

**ISLAM AS A FACTOR IN THE FOREIGN
POLICY OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC
OF IRAN**

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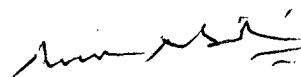
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DECLARATION

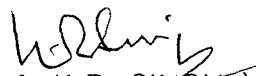
Certified that the dissertation entitled : " Islam as a factor in the Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran", submitted for the Degree of Master of Philosophy, has not been previously submitted for any other diploma or degree of this or any other University.



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PREFACE

Owing to its religious manifestations, the Iranian Revolution of 1978/79 and the subsequent formation of the Islamic Republic have created the scope for a new paradigm in the study of political behaviour of Third World countries. The mushrooming academic literature on Iran is a good indicator of such a tendency. Meanwhile, it is to be noticed that the intricate interpenetration of religiosity and political aspirations have a dominating effect not only on the domestic political scenario but the same is also reflected in the behaviour of the Republic of Iran towards its external political milieu as well. While condemning and discarding the Occidental norms and existing international order as mere tools for the Super Powers to exploit and plunder the rest of the world, the spokesmen of the new regime projected Islam as a counter ideology. As a result, along with the restructuring of the internal political system, the perceptions and objectives of Tehran in terms of policy towards the other states also underwent drastic ruptures, reshufflings and reinterpretations.

In course of time, the Iranian regime assumed and projected itself in the role of the champion and torch-bearer of what is called "the historical mission of Islam". It asked the Muslims the world over to listen and follow the message of its Revolution and to overthrow the rulers who were described as "the agents of imperialism". It addressed the Third World countries to practise

the non-alignment policy in a qualitatively different style, as a continuing struggle against all kinds of dominance even in the cultural and psychological fields. The radical stand became apparent in such events like the official blessings rendered to the capture of the American Embassy, alleged connections with, and abetment of, the activities of the Islamic militants in various countries, politicisation of Haj, uncompromising stand on the war with Iraq, vigorous propaganda of the aphorisms like "Neither East, nor West" and "Export of the Revolution".

The impetus for this zealous design and conduct of the external policy, to a great extent, has been provided by Islamic principles, Islamic idioms and Islamic symbols. In fact, ever since the inception of the Republic, Islam has been made a central theme in the foreign policy postures of Iran and still continues to be providing magnetism to its foreign policy operations. The object of the present study is to identify and assess this religious factor - that of Islam-in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The period of this study is from the establishment of the Islamic Republic to nearly the present, i.e., covering a span of nearly seven years. Since a theological or moralist frame of reference is not called for, in the present work, it is not at all found necessary to define Islam per se. Hence, Islam would be considered as it is presented by the spokesmen of the regime through their pronouncements and display of symbols. Foreign policy is conceptualised as the official aspiration of the state towards its

external milieu and the means and actions employed to attain them so as to include its various aspects like formulation, process and implementation.

Because of the very nature of the study, as it is an effort to trace and analyse the Islamic factor in foreign policy, it was found difficult to apply a single methodological system. Therefore, though analytical-deductive method is mainly followed throughout the course of this study, certain semantic devices and readings have also been relied on to differentiate between the religious and political meaning of the new Iranian language. Most of the available books and articles having valuable bearing on the theme of Islam and politics of Iran are used in the present exercise. Basic source material, such as the official publications, documents, speeches etc., has also been consulted in order to get a proper understanding of this complex subject.

The significance of this work lies mainly in the fact that though a lot of academic and other sorts of studies dealing with the impact of Islam on the domestic political milieu of Iran have been published, there exist only a few studies about the same aspect concerning the external scene. Moreover, in all fields of social sciences as a result of the realization of the myopia of what Edward Said calls "Orientalism", studies on orient and especially on Islam are attracting fresh attention. And, further, as the 'nationality question' is demanding new answers of the various political uprising

and as increasing influence of nascent ideologies like 'Liberation Theology' is demonstrating the potentiality to mould the political behaviour to new dimensions, the topic of religiosity and political interaction needs serious analysis anew. In this context, the role of Islamic factor in determining and shaping the foreign policy orientation of a Third World country like Iran to its external milieu becomes relevant and worthy.

The first two chapters of this work are intended to serve as background for the analysis of the main theme. The first chapter deals with the Iranian history with special reference to the transformation of the monarchy to the Islamic Republic. In course of this discussion, the role played by the Islamic element, especially the ulema, in Iranian history as well as the part played by them in the 1978/79 Revolution is brought out. The new regime's ideological outlook finds its expression mainly through the world view of Ayatollah Khomeini and, therefore, an overview of the political content of Khomeinian thought was deemed necessary and this forms the main chunk of the second chapter. Here it should be mentioned that no political ideology can exist in an historical vacuum and this necessitate accounting for the ideological setting of Khomeinian world view. That is how the thoughts of Jalal Aal-e Ahmad, Muhamad Kasravi, Musaddeq, Ayatollah Kashani and especially Ali Shariati find place in this chapter.

The third chapter deals extensively with the Islamic dimensions of post-Revolutionary Iran's foreign policy, which forms the core of this study. Foreign policy postures as well as their Islamic content have been based on the new structural framework evolved to conduct the affairs of the ^{country} in the transcendent political milieu and also on the ideological orientation of the revolutionary leadership. In this light, the Constitutional provisions on foreign policy, the leadership's assertion on a 'Neither East nor West' policy position and its quest for exporting the revolution beyond the Iranian boundaries have been scrutinised. Besides identifying the structural- ideological realm, the Islamic content of Iranian foreign policy in the operational sphere is also analyzed in some detail. While dealing with the operational side of foreign policy, due to our main preoccupation with the Islamic factor in it, the traditional parameters of state to state relations and usual focus on problem areas in such relations does not figure in any seizable manner in this study. Rather the attempts on the part of the Islamic Government and the leadership to construct and deploy parallel system of conducting foreign policy, i.e. of developing a "people to people" diplomacy is given prominence. This is where politicization of Haj, utilization of religious platforms for propagating Iranian Islamic ideology, etc. finds place. The ideological position and the confrontation with the political realities of the present international system naturally necessiated shift in the policy postures, instances of which have been examined in the course of this chapter.

War, being a condensed form of politics, is a dependable criterion to assess the conduct of the State policy. Along with mass mobilisation technique like "martyrdom", demonstrations and "Friday Prayer", etc., the regime used an explicitly Islamic language terming the war with Iraq as a Jihad against the infidels and the "Great Satan". Islamic symbols have been abundantly used in the propaganda against Baghdad. Even in the midst of the apparent isolation in the international arena, Iran sustained with vigour and swore by Islamic principles and commitment. In different international forums, Iran has justified its "principled stand", and adherence to "Islamic justice". The fourth chapter surveys the role of Islam during the ongoing war with Iraq. And the final chapter is the formal conclusion which contains the summary and the findings arrived at in the earlier chapters.

I record my great indebtedness to Prof. A.H.H. Abidi, my supervisor, for his valuable guidance. I owe a special debt to Prof. K.R. Singh, Chairman of the West Asian Centre for his encouragement and help. I am also thankful to the Dept of Education, Govt. of Kerala for sanctioning me a fellowship during the course of this study. Finally, I owe a lot to my friends, especially Mr. A.K. Ramakrishnan, Mr. L.M. Pande, Mr. Roy Mathew and Dr. P.A. Azeez, who have rendered their co-operation and assistance in materialising this dissertation.



(BABU JOSE)

CHAPTER I

THE ULEMA, THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION AND
THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC

As early as in the 16th century, under the Safavid rule, Shi'i Islam became the state religion of Iran. Though it flourished enjoying the official patronage in the first half of the eighteenth century, the Afghan rulers who later invaded Iran subjugated and undermined the Shi'i Islamic set-up. But it once again took root and this time more energetically, when the Qajars came to power in 1794-95. Though the ulema were not a formal part of the executive as in the Safavid period, the independent administrative and judicial institutions that developed in the Qajar rule provided them a favourable structure for the "conquest of social hegemony".¹

Another factor which contributed to the revitalization of the ulema was the outcome of the Usuli vs Akhbari controversy in favour of the former. This was centered around the question whether a living scholar could exercise ijtihad (individual interpretation of the law), or he must rely exclusively on the traditions (Akbar), during the period of the Occulation (Al-ghaibah)². The victory of the usulis in the beginning of the nineteenth century led to certain drastic changes in the structure of Shi'i Islam. Primarily it provided a new

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1. Azar Tabari, "The Role of the Clergy in Modern Iranian Politics", in Nikki R. Kiddie, ed., Religion and Politics in Iran: Shi'i Islam from Quietism to Revolution (New Haven, Conn., 1983), p.49.
 2. For a discussion regarding the theoretical issues involved in the dispute see Hamid Algar, Religion and State in Iran 1785-1906: The role of Ulama in the Qajar Period (Berkeley, 1969), pp. 33-36.

dimension to the ideological competence of the ulema through 'innovations' the possibility for which did not exist before. Secondly, it gave a new position to the ulema as the Mujtahids whose verdict had to be obeyed by the laymen. Thirdly, the emergence of the institution of Marja'-e-taqlid (the commonly recognized greatest Mujtahid) as a supreme source for emulation has provided certain hierarchical structure within the Shi'i Islam. J.R. Cole remarks that the victory of the Usuli school and the emergence of Marja'-e-Taqlid is as significant for Shi'i Islam as the victory of Papal power at Vatican for modern Roman Catholicism.³

The tobacco episode of 1891-92 was a historical event which denoted the command and influence of the ulema especially the Marja' among the people.⁴ This movement was launched by the grand alliance of the ulema on the one hand who were hurt by the foreign intervention in the internal affairs of the country and government's modernisation programmes, and the Bazaaris on the other who were agitated over the economic concessions given to the foreign companies. The culmination of the agitation was the fatwa given by the leading Marja', Ayatollah Mohammad Hassan Shirazi, to boycott tobacco consumption

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3. Juan R. Cole, "Imami Jurisprudence and the Role of the Ulama: Mortaza Ansari on Emulating the Supreme Exemplar", in Keddie, n.1, P. 40.
 4. See for details Nikki R. Keddie, Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest, 1891-1892 (London, 1966).

which was whole-heartedly obeyed by the people and it forced the government to withdraw the concession granted to a British national, Major Talbot. The leading role played by religious forces in this struggle brought them to the level of "a central force which could be allied with, manipulated, combatted, but never ignored".⁵

The Constitution Movement of 1907-08 was another land-mark in the modern political history of Iran. In the initial stages of the movement the ulema jointly participated in the popular movement against the tyrannical tendencies of Qajar rulers. But, later on, the ulema were divided into two fronts: one under the leadership of Ayatollah Muhammad Naini who had favoured constitutionalism and Shaikh Fazlollah Noori who opposed it. The pro-Constitutionalists argued that, in the absence of the 12th Imam, since it was impossible to have a just Islamic government, the alternative was to impose Constitutional checks on the absolute power of the rulers. Meanwhile, the anti-Constitutionists proposed that the true Constitution was the Quran and the Sunnah. They refuted the idea of introduction of Constitutional set-up on the ground that it would be a tricky cover for introducing more European domination.⁶ The Constitutionalists

5. Azar Tabari, n.1, P. 55.

6. Michael Fisher, Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution, Cambridge, 1980), P. 151. Also see V.A. Martin, "The Constitutionalist Argument of Shaikh Fazlallah Nuri", Middle Eastern Studies (London), No. 2, Vol. 22, April 1986, pp. 181 - 96.

