran objected the Wye River Memorandum which it considered as based on the principles detrimental to the idea of Palestine. Besides Israel was referred as the cause of its military preparedness and missile programme (Israel Line, 3 August, 1998) The domestic conditions and politics kept the Iranian stand on these issues without much changes. President Mohammad Khatami hailed that Hezbollah is the “ideological and humanitarian movement” (Khatami May 15, 1999).

This scepticism apart, Iran remained determined towards peace and stability in the region. Soon Tehran made necessary arrangements and made it a point that its gestures of accommodation in the region remains on the track. In December, 1999, Syria resumed talks with the state of Israel and response of Iran was very pragmatic and stated that Hezbollah would make the it’s adjustment in the new setting of peace among these countries.

Iran and Central Asian states

The Khatami presidency pragmatically moved forward the Iranian engagement in Central Asia started by the previous government of Rafsanjani. It was instrumental to bring peace in the faction-ridden conflict in Tajikistan. These constructive roles of Iran have been important to improve Iranian image and perception in the Gulf. These efforts points to Iran’s commitment to engagement and cooperative local solutions of problems and disputes leading to genuine regional security in the Gulf.

The engagement policy of Iran is duly supplemented by its pragmatic approach and action. In the 1990s, Iran is surrounded by potential adversaries all around. Despite all the odds Iran in the 1990s remains committed to peaceful methods and regional resolution of the issues of differences and disputes. These intentions found ample expressions in the pronouncements and statements.

CONCLUSION

The period of 1990s is significant to understand the actual and pragmatic issues of security in the Gulf and the states there. After more than a decade of revolutionary ideas and ideals Iran is very apparently appears on the track of needed pattern of moderation and willing engagement in the region to ensure its security. The Gulf Arab states are busy in their domestic demands but have exhibited their common concerns and expressed the positive response in their pronouncements and diplomatic gestures towards security in the region in which Iran needs to be considered. The progress is not their fast given the decades of suspicion and mistrust. But the process and patterns of their engagement with Tehran during the period has made considerable progress towards the mutuality of interests and existence of Iran and its role in the region. The diplomatic exchanges and the high-level visits have surely changed their threat perception about Iran and seems that a significant component of their opinion is in the support for the engagement with Tehran. More than that there is a strong realization in the entire region that peace and security is the urgent need of the hour. No matter what would be the form and modality of the security and its structure, cooperation and engagement of all of them are the necessary condition to produce an atmosphere of mutually beneficial trust. This is not at all an idealistic approach but a pragmatic pre-requisite to give the sub-region of the Gulf a stability and security based on the mutual interest of one and all concerned.

CHAPTER- 5

Changes in Iran's Attitude towards the US Interests in the Region

Iran has been in the centre stage of the US policy in the region of the Gulf. The present Iran-US relations of hostility started after the Iranian Revolution of 1979. The tension between the two worsened further with the storming of the embassy of the United States by the demonstrating students in Tehran and took large number of US citizen hostage. During the Second World War Iran was forced to adopt a policy of neutrality but the shifts in the power politics of Europe led to eventually to the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran August 25, 1941. The Cold War conditions necessitated the United States to support many an unpopular governments and even some repressive regimes as well. The Shah of Iran was unpopular and repressive but was fitting into the US policy. Therefore, plan was made to overthrow the popularly elected government of Dr Mohammad Mosaddegh. The US government and its secret agencies made preparation which had the approval of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill as well. Soon after the return of the young Shah Iran became a member of Baghdad Pact in 1955. The US support for the Shah was a fact of strength for the latter. There is little doubt that the Shah regarded Iran's political independence and territorial integrity as his overriding external goal (Ramazani 1975: 257). It led to the emergence of a subsystem in the Gulf and the Iranian ambition of regional leadership.

Thereafter started the close coordination and warm relation between Iran and the US. The real concern of the Shah was the security of the region and consolidation of power of Iran in the Gulf. The US administration could see this concern of the Shah of Iran and found that the US concerns could be served with the strengthened hand of the Shah and Iran. President Eisenhower and the Shah had envisioned an alliance relationship. The Eisenhower Doctrine, which was a joint resolution of the Congress promising aid to any West Asian country threatened by "international communism". Iran endorsed the Doctrine, welcomed US promise of increased military and economic assistance (Ramazani 1982: 38).

As the Shah failed to convince the US administration to join the alliance Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), he became desperate as he was focused with Iran's role in the security. As a result the Shah tried to balance the situation and

accepted Soviet offer to conclude a 50 year nonaggression pact. This change of gear on the part of the Shah was to avoid overdependence on one power given Iran's past experiences and keep its strategic importance intact in the security and its role in the region of the Gulf.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed the increasing proximity and deepening of relations between Iran and the US in the Gulf and its security. Thus began the pursuit of Iran for its ambition of regional leadership. The decade of 1960s was very significant for Iran as its oil revenues increased and this resulted in the overall progress of the country. By the 1970s there was substantial increase in the oil revenue which led to a fast emerging economic gap between the states in the Gulf and the countries in the rest West Asian region. This therefore marked by the growing separation of the Gulf sub-region. This development was conducive for Iran's longstanding ambition of regional leadership. The pursuit of Iran was facilitated by the increasing oil revenue, strong leadership and the US policy in region. The purchase of arms and huge military aid and grants from US made the Iranian position stronger in the region.¹ A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the US and Iran brought the shift in the relations. It enabled Iran to purchase \$ 200 million worth of US military equipments. Domestically, the Shah's regime felt an increasing sense of self-confidence both politically and economically (Ibid: 40). Shah used the contemporary Cold War condition to spur his and Iranian position vis-à-vis the powers. His compromises with external powers, he would explain, were realpolitik exigencies to be abandoned as soon as new power realities allowed (Cottam 1988: 124).

The Baghdad Pact formed in 1955 was used by the US serve its interests in the region. This was a timely development for the Shah which made large amount of arms and weapons available to Iran. Besides, it enabled the Shah to strengthen his grip on the domestic politics by side-lining the opposition and the detractors of the regime. This also emboldened the Shah as he was feeling secure from the external threats with the US backing. However, the revolution and abolition of Iraqi monarchy in 1958 and the establishment of Republic of Yemen and its recognition by the US in 1962 created

¹ During 1960s Iran joined with Saudi Arabia and other monarchies in a king's alliance to contain Egypt under Nasser. Soon after the defeat and division of Pakistan in the 1971 Indo-Pak war the US began to identify Iran as an important pillar of security in West Asia. The others were Turkey, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

an alarming atmosphere around Iran. The Shah of Iran found the events a dangerous trends which might have started the chain effect for the fall of the monarchies in the region. The differences in the US actions and Iranian expectation were owing to the differences in their respective concerns during the period. For the US, the containment of the USSR was the utmost priority while consolidation of his position and enhancement of Iran role in the Gulf was the main goal of the Shah. Gradually the Shah revised its stand and policy which led to the emergence of an independent policy based on Iran's national interests. This new approach led to de-coupling with the US, prudent engagement with USSR and enhanced assertiveness in the region of the Gulf.

Iran negotiated a new concessionary agreement with a consortium of oil companies which reflected the new international situation in which Britain's role in the region was declining (Clawson and Rubin 2005:70). The period is notable for the growing closeness and solidarity among the hereditary rulers of the region owing to their common threat perception from the Egyptian Ba'athist ideology and its impending spread in the region. The monarchs in the region and Shah particularly concerned that fall of existing balance would drag the Gulf in the larger conflict in the Palestine.

The American ambivalence facilitated Iran for a while turning towards the Soviet Union. Iran was alarmed by the US decision to reduce the aid to the country. Besides, the Shah came to know in 1962 that the missiles placed in Turkey were going to be removed which would amount to withdrawal of their security cover. This resulted in the Iranian rejection to permit US missiles on its soil and in 1966 concluded an arms deal with the Soviet Union (Calabrese 1994: 22).

Thus towards the close of the 1960s, there were a growing chasm in the US-Iran relation and Iran witnesses a notable shift towards the USSR. The shift was important for the Shah as he demonstrated to the US that Iran was not dependent on the former and the move also strengthened his position in the domestic politics. Now he was able to reign over the Tudeh Party's criticism and opposition. In the Soviet perspective the rapprochement with Iran was based on the broader geopolitical goal of wresting Iran to its side and maintains its position deep in the region with the aid and grants to the regional power which would break the predominance of the United States in the region.

The decade of 1960s marked by the thaw in the Cold war syndrome that is important to understand US policies in the Gulf. The US remained increasingly preoccupied with Vietnam. Therefore, the security of the Gulf was largely dependent on the arrangement of security of the local states and the British. Iran became disillusioned with this position and policies of US in the region. The Shah made condition as an opportunity that led it to the decision to renew relations with USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). It allowed Shah to strengthen his position domestically and concentrate his attention to the stability and security which was necessary for Iran under Shah and its ambitions.

Thus the change of US policy during the 1960s led the change of pattern of power balance in the region of the Gulf and the emergence of Iran's policy independence. The changing pattern was well with the policy options of both the United States and the USSR. The latter was successful in de-aligning from the West and the West was also not having problem with this minor readjustment. But the condition was very conducive for the Iranian ambition of leadership in the region which was found in line with the perspective of the powers during the period. The focus of the powers instead on the Palestine issue boosted the momentum of the decoupling of the sub-region of Gulf from the larger global struggle of the Cold war. Such Superpower convergence raised the stature of Iran and its role in the region.

Oil and implications for Iran

Iran's rapidly growing oil industry enabled the Shah to play the crucial role in shaping the world oil industry in the 1960s and 1970s (Clawson and Rubin 2005: 74). In this changing environment, the local events in the region acquired significance. Foremost was the growing affinity of interests amongst the states in the region. In line with this it was prudent to build alliance through Islam. Saudi Arabia and Iran planned to deal with Nasserism and its influence by the force of the Islamic Conference. The conference was called in 1965 which considerably played down the march of Nasserism in the region. This emerging alliance between the regional powers was in consonance with the US 'Two Pillar' policy which would team the two influential regional powers to deal with the issues of concerns in the region. It would therefore

considerably minimize their mutual tensions and thus the local threats which in turn led to the stability in the region.

The declaration of British withdrawal from the region further impacted the changes in the situation. Egyptian influence was on rise after the formation of the Republic of Yemen which could have become paramount in the wake of the British withdrawal. Iran was also anxious to assume the role the regional guarantor of peace after the British withdraw from the region. For Egypt, its defeat in the 1967 war changed its context of ambition in the region as domestic compulsion forced it to withdraw and work for its domestic concerns and stability. Hence the process left Iran unchallenged in the region to place itself in the position of regional power and responsibility. Iran appeared blessed with the very congenial atmosphere when there was growing reduction in the super power competition in the region and both the long-established colonial power Britain and the new regional challenger Egypt left the scene to the hands of Iran which the latter pursuing for long. Thus Iran emerged to the role of regional power and its security guarantor based on the policy of status quo in the region and the exclusion of powers.

Therefore it is apparent that the British withdrawal from region was of profound implications for the emerging pattern and balance of power in the Gulf which led Iran to become the policeman of the region (Martin 1984: 23). With this perception and conviction Iran naturally gave utmost priority to region as its own security and stability was linked to it. In this direction therefore Iran was willing to cooperate with any littoral state of the Gulf. One more notable aspect is that Iran took the plunge in the wake of British withdrawal, the United States lacked the concrete plan. Actually the US seemed unresolved and lacked the willingness to fill the vacuum as it was sure of its capacity to manage the means and resources required for it. The United States was therefore underscored the pattern and showed the willingness to strengthen Iran with aid and assistance to carry out the responsibility of the security of the region.

Nixon doctrine and Two pillar policy

The US administration was of the opinion that the regional security of the Gulf had to be maintained by the cooperative arrangement of the countries of the region. It found confirmation in the statement of the Country Director for the Arabian Peninsula,

William Brewer that 'the countries and peoples that border the Gulf will in the future have to deal with their problems without outside tutelage or intervention'(Brewer 1969: 158). By any objective standards, Iran's national power in the early 1970s was a modest one. Its industry was rapidly expanding, but lacked any immediate potential to serve as a basis for an independent military force (Cottam 1988: 143). The regional developments also enhanced the Iranian ability to influence US security and arms transfer policies. The Vietnam cost had profound effects on the nature and extent of US reliance on the Shah's regime. The arms purchase by Iran kept on increasing from the mid-1960. By 1978, the annual expenditure of Iran on arms purchase reached the proportion of more than two billion US dollar. The US willingness to leave the Gulf security on Iran provided an extraordinary opportunity to the latter to realise its longstanding ambition in the region. Thus at time the British withdrew militarily from the Gulf area in 1971, the Shah claimed his intention to replace them- a policy Americans such as Dr A Kissinger interpreted as a move to deny the area to the Soviet Union, and hence eminently acceptable (Cottam 1988: 144). Therefore Iran was recognised as the regional leader with the responsibility of security from the beginning of the 1970s. Thus started the dense relations between Iran and the US from military deals to numerous official and individual contacts. These all gradually led to the conceptualisation of the 'Two Pillar' policy with Iran alongwith Saudi Arabia to manage the security responsibilities of the region together.

The contemporary constraints on American policies are different after the Cold War. But the financial cost, changing patterns in the region and continued regional aspiration of Iran as well regional security system require a pragmatic approach to security in the region. With these contemporary sentiments and pattern, the Gulf acquired the concept of regional security with the regional powers. This change of security strategy in the region led to the further crystallisation of idea of the sub-regional security. Given the responsibility, Iran was a natural choice to stem the menace of communism in the region and deal with the communist infected countries of Syria and Egypt in the region. To maintain its exceptionally closeness, Iran always endorsed American view that his primary concern was to oppose Soviet expansion. He apparently was able to do that remarkably well in private conversations with American policy makers (Cottam 1988: 144).

The Nixon Doctrine was declared in June 1969 which announced the global disengagement of the United States and revised the strategy of dealing with regional crisis and issues of security through the arrangement led by the capable regional allies. The United States gave its protective security cover to these regional allies who in turn take the role of security guarantor in their respective regions. Besides the regional allies were promised with the requisite military and financial aids to ensure their preparedness and capabilities to maintain security and the US interests in their regions. Thus the background and goal of the 'Two Pillar' policy in the Gulf was laid down in the 1969 Nixon Doctrine. The policy had the additional relevance for the region as well as for the United States as it was able to bring the two main regional competitors in its strategic regional shared partnership. Their rivalry for the supremacy in the region and global Islam was reduced by their common threat perceptions from Iraq and the USSR which was further aggravated by the 1972 Treaty of Friendship between Iraq and Soviet Union. Notwithstanding, in an unprecedented expression, the significance of Iran's position was accepted by the USSR and maintained that issues of the region must be resolved by regional cooperation of the regional states in which external powers should not interfere. The expression was completely in accordance with the Iranian line of policy in the region. This naturally led to the acceptance of Iranian views and perceptions on the Shatt al-Arab disputes with Iran, the islands disputes with UAE and the vexing Kurdish issue.

Hostilities, however, were abated through the mediation efforts of the Algerian Prime Minister at the OPEC Conference at Algiers. This mediation led to March 6, 1975 agreement between the combatants known as the Algiers Agreement (Martin 1984: 39).

Thus the Nixon Doctrine and the 'Two Pillar' policy was able to revise the security structure and demonstrated the US willingness to share responsibilities with the friendly capable regional states. Thus it led to the emergence of the regional structure of security structure and the credible regional powers were weaved into their strategic security arrangements which in turn were connected with the strategic interests on the super power in the regions. The Gulf therefore was recognised as an area of security separated from the rest of the West Asian region and also got the regional security structure under the local powers supported by the world power. The emerging structure also enhanced the stature of Iran in the region and its security. The

Shah of Iran was able to win the confidence of the US administration. Still at times and on certain issues the views of Iran used to be at variance with that the United States. Iran's claim on the three islands, Abu Musa and the Tunbs were based on historical antecedents and more importantly owing to their strategic significance. Despite these differences between Iran and the other states in the region, the strategic cooperation endured owing to their threat perceptions of Iraq and its connection with the USSR. Hence the strategy of the US was subservient to the Iranian goals and its intended role in the region. Henry Kissinger's role as a formulator of American Foreign policy coincided with eight years of the golden decade of the shah's rule in Iran. And Kissinger's memoirs include an emphatic assertion of the importance of Iran in American foreign policy (Cottam 1988: 147).

The US and Iran thenceforth had shared policies on issues of international importance and the issues of threats in the region. For Iran, the approach of USSR remained supportive to Iran's role in the region despite its growing relations with Iraq. This Soviet policy was mainly based on its objective of limiting the predominance of the US in the Gulf.

Iran was the major strategic instrument of the US policy in the region in the 1970s. The relation of the two countries were based on security, arms sales, military aides and economic cooperation which ensured Iran a place of prominence (Sick 1999:21). The Shah emboldened with the US support to Iranian policies and views which made him dominate over his opponents domestically. This pattern led the CIA and SAVAK² in this era took the form of an essentially liaison relationship. The CIA could count on SAVAK assistance in operation against the Soviet Union (Cottam 1988:148). This started the increasing role of SAVAK in the 1970s leading to suppression of opposition and crushing the expression of criticism of the government. The SAVAK systematically identified the individuals, groups and organizations which were suspected to be opposed to the policies of the government. These excesses found reactions in the United States but the US administration ignored all these abuses of human rights owing to its geopolitical identity with Iran in the region of Gulf. Despite the opposition of the US Congress the US administration continued with their military aid and arm sales.