earned a short victory and Noori was hanged by them in 1909 and Muhammad Ali Shah was about to bring the proposed Constitution. But the Russian invasion of northern Iran and the establishment of a republic in the occupied Gilan territory diffused the movement prompting Syed Kazim Yazdi, the then leading religious authority (Marja'-e- Taqlid), to ask for a withdrawal of the ulema from political arena.⁷

Reza Shah's seizure of power in 1921 and the building up of a centralized military state was a major event in the sense that it paved the way for the development of a modern Iranian nation. His efforts to project the Persian identity in opposition to Islamic identity and various 'modernisation' programmes like the expansion of the authority of the Justice Ministry at the expense of the traditional shariat code, expansion of secular school system, enforcement of European dressing and unveiling of women etc, antagonized the ulema. A section of the clergy, under the leadership of Ayatollah Muhammad Taqi Baqi and Great Ayatollah Husayn Tabatabai Qomi, actively engaged themselves in resisting the Shah's modernisation programme. Nevertheless, by the end of 40s, as a result of the various official

7. Said Ameer Arjomand, "Traditionalism in 20th Century Iran", in S.A. Arjomand, ed., From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam (London, 1984), P. 203

administrative measures, the ulema were reduced to the position of "a declassé stratum".⁸

Threatened by the alleged presence in Iran of Germans and their supporters in the armed forces, the Allies forced Reza Shah to abdicate and placed his young son, Mohammad Reza, on the throne in 1941. In the following years, Shi'i Islam had to face attacks from another quarter also. The challenge came from the idea of religious modernism propounded by Ahmad Kasravi, Shariat Sangelaji and others. Ruhollah Khomeini's first major appearance in the Iranian political scenario was in this context. He emerged as a strong defender of Shi'i traditionalism and the ruhaniyyat (the clergy). In his Kashf al-Asrar (The Discovery of Secrets) which was written as a polemical rejoinder to Asrar-e Hezar Saleh (The Secrets of Thousand Years) by Ali Akbar Hakamizadeh, Khomeini strongly rebuked the charges made on traditional Shi'i Islam by the modernist school.⁹ The main feature of Khomeini's tract is that it put a systematic and logical presentation of his case rather than an obscurantist attempt to defend the traditional values for the sake of merely revering the precedents and

8. Shahrough Akhavi, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran: Clergy-State Relations in the Pahlavi Period (Albany, 1980), P. 132.

9. For a synoptic account of this work see Tabari, n.1, PP. 61-64.

the set values.¹⁰

The Pan-Islamic group, the Fedayan-e Islam (the Devotees of Islam) also emerged in this period and it aimed at resisting the modernist attempt to redefine Islam. It was founded by Syed Mujtaba Nawab Safavi in 1945. The Fedayan called upon all Muslims of the world "to rise up, become alive, regain your rights".¹¹ They actively participated in anti-government agitations and adopted a violent course of action. Their political programmes ranged from pamphleteering to political assassinations. Their dissociation with Ayatollah Syed Abol Qasim Kashani and effective repressive measures by the government destroyed the Fedayan. They made a feeble reappearance towards the end of 1970s under Ayatollah Sheikh Sadeq Khalkhali, the infamous judge of the Islamic Courts.

By the end of 1940s, the level of ulema's engagement in political activities reached such an extent that the leading Ayatollah Hosain Borujerdi had to call a conference of the ulema to deal with the issue. The conference repeated Ayatollah Yazdi's fatwa in 1911, prohibiting all kind of individual participation in politics.¹² But the above fatwa was not effective in the vibrant political atmosphere

10. See Arjomand, n. 7, P. 208.

11. Farhad Kazemi, "The Fedayan-e Islam: Fanatism, Politics and Terror", in Arjomand, n. 7, P. 161.

12. Edward Mortimer, Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam (London, 1982), P. 311.

caused by the call for nationalisation of the oil wealth. Projecting the demand for nationalisation as a crusade against infidel foreigners, a large section of ulema - Ayatollah Kashani being chief among them joined the national mainstream. But Musaddiq's secularist orientation, alleged leftist sympathy, and insistence on more power to the Prime Minister, etc, compelled most of them to part with him.

After the recapture of power with the CIA help, the Shah tried to maintain good relationship with the ulema. In this period, as it is observed by Akhavi, "it was Qum that was exercising a studied neglect of Tehran and Tehran that seemed in need of wooing Qum".¹³ But the relationship was changed by the end of 1950s when the Shah had consolidated his power and began to propose new modernization programmes in the teeth of clergy's opposition. The new land reform bill, intended to divide large estates to be distributed among the landless peasants was such a proposal. Accounting the bill as an attempt to destroy the religious endowment and church property, the ulema started an uproar against the bill. The leading Ayatollah Borujerdi proclaimed the proposed bill as contrary to the Shariah.¹⁴ In face of the mounting pressures, the Shah withheld the bill temporarily.

With the launching of the White Revolution (Engelab -e Safid) in the early 1960s, the temporary understanding between the Shah

13. Akhavi, n. 8, P. 73.

14. Ibid., P. 91.

and the ulema came to an end. The political upsurge that followed was significant in two aspects. First, Khomeini emerged as a charismatic and uncompromising leader of the opposition front. This was due to the fact that while the ulema had begun the agitation mainly because of the introduction of the land reform bill Khomeini, rather keeping silent on that issue, focussed the attention on subjects having a wider appeal.¹⁵ His criticism was centered on subjects such as: the autocratic rule and violation of the Constitution; the proposal to grant capitulatory rights to American advisors the contract of a \$200-million deal with the USA for the purchase of weapons; and, above all, the new friendship with Israel.¹⁶ Such a wider dimension to the attacks helped Khomeini to bring even the secular forces, especially the powerful students wing, under his leadership.¹⁷

Secondly, the vibrant political upsurge was "a kind of dress rehearsal for the 1978-79 Revolution".¹⁸ The demonstrations that spread throughout the main cities of Iran after the arrest of Khomeini were an expression of popular solidarity and readiness to fight with the dictatorial regime. In the tussle between the government forces and the Ashura marchers and in the riots that followed reportedly thousands were killed.

15. See William M. Floor, "The Revolutionary Character of the Wishful Thinking or Reality?", in Keddie, no.1, P. 84, fn. 47 and Tabari; n.1, P. 66

16. Ervand Abrahamian, Iran Between Two Revolutions (London 1982), 425.

17. Tabari; n.1, P. 70.

18. Mortimer, n.12, P. 317.

Though Khomeini was deported from Iran to Turkey and then to Najaf in Iraq, there "he was to prove much more dangerous than when he was inside the country."¹⁹ He sharpened attack on the Shah comparing him to Yazid, the most villainous character in Shi'i history and urged the overthrow of the Shah's regime. Henceforth, in a series of lectures to religious students, he set forth the new theory of Velayat-e Faqih. In this Khomeini developed the Shi'i traditionalist concepts on the nature of the government in the occultation period. Denying any place for monarchy in Islam, Khomeini proposed that faquihs should be entrusted with the full responsibility of the business of government in an Islamic polity.

Besides the dynamic leadership of Khomeini as a political activist and theoretician, two other factors also helped in radicalising the traditional Islam into a liberation force in the later seventies. One was the senior intellectual activity which centered around the study of Islam in a new light: the ideologization of Islam. Earlier, Ayatollah Borujerdi's efforts to build up "a network for the dissemination of religious knowledge throughout Iran"²⁰ and Ayatollah Taleqani's combined efforts with Ustad Taqi Shariati (the father of Ali Shariati) and Mehdi Bazargan under platforms like the National Resistance Movement and the Freedom Movement, aimed at "presenting Islam in a modern light"²¹ had prepared the

19. Malise Ruthven, Islam in the World (New York, 1984), pp. 339-40.

20. Hamid Algar, "Iran and Shiism", in Kalim Siddiqui, ed, The Islamic Revolution (London, 1980), p. 12.

21. Suroosh Irfani, Iran's Islamic Revolution (London, 1983), p. 138.

ground for such an approach.

The launching of the journal Goftar-e Mah (The Month's Discourse) and its public discussion forum in Teharan in 1961, provided a meeting place for the intellectuals of both the clergy and the laymen. One of the main topics of these discussions was "the need to replace the central importance of fiqh in the madrash curricula with akhlaq (ethics), aqa'id (ideology) and falsafah (philosophy)"²². Ayatollahs Mortaza Motahhari, Mohammad Beheshti and likeninded ulema also emphasised the need to develop a religious outlook on social reality.

The opening up of the Dar-al-Tabligh al-Islami (Institute for the Propagation of Islam) in Qom and Husseiniya-e Ershad, the religious foundation in Tehran in 1965, speeded up the Islamic intellectual activity. The return of Ali Shariati from Paris, acted as a catalyst in this brewing process. Later, when Shariati joined the Ershad Foundation, it gained the uppermost attraction among the intellegentsia and in time "his name became synonymous with the institution".²³

The second one was a parallel development in the social fabric: the high rate of penetration and popularity of religiosity. This was well attested by said Said Amir Arjomand.²⁴ Religious books appearing

22. Akhavi, n. 8, p. 119.

23. S. Akhavi, "Shariati's Social Thought", in Keddie, n.1, p. 127.

24. For data tables, see Arjomand, n.7, pp. 214-17.

in Iran during the decade 1954-55 to 1963-64 amounted to an average 10.1% of the total titles of books published during the time. This increased to 33.5% during 1974-75, showing increased penetration of Islamic themes in society. The number of mosques in all Iranian towns increased to 5389 in 1973-74 compared to 3653 in 1962-63 and in Tehran alone, by 1975-76, there were 1140 mosques. Also, the number of haj pilgrims went up from 27,000 in 1970-71 to 71,851 in 1975-76.

By the late seventies, the stage was set ready for the popular outburst against the Shah's regime. At this juncture, Iranian polity had been a typical case where neocolonial dependency syndrome was clearly evident.²⁵ The heavy dependence - economic, political and military - on imperialism, the various 'modernization and secularization' programmes carried under dubious imperialist schemes, the megalomaniac attempt of the ruler to create charisma in the absence of popular legitimacy, absence of political freedom and heavy reliance on oppressive state instruments to curb dissidents without the least

25. For an account of the dependency nature of Iranian economy and its neocolonial character, see Bizhan Jazani, Capitalism and Revolution in Iran (London, 1980), Bryan S. Turner, "Capitalism and Feudalism: Iran," in B S. Turner, ed, Capitalism and Class in the Middle East; Theories of Social Change and Economic Development (London, 1984), PP. 153-89; and Hashim Pesaran; "The System of Development Capitalism in Pre- and Post- Revolutionary Iran", International Journal of Middle East Studies 14, 1982, PP. 501 - 22. Taking into consideration the dependency crisis and the related socio-political factors, Fred Halliday, prior to the Revolution, in a crisp analysis predicted the immediate future of Iran as an explosive one. See Fred Halliday, Iran: Dictatorship and Development (London, 1979).

concern for human rights, building of heavy military arsenal, increasing rate of inflation, presence of a large number of foreign military experts and technocrats ... etc, which are the characteristics of such a syndrome were much in the scene. Owing to these reasons, popular resentment against the Shah and the American patronage extended to him shot up to its peak. As it was later proved, there was a virtual alienation of the Shah and his regime from the majority of the cross section of Iranian populace.