² SAVAK stands for Sāzemān-e Ettlā'āt va Amniyat-e Keshvar .

These developments raised the Iran to the stature of credible regional power capable of maintaining security in the region, particularly in the Gulf. The period also witnessed the growing closeness with Israel under the supervision of the Super power strategic vision. A deal was reached on to supply of oil to Israel in return of the withdrawal of the latter from Sinai peninsula. Besides Iran was provided with billions of economic assistance by the United States which in turn led Iran increasingly to the side of Israel. This made the policies of Iran and the United States based on reciprocity and mutual benefits. This relation was based on the Iranian standing, aspiration and ambition to take the lead in the region as Iran viewed very pragmatically the security of Iran inseparable from that of the Gulf at large. The US policy of containment of communism produced favourable opportunity for Iran and earned US acceptance of Iran as pillar of security in the region.

The Carter presidency continued the US policy of promoting Iran in the Gulf for the protection of its interests and overall security of the region. The pattern of relation was thickened with the increasing economic and military ties. Iran became major destination of market of arms which played a significant role costs for US arms industry and its growth. The Iranian role in the OPEC which resulted in the moderation in the OPEC policies that in turn brought moderation in the oil prices. It was a big and timely relief .It was very important for both the US and its allies. This policy had benefited Israel also which received the uninterrupted supply of oil from Iran. All these played an important role to put Iran in a credible positive light as partner in trouble times and therefore trusted pillar of US policies and its interests in the period of Arab-Israel conflagration, subsequent OPEC decision which had serious implication for the US economy and the world economy and its stability at large.

Obvious therefore the US establishments found Iran indispensable so far as the stability in the region of Gulf was concerned. They responded by not only maintaining close ties with the Iran but also cementing it with a number of agreement in different fields. This growing proximity between Iran and the US was spurred by the personal relations of the Shah and the US leaders in political and administrative establishments. The US policy of ignoring Iran's human right abuses was explained by the strategic compulsions. The general underlying thesis of the Carter human right policy toward friendly authoritarian regimes was simple. The actions of the governments must lead to promotion of conditions conducive for

human development but at the same time it must widen the basis of support of the government (Cottam 1988: 157). Such an uncritical US support to the regime of the Shah in Iran led to numerous forms of opposition in the country. This resulted in the rising tides of protest against the Shah and his policies and shrinking legitimacy of the Shah rule. The US called for reform and the Shah was asked for making the necessary corrective measures. But the delayed responses failed to stem the storm of social protest and political opposition which made the situation complicated for the policy of the United States which still grapples with the situation and possible options. An analysis of the US stand and policies in the region especially in reference to its reliance on the Shah and its 'Two Pillar' policy makes it clear that in a short term the US policy stands out successful as it was able to maintain peace and security in the region without being directly involved. It also reduced the possibilities of tension in the region by bringing the two rival states Saudi Arabia and Iran together under its 'Two Pillar' policy. This strategic cooperation between these two rival states played significant role in understanding the common basis of national interests of the states in the region and their linkages with the regional security of the Gulf. Thus it also helped develop the spirit of regional cooperation and the possible benefits of cooperation. Besides, it not only made a remarkable contribution towards limiting the march of Soviet intervention and the revolutionary influence of Iraq. Not the least, it demonstrated the sub-regional character of the Gulf and therefore paved the way for a regional security.

After Nixon's 1972 pledge to allow Iran to purchase any nonnuclear arms it wanted, the Shah went on a shopping spree (Clawson and Rubin 2005:82).Iran in the process gained the position of regional power which had been perceiving the security of the region as it's integral part of national interest and therefore its policy pursuits.However, it slowly started emerging that the relationship between Iran and the US was not mutually reinforcing.

Iranian Revolution

The protest against the Shah was becoming strong and widespread. His repressive policies, use of SAVAK, torture of opposition, human right abuses ,Israeli help in repression and methods were responsible for growing explosive condition in the late

1970s. The situation was fanned by the conservative section of Shiite who demanded that the government should be based on tenets of Islam. The opposition and anti-regime protest spread all over the country. The exiled cleric, Ayatollah Khomeini provided the guidance and rebellious fervour in the religious tones and justification. Soon the repression followed which fanned the popular anger and the whole country was engulfed by severe protests. Thus six months before the revolution's success, some awareness was beginning in Washington that a regime-threatening crisis existed in Iran (Cottam 1988: 173).

The popular protest started building up and at the beginning of 1979 it assumed country-wide proportion and the Shah was forced to flee out of the country. The popular mood was further revolutionised by rhetoric and slogans of Ayatollah Khomeini against the United States, making it the principal external enemy of the Revolution (Calabrese 1994:7). The situation was charged with the return of Khomeini in February, 1979. He assumed the responsibility of the new Republic and started the trial and persecution of the Shah regime loyalists and officials. The Islamic Republic reversed the policies of Shah. Radicalisation was in unprecedented ascendancy and made a total break with the Iran-US relations and understanding of security and the role of Iran in the region. There was also a sense of optimism among the foreign diplomats particularly the US diplomats that the situation would come back to normalcy as soon as the moderate elements come to the fore and take control of the country. But the situation worsened further and the revolutionaries went violent and attacked the embassy of United States and all the officials and people in the embassy were taken hostage.

The Tehran embassy of the United States was watching the events and sensing the mood of the people in the country and kept updating the Washington government about the possible reaction and condition in the country. The overall perception was that the liberal groups who were in support of the US relations were becoming vocal in their views which were detrimental to the US interests in the country and the region. The United States permitted the Shah to go to the US for treatment which made the revolutionary very angry and could not hold their hostility towards the US and attacked the Tehran embassy of the United States and took the sixty six US citizens hostage. They made their demand very clear that the American must hand over the Shah to Iran and return the Iranian money stashed by the Shah to that country. The hostage crisis worsened the hostility between the two countries. Out of the sixty six

hostages, Iranian agreed to release the thirteen hostages fast but the remaining fifty three hostages remained under the custody. The American administration planned rescue operation but it failed as their planes met an accident in the desert of Iran due to collision which left eight servicemen dead. The negotiation resumed and eventually the remaining hostages were released on 20th January, 1981. The new president, Ronald Reagan assumed the office days before the release of the hostages, started presidency with hostile relation towards Iran. The revolutionary Iran under Ayatollah Khomeini made a total break of Iran's foreign with that of the Shah. Therefore all the relations Iran had with US. In 1980 the US eventually broke off diplomatic relations with Iran because of the Tehran embassy hostage crisis. Since the Shah was deposed, Iran and the United States- which had previously been allies- have been sharply at odds (Calabrese 1994: 7).

Iran-Iraq War, hostage crisis and US role

Soon after the Shah was overthrown, the US was left strategically naked. Thus the US was forced to review its policies in the region in order to restructure its position and defence mechanism to protect its interests in the region and also stop the Iran and its revolution spill over into other states in the region (Sick 1999: 25). Iran and the US were locked in the hostage crisis and Iraq was also planning to safeguard itself from the threats of Iranian revolutions. Besides it also had its own agendas to fish in the troubled waters like to take the Khuzestan province of Iran which is Arab dominated population and to ensure control over the disputed waterway, Shat al-Arab. Thus Iraq made the surprise attack on Iran in 30th September, 1980 which to the surprise of Iraq and many others was responded with force and Iran was able of rebuff the invasion. The declared official position of the US was neutrality in the war and helped neither party. A soon as the war started, Iran was in need of the military supplies and requested the same from many quarters. Its weaponry were mainly from the US and therefore needed the spare and new parts from the US which it could not manage sufficiently. The Soviet weapons were the central element of the Iraqi forces but the course of war needed more supplies. At the outset the Iraqi invasion caused losses to Iran but soon the Iranian recovered all the loses. The emerging condition was against the interest of Iran which not only lost the support of US but also earned the hostility from the GCC states which supported Iraq to tame the revolutionary Iran.

The revolutionary anti-US slogans like Death to America and rhetoric referring US as Great Satan made US to change its strategy and took the side of Iraq. Given the situation it was very clear that Iran and the US had the common enemy in Iran therefore new equation at that moment was natural. There were talks and many visits between the two countries to reset their relation to serve their common end of crushing Iran. This resulted in removal of Iraq from the list of international terrorism supporting states by the US State Department in February, 1982. The war seemed to be not decisive from any side and therefore becoming costly for the belligerent countries. The large amount of funds was provided by the Gulf States to Iraq which also got considerable financial and military assistance from the United States. Besides, the latter used its influence to make the other international organization to provide loans and financial assistance to Iraq. Many innovative measures were taken by the United States to ensure that Iraq remained standing till the defeat of Iran. The engagement got thicker and the formal relations was resumed between the two countries in November, 1984. Despite the official position of neutrality, the US administration not only provided the financial and military assistance to Iraq but also shared the crucial intelligence to strengthen the position of Iraq in the war (National Security Archive February 25, 2003).

The most important secret deal of the period was made between the US and Iran in the mid-1980. The issue came to the light when the Ash Shiraa magazine of Lebanon wrote about the deal in November, 1986. Accordingly the US made a deal with Iran to supply weapons to the latter in return of the latter's help in releasing the American hostage in Lebanon held by the Hezbollah. The deal was having a complex pattern and linkages involving many countries across the continents. As per the deal, Iran would use its influence for the release of the American hostage with the Hezbollah in Lebanon and in return the US would provide Iran the US made anti-tank missiles and surface-to-air missiles via Israel. The Iranian would make the payments for the same to the Contras in South America. There were several shipments of the weapons and missiles from November 1985 to November 1986. The deal, however, could not last longer as more US citizens were taken hostage by Hezbollah and the US lost trust in such deals.

The security of the Gulf, the most strategic region of the world was in inexorable uncertainty which was the result of the domestic crisis Iran, the regional

competition between Iran and Iraq along with other Gulf States which was further intensified by the US interest and the global power play in the region. But the point that emerges out is that stability, crisis and security in Iran interlinked with the stability ,crisis and security in the Gulf.

The Incidence of the USS Vincennes

The Iran-US hostility touched all time low when a passenger plane of Iran carrying 290 people was shot down by the USS Vincennes in August,1988.But the US was unapologetic and George H W Bush, the then Vice-President said that “I will never apologize for the United States of America ever. I don’t care what the facts are” (Newsweek 1988). But the issue was resolved and settled during the Clinton presidency when the United States paid the 68.1million US dollar towards the compensation for the victims of the ill-fated Iranian airliner. This was done to avoid to face the case in the International Court of Justice the case brought by Iran. Though US denied any responsibility but the payment made and the words expressed have healed the derailed relations. The issue has been bedevilling the relations of the two countries and had a huge consequence for the deteriorating state of security in the region.

The incident turned against the US position when Admiral William Crowe accepted that during the time the Iranian Airliner was shot down, the USS Vincennes was in the territorial waters of Iran. Finally ,the International Court of Justice reached to the conclusion on 6th November,2003 that the action of the of US naval ship was not lawful (Ghasemi 2004).Hope the settlements would pave the way towards narrowing down the gap between the two countries and security of the region will get a genuine reconsideration.

Post-Cold War

Thus immediate the Post-Cold War period, 1990s witnessed the emergence of the regional conflicts in the regional of the Gulf. The US foreign policy which lost its path course with the Iranian Revolution in 1979 still does not have focussed strategy. As a result it continues with the course of confrontation with Iran. The policy of Iran’s containment is in line with the same. As in the past in the pre-revolution era US

and Iran had shared and mutually reinforcing interests remains valid in the 1990s as well. Given the strategic significance of Iran and geopolitics of the region, Iran cannot be a permanent threat to the United States. Therefore to understand the real dynamics of relations of the two countries there is a need of analysis of their interests and positions in the historical context. United States-Iran relations underlines the importance of strategic concerns of the Gulf. This concern remains valid even in the post-cold war. With the collapse of Soviet and Iraq down, there is fragile balance of peace in West Asia particularly in the region of the Gulf. In wake this strategic importance of Iran has increased surely increased. More than that the emerging maturity in the policy of moderation in Iran prepare an altogether a different situation for both the countries with shared economic and strategic interests in the region. US interests therefore points to the mutuality of interests of these old time allies. Therefore 1990s offers an opportunity for United States and Iran to leave their hostile course and resume the mutually beneficial course which enable the reformist groups in Iran to dominate over the hardliners with their pragmatic pursuit of policies aimed development at home and security in the region.

The death of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was certainly an important event at least for the US which Khomeini branded as the "Great Satan". Naturally therefore, there was a possibility of rapprochement between the two countries. Pragmatic approach in Iran's regional and international policies from the summer of 1988 found substance in the attempts to restore and improve relations with its neighbours and the West (Ehteshami 1995: 147). In this scenario the countries with stake in the region are bound to contact each other with the growing moderation in Iranian position in the 1990s. The revolutionary tones and rhetoric of Iran is no more the part of official expression in Iran. There is clear indication of the pragmatic turn of Iranian approach with its emphasis on engagement and reconstruction. This appears very congenial for the resumption of talk and diplomatic communication between the two which is indispensable for the peace and security in the region. The US also needs to see the things in the new context of the region and the wider world.

The post-Khomeini Iran under the new leadership was appearing to be moderate in expression compared to its earlier revolutionary blistering. President Rafsanjani said that Iran must stop making enemies. (Suwaidi 1996: 91) He made clear policy commitment towards economic reconstruction and political pragmatism.

There emerges the ‘pragmatism’ in Iran’s regional and international outlook and policy perceptions as well as the actions also begins towards restoration of relations it’s neighbours and the West. Under Rafsanjani domestic reforms were accompanied by periodic diplomatic initiative by Iran aimed at securing it’s reintegration into the international community.

The most important obstacle on the way to improve relations with the West was the perceived complicity of Iran in holding of the Western hostage in Lebanon by the pro-Iran Hezbollah. Between August and December 1991, with active support of the UN and it’s diplomacy with Iran, Syria and Lebanon all the remaining hostages released without any conditions unlike the earlier demands by the captors. The remaining hostages were released by June 1992. In this release of the US hostages the role the Islamic Republic was very crucial. Therefore helped considerably to reduce tensions between Iran and US. Meanwhile, some progress at the US-Iran claims Tribunal in Hague temporarily removed the growing tension between the two countries. In September 1990, the USA paid Iran US\$ 200m for armaments not delivered after the Revolution of 1979. In December 1991, a further US\$ 278m was paid by the USA. In March 1992, the USA was ordered to compensate Iran for property frozen in the USA after 1979 Revolution. The issues of reciprocity of moderation continued in the Iran and US .In June 1990, Iran agreed to pay the US Company AMCO US\$ 600m in compensation for US oil operations expropriated during the Revolution. In the wake of the Kuwait crisis, in order to secure its interests and ensure confidence among the allies in the region the United States establishes several military and naval bases in the Gulf. The presence of the US build-up of this scale is unprecedented and has completely changed the power balance in the region. The developments which Iran could not afford to ignore and must analyse the changed conditions and the balance of interests particularly in the external powers interests and their willingness to stand for that. The US presence in the Gulf is apparent with the US bases in the region.

US BASES IN THE GULF

COUNTRY	BASE NAME	DESCRIPTION
	Ali Al Salem	Military airbase on Iraq-Kuwait border, owned by the government of Kuwait, used by both Kuwait Airforce and 386 th Air Expetionary Wing of the US Air Force (http://militarybases.com/overseas/kuwait/ali-salem/)

KUWAIT	Ahmed Al Jaber	Kuwait Air Force base used by the US Air Force (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/ahmed-al-jaber.htm)
	Patriot	Had 3000 soldiers during Iraq operation (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/camp-patriot.htm),
	Buehring	Primary location for Middle Eastern Theatre Reserve troops (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/camp-buehring.htm)
BAHRAIN	Juffair	Naval Support Activity Baharain, The US fifth Fleet is here with more than 2000 US soldiers. It provides security for commercial maritime traffic (http://www.cnic.navy.mil/bahrain/)
	Muharraq	Air field near the Bahrain International Airport used by US navy. (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/muharraq.htm)
	Sheikh Issa	Royal Bahraini Air Force Fighter Wing used by US Forces (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/shaikh-isa.htm)
QATAR	Sayliyah	Army Base. US military's largest pre-positioning facility in the world. (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/camp-as-sayliyah.htm)
	Udeid	US Air Comand Centre, forward headquarter for CENTCOM (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/udeid.htm)
UAE	Dhafra	Outskirt of Abu Dhabi, hosts the 763 rd Expeditionary Air Refueling squadron, Also hosts the UAE Air force ,a French Air Force installation (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/dhafra.htm)
	Abu Dhabi	Naval base at port Zayed called Peace Camp. Also a French naval Air Station. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/26/AR2009052602994.html)
	Jebel Ali	UAE surface hub logistics site, US navy ships prefers the port. Jebel Ali-Fujairah land link is important for the Navy's logistic pipeline in the event of the blockage of the strait of Hormuz. (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/jebel-ali.htm)
	Fujairah	US Naval Security Force base (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/fujairah.htm)
OMAN	Seeb	US Air Expeditionary Force base, Centre for war reserve materials. (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/seeb.htm)
	Masirah	Renamed as Camp Justice. Oman Air operates. US Storage Depot. Former Rapid Action Force (RAF) airfield. Also hosts anti-submarine patrol crafts. (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/masirah.htm)
	Thumrait	Joint US-Omani air base. Used for maintaining war reserve materials.