But the significant character of Iranian Islamic Revolution, which distinguished it from other revolutions emerging out of the above mentioned context was its specific nature. It was not a ballot revolution, a military coup d'etat nor the culmination of a protracted guerrilla warfare. The fervent appeal of the revolution that was there on the masses at large and their enthusiastic and whole-hearted involvement throughout the era of upsurge was the unique feature of the Iranian Islamic Revolution. As Kambiz Afrachteh qualifies, it was possibly "the largest urban uprising since the French Revolution"²⁶, and this feature of massive popular involvement was provided by the vehicle of Islam.²⁷

The death of Khomeini's son, Mustafa, allegedly at the hands of the SAVAK, and the appearance of a shady article entitled "Iran and the Black and Red Reactionaries" in a national newspaper, Ettelaat

26. Kambiz Afrachteh; "Iran", in M. Ayoob, ed., The Politics of Islamic Reassertion (New Delhi, 1982), P. 91.

27. Asaf Hussain, Islamic Movements in Egypt, Pakistan and Iran: An Annotated Bibliography (London, 1983), P. 87.

intended at maligning the fame of Khomeini and the resulting mass uproar precipitated the alliance of the secular and religious elements.²⁸ "Marg bar Shah" (Death to the Shah), thus became the unison cry of the opposition. In this phase, the mosque as the historical center of opposition to the state and ulema as the vanguard of the resistance movement acquired a pivotal position.

Through various sermons and pamphlets the theme of the ultimate victory of the solidarity of the mustaz'fin and Islam was widely propagated in villages.²⁹ In the Friday sermons and memorial services held to mourn the martyrs, the minber became the platform to propagate political message. That the religious marches held on auspicious days like Id-i-Fetr, Ashura, Tasu'a, etc, were occasions for massive show of protest and antipathy against the regime.³⁰ The taziya passion plays and the rawzeh songs with the call that "Every day is Ashura, Every place is Karbala", assumed a new meaning when the Shah was depicted as Yazid, the arch tyrant of Shi'i history. And Karbala paradigm was invoked as an act of revolt against injustice rather than that of lamentation. Mary Hegland rightly reasons :

28. A.H.H. Abidi, "The Iranian Revolution: Its Origins and Dimensions", International Studies (New Delhi), Vol. 18, No. 2, April-June 1979, P. 136.

29. For an interesting study on this aspect see Shaul Bakhash, "Sermon, Revolutionary Pamphleteering and Mobilisation: Iran, 1978", in Arjomand, n. 7, PP. 177-94.

30. In December 1978, fearing the impact it could make, the leading Ayatollah Shariatmadari proclaimed that none needed permission to commemorate Imam Hussein's martyrdom. See Dilip Hiro, Iran Under the Ayatollahs (London, 1985), P. 84.

→ Because of the intermingling of religion and politics in such a nation, efforts made by the authorities to block the massive protest marches was ineffective. For instance, when General Azhari banned the Ashura marches

Such rituals provided confidence and faith in an eventual victory, helped recruit new members to the movement, inspired feelings of unity and cohesion, instilled stronger commitment and determination, and presented such an overwhelming show of strength in the war of nerves and morale that unarmed masses decimated a military giant.³¹

In short, the 'six Ms' which A.H.H. Abidi speaks of - Mehdi, Mullah, Masjid, Minber, Mustaz'af and Martyrdom - provided the necessary platforms and motifs for the unique revolutionary mobilization.³² As a result, the numerous local mosques, madrassahs and Hosayniyyehs (religious centres) and the attached Komitehs (revolutionary cells) became the nerve centres and Qom emerged as the citadel of the revolutionary movement. All these determined the future course of Iranian politics in a decisive way.

After a series of desperate attempts to sustain the Peacock Throne, at last, the Shah had to leave the country on 16 January 1979. Thus, the two thousand and five hundred years' old monarchical rule in Iran came to an end. Within a fortnight, Ayatollah Khomeini arrived in Tehran in the midst of an ecstatic and jubilant crowd. Mohammed Haikal narrates the occasion as one of "unbridled rejoicing, for which there has probably been no parallel in modern world",

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31. Mary Hegland "Two Images of Hussain: Accommodation and Revolution in an Iranian Village"; in Keddie, n.1, p. 234-35.
32. A.H.H. Abidi; "Islamic Revival in Iran", Seminar (New Delhi), No. 290, October 1983, p. 27. For an exclusive analysis on mass participation and mobilization in the Iranian Revolution, also see Jerrold D. Green, Revolution in Iran: The Politics of Counter-Mobilization (New York, 1982), pp. 1-13, 76 ff.

and speculates that "if the hidden Imam had in truth reappeared after eleven hundred years the turn out could hardly have been greater".³³

The revolutionary forces were now faced with the task of doing away with the remnants of the monarchical structure and that of forming new revolutionary institutions capable of representing the will of the people as well as providing the basic framework for realizing their long-cherished aspirations.

But once the immediate objective of the revolution, that of deposing of the Shah, was carried out, there cropped up among the claimants to the success of the revolution, a number of issues regarding the future course, like the nature of the political system to be implemented, reforms to be followed, role of ulema in the governing of the country, disarmament of the revolutionary fighters, sharing of power ... etc. In this confronting stage, with the legitimacy and influence attained through the revolutionary struggle, the Islamic segment led by Khomeini "had little difficulty in assuming the reins of powers."³⁴ The effective management of the situation was made possible by the concerted and deliberate attempts by Khomeini and his followers in doing away with the liberal elements and the establishment of their overall control over the whole political setup.

33. Mohammed Heikal, The Return of the Ayatollah (London, 1981), P. 177.

34. A.H.H. Abidi, "Iran : A Sincere Exercise", World Focus (New Delhi), May 1980, P. 10.

When nationwide referendum was conducted on the future system of the government, Khomeini was able to shape things through his adamant insistence on an Islamic Republic in such a manner that the people had to opt for the same. In the elections to the Council of Experts for ratifying the new Constitution, the religiously oriented IRP established itself as the dominant political organization in the country and managed to gain the majority of seats. Arguably, one of the reasons for the seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran by the "Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line" without the knowledge of the PGOI was also to delink the liberal elements from the power structure and to demonstrate that whatever the radical Islamic elements had in mind would be implemented. The immediate result was the collapse of the PGOI. After overcoming the initial riddles, the Islamic Constitution was finally promulgated, thereby orienting the whole political process of the Republic on Islamic lines.³⁵ As per the Constitution, the new Islamic Republic was duly established with Abolhasan Banisadr as its first President.

The most important characteristic of the Islamic Constitution

35 For details concerning the debate over the Constitution and the manoeuvres made by Beheshti group to facilitate drafting and ratification of the Constitution see Shaul Bakhash, Reign of the Ayatollah : Iran and the Islamic Revolution (London, 1985), PP. 71 -88.

is its originality as a politico-legal code.³⁶ The preamble of the Constitution claims that it is "based upon the Islamic principles and precepts which reflect the true aspirations of the Islamic community."³⁷ Avowing the Khomeinian dictum, Article 5 of the Constitution states that until the arrival of the 12th Imam from Occultation, "the leadership of the affairs and guidance of the people" is entrusted with the jurisprudent.³⁸ Thus, the jurisprudent occupies the apex of the hierarchical structure consisting of the Assembly of Experts, Council of Guardians, Majlis, and various other institutions. Principle 11 asserts that the Republic is dutybound to pursue a policy for the overall integration of the Islamic ummah.

The Islamic elements following Khomeini continued to exercise a firm grip over the secular-liberal elements even after the establishment of the Republic, so as to mould the new institutions and roles in an Islamic line. This was manifested in the removal Banisadr from Presidentship, gradual absorption of clerics to President-

36. Sepehr Zabih contends that it has an indirect influence of the Constitution of Fifth French Republic. See Sepehr Zabih, Iran Since the Revolution (London, 1982), P. 38. for a textual analysis of the Islamic Constitution, see *ibid*, PP. 35-40.

37. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Tehran, n.d.), P. 22. Fully and partially the text contains fifteen Verses from the Quran.

38. *Ibid*, P. 31.

ship and other important positions, changes of Foreign Ministers in quick succession and the assumption of power by IRP men in various spheres of the political structure, etc. In short, the Islamic Republic was transformed to use a term coined by P.J. Vatikiotis, a clerisocracy, "a one party fundamentalist theocracy".³⁹

By late 1985 with the appointment of Ayatollah Husain Ali Montezari as the successor to Imam Khomeini, many predictions were blown into the wind that the Tehran regime would be shortlived.⁴⁰ The Islamic system has been apparently stabilized and quite logically the stage continues to be conducive for the Islamic factor to play a major role in the foreign policy sphere as well.

39. P.J. Vatikiotis, "The Rise of Clerisocracy", in P.J. Vatikiotis, ed., Arab and Regional Politics in the Middle East (London, 1984), P. 68.

40 For instance, Godfrey H. Jansen, the author of the famous book entitled Militant Islam, forecast as early as 1980 that "the regime would collapse within two years". See G.H. Jansen, "Militant Islam: Present State and "Future Possibilities"; Islam in World Politics, PSIS Occasional Papers, No 2, October 1980, P. 31.

CHAPTER II
AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI'S WORLD VIEW

The Tehran regime constantly maintains that the posture the Islamic Republic of Iran took towards the external political milieu is in accordance with the principles of the revolution. Since Ayatollah Khomeini has been the leader and the chief architect of the Islamic Republic, it is his world view which has become the central pillar of post-revolutionary Iran's foreign policy. But every political ideology has its own historical setting and legacy and Khomeinian vision is also not an exception to this general principle.

It is pointed out by M.C. Bateson et. al. that "good vs evil"- in the form of a conflict between a pure core and a corrupted periphery - typifies a specific characteristic of Iranian political culture.¹ The political psyche that developed from this apprehension motivated the identification of external powers that dominated the country as channels of evil and corruption. The absence of direct territorial invasion by colonial powers provided a new dimension to this phenomenon. It led to a search for finding out the ways and means by which imperialists managed the plundering and exercised their domination.

Jalal Aal-e Ahmad's "Westoxication theory" (gharbzadegi) was an out come of this enquiry.² A champion of progressive secularism,

1. M.C. Bateson et. al., "Safayi Batin: A Study of the Inter-relation of a Set of Iranian Ideal Character Types" in L. Carl Brown and Norman Izkowitz, eds, Psychological Dimension of Near Eastern States (Princeton, 1977), pp. 257-73.

2. This term was popularised by Jalal Aal-e Ahmad which was connotated from the Persian term Gharbzadaha. Different

Aal-e Ahmad contended that the sole reason for Iranian society's malady was the Western influence in various fields of society. The superficial imitation of Western ways, he argued, roots out Iranian society from its soil. Though he failed in reaching the popular pulse, mainly because of his unsympathetic attitude towards the ulema, the endurance of his postulation was later proved when Khomeini also used the same term Gharbzadegi in describing the alienation created among the Iranian masses by Western influence.

Another thinker, the prolific historian Ahmad Kasravi, contended that the political and social disunity among Iranians was the sole reason for the weak stature of the Iranian nation. He criticized the ulema for keeping the people as a sect (kish), rather than the true followers of the Islamic ideology (din). According to Kasravi, the din must be that system of thought which "teaches the people the true meaning of life and gives them the practical code of ethics".³ Traditionalist Shi'ism, by means of its sectarian attitude, was keeping away the believers from the national mainstream. Religious reforms

translations are given to this term. For instance Nikki Keddie and A.H.H. Abidi use "Westoxication", Hamid Algar uses "xenomaniac" and Edward Mortimer uses "Westities". But R.K. Ramazani suggests that "hesperomania" would be a more accurate translation. See, Ruhollah Ramazani, "Iran: The Islamic Cultural Revolution", in Philip H. Stoddard et. al, eds, Change and the Muslim World (Syracuse, 1981), p. 42.