		(http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/thumrait.htm)
SAUDI ARABIA	Eskan Village	US military base (http://militarybases.com/overseas/saudi-arabia/eskan-village/)

Iran's policy of economic reconstruction based on liberalisation and privatization were paying the dividends in a faster pace. Within a short span of three year from 1989 to 1992, all sectors of economy were demonstrating the unprecedented growth and significant diversification of the economy. The Carpet industries and its export which suffered huge losses during the previous decades assumed fast track of recovery and progress. Within these three years its export showed the three fold increase in the export revenues. All other non-oil sectors showed the similar trends. There was doubling of the fresh and dry fruits exports while there was five fold increase in the textile exports. The measures of the government in the 1990s brought about the necessary changes which led to the ease of business and increase in the revenues of the state. Thus Iran registered doubling of its export revenue from its non-oil sector during the period. It laid the foundation for reconstruction and development which would lead to moderation in the political approach and thinking in the period.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the worsening of the Iraq–West relations compounded the condition in the Gulf. The security perception and priority of US and its Western alliance partners in the region was in the process reevaluation and consideration of new factors and options. Iran was hard pressed to go ahead with its developing pragmatist policies and its perceived role in the Gulf security. The crisis made the west more vulnerable so far as its security concern in the Gulf is concerned. In the same way the Arab Gulf states found the security of the region vulnerable despite the pragmatist diplomatic overture of Iran in the recent years. Post-Khomeini Iran's foreign policy has been devoted to securing cooperation to pursue economic reconstruction and development (Calabrese 1994: 164). It can be said that emerging scenario was the testing time of the new policy direction in Iran and it's will to implement them to achieve the intended aims and goals. The western position in Iraq was a dangerous development for Iran. But it also provided it an opportunity to Iran in the changing situation in the Gulf region and West Asia in the wake the end of

cold war to present and test its new regional policies in the stability and security of the region.

Taking advantage of the Gulf crisis (Iraqi invasion of Kuwait) president Rafsanjani has isolated the radical foes of his policies, improved relations with Arab government in the Gulf and expanded political and economic ties with Western Europe (Ibrahim 1990). The Iraqi adventure surely raised Iran's security profile and the significance of Iran the opportunity to do away with its image of revolutionary destabilising force in the region. The stand of Iran was in sharp contrast with its interventionist and adventurist policies of the war years with Iraq. Tehran maintained "Active Neutrality", so that it can improve its credibility and secure its goal while the two belligerents would not be offended (Suwaidi 1996: 91). Tehran not only remained neutral but also supported the UN position and made vehement condemnation of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Apparently, the stance found beneficial appreciation in the region and beyond. This played the significant role to downplay the influence of the revolutionary conservative element in the domestic arena and the return of the western military forces in the region. By supporting the successive UN resolutions and measures Iran demonstrated its desire to avoid any regional and international measures that might have drifted the Gulf under the complete dominance of the US. Unlike its earlier position Iran regarded the UN as the preferred international forum of conflict resolution. Besides, Iranian position was on the side of UN held by the West and stood for the Kuwaiti sovereignty. The support for UN resolution and strategic silence of Iran was in consonance with the interest of the West and Iranian consistency of neutrality throughout helped the Western Coalition efforts.

The Policy of Dual Containment and the Trade Sanctions

As the US interests remain at odds with the independent policy of Iran and its policy of regional solution of Gulf problems and security. Thus the US policy of 'Dual Containment' was devised to deal with both Iran and Iraq in the region. As per the US assessment both these countries were detrimental for the US goals in the Gulf. The administration wanted to complete control over the situation instead of its older policies of balancing one against other. Martin Indyk says, that the US should leave

its old policy of balance of power in the region. Because that policy of balance has proved disastrous which led to the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq (Indyk 1993).

It was further remarked that the US strength has enhanced in the region does not need the balance game in the region. Alongwith its allies in the region like Isarel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and GCC the US could, says Mrtin Indyk,"counter both the Iraqi and Iranian We will not need to depend on one to counter the other"(Gregory 1994).The policy also had the concern of the US administration about Iranian threat to Israel. The US policy of Iran has always been influenced by the Israel factor. The US President Bill Clinton announced about the trade ban on Iran while addressing the jewish gathering just to satisfy the constituency of the Jews in the US politics. The US has adopted a policy of containment against Iran in an attempt to force a change in the Iranian external behaviour US policy lacks the support needed from the closest US allies and the international community(al-Alkim 2000: 83).The move again made a significant impact on the pattern of the security perception in the region. The data below regadin their defence expendirure show the trend.

SIPRI Estimates of Gulf State Military Spending in Constant 2011 \$US Millions, 1997-2014

Countries/Year	1997	1998	1999	2000
Bahrain	377	386	431	428
Iran	5952	5957	6060	6644
Iraq	----	-----	-----	-----
Kuwait	4197	3915	3804	4442
Oman	2742	2429	2457	2926
Qatar	----	-----	-----	----
Saudi Arabia	24313	28082	24997	27551
UAE	6034	7115	7357	10075

Source: Data Generated using data from
http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database

To avoid the negative impacts of the ‘Dual Containment’ several extra incentives were offered to the Western companies particularly the US companies by Iran. The efforts bore significant result which can be understood by the fact that by within a year that fifth largest import destination of Iran was the US and the major buyers of the Iranian oil was the companies from the United States. Another notable result of the US policy of pushing Iran into isolation was the growing closeness of the Iran and Russia while the allies of the US are falling apart(Brzezinski et al 1997). The

closeness Iran with Russia was apparent with increasing visits and the declarations concerned. In March 1996, Ali Akbar Velayati went to Moscow and described the relation of Iran and Russia “at their highest level in contemporary history” (IRNA, March 7, 1996). The relations went on deeper and Iran made agreement with Russia to construct a nuclear reactor in Iran worth 800 million US dollar. Both the countries also agreed for a joint venture for the exploration and production of oil in the Caspian sea.

The post-cold war scenario in the central Asia also spurred the strategic importance of Iran. The disintegration of USSR led to the emergence of several countries in the Central Asian backyard of Iran. Iran astutely tried to weave relations with these new central Asian republics based on the economic interests. Iran realised the benefits to be the transit bridge for these countries and bringing them closer to Iran both for long term economic and strategic reasons. The strategic location of Iran gave Iran the willing acceptance in the region as their economic interests could be better served with the Iranian cooperation through pipelines and other related agreements and understanding. As result Iran made a number of agreements with Kazakhstan and Turkeminstan. Besides a trilateral agreement was signed between Iran, Turkeministan and Turkey for building 900 long pipeline which would provide access to the European markets in the future. These developments were in right direction at the right moment raise Iran and its inherent role in the politics and security of the region.

The Iranian President, Hashmi Rafsanjani came to India 17-19 April 1995 on a visit that could be said to have finally turned around the Tehran-New Delhi relationship .It was Iran’s presidential first visit to India and Rafsanjani told reporters, “you could say I have come on a pilgrimage to India” (Dutt 2010: 292).The economic ties between the two countries were strengthened and the India-Iran Chambers of Commerce was launched. The visit also led to formation of a joint Shipping Company and construction of a fertilizer plant in Iran by India. The significant proposal of the visit was the proposal of Iran a gas pipeline from Iran to India via Pakistan. The Gulf countries as well as Turkey maintained considerable relations with Iran during the period as a result of the policy of constructive engagement in the region and beyond. This is apparent with the fact that Iran’s trade with the UAE also increased manifold. These all were mainly the re-export of the goods to Iran which they had importaed

from the Western market. The trade sanctions against Iran played a big role in bringing Turkey and Iran closer. The trade volume between the two countries has multiplied during the period. More significant that the countries have diplomatically come very close to each other, crucial for Iran in the era of economic sanctions (Habibi 2012).

Iran also expanded the perimeter of its relation and made economic ventures with such countries as China, Malaysia and many African countries. The cooperation with China led to the construction of the Metro networks in Tehran by the latter. It also helped Iran to procure the most needed supply of military hardware from China. Malaysian role has been instrumental to keep the Iranian oil industry working. The Malaysian companies with the partnership of the Petroleum major of France, Total helped develop the Iranian oil and gas fields. Similarly several visits were exchanged between Iran and South Africa and many agreements were signed in 1994 which made the latter one major importer of the Iran's petroleum. As per the Constitution, foreign investment cannot have share in the production of oil in Iran. Hence to attract the foreign investors a new methods were adopted. As this, the foreign investors are allowed for investment in oil fields but instead of sharing the production, would get the capital with profits from the revenue of the oil exports thus produced.