3. Quoted in "Kasravi: The Integrative Nationalist of Iran", in Elie Kedourie and Sylvia Haim, eds, Towards the Modern Iran: Studies in Thoughts, Politics and Society (London, 1980), p. 110.

and "social solidarism", Kasravi reasoned, were the nostrum for attaining the national glory which was eroded by tribal, linguistic and religious sectarian attitudes. As we have seen earlier, Khomeini's first appearance in Iranian political scenario was to repudiate Kasravi's criticism of Shi'i traditionalism.

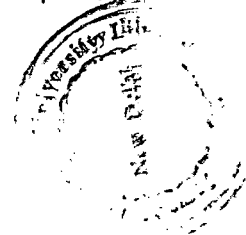
The absence of direct territorial invasion of Iran by colonial powers led to a different form of political struggle, unlike the anti-colonial national liberation movements of Asia and Africa, where the evil external forces were in direct confrontation with the people. Its emphasis was economic self-reliance and political independence from external political pressures. The Musaddeq interlude of 1951-53- the nationalisation of foreign-owned oil companies and designing of a progressive foreign policy of "negative equilibrium" (Muvazeneh-e Manfi) - is a landmark in the political history of Iran. Musaddeq's efforts helped Iran to have a place in modern world history as the first third-world country to launch a major political war against a super power's domination. But it was a short-lived rebellion against the unjust world order. The overthrow of Musaddeq by the CIA and the gradual consolidation of power by the Shah put Iran once again under indirect super power domination. The legacy of Musaddeq continued as a political stream under the banner of the National Front, but it never enjoyed the same mass appeal and enthusiasm as in the early fifties. Nevertheless, it can be claimed that Musaddeq's independent foreign policy posture had contributed in its own way for the later development of the "Neither East nor West" policy.

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The progressive secular trait of political struggle mostly attracted and influenced only the elite section and it was almost handicapped in mobilizing the masses on a long run. On the other hand, the religious opposition to imperialism gained a greater appeal among the masses. The legitimacy and charisma of the religious leaders and their capability in coupling the religious and political sentiments contributed to the success of this trait.

As we have seen earlier, the victory of the Usuli School over the Akhbari school on the ijtihad / taqlid controversy during the nineteenth century reshuffled the political power structure of Iran. The new position of the ulema - empowered to interpret the Law and that which ought to be obeyed by the laymen - had given sanctity to the clergymen to interfere and intervene in the social and political affairs of the country. The successful launching of the Tobacco Protest Movement in 1891-92 was a significant episode denoting the nature of command that the ulema enjoyed over the masses. Later, in the Constitutional Revolution also, the clergy played a very vital role determining the course of events. The continuing themes of these political protests by the clergy were focussed on : (a) staunch opposition to foreign power dominance; and (b) an appeal for the revival of Islam. And those religious leaders who engaged in politics enjoyed the backing of a good number of followers who were ignited with political and religious zeal.

Ayatollah Kashani was such a fire-brand leader whom Yann

Richard called the "Precursor of the Islamic Revolution".⁴ Kashani was a strong advocate of the unity between religion and politics. He held that anti-colonial struggle is a religious duty of the believers. His call for the solidarity of Muslims and non-Muslims of Asia and Africa in the fight against imperialism⁵ and his abortive attempt in 1952 to summon a World Islamic conference in Tehran⁶ were of special significance. Later, Khomeini incorporated the liberation of mustaz'afin of the whole world in his political objective, and the organizing of the annual Islamic summits became one of the main diplomatic tool of the foreign mission of Tehran.

But it was Ali Shariati, the modern Islamic scholar, who influenced the Iranian Revolution in a significant manner prompting A.H.H. Abidi to describe him as the "Ustad-e Inqilab" (the Teacher of the revolution).⁷ Having deep-rooted knowledge in the different streams of modern philosophy and personal acquaintance with the great thinkers of the time, Shariati took interest in analysing the sociological aspects of Islam rather than in the shell of jurisprudential and scholastic Islam. Using the dialectical method, he tried to reveal

4. Yann Richard, "Ayatollah Kashani : Precursor of the Islamic Republic", in Nikki R. Keddie ed., Religion and Politics in Iran: Shiism from Quietism to Revolution (New Haven, 1983), p. 101. In the post-revolutionary Iran, Kashani was projected as the real hero of the 1953 rebellion by the IRP, alluding to the struggle between the secular Banisadr and religious Mohammad Beheshti.

5. Ibid, p. 123.

6. Ibid, p. 112.

7. A.H.H. Abidi, "Dr. Ali Shariati: The Man and His Ideas", Islam

the hidden structures of the scriptures and rituals and remoulded and reshaped rusted Islam into a glittering intellectual weapon fit for its contemporary task.

Shariati distinguished the Islam which became an instrument in the hands of the ruling class for legitimizing their power and the Islam of the poor and the oppressed.

Both are Islam, but there is a difference between the two. One is the Islam of Caliphate, of the palace, and of the rulers. The other is the Islam of the people, of the exploited and the poor⁸

Recalling the history of the Safavi dynasty and Ali family, Shariati labelled the former as 'Safavi Shiism' or 'Black Shiism' promoted by the monarchy and the establishment, and the latter as 'Alavi Shiism' or 'Red Shiism' which stands for revolution and, thereby, he clearly demarcated the Islam of corruption and tyranny and the Islam of purity and militancy. It is interesting to note that while his attack on reactionary clergymen, whom he described as "the compromising men of religious bazar",⁹ invited obstreperous attack from a large section of the ulema, Khomeini preferred to be rather silent on the

and the Modern Age (New Delhi), 13-2, 1982, p. 97.

8. Quoted in E. Abrahamian, Iran Between two Revolutions (London, 1982), p. 470.
9. Hamid Algar, "Islam as Ideology - the Thought of Ali Shariati", in Siddique, ed., Islamic Revolution in Iran (London, 1980), p. 42.

issue, demonstrating his characteristic political astuteness.¹⁰

Shariati asserted the humanistic dimension of Islam and as Abidi says, projected "a world view that was in harmony with the temporal spirit of contemporary societies."¹¹ In this context his reinterpretation of many religious concepts like Ummah, tawhid, shirk, poles of Abel/Caen, hijra etc. in tune with the contemporary socio-political reality, deserve attention in understanding his views on the ideal political community.

The ideal society of Islam - Ummah for Shariati is a "classless society".¹² His contention is that Ummah is specifically different from other concepts of ideal societies in the sense that :

While other expressions denoting human agglomerations have taken unity or blood or soil and sharing of material benefits as the criterion of society, Islam by choosing the world Ummah, has made intellectual responsibility and shared movements towards a common goal the basis of its social philosophy.¹³

Concerning the nature and the modality of function of the Ummah he asserts :

The political philosophy and the form of regime of the

10. Asaf Hussain, Islamic Iran : Revolution and Counter Revolution (London, 1985), p. 80.

11. Abidi, n.7, p.90.

12. Ali Shariati, On the Sociology of Islam, Hamid Algar, trans., (Aligarh, 1979), p. 119.

13. Ibid.

Ummah is not the democracy of heads, not irresponsible and directionless liberalism which is a plaything of contesting social forces, not putrid aristocracy, not anti-popular dictatorship, not a self-imposing oligarchy. It consists rather of 'purity of leadership' (not the leader for that would be fascism), committed and revolutionary leadership, responsible for the movement and faith of society on the basis of its world view and ideology ...¹⁴

Tawhid, the Islamic totality of Oneness, is the state of complete harmony with nature, man and existence, while its opposite Shirk is the realm of a multitude of contradictions. The ongoing struggle in history for Shariati is that of the conflict between the world views of Tawhid and that of Shirk, which takes place in all spheres of social and individual life.¹⁵ The ultimate triumph of the principle of Tawhid and the emergence of a society in which all contradictions are nullified, is the ideal social system which Shariati looks at.

For this, the basic dualism in human character - represented by the story of the fight between Abel and Caen in the Book - has to be understood. The pole of Abel is a representation of harmony and community life while the pole of Caen represents fascism and tyranny. Man should strive to reach the pole of Abel and thereby achieve the ideal state of Tawhid.

It is hijra, the self-transformation, the migration of man from

14. Ibid.

15. Suroosh Irfani, Revolutionary Iran : Popular Liberation or Religious Dictatorship? (London, 1982), p. 34.

the pole of Caen to Abel and society from Shirk to the manifestation of Tawhid which should give meaning and challenge to existence. Life becomes a process of 'becoming' rather than 'to be'. The process of change from clay to spirit and from base character to sublimated character transforms the individual essence. This higher level of awareness provides a new social role to man - "the responsible rebel", a rebel willing to carry on the fight with conviction and ready to shed blood till the last drop. Relying on the saying of Imam Ali- "life is verily faith (aqideh) and fight (jjihad)" - Shariati calls for the unity of conviction and effort as well as theory and practice.¹⁶

Shariati also analyzed concepts like jjihad, martyrdom, Haj etc. and tried to give them a new meaning in the contemporary context. Invoking the Karbala episode, he demonstrated that fight against injustice and submission only to justice is the true path of Islam. Thus, advocating a 'Red Shiism', Shariati insisted that the duty of the believer is to enter into a jjihad for the creation of a society based on justice. The arrival of the hidden Imam can be made possible only through this way.¹⁷

Shariati was a critic of both Western bourgeois democracy, and Marxian 'scientific socialism'.¹⁸ He questioned the validity of the

16. Hamid Enayat, Modern Islamic Political Thought (London, 1982), p. 155.

17. S. Akhavi, "Shariati's Social Thought", in Keddi, n.4, p. 141

18. See Ali Shariati, Marxism and other Western Fallacies - An Islamic Critique, R. Campbell, trans., (Berkeley, 1980).

Western classification of political systems into categories such as modern / traditional systems. His contention is that such a categorisation stems from an ethnocentric and biased notion of 'development'. In the same way he disapproved Marxism due to its undue weightage given to the material base of society and hence disregarding the spiritual realm, a lively part of human personality and society. Further, he rejected the very basic Marxist presumption of an ongoing conflict in nature; i.e., the emergence of new contradictions even after the formation of a classless society. As Hamid Enayat says, by projecting the idea that the 'system of unitarianism' would have an inevitable victory over the conflicts, "Shariati replaces Marxian determinism with the Shii millenarian rehabilitation of the universe".¹⁹

But Shariati had amalgamated and incorporated many Marxist and especially neo-Marxist concepts and terminologies in his domain of discourse. For instance, he translated Franz Fanon's famous third world treatise, Les Damnes de la Terre in 1971 using the graphic Quranic term mustaz'afin meant as "the disinherited".²⁰ This term, with its catching appeal among the poor and the oppressed and its religious allusion, enjoyed a prominent position in Khomeini's revolutionary discourse, in the later period. Shariati became the first

19. Enayat, n. 16, p. 158.

20. The English version of this book is entitled as "The Wretched of the Earth"; for a recent reprint, see Franz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (London, 1980).

Islamic writer of Iran to present the Islamic theological doctrine as a Jahan-bini (world view), a term coined originally by Iranian Marxists in the early forties.²¹ As Mangol Bayat Philip points out, while rejecting the traditionalist, Western and Marxist theories on the ideological front, Shariati successfully made use of those frame-works to built up his own theory.²²

Though Shariati was in such a fashion influenced by Marxian dialectics, existentialist philosophy, New Left school etc., the main emphasis of his argument i.e., to return to the roots, adopting the Prophet's methodology of retaining the old rituals while transforming it with a revolutionary meaning, is an original contribution. He appealed that the Muslim world should search 'the inside' rather than 'the outside'. If each believer and thereby the community en masse follows the model of Hussain at Karbalā against the tyrant Yazid, it would be possible to raise the banner of revolutionary Islam, giving up the clutches of fatalist Islam and a society based on justice can be formed. At the same time, for Shariati, "Hussain's action was a prototype for all societies and all cultures".²³ Therefore, on a broader level, the same theme appeals to the people of the Third World, as a call to regain their identity and to reject external

21. Enayat, n. 16, p. 155.

22. Mangol Bayat Philip, "Shiism in Contemporary Iranian Politics: The Case of Ali Shariati", in Kedourie and Haim, n.3, p. 166.

23. Akhavi, n. 17., p. 140.

domination. In short, to a considerable extent the doctrinal base for 'Neither East nor West' policy could be traced to Shariati's Thought. And his yearning for the liberation of mustaz'afin of the whole world put him on the esteemed position of the Great Apostle of "Islamic Liberation Theology."²⁴ Furthermore, from the point of view of the Islamic Republic and Khomeini's leadership, the following observation made by Hamid Algar is not at all an exaggeration. In his words :

People were ready to participate in the revolution under the leadership of Imam Khomeini to a large degree because of the influence upon them of Dr. Shariati.²⁵

The ideas emerging from different personalities and movements mentioned above cannot be considered as isolated streams of thought. It was part of the struggle launched by a Third World country against super power dominance and tyrannical rule. Quite naturally, Ayatollah

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24. Shariati's concern for the mustaz'afin is well expressed in an essay titled as "Reflections of a concerned Muslim : On the plight of Oppressed People". This is a poetical account of identifying the oppressed people with those who engaged in building the greater Pyramids and later were buried collectively in a ditch. The English translation of this essay appeared first in the reputed left magazine Race and Class in 1979; Mansour Farhang, ed., "Resisting the Pharaohs : Ali Shariati on Oppression", Race and Class, (London) Vol. 21, n.1, 1979, pp. 31-40; later it was included as the first chapter in the voluminous work Voices of the Oppressed, Richard Falk, ed., (Colorado, 1982).
25. Hamid Algar, "Iran and Shiism", in Kalim Siddiqui, n. 9, p. 49.

Khomeini's world view which forms the essence of Islamic Republic's ideological stand point in regard to its foreign policy, necessarily incorporates consciously or unconsciously, and due to contextual reasons, the ideological development that preceded.²⁶

Politicisation of Islam is the core of Khomeinism.²⁷ Projecting Islam as a socio-political, spiritual and jurisprudential system, capable of challenging the threats and evil designs of the super powers over the vast majority of the people, Khomeini proclaims that a world order based on unity and justice can be brought about only by adhering to the teachings of the Holy Quran in the proper way. As is contended by Asaf Hussain, acceptance of the authority of God alone and none else, makes Khomeini's world view of "vast implications for

26. This is a topic still to be investigated in detail. For instance, though apparent similarities and differences could be envisaged in Shariati's and Khomeini's modes of thought, detail study has been not done so far. In his slightly polemical study, Mangol Bayat Philip asserts that "Shariati's view of Islam fundamentally differed from Khomeini's". Mangol Bayat, "Islam in Pahlavi and post-Pahlavi Iran: A Cultural revolution", in J.L. Esposito ed., Islam and Development : Religion and Social Political Change (New York, 1981), p. 103. Meanwhile, Asaf Hussain is of the opinion that "Khomeini's and Shariati's ideologies of Islam complemented each other"; Hussain, n.10, p.67.

27. For an excellent analysis of Khomeinian thought, see Gregory Rose, "Velayat-e Faqih and the Recovery of Islamic Identity in the Thought of Ayatollah Khomeini", in Keddie, n.4, pp. 166-188; Michael Fisher provides a critical study of Khomeini, in reference to his psychological traits, in "Imam Khomeini: Four Levels of Understanding", in John L. Esposito, ed., Voices of Resurgent Islam (Oxford, 1983), pp. 150-74.

international politics."²⁸ Relying on the ultimate victory of the principle of Tawhid, he envisions an Islamic world order in place of the present one which he picturises as the creation of "limited minds."²⁹ The concept of an Islamic Ummah under an Imamate, staunch anti-imperialism and anti-zionism, negation of the Western and Eastern political systems and thoughts, etc., are the main components of his world view.

The basic premise of Khomeini's politicisation of Islam is the rejection of the distinction between spiritual and mundane activities. Such a distinction in Khomeinian view is contrary to the basic precept of Islam and is nothing but a play created by the enemies of Islam. The believer should strive to transplant values which Islam speaks of into real life ; it should not be allowed to remain as an alien ideal. In other words, for Khomeini church and state are inseparable. That is why he denounces the advocates of the separation of religion and politics. He asks whether religion was separate from politics at the time of the Prophet :

Did the Prophet Mohammed keep out of politics... If he had been no more than the messenger of God he would

28. Hussain n. 26, p. 68.

29. R.K. Ramazani, "Khumayni's Islam in Iran's Foreign policy", Adeed Dawisha, ed., Islam in Foreign Policy (London, 1983), p. 17.

have delivered God's Book, the Quran, to men and then disappeared. But he was told by God to fight and plan. He organized society and acted as the judge in the community. He commanded armies in the battle, dispatched ambassadors, signed treaties. To say that religion can be separated from the business of government is nonsense.³⁰

At the same time, Khomeini gives a very radical interpretation of Islam as a religion. For him

Islam is the religion of militant individuals who are committed to truth and justice. It is the religion of those who desire freedom and independence. It is the school of those who struggle against imperialism.³¹

In congruence with his logic of the rejection of contradiction between civil and spiritual life, Khomeini rejects the salience of the political boundaries within the great Islamic community. He perceives the world in a supranational framework, as an Ummah composed of the entire Islamic community without any racial, class, linguistic, national or other sorts of division. And citing the saying of Fatimah Az-Zahra that "the Imamate exists for the sake of preserving order among the Muslims and replacing their disunity with unity", Khomeini propounds that the Ummah under an Imamate would only serve the purpose of establishing the ideal world order based on unity and

30. Mohammed Heikal, The Return of the Ayatollah : The Iranian Revolution from Mossadeq to Khomeini (London, 1981), p. 137

31. Imam Khomeini, Islam and Revolution, Hamid Algar, trans, (Berkeley, 1981), p. 28.

justice.³² Reflecting on the present state of the Islamic Ummah, he accuses the Taghut - the despots and the tyrants - and the imperialists as responsible for hindering the natural growth of the Ummah. The early attempts by Imam Ali to establish and consolidate the Imamate were spoiled by the Umayyids and the Abbasids who had replaced the Imamate with non-Islamic forms of government which were systems of Kufr. Even then, the Ummah did not perish but remained intact like under the tyrannical rule of the Ottomans though without an Imamate. At this stage, the imperialists appeared on the scene with the desire to encroach on the Islamic lands. Finding it difficult to fulfill their aim, the imperialists engaged in the process of destabilising the Islamic unity and they successfully carried out the fragmentation of the Ummah by imposing upon the people artificially created states and agent regimes. Khomeini continues his argument that it is because of the handiwork of tyrants who followed the path of Shirk and imperialists who ran after avaricious motives that the Ummah under an Imamate could not take root and grow. The non-Islamic forms of government are still persisting and the Islamic land is fragmented into many divisions. And, above all, a part of the holy land is under the enemy's hand.

It is mainly from this reading of the causes for the weak stature of the Ummah in the present period that Khomeini's staunch anti-imperialism stems up. In the very beginning itself, the expansionist imperialism tried to destroy Islam since

32. Ibid, p. 49.

they felt the major setback in the path of their materialist ambition and the chief threat to their political power was nothing but Islam and its ordinance.³³

Sensing the threat from Islam, the enemies devised various means to get rid of the potency of Islam such as : creation of different states, enthroning and supporting their agents as rulers promotion of Zionism and establishment of Israel in the heartland of Islam, misinterpretation of the Quran, exaggeration of Sunni-Shi'i divisions, establishment of oriental schools to propagate doubts about the capability of Islam to deal with modern issues, insistence on the separation of church and state, etc. along with economic, military and cultural penetration on a large scale. Khomeini laments that the apathy and negligence of Muslims helped the phenomenal growth of imperialism to spread like a cancer and to weaken the whole Ummah to such a pitiable stage, whereby

the foul claws of imperialism have clutched at the heart of the lands of the people of the Quran, with our national wealth and resources being devoured by imperialism despite our supposed ownership of them, with the poisonous culture of imperialism penetrating to the depths of towns and villages throughout the Muslim world, displacing the culture of the Quran...³⁴.

Khomeini, in many of his pronouncements, interchanges the words 'super power' and 'imperialist' to club together the USA and USSR. Because of the context of his saying i.e., the 'Great Satan' America being in direct confrontation with Iran, his attacks on Soviet Russia

33. Ibid, p.28.

34. Ibid, p.195.

are not so vociferous and frequent. This can mislead to the assumption that his criticism of both the super powers is equivocal in tone. For instance, Robert G. Darius observes that in Khomeinian eye "the USA is an oppressor, hegemonist, and imperialist power, whereas those adjectives are not used to describe the Soviet Union."³⁵ But an examination of various statements shows that, at least, in the theoretical front, Khomeinian world view contains an even opposition to both the super powers. For example :

We are at war with international communism no less than we are struggling against the global plunders of the West, headed by America, Zionism and Israel.³⁶

We are decisively determined not to compromise with super powers. We will not go under the American or Soviet domination. We are Muslims and we want to live as Muslims.³⁷

Again,

"America is worse than Britain. Britain is worse than America. Russia is worse than both. Each is worse than the other. Each is more unholy than the other. But,

35. Robert G. Darius, "Khomeini's Policy towards the Middle East", in R.G. Darius et. al. eds., Gulf security in the 1980s. Perceptual and Strategic Dimension (California, 1984), p. 35. A much more harsh tone can be heard from Ashgar Ali Engineer: "Khomeini's stance is more anti-American as America supported the Shah rather than the anti-imperialist", A.A. Engineer, ed., Islam and Revolution (Delhi, 1984), p. 41, fn. 80.

36. Khomeini, n.31, p. 286.

37. Hussain, n.10, p. 71.

today, we have to deal with america."³⁸

One of the main arguments Khomeini often put against Soviet Union to show its historical enmity to Muslims is that Soviet Union did not hesitate in committing the severest sin of being a party with U.S.A. and U.K. in the formation of Israel. And as Soviet Union also keeps the ambition to attract other nations into its political system, the Islamic world becomes natural enemy in such a design.