Thus the new system helped Iran and therefore the NIOC made an agreement with the Total worth 600 million US dollar (Millward 1995). Iran's deal with the US company Conoco was an important success of Iranian policy in the wake economic sanction and trade ban. Despite the fact that the deal was cancelled later, Conoco³ deal was the first deal between Iran and a US company after the revolution. Notwithstanding, the deal was a clear indication of the fact that the US has the possibilities of engagement with Iran and has permanent interests beyond the politics of the time and sanctions. This also demonstrated the division between the US administration and the Congress but soon the issue was resolved by the executive Order, 1995 which imposed a blanket trade embargo on Iran. Total and all other foreign companies that invest in Iran under this Bill (Iran Oil Sanctions Act 1995) would be forced to make a choice whether they want to conduct business with the US or Iran (Committee Report 1995-1996). But the business contact was not over. It was found out that many companies as many

³ This deal was a clear pointer to the changing approach of Iran in the 1990s towards the United States. This is the evidence of Iran's pragmatic perception of the US interests in the region and the willingness to work in mutually beneficial way leading to security and stability in the region.

as seventy four had been trading with Iran as per their website and Security Exchange records (New York Times, March 12, 2010).

Oil production and its revenue is the essential basis of its economy. Therefore, proper arrangements of the oil production that include system of exploration and research and development of new location of exploration, oil refinery and the networks of pipelines billions of dollars of foreign investment was needed to facilitate such developments. The United States wanted to stop the flow of foreign investments in Iran so that it cannot develop its oil sector which in turn, would lead to weakening of its economy and Iran itself. The new law passed by the US Congress on 5th August, 1995 was represented the intended purpose which debarred foreign investment in the energy sector of Libya and Iran (Issue Brief for Congress 2002).

The aims of the US sanctions and the laws were to keeping Iran unable to access the finance and investments needed to develop its oil production and exploration essential for its economy. Iran had limited options to face these sanctions and its effects. The best way was to create its own infrastructure and funds to manage its requirements. Though it was not an easy task for Iran given the sophisticated technology and huge investments needed to carry out the works on its own, it would make Iran self-reliant on the long run. Otherwise though politically risky for the Iranian administration the other option is approach the US unilaterally which seems untenable for Iran politically. But it may ensure many-sided benefits the resolution their major mutually detrimental differences and the path leading to the lifting of sanctions. Another was to make arrangement with companies of other countries with better incentives which would make the US sanction regime untenable. This option seemed possible given the opposition of the European Union, Canada and Japan at the G-7 Summit in Lyon (Sadri 1998). There was sharp criticism of the Iran-Libya sanction in Europe and many legislation were also brought in by the European countries to challenge the legality of the extra-territoriality of the US Act.

Iran in the beginning of the 1990s was in an urgent need of putting its economy on the track and ensure health with investment for economic growth to deal with its huge amount international debt. Iran has been making several deals and agreements to arrange and structure its loans in a payable format. Therefore, the countries like Japan, France, Germany, Italy and Belgium which had given huge loans

to Iran was unwilling to accept any law which hits the oil sector of Iran which was critical for the recovery of their loans.⁴

In order to attract the non-American companies the Iranian came up with numerous incentives of development for the Iran's oil production and exploration. The strategy worked well with many companies of the Europe, Japan and Canada. The European and Russian companies plunged into negotiation for the deal with Iran without following the ban of trade with Iran as per the Iran-Libya Sanction Act, 1995. The pattern was followed by other countries as well as a joint venture of Canada and Indonesia also made agreement for the development of the offshore gas field. Besides, a bank of Germany also queued up to finance a project in the oil sector. The governments of all these companies have supporting the moves of their companies without respecting the US sanctions.

The European Union has unanimously opposed the extraterritoriality of the US law, Iran-Libya Sanctions Act and declared it unacceptable given the strategic significance of Iran for Europe (FarsiNet News, April26 1997). Thus the US perception of Iran as a threat to the security of the World has not been able convince its own allies and holding them from have ties with Iran(Fuller&Lesser1997: 47). Russia and European Union continued with their trade links with Iran only the promise reconsideration of their policies were made. Later Australia also expressed willingness to have closer ties with Iran (FarsiNet 21 April, 1997). Thus the responses of the US allies have demonstrated that Iran could have won more opportunities with many other countries to develop its economy. Still it concentrated in the development of its local capabilities and skills with marginal foreign assistance. Difficulties it faced but it was able to build and develop its infrastructure. The technology for local development has been obtained through joint ventures with foreign firms. Moreover, Iran has gradually shift its focus towards the East for trade and investments. The Chinese option involved many advantages for Iran. The former also had the Western know-how licence which was very useful for construction of refinery, petrochemical

⁴ Iran showed a requisite maturity to avoid direct and hostile response to all these US actions. It substantially helped build its moderate image and its commitment to dialogue and constructive engagement as well as provided ways and means to deal with these sanctions.

industries. The strategy Iran had very limited success was the rapprochement with the United States.⁵

Iran nuclear issue

The Iranian nuclear programme has been another arena of a standoff between Iran and the United States. The Iranian nuclear programme started under the Shah under the guidance of the United States. The nuclear Cooperation with US was signed in 1957 known as 'Atom For Peace Proposal'. The cooperation bore fruit and the first reactor of 5 megawatt thermal research was built at Tehran Research Centre with the assistance of the United States. It also trained Iranian technicians under the IAEA guidelines. Iran under Shah was firm to towards programme. With the US restrained assistance to Iran, the latter found it subservient to sign the NPT in 1968 and looked for alternative sources of assistance and skills development. To systematize the plans and its execution in 1974, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran was formed and a long term plan of construction of chain of power reactors were made public. Several countries including the United States, France and West Germany showed their readiness to make lucrative deals on power reactor with Iran. Despite its declared aim of peaceful nuclear programme the Shah was of the opinion that development of nuclear arms option should remain open (Albright and Stricker). The programme received a severe jolt in 1979 when Ayatollah Khomeini declared the weapons of mass destruction un-Islamic and immoral. However, the nuclear programme got attention in the 1980s and resumed the course with Chinese help. The programme was further received assistance from the Russian in 1990s.

The latest issue of Iran nuclear programme came to the international limelight in June 1991, when the Iranian dissident movement Mojahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO/MEK) claimed that Iran was engaged in an ultra-secret nuclear weapon project under the direction of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. The US and the western world got alarmed particularly if the Iran nuclear was developed and fell into the hands of the extremist groups. The hostility of the United States and the possible nuclear action of the US is a matter of serious concern in Iran Therefore it perceives

⁵ Such pragmatic responses of Iran by finding the alternative options in the wake of US sanctions through its pursuit of engagement with other countries and alternative sources have earned it the considerable assimilation in the international community as responsible player in the region.

that the nuclear programme would ensure it a credible deterrence against a conventional attack. It would also provide Iran an assured edge over its neighbours and boost its claim of regional leadership in the Gulf.

There are many ramifications of a nuclear Iran. It would make any US military option against Iran impossible. The nuclear Iran would direct threat to the security of the Gulf States. In such scenario oil production and supply could be disrupted, a grim situation for the international economy. The nuclear device might fall in the hands of Hezbollah and Hamas, a grave possibility for the Palestine issue and the whole region. Most certainly it would promote other states as Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia into the nuclear race. The nuclear weapons and its race in a region of continuous instability would make the things worse and further deteriorate the possibility of peace, security and stability. Iran claims that as a signatory to the NPT has inherent right to acquire nuclear energy capability and refers the US concern misplaced and misleading. Many in European Union and others give credence to the Iranian line and have already strained the US-Europe relations. Iran managed its way and succeeded in making US efforts ineffective with its relations with the European countries who were not buying those positions of the US towards Iran. The US tried its position with the signing of the signed Executive Order 12957 by President Clinton, which imposed strict trade sanctions and oil regulation to the disadvantage of Iran and made involvement of US corporations or their subsidiaries elsewhere to finance the development of petroleum resources in Iran illegal. In addition, another Executive Order 1295 was issued by President Clinton on May 6, 1995 which banned almost all trade between US businesses and the Iranian government.

There is a consensus between the EU and the US that Iran must be prevented from its nuclear pursuit. However, they have discernible disagreement about to how to proceed and attain the option. Within the EU also there is a lack of synchronized diplomatic efforts as to how to deal with it. Iran considers its nuclear weapons program has nationalistic, and contains economic, and security implications. Iran wants to develop its nuclear capacity to save its oil for long. It argues that the programme ensure jobs to a large number of people. It also can provide energy

security as well as clean energy to the country. Such an option therefore enables Iran to concentrate Iran on other areas of concerns for overall development (Davis).⁶

There is an intense tension between Iran and the US since the revolution in 1979. The change context in Iran, region and the world at the beginning of the decade of 1990s, there emerged a perceptible change in the policy of Iran towards the region and beyond including the United States. The pattern has gained momentum in 1997 with the election of President Khatami. His idea of dialogue has created a lot of hope. Owing to the domestic compulsion both in Iran and the US a direct contact at the government level seems not possible at the moment. But the pattern holds the possibility of it to happen in the years to come.

The American response to the election of Khatami has been positive. It can be appreciated from the words of the US Secretary of state, Madeline Albright- "America's response has been a policy of isolation and containment. We took Iranian leaders at their word, that they viewed America as an enemy. And in response we had to treat Iran as a threat. However, after the election of President Khatami in 1997, we began to adjust the lens through which we viewed Iran. Although Iran's objectionable external policies remain fairly constant, the political and social dynamics inside Iran were quite clearly beginning to change" (Albright March 17, 2000).

The election of the President Khatami added acceleration to the process of engagements of Iran with the rest of the world. The new flavour Islamic cooperation was promoted in the region which was very apparent with the enthusiasm of the OIC summit in Tehran. The changes in Iran found appropriate responses in the states of the region. Even the changes received the positive responses of the United States but the economic sanction kept festering the relations.

The United States is aware of the fact that reforms in the domestic politics of Iran and a durable peace and stability in the Gulf are favourable to the US interests. Towards the end of his second presidency, therefore, President Bill Clinton tried to reset the US policies so that the region can be peaceful. After President Khatami's election, the US demonstrated their willingness through numerous channels and expression for resuming talks. The US willingness was constrained by the political

⁶ Iran's Nuclear Strategy Options And U S Foreign Policy Implications by Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy D. Davis, United States Army, USAWC Strategy Research Project, <http://www.ourexcellentadventures.com/wp-content/stcpublications/inso.pdf>)

structures and composition of political powers as the conservatives and the hardliners were still powerful in the levers of power in Iran who were completely opposed to have relation with the US. This power configuration also affected the economic reform in the country. The US approach is able to appreciate the reforms and the liberal president's vision and also examining the political economy and the pattern of its reforms (Zonis and Farmanfarmaian 1999: 33). The United States urged the European countries to assist the US policy of containment of Iran and agreed for blanket exemptions to the European companies from the sanctions (Lippmann 1997).

The Iranians were feeling the pressures of the sanctions imposed by the US. Its European economic relations were also roughened in the sanction and their campaign by the United States. The reports of Iranian acquiring the capabilities of weapons of mass destruction was enveloping clouds of suspicion towards Iran. Tehran needed some constructive space and in order to clear the gathering mistrust in the international community wanted to demonstrate some positive action in this regard. Iran ratifies Chemical Weapons Convention (Washington Post, November 17 1997). President Khatami in response to question talked of a "thoughtful dialogue" with the people United States and referred them as the "great people of the United States". The reference of such dialogue between the people was examined by the US administration appreciated it as a "potentially positive statement" (Washington Post, December 15, 1997).⁷

However several positive responses appeared on the ground. One such positive development was the moderation in the travel warning to its citizens to Iran which made the contacts of the people at an increasing pace. Meanwhile many European companies which includes Total, Gazprom and Petronas were exempted from the sanctions of the ILSA, 1995 which the administration justified on the ground that it would enhance the European cooperation to deal with international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction which is crucial for the national security of the United States (New York Times May, 20, 1998).

The cautious move and expressions are the dominant feature of the approaches of the United States and Iran during the period. The US secretary of States, Madeleine

⁷ The period and the pronouncements of both Iran and US presents a transition course to acceptance of each other interests, importance and role in their respective perspectives and in turn appreciate each other views on security and stability in the region.

Albright appreciates the President of Iran, Mohammad Khatami who “deserves respect because he he is the choice of the people of Iran” but demands it that Iran must shun the path of terrorism and acquisition of weapons of mass destruction. She appreciates the changes in Iran and shows willingness for dialogue that “As the wall of mistrust comes down, we can develop relations with the Islamic republic, when it is ready, a road map leading to normal relations”. It was positively appreciated by Kamal Kharazi, the foreign minister of Iran and stated that it is possible once the US sanctions are lifted (New York Times, 18th June, 1998)

President Khatami in his address to the UN General Assembly, called for a ‘dialogue of civilization’ as a process of interaction of the West with Islam. He denied the alleged support and assistance to Hamas, Hezbollah or any activities of terrorism. Notably he referred to the US sanctions and the freezed Iranian assets in the US as hurdles on the way of Iran for its own development and pragmatic pursuit with the rest of the world (New York Times, September 23, 1998). Another issue which put Iran in the bad light was the fatwa against the British author, Salman Rushdie of Satanic Verses. To allay the suspicion Kamal Kharazi, the Foreign Minister of Iran said to the reporters on 24th September, 1998 that, “The Government of Islamic Republic of Iran has no intention, nor is it going to take any action whatsoever, to threaten the life of the author of ‘The Satanic Verses’ or anybody associated with his work, nor will it encourage or assist anybody to do so” (New York Times, September 25 1998).

The period also witnessed the coming up of organizations that aim at bringing the people of Iran and the US closer with better mutual understanding and appreciation. This led the formation of American Iranian Council (AIC) in 1990 with the aims of promoting dialogue and contacts between the people and governments of the United States and Iran. It promotes the activities and exchange of ideas which will result in the mutual interests of both and are able to bridge the gap between the two countries.

The interview of President Khatami to the CNN was significant in many ways. The President praised the people of the United States and also expressed the stands of Iran on a number of issues the US was concerned about. The hostage crisis was regreted and condemned terrorism in any form. Clarifying Iran’s position on Palestine he said, “ we have declared our opposition to the Middle East peace process, because we

believe it will not succeed. At the same time, we have clearly said that we don't intend to impose our views on others or to stand in their way". About Iran's nuclear programme he gave a very clear view of Iran when he averred that "We are not a nuclear power and do not intend to become one" (Khatami, January 7, 1998).⁸

The Khatami CNN address had a natural response from the United States. The path of normalisation continued and it got boosted with the pronouncement and policy action in the subsequent period which points to the wind of reconciliation. Madeleine Albright, the US secretary of States responded to the issues and stands of Iran expressed by the President of Iran in a systemic manner. The most notable part of the response was its moderate tones bereft of usual rhetoric mode of yester years. The speech spoke of the hope of a fresh start as ways and means are being searched to rebuild the confidence by removing misunderstandings. In the wake of the changing Iranian positions, there is a possibility of new and normal relation between the two countries (Albright, 18 June 1998).

The US brought about a number of changes in its policies and approach towards Iran. Iran was removed from the international terrorism sponsor list of the US government and the concerned sanctions. Many areas of regulations were relaxed as more visas were issued to the citizens of Iran, Sanctions on food and medicine sales to Iran was lifted. Besides the changes in Iran were accepted and appreciated and even grievances of Iran against the foreign interferences were recognised (Clinton April 13th, 1999). These remarks surely gave boost to the growing climate of reconciliation between the two countries and represented a significant shift in US public policy towards Iran and its policies and pronouncements.

The policies and efforts of Iran throughout the 1990s have been to respond with cautions and positive approach in all the conditions. In numerous ways it has demonstrated that Tehran has the clear understanding of the changing situation in the region and at the international levels. Instead of reacting in the traditional revolutionary and rhetorical manner it has been responding with appreciable pragmatism and considered approach. The effects of Iran's diversification strategy helped ease the effect of US sanction without confronting US and reacting to its

⁸ The address of the President Khatami was unprecedented in many ways. It gave a very clear view of Iran on almost all the various issues in a very frank and candid manner with a willing approach to consider each other views and move beyond the disputing accusation towards a peaceful and secure future course. This would surely be a course to stability and durable security in the region.

actions. A careful analysis of trade and investment in Iran during the period points to the fact that the intensification of trade and investment sanctions led to a different competition among the international business actors to access Iranian market.⁹

These all interactions between the US and Tehran makes it apparent that Iran has come to appreciate the US interests and its actions and their motives. It has demonstrated throughout the period a pragmatic maturity in all the occasion of US actions. In the wake of sanctions, it has simply avoided the heated exchanges instead has very practically chosen to diversify its businesses, it's directions and a new pattern of engagements. Iran has been trying to demonstrate to the West and particularly the US that Iran is prepared to participate in the comity of the world with constructive bent of attitude and policy perception. It is also concerned with the contemporary issues and challenges. "Honest and sincere efforts to combat terrorism in all it's forms and manifestations, including state terrorism, constitute an important priority for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran" (Khatami , September 21,1998).

The subsequent contacts between the two countries have been quite encouraging. Both the US and Iran has made significant appreciation of their interests in the region and beyond. The Islamic Revolution and the few decades hostility has not changed the geopolitical reality and the interest of the two in the region of Gulf. Psychologically and logically it is impossible to have hostility without having an unavoidable interest in common point of their interest which is without a doubt is the security of the Gulf. Both the United States and Iran have shared national interest stake in the Gulf security. The aims of the revolution in Iran and the consequent events and issues of difference are actually the manifestation of these contesting interests of the two. In this perspective, it is very appropriate to mention the remark by Martin Indyk, when he stated on October 14,1999, "It is time for the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran to engage each other as two great nations face to face, and on the basis of equality and mutual respect"(Iran Times, Oct

⁹ Iran response played significant role to deal with the US sanction by making the EU countries do business with Iran. It also had indirect effect on US policy and its reconsideration as US was unable to restrain its European allies to do business with Iran. Rather Iran's European engagement made US to find ways and means to regains its position in Iran affair, a positive indication for security and stability in the Gulf which warrants the consideration of their mutual interests in the region.