It is to be noticed that Khomeini's opposition to USA and USSR is not merely centred at the governmental level. It rejects the system and organization of these societies too. This is made on the ground that both communist and capitalist societies "are created on materialistic bases and values."³⁹ Thus, rejecting both the East and West, Khomeini calls for organising the state and society in such a way as to serve "human development" through the path of Islam. He says :

If the Muslim states and peoples had relied on Islam instead of relying on the Eastern or Western block, had placed before their eyes the luminous and liberating teaching of the Noble Quran, and then practised those teachings they would not be enslaved today by the Zionist aggressor, terrorized by American phantoms, and at the mercy of the satanic cunningness of the Soviet Union.⁴⁰

Another striking feature of Khomeini's views on imperialism,

38. Irfani, n. 15, p. 71.

39. Kambiz Afrachteh, "Iran" in M.Ayoob, ed., The Politics of Islamic Reassertion (New Delhi, 1982), p. 109.

40. Imam Khomeini, n. 31, p. 210.

beside the dismissal of the Eastern and Western blocs and those systems in toto, is that it conceives not only the political and economic threats from the imperialists, but other forms of threat as well, mainly the cultural. Khomeini identifies the Western cultural infiltration over the Third World populace operating through different channels like education, literature, art, consumerism etc. as a great menace.⁴¹ Cultural revolution, therefore occupies a prominent position in Khomeini's anti-imperialist political programme.

Subsequently, Khomeini develops his thesis that it is imperative for the believer to launch the necessary Jihad for the liberation of the mustaz'afin and the formation of a world order based on the principle of justice, equality and freedom. According to him, when millions of people are deprived of "the smallest degree of life's pleasures and blessings" the Muslim's are duty-bound to revolt against this injustice and

to bring happiness to millions of peoples through destroying and eliminating the unjust governments and through establishing a sincere and active government.⁴²

Reflecting on the same theme he says again.

We have no alternative but to work for destroying the corrupt and corrupting system and to destroy the symbol of treason and the unjust among the rules.

41. See Oriana Fallaci, "An Interview with Khomeini", The Courier Journal, 7 July 1979.

42. Ayatollah Khomeini, Islamic Government, Joint Publication Research Service, trans, (New York, 1979), p. 28.

This is a duty that all Muslims wherever they may be are entrusted - a duty to create a victorious and triumphant Islamic political revolution.⁴³

He entrust this duty not only to "the individual Muslims wherever they are" but specifically to Iran, which is privileged with the special merit of the first and the only state which is "Islamic" in the present time, as the carrier of the 'Export of the Revolution.'⁴⁴

If the Muslims unite together and if they carry out the successful establishment of the great Ummah, he predicts that then it would be such a great power that "no world power will be able to reach that level"⁴⁵. Alluding to the nature of such a revolt Khomeini says : "you must remember that right is to be seized otherwise they will not offer it."⁴⁶

In a nutshell, the essence of Khomeinian world view is the Tawhidian outlook towards the world in terms with the Islamic triple themes of Justice, Equality and Freedom and its action part is the transfer of the present world which is a manifestation of the opposites of the above triple themes, through a Jihad, guaranteeing the liberation of mustaz'afin. Such a Weltanschauung, though appearing to be "a singlistic view of the world" contains certain important

43. Ibid, p. 26.

44. "Imam Khomeini's Views on the Super Powers", (Tehran, 1982), p.14.

45. Ramazani, n. 29, p. 18.

46. Quoted in Hussain, n. 26, p. 74.

postulate regarding the present international political system.⁴⁷ The first is regarding the validity of international law. In Khomeini's design of a 'Shariat milieu', it becomes unobligatory to follow the terms of the international law and the dictums of various international forums. Another important feature is regarding the nature of political sovereignty of a country. In Khomeinian scheme, the present territorial configuration of different nation-states in Islamic regions and above all nationalism which is the main ideological component of modern states do possess little sanctity. Un-Islamic forms of government are to be demolished; nation-states ought not to be a barrier for the integration of Ummah; and nationalism should be subservient to Islamic universal brotherhood. The Khomeinian world view, therefore, challenges the existing international political system and redefines it seemingly through a classical Islamic perspective.

47. Darius et. al, n. 35, p. 36.

CHAPTER III

THE ISLAMIC DIMENSIONS IN FOREIGN POLICY

Ayatollah Khomeini's world view which envisages the establishment of an integrated ummah and Islamic world order has provided a new orientation to the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Iranian leaders themselves posed as the torch bearers of the long-cherished aspirations of the Islamic world and asserted that Iran would provide all sorts of support in promoting the just struggles against inequality, disunity and injustice which are the manifestations of the rule of the mustakbirin. For the achievement of the ultimate goals of the Islamic Revolution, i.e., to build up the rule of the mustaz'afin and to pave way for the reemergence of the 12th Imam from Greater Occultation whereafter the realization of the la grande nation would be taking place,¹ the conscious restructuring of the present world through the propagation and dissemination of Iranian revolutionary Islamic ideology on a world scale was considered necessary by the Iranian clerical leadership.² At the same time, like every major political upheaval, the Iranian Revolution also bears a mark of applicability beyond its territory, especially among

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1. Fred Halliday, "The Iranian Revolution in International Affairs: Programme and Practice", in Abdel Majid, ed, Oil and Security in the Arabian Gulf (London, 1981), p. 25.
 2. See Masih Muhajeri, Islamic Revolution : Future Path of the Nations(Tehran, 1982).
 3. As we have seen in the first chapter, the Iranian Revolution has got its own particularities emerging out of the specific historical and political conditions in Iran. In this context, the following observations are noteworthy: "... the revolution of Iran appears to be sui generis, a class by itself, which cannot be generalized" - M.A. Saleem Khan, "Religion and Politics in

the Muslim countries. The Iranian leadership made use of this factor in giving shape to the main objective of the country's foreign policy which was adherence to the principle of Islamic Internationalism. For the ardent advocates of the Islamic Revolution, Iran since its formation as a Republic was "no longer a nation-state but merely a geographic area of the ummah".⁴ Relying on the Quranic saying that all Muslims are brothers, it was argued that relationship with the Muslim countries could not be treated in a restricted fashion as a question of mere foreign policy.⁵ Further, it was officially contended that

In foreign policy, all the programmes of the government are based on the essential principle that because our

Southwest Asia", in D.D. Khanna, ed., Southwest Asian Crisis (Allahabad, 1981), p. 52; and "it is vital to remember that the issues and process of the revolution in Iran were purely indigenous in character" - A.H.H. Abidi, "Iran: A Sincere Exercise", World Focus, May 1980, p. 13. But the point is that this is the case with all major political revolutions. For instance, the Bolshevik Revolution was a result of the specific objective condition of Russia being 'the weakest link' in the chain of capitalist countries. See also, Edward Mortimer, Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam (London, 1982), p. 357.

4. Mortimer, *Ibid.*
5. Ayatollah Allama Yahya Nouri, Islamic Government and the Present Revolution in Iran (Tehran, n.d.), p. 27.

revolution has world wide dimensions, our foreign policy is ideologically oriented not nationally oriented [Emphasis added].⁶

Additionally, the relevant parts of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic concerning the relationship of Iran with the external world, exemplify the vision and the mission of Iran in the realm of foreign policy. In the preamble of the Constitution itself, where it deals with the Armed Forces and Corps of the Republic, it has been stated that they are having the additional duty to "struggle for the spreading of the sovereignty of the rule of God in the world".⁷ Article 3, Section 16 states that the Islamic Government would apply all its possibilities for the realisation of

formation of a foreign policy of the country based upon Islamic criterion, brotherly commitment to all Moslems and unqualified protection of all the deprived of the world.⁸

Article 11 of the Constitution states :

in accordance with the Quranic verse, "surely this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord, so serve Me" (21 : 92), all Moslems are one nation and the government of the Islamic Republic

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6. "Programme of the Government of Prime Minister Mir Hussain Musavi, Basheer (Supplement), Vol. 1, No. 10, December 1985 p. 7.
 7. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Tehran, n.d.), p.15.
 8. Ibid, p.22.

of Iran is responsible that its total political policy is based upon the coalition and solidarity of the Islamic nations and to make continuous efforts to realize the political, economic and cultural unity of the world of Islam.⁹

Likewise, in Part X which deals exclusively with the foreign policy, Article 152 states :

the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on negation of all forms of domination or submission thereto, preservation of all embracing independence and territorial integrity of the country defending the rights of Moslems, non-alignment before dominating powers and mutual peaceful relation with non-aggressive states.¹⁰

And Article 154 supplements that

the Islamic republic of Iran aspires for the happiness of human beings within the community of mankind and recognizes independence, freedom and the rule of justice as universal rights to be enjoyed by all peoples of the world. Accordingly, while refraining from all interference in domestic affairs of other nations, the Islamic Republic shall support any rightful struggles of deprived peoples against the oppressing classes anywhere on the face of the earth.¹¹

The Islamic thrust of the Iranian foreign policy is evident in these provisions. At the same time, it can be seen that the practical difficulties in pursuing such a policy have been taken into consideration. While lending unqualified support and protection to the cause of the oppressed and deprived of the world, with specific emphasis on the rights of all Muslims and the

9. Ibid, pp. 24-25.

10. Ibid, p. 70.

11. Ibid.

unity of the 'world of Islam', the architects of the policy also expresses commitment to the internationally accepted norm of non-interference in the internal affairs of other sovereign nations. The explicit contradiction in this stand¹² is an indication of the Republic's intention to harmonise its policy committed to Islamic internationalism and the principles of Islam with its concern for the restraints in translating the policy into actual practice.

To a certain extent, this is an in-built contradiction of the world view of Islam itself, of course confined in the classical version. According to this view, the world is divided into two zones : the Dar al-Islam and the Dar al-Harb. Between these two divisions, as Bernard Lewis points out, there was

a religiously and legally obligatory state of war ... which could only end with the conversion or subjugation of all mankind [into the Islamic System] ... The war could not be terminated, it could only be interrupted, for reasons of necessity or expediency, by a truce.¹³

Nevertheless, owing to various social, political, commercial, military and other reasons, the Islamic world had to gradually adapt itself to the reality, through recognizing the political sovereignty of other states and the related

12. See A.H.H. Abidi, "Iran and Non-alignment". in K.P. Misra, ed., Non-Alignment : Frontiers and Dynamics (New Delhi, 1982), p. 349.

13. Bernard Lewis, "Politics and War" in Joseph Schacht and C.E. Bosworth eds., The Legacy of Islam (Oxford, 1974), p. 175.

international norms.¹⁴

As we have seen in the last chapter, the Khomeinian world view at certain level is trying to rejuvenate the classical Islamic concept of world order. The foreign policy of Iran, for which Khomeinian world view is the central pillar, by assuming Islamic objectives and obligations beyond its national territory, presumably is caught in a web of intrinsic contradiction. As a unit of international polity, it has to regulate its mode of behaviour according to the existing set-up. At the same time, it is ideologically committed to lead and defend a crusade against the prevailing international system. In other words, Tehran has put itself in an obstinate hurdle : political idealism (and/or) ambition vs political realism and/or pragmatism.