22,1999).¹⁰ It is very important to note that this is a major shift in the US approach from its policy of Dual Containment from 1993 onward. The statement carries more significance due to the fact that the 1993 policy of 'Dual Containment' was devised by Martin Indyk only. As a result of all these Iran with its pragmatic approach from the beginning of the decade of 1990s has many ways demonstrated its realisation that it has to mend its approach towards US due to its interests in the region for the peace and stability in the region.

CONCLUSION

The Gulf has tremendous strategic and economic significance in the contemporary world. Security of the region is therefore of utmost importance. The 1990s present a new setting in the region as changes in the region, domestic politics of Iran and the wider world would have a favourable impact. All the stake holders need to appreciate the changes as well as their interests in the light of the interests of others. Kuwait crisis has provided Iran an opportunity to help reform its image in the region and dissociate itself from the revolutionary slogans and rhetoric which the Arab Gulf states were scared of. The end of the Cold War has led to the international order which is dominated by the US. Therefore Iran has come realise the paramount interest of the US in the Gulf and pursuing a pragmatic policy on rapprochement. The larger goal of all these policy and changes are the security of the Gulf which is a prerequisite for Iran to pursue its dreams and attain its goals of a strong regional player capable of participating at the global level with strength. The US is also in the serious consideration and appreciation of these change-consistencies in Iran during the period with its appropriate diplomatic gestures and economic concessions to Iran. The engagement between Iran and US would serve the US interest in a better and assured way. Notwithstanding the disagreements and espousal of opposing approaches, the period has witnessed enough evidence of the US and Iran coming closer.

¹⁰ Cited by Abdullah K. AlShayji , Mutual Realities, Perceptions and Impediments Between the GCC states and Iran,p-233, in Lawrence G Potter and Gary Sick (ed). Security in Persian Gulf: Origin, Obstacles and Search For Consensus.

In the wake of simultaneous changes in the domestic arena (post- Khomeini), regional sphere (1991, Kuwait War) and at the global level (the end of Cold war) Iran in an enthusiastic and pragmatic spirit is willing to cooperate with the other Gulf States to improve the stability and security in the Gulf. Therefore, it is very hopeful for the Gulf to establish its security order in the future with the cooperation of the states in this sub-region. The concept of a sub-region is developed from the regionalism theory to dispose the problems of a bigger and diverse region like West Asia. The strategy for establishing the sub-regional security order is to deal with the regional security problems in different sub-regions separately. This will make the problems much easier to be solved. In a relatively small area, all sides will obviously have common characteristics. It will be much more convenient for them to accept the manner of solution for this sub-region. The sub-regional security concept simplify the issue by reducing the ambit and complexities of the problems. It becomes easier therefore to solve the security problems of different sub-regions separately through corresponding efforts and that the security problems of different sub-regions should not affect each

other. This concept also stresses that the security problems of a certain sub-region only involve the nations in this region and it needs all the nations in this region to join together to solve them. For the Gulf region, the main advantage in the sub-regional concept is that it can separate the core security problem concerned by the GCC member nations, Iran, Iraq and Yemen from the rest and can attain the security system in a better way.

The very location of Iran in Gulf region makes it apparent that Iran has natural advantages. Iran has the largest population in the Gulf region and also ranks second in terms of gas reserves in the whole world .It has emerged as the most powerful nation in the region in the aftermath of Kuwait-crisis . Iran had already been the most prosperous nation in the Gulf region till the Revolution . Now the Iranian government, motivated by raising the leading role of Iran in Gulf on one hand and cooperating with the other Gulf nations to resist the US on the other hand, is having a strong desire to promote the sub-regional security order in the Gulf. Iran while exhorting the other Gulf nations to cooperate in the sphere of cultural, economic and political conditions

also offers a favorable local solution by them. The diplomatic exchanges and high profile exchange of visits between Tehran and the GCC states throughout the 1990s are testimony to the natural desire on the part of all the parties concerned in the Gulf towards building confidence leading to stability and security in the Gulf. Iran as the most populous and strongest nation is willing to play an important role in political, economic and cultural areas in promoting the sub-regional security order, because its cooperation with the other Persian Gulf nations is not only beneficial but also essential for its own future. Iran has also made substantial efforts to improve relations with them and to establish confidence among them. The election of Khatami in 1997 accelerated the pace of Iranian cooperative diplomatic offensive as it has given up its ambition to spread the Islamic revolution in the Gulf region and strongly yearns to produce the trust of amicable coexistence. The period is also witness to numerous positive responses and a strong desire on the part of the Arab Gulf states to keep peaceful relations with Iran and ensure peace, cooperation and security. This pattern is manifest the idea and practice of sub-regional security.

The pattern of sub-regional behavior is clearly apparent from the outset of this period when the Kuwaiti Minister went to Iran in the wake of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 itself. Iran's firm stand that Iraq must withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally was a very clear message in the region of its total change from its earlier revolutionary goals and approach towards other states in the region. Invitation to Iran to participate in the GCC meeting in 1990 was the obvious result of all these changing pattern of thinking in Tehran and the Arab states in the region. This pattern of pragmatism remained there as a strong wave in the region against the odds of its past. Undoubtedly there has been criticism during this period about Iran's unchanged revolutionary political system and its capacity to deliver the changing pattern of its expression and pronouncements both formal and informal. This is mainly due to the peculiar position of the elected executive of Iran who does not have the final say in the making of policies and decisions especially concerning foreign policy.

Although considerable change happened during the Khatami period but this change was reflected somewhat in the stance adopted by the GCC states in response to the Iranian diplomatic overtures in the region. The Arab littoral states are mindful of the US-Iran confrontation and are keen to see some peaceful diplomatic solution of long-drawn impasse. There has been realization among the Arab rulers that appearing

too close to the US position and alienating Iran might become a liability in the light of their internal political dynamics given growing anti-Americanism in the Arab streets.

Despite these real difficulties, Gulf states acknowledge the need to move towards a multilateral approach and also to emphasize the need for a new cooperative framework need not compete with existing bilateral relationships, and that the framework could be built incrementally over many years, even decades. Not every instance of cooperation needs to cover all states to begin with. Cooperation on specific issues such as trade and commerce, oil policy and environmental concerns would pave the way for broader and multiple engagements. In the process, many bilateralism would promote the cooperative patterns. The frequent and sustained bilateralism would be the building block of multilateralism. The purpose of an evolving, cooperative multilateral forum would act on issues of common concern and gradually make them agree to the greatest extent possible on threat perceptions as well as opportunities for positive change towards security in order to maximize resources and diplomacy especially when there is a common goal.

Given the interstate relations and fragile domestic politics in the Gulf any security framework will ultimately depends not just on indigenous efforts, but also on pragmatic adjustment of interests of the external powers. It would have substantial contributions to help create balance of power and interests that involves the purposeful creation of mutually interdependent region. But if the outside powers were to embrace the tenets of cooperative security, then external powers should promote credible diplomatic and political guarantees to assure regional measures to enhance their levels of mutual security dependence. There are three main stake-holders the United States ,Iran, and GCC in the Gulf and its security. The rapprochement among all the three would serve the interests of all. United States as power could help mediate over the disputed islands which would enhance trust and confidence between Iran and GCC states which would lead to stability in the region which in turn secure US oil interests in the Gulf. It is therefore apparent that engagement is in favour all the actors concerned. The subsequent peace and security would lead to prosperity in the region.

A principled multilateral approach will only hold good for the future of Gulf security and stability. It must be an all-inclusive security structure including Iran.

Gulf security would be built on a rule-based order in which universal principles would apply to all actors in the Gulf, including the United States. There would be basic recognition of the inherent right to legitimate measures for self-defense on the part of all states because the central assumption of the strategy of principled multilateralism is that security is sought with other states. The domestic developments in the Gulf will follow a more beneficial course if all states are gradually intertwined in a web of military and economic agreements that create strong interdependence. The Gulf security needs all the stake holders to understand one another's interests and engage constructively. The cooperation of all would serve the interests of all. The Gulf states can not ignore the Iranian national interests in the Gulf nor the US can sell an alternate security structure in the Gulf without accommodating the Iranian interests in the region. Iran has also come to the realization that it's revolutionary rhetoric has undermined its interests in the region. The pragmatic approach with its national goal in the Gulf can help Iran to assume its desired role and status in the Gulf. The Iranian diplomatic engagement and the pursuit of pragmatic approach towards other Gulf States and the US is a testimony to the fact that Iran has calculated the ingredient factors and actors in the making of a durable and stable security of the Gulf. The way forward to Iran and the Arab Gulf states is to work for stability which fosters prosperity in the region and beyond.

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