14 See Majid Khadduri, "The Islamic Theory of International Relations and its Contemporary Relevance", in J. Harris Proctor, ed., Islam and International Relations (New York, 1965) and Manoucher Parvin and Maurie Sommer, "Dar al-Islam : The Evolution of Muslim Territoriality and its Implications for Conflict Resolution in the Middle East", International Journal of Middle East Studies, February 1980, pp. 1-21. In this context, the 'Saud-Ikhwan encounter' is a case worthy to be recollected. Though initially the Ikhwan, the religious war group and Abdul Aziz, the founder of modern Saudi Arabia moved ahead hand in hand, later on due to the differences in orientation and aim, conflict was developed between the two. Foremost Ikhwan's concern was for the unlimited expansion of the ummah and a permanent jihad against the Kafirs, whereas Abdul Aziz was mainly concerned with his own political expansion. Accordingly, Abdul Aziz the seasoned statesman, had to opt for the acceptance of Britain's mandatory role and had to recognize the political sovereignty of neighbouring states. This was not acceptable to the Ikhwan warriors and they dared to carry on their mission by surpassing the authority of Abdul Aziz. And, finally, the

The operational part of the policy could only shed more light on it.

But, before turning to the operational part, it is necessary to examine the Islamic content and the official position regarding the doctrines of "Export of the Revolution" and "Neither East nor West". This is because it is around these two doctrines that the Islamic Republic has given practical shape to its foreign policy.

The export of Revolution becomes the central programme of Iranian foreign policy in two ways. First, it is a mission which Tehran is bound to implement according to the avowed policy of the Islamic leadership. In a special feature on 'Islamic State', in a semi-official magazine, it was mentioned :

It is important to explain that we say that we will export this Islamic Revolution to the whole world because this Revolution is a universal religion, and it follows that an Islamic Revolution should be global in its scope.¹⁵

The second implicit element is that of 'national interest'. The Islamic leadership realizes that for the very survival of the regime it is necessary to transform the rest of the world. The anguish about the antagonistic external milieu could be seen even in the declarations of Ayatollah Khomeini, the supreme leader of the Republic.

Sauds had to suppress the Ikhwan forcefully. Ironically enough, in this encounter the ulema supported the royal house rather than the religious warriors. See for details, the exemplary study by Christina Helms, The Cohesion of Saudi Arabia (London, 1981), pp. 250-72.

15 "The Universal Rule of Allah", Mahjubah (Tehran), No.9, May 1986, p. 5.

He warned :

we must strive to export our revolution throughout the world, and must abandon all idea of not doing so for ... all powers are intent on destroying us, and if we remain surrounded in a close circle, we shall certainly be defeated.¹⁶

With regard to the method of exportation, the official posture is that the best course is to restructure Iran in Islamic lines and to regulate its behaviour with the rest of the world in such a manner so that Iran could serve as a model to be followed by others.¹⁷ In this context, adherence to the 'Islamic ethics' in the mode of behaviour of Iranian citizens, especially the foreign service personnel,¹⁸ intensification of revolutionary propaganda, specifically amidst religious gathering; proselytization through foreign religious leaders by arranging visits to Iran and organizing global conferences etc., are pointed out as effective instruments to export the revolution.¹⁹ In general, the Iranian leaders stick to the position that their design of exporting

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16. Ayatollah Khomeini, Islam and Revolution, trans. Hamid Algar, (Berkeley, 1981), p. 286.
17. See Sepehr Zabih, Iran Since the Revolution (London, 1982), pp. 192-3
18. President Hajjatoleslam Ali Khamenei had once described the Foreign Ministry officials abroad as the "Apostles of the Revolution". Cited in R.K. Ramazani, "Khumayani's Islam in Foreign Policy", Adeed Dawisha, ed., Islam in Foreign Policy (Cambridge, 1982), p. 20.
19. See R.K. Ramazani, "Iran's Islamic Revolution and the Persian Gulf", Current History (Philadelphia) Vol. 84, No. 498, 1985, p. 7.

the revolution is a peaceful one.²⁰

The other doctrine, "Neither East nor West", is an indigenous slogan evolved out of the struggles against Super Powers' domination of different hue and colour. For the perpetuation and the continuation of the Revolution, the Islamic leadership has made use of this slogan as one of the basic foundations of the theory and practice of the Republic's foreign policy.²¹ This declared principle consists of two elements : (a) fight against super power hegemony on all fronts; and (b) substitution of Islamic values in the place of both the Eastern and the Western ways. According to the Iranian view, in the present global political set-up, the Third World countries are actually possessing very limited freedom and independence because of the supremacy of the two blocks, Soviet and American. The efforts made by the Third World countries to overcome the barrier have made only little progress since it failed in building up an alternative framework and independent ideology. Projecting it as a sacred principle, the Iranian leadership advocates that strict adherence to the policy of "Neither East nor West" could be the ideal alternative path for the

20 But on rare occasions a different tone can also be heard. For instance, Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said in an interview held at New York : "If our friends anywhere in the world ask us, of course we will help them. It's the same way US government helps its so-called friends and even helps them when they don't ask, as in Grenada", International Herald Tribune 5 October, 1984.

21. See for details Message of Revolution (Tehran) No.1, May 1981.

other Third World countries as well.

Non-alignment, yet another fundamental principle of Iranian foreign policy, is in a way, a corollary to the above maxim. But at the same, it is to be noted that the Iranian non-alignment has an independent existence, irrespective of the Islamic Revolution and the Republic. It has its roots in the various lines followed by pre-Republican Iran, like "Third Power Balance", "Negative Equilibrium" and "Positive Neutrality" at different periods.²² Yet by asking to remould the non-aligned movement as a platform to fight against super power domination in all spheres and by designing its own version which is inscribed in the motto of "Neither East nor West", post-revolutionary Iran added a new dimension to the domain of Iranian non-alignment. "In short", as A.H.H. Abidi puts it, "they interpreted non-alignment as an Islamic concept".²³

Despite the different views held among the various groups and personalities over matters like tactics to be adopted and priorities to be given etc,²⁴ in principle, the Islamic Republican leadership had

22. For details see Abidi, n. 12, p.339-147.

23. Ibid., p. 358.

24. This ranged from Ayatollah Shariatmadari who favoured "friendly ties with both the East and the West, to the brainman of the seizure of the US Embassy, Dr. Peyman, who insisted on a policy of direct relations with the masses rather than with the governments. The same way hardcore clerics like Rafsanjani, Khomeiniha and Khamenei opted for violation, isolation and loneliness in the international scene, rather than being in league

a common stand from the very beginning on the basic framework of foreign policy. That was for complete independence from Super Powers, closer proximity and identity with the people of the Third World, especially of the Muslim countries, and support to the movements against colonialism, facism and zionism, etc. The rapture with the past and the beginning of the new Islamic foreign policy was indicated by various immediate steps taken by Tehran. Yasser Arafat, leader of the PLO, was given a pompous welcome²⁵ and the former embassy building of Israel was handed over to the PLO testifying the ardent support to the cause of Palestinians. Meanwhile, the emissaries from the Gulf States who came with the intention to acquaint with the Islamic regime were rather ill-treated. That was reflective of

with immoral and oppressive regime. Meanwhile another section represented by Beheshti, Nabavi and Rajai stressed the gains in developing lively relationship with Third World countries. See Zabih, n. 17, pp. 170-1.

25. Yasser Arafat did not miss to make use of the occasion. Resonating to the Iranian mood, he said : "this great Iranian people lives with us in one trench raising together the same emblems - all of us are fighters, all mujahidin, all revolutionaries (thuwwar) under one flag - the flag of our Islamic Nation [Ummatina al - Islamiyah] against imperialism". Quoted in Nels Johnson, Islam and the Politics of Meaning in Palestinian Nationalism(London, 1982), p. 88.

Tehran's contemptuous attitude towards the Shaikdoms.²⁶ Cancellation of the West-sponsored collective security system, abrogation of the bilateral defense pact with the United States, unilateral cancellation of Articles V and VI of the 1921 treaty with Russia, breaking off ties with South Africa, seeking membership in the NAM, etc, were the other measures taken in the run. And, above all, the state patronage extended to the act of seizure of the American Embassy by the "Students Following the Imam's Line" and the following stand of paying little respect to the existing international norms were clear signs of Iran's new militant Islamic posture.

Because of the Islamic milieu, it was in the Muslim countries, especially in the nearby Gulf region that the repercussion of Iranian militant Islamic posture made much impact. Iran also found it as the fertile ground for the successful operation of its policy. Propaganda net-work was intensified through literary and other audio-visual means to establish direct interaction with the Muslim masses. By calling the rulers of Gulf States as the followers of 'American Islam', Khomeini and other spokesmen of the regime let loose powerful attacks on them.²⁷ The Saudi Arabian kingdom was depicted as the arch-agent of the "Great Satan" and its policies

26. See for details, Mohammad Heikal, The Return of the Ayatollah: The Iranian Revolution from Mossadeq to Khomeini (London, 1981), p. 200.

27. Dilip Hiro, Iran Under the Ayatollahs (London, 1985), p. 335.

including the organisation and conduct of Haj were condemned as anti-Islamic.²⁸ The Iraqi Shi'ite leader, Ayatollah Baqir al-Sadr, was depicted as "the Khomeini of Iraq" in Radio Tehran's Arab Service.²⁹ There was call for the toppling of anti-Islamic Ba'athist regime of Baghdad as an Islamic duty of the believers. And same was the case with other rulers too whom Khomeini described as the 'mini-Shahs'.³⁰

A number of incidents of religiose-political uprising, demonstrations and sabotages took place in various countries which had direct or indirect influence of Tehran.³¹ The same Islam which the rulers were using hitherto as an "anti-communist force" and "politically stabilising force" had begun to rebound against the rulers, causing wide menace to their regime stability.³²

In the midst of changed external and internal threat perceptions and security considerations, the various regimes were forced to adopt different measures of which the cumulative one was the formation of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) in 1981. But what matters to us is a specific design used by the various Muslim leaders to

28. Ramazani, n.18, p. 26.

29. Mortimer, n. 3, p. 364.

30. Hiro, n. 27, p. 335.

31. For a brief survey of the impact of Iranian Islamic Revolution on Islamdom, see Daniel Pipes, In the Path of God : Islam and Political Power (New York, 1983), p. 323-8.

32. Khan, n.3, p. 48.

counteract the Iranian militant Islamic appeal. They portrayed it as an Iranian brand of Shi'ism having Persian expansionist motives. In the guideline set out by the Information Ministers' Conference at Riyadh in late 1979, it was specifically mentioned that the Iranian Revolution should be downgraded to a purely Iranian Shi'ite one.³³ A Kuwaiti minister accused that Iran was exporting "Shiaism in the guise of pan-Islam".³⁴ King Hassan of Morocco, meanwhile, branded Khomeini as a heretic and his dogma as a heresy which should be condemned by all the Muslim Universities.³⁵

The clearest manifestation of the increasing animosity between Iran and its neighbours was the outbreak of Iran-Iraq war. While bearing fear over the possibility of the escalation of the war, the Gulf and other Muslim countries' leadership found the border between Iran and Iraq as the wall that would defend from the "dangerous and contagious disease that threatens to seep and spread through their countries".³⁶ Meanwhile Khomeini hoped that the Organisation of Islamic Conference (ICO) would condemn Iraq for its attack on a Muslim country.³⁷ Needless to say, it did not occur and in that

33. n. 27, p. 335.

34. Ibid, p. 341.

35. William Zartman, "Explaining the Nearly Inexplicable : The Absence of Islam in Moroccan Foreign Policy", in *Dawisha* n.18 p. 101.

36. James A. Bill, "The Arab World and the Challenge of Iran", Journal of Arab Affairs Vol.2, No. 2, 1983 p. 156.

37. Ramazani, n. 18, p. 25.

Muslim international body also Iran was isolated. This was also the case with Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference where Iran expected an outright condemnation of the Soviet Union for its attack on Afghanistan. In short, Iran, due to its militant Islamic policy was incapable of building up warm relationship with other Muslim countries and due to the same reason it was deprived of realising diplomatic goals in the Islamic international bodies as well.

Strangly enough, Tehran did not stick to the principled stand of being antagonistic towards the 'un-Islamic regimes' of Muslim countries, in certain cases. For that matter, Ankara-Tehran relationship is a good example. In spite of Ankara regime's ill-treatment of its Shi'i minority and the presence of US bases in eastern Turkey, Iran did not keep it out of its good book. In fact, the Turkish ambassador in Tehran enjoyed the privilege of being the first among the foreign diplomats who got the august audience of Khomeini.³⁸ And, in August 1982, the military regime's Premier, Bulent Ulusu, paid a state visit in Iran. Another example is Zia's Pakistan. True that Khomeini, once asked the Pak naval officers returning from Haj to launch an Islamic Revolution in Pakistan³⁹ and Radio Tehran, in its call to the people of neighbourhood for toppling the tyrannical regimes, specifically mentioned the Zia government.⁴⁰ But

38. Hiro, n. 27, p. 350.

39. Mortimer, n. 3, p. 371.

40. S. Tahir-Kheli, "In Search of an Identity : Islam and Pakistan's Foreign Policy", in Dawisha, n. 18, p. 76.

Iran's policy towards pro-Western Pakistan was to develop cordial relationship. In the same way, Islamic leadership of Tehran did not show any hesitation in building up close contact with the Ba'athist regime of Syria which was responsible for the massacre of Muslim Brothers who followed the Iranian call in the Hama valley.

But in its dealings with super powers, especially the USA, Tehran has shown a remarkable degree of moral strength and courage. Anti-American image being one of the most important components of Islamic Revolution, it is quite logical that post-Revolutionary Iran followed a totally antagonistic policy towards the US regime. Inside and outside Iran, even after the political gains out of "the hostage crisis", Tehran continued to call America as the "Great Satan".⁴¹ Soon after the outbreak of war with Iraq, America was accused of using Saddam as a pawn to "annihilate the Islamic Revolution".⁴² On its part, America, while reacting to the Iranian posture by enlisting Iran among the group of 'terrorist countries' and lending extensive support to the Gulf states, found it difficult to resist the Iranian

41. For a better understanding of the term, in the religio-political context of Iran and its enmity to America, see William Beeman, "Images of the Great Satan : Representation of the United States in the Iranian Revolution", in Nikki R. Keddi, ed., Religion and Politics in Iran : Shiism from Quietism to Revolution (New Haven, 1983), pp. 191-217.

42. The Devil's War Against Islamic Iran, Islamic Revolution Guards' Corpse (n.p., n.d.), p.4.

attack in the ideological realm by the usual pattern of labelling it as "the communist in disguise" because of the Islamic ideology of Iran.⁴³ To counter the anti-American posture which one of the main thrusts of Khomeinism, it became necessary for America to know more about Islam and its political content. As a result we could see a spurt of books and other materials originating from American circles.⁴⁴ But later the special section of the State Department charged with the study for the resumption of relation with Iran, itself was engaged in collecting data and learning more about Islam.⁴⁵

The interplay of Islamic factor is more evident in the case of Soviet-Iranian dealings. Because of the anti-American posture and the possibilities thus made available, "Moscow has gone out of its way to condone the Revolution in Iran".⁴⁶ This was reflected in the remark made by Leonid Brezhnev in

43. Hiro, n.27, pp. 330-31.

44. Even such discussions and studies as in the past are centered around what is called by Edward Said as "Orientalism". For a detailed account of the distorted notion of American perspective on Iran, especially that of the American media based on the concept of 'Orientalism' see Edward Said, Covering Islam : How the Media and the Experts Determine How to See the Rest of the World (New York, 1981). See also Fred R. Vordorfer, "American Perceptions of Islam", in John L. Esposito, ed, Voices of Resurgent Islam (Oxford, 1984), pp. 178-82.

45. See, Rajai Khorasani, "To Deal with Revolution, Americans are Studying Islam", Basheer, November 1985, p. 10.

46. Yaacov Ro'i, "The Impact of the Islamic Fundamentalist

the central committee report to the Twenty-sixth Congress of the CPSU. He said :

The people of Iran are looking for their own road to freedom and prosperity. We sincerely wish them success in this, and are prepared to develop good relations with Iran on the principles of equality and, of course reciprocity.⁴⁷

But the Soviet willingness to have good relationship with Tehran was jeopardised considerably due to the developments in the neighbouring Afghanistan.⁴⁸ Tehran leadership found the events there propitious for Iran as the guardian of Islamic ummah and as a golden opportunity to let loose its anti-Communist euphoria. It was stated that the invasion of Afghanistan was the Russian reaction to the success of Islamic ideology over Marxist Ideology. Fear was expressed that "the Russians may use it [Afghanistan] as a base to block the way to the Islamic Renaissance".⁴⁹

The deteriorating relations with Moscow found their expression in events such as the rumour about the attempt to capture the Soviet Embassy which was described as the "Second Spy Den", burnings of

Revival of the Late 1970s on the Soviet View of Islam", in Yaacov Ro'i, ed., The USSR and the Muslim World (London, 1984), p.149.

47. L.I. Brezhnev, "Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Immediate Tasks of the Party in Home and Foreign Policy" (Moscow, 1981), p. 23.
48. See A.H.H. Abidi, "Soviet Attitude Towards the Islamic Republic of Iran", Problems of Non-Alignment (New Delhi), Sept-Nov 1983, pp. 231-3.
49. "What Interest are Pursued by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan",

a Soviet flag in front of the Embassy, Afghan Mujahideen's raiding of the Soviet Embassy, expulsion of the First Secretary of the Embassy for alleged spying, ban on activities of leftist groups etc. In May 1983, eighteen Soviet diplomats were expelled and top leaders of Tudeh Party were arrested on the ground that they were conspiring against the government as Russian agents. The anti-Soviet attitude of Tehran was well expressed in the words of Ayatollah Hojati Karmani, one of the top ideologue of IRP :

Satan can assume a new face at will...Yesterday he looked like Carter, today he wears the face Yuri of Andropov. But we know him behind the mask.⁵⁰

But it was in the Iranian policy towards the Muslims of Soviet Union that the Islamic factor played a major role. It presented the Soviet Union to take counter measures in the same manner, i.e. to use the Islamic card. As a part of its drive to export Revolution Tehran, by late 1982, activated its propaganda machinery "aimed at rekindling religious fervour of Muslims in the Southern Republics where four-fifth of the Soviet Union's 45 million Muslims

Message of Revolution, No.5, Sept-October 1981, p. 52.

50. Amir Taheri, Times (London), 5 June 1983.

live".⁵¹ In the highly powerful radio broadcasts, Kremlin was depicted as the "Seat of Satan's empire", and the oppressed Muslims were called to form a single great ummah.⁵² Ayatollah Khomeini's recorded speeches began to circulate on the black market. Quran and other religious books were sold in underground.⁵³

Moscow was concerned at these developments due to the specific demographic structure, and the dogmatic influence of Islam among the inhabitants, of these areas. Moscow launched a massive propaganda campaign designed to convince the Muslim States that the intervention in Afghanistan was not a move against Islam as such.⁵⁴ In order to prove that the Russian Muslims are doing well various religious seminars were held in which foreign Muslim leaders were also invited. It was propagated that "communism and Islam are fully compatible and that a perfect symbiosis has been achieved between the two in Soviet Muslim Republics."⁵⁵

According to the avowed policy of the Islamic leadership that

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51. Dilip Hiro, "Khomeini's Revolution : Riding the Wave of Islam's Past", The Nation (New York) Vol. 240, nO. 5, February 1985, p. 145.
 52. Ibid.
 53. Karen Dawisha and Helen D'Encausse, "Islam in the Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union : A Double-Edged Sword?", in Dawisha, n. 18, p. 124.
 54. Karen Eawisha, "Moscow's Moves in the Direction of the Gulf", Journal of International Affairs Vol. 34, No. 2, Fall 1980-81, p.219
 55. Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, "Soviet Central Asia: A Model

~~that~~ it would extend support to the cause of deprived people in their fight for justice the Republic, in the very beginning itself, had established relationship with various movements⁵⁶ and established a special department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for that purpose.⁵⁷ Specifically among them Tehran's relationship with the PLO is of great importance due to the strong anti-zionist posture of the Islamic regime. Though in the earlier stage Tehran extended its support to Yasser Arafat, later on, it was cooled down because of the infighting in the Al-Fatah leadership and Arafat's pro-Iraqi stand. It was pointed out by Tehran that the Palestinians are not following Islamic principles and this was the main reason for the weakness of the movement.⁵⁸ Later on, when Arafat was engaged in a negotiatory path to resolve the Palestinian crisis, he was depicted by Tehran as a traitor. Tehran holds on to the position that not by a mere unity of different factions but only by a transformation of its political ideology, i.e., reliance on Islamic ideology, and by developing "popular Islamic struggles" that the cause of Palestinian people could be made successful.⁵⁹

of Non-capitalist Development for Third World", in Ro'i, n. 46, p. 197.

56. See Abidi, n.12, p. 349, fn.28.

57. Hiro, n. 27, p. 249.

58. Ibid, p. 348.

59. "Palestine Revolution Needs a Great Transformation", Tehran Times, 12 April 1986.

As we have seen in the early part of this chapter pragmatic outlook gave way to Islamic statecraft in the position on norms of international law. Iran took an exceptional course and presented its own Islamic solution while rejecting requests from international bodies. Tehran took such a stand on two grounds. First, it decried the conduct of the existing international institutions and accused that the international bodies are dominated by imperialism. Secondly, as an Islamic state, Iran's ultimate allegiance is to the will of Allah which is expressed in the Shariah. Therefore, it is not at all bound to act according to the terms dictated by other bodies if it is contrary to the precepts of shariah. The 'hostage crisis' was one such case.⁶⁰ The occupation of the U.S. embassy itself was a flagrant breach of accepted diplomatic norms regarding the immunity of diplomatic centres. Tehran outrightly declined to accept the unanimous Provisional Order (29th Nov, 1979) and the judgement (15th May, 1980)

60. In this context Montgomery Watt suggests that though the Iranian stand of disregarding the international norm was right in their point of view, the Shariah as such has not taken into consideration a question like 'the diplomatic immunity'. He points out that this is a question which has to be examined by Islamic scholars for a proper understanding of the application of Shariah in terms with the modern realities. See Montgomery Watt, "Islam and Tomorrow's World", Islamic Culture, Vol LIX, No. 3, July 1985, p. 271.

of the International Court of Justice as well as Resolution 457 (4 October 1979) and Resolution 461 (31 December 1979) of the Security Council. Even amidst mounting pressure to release the hostages, literally from all official quarters, Iran was firm on its stand. Khomeini declared that it was not a question of a struggle between Islam and blasphemy.⁶¹ Another striking example is Iran-Iraq war which we will be dealing in detail in the next chapter. But here it should be noted that to end the war, Iran is willing for nothing but a solution based on Islamic justice. In the Afghan crisis also Iran made two suggestions which were termed as an "Islamic solution". One was to create an Islamic 'peace troop' to replace the Soviet army and the other was to create an Islamic Council of the ulema for looking after the peaceful withdrawal of the Soviet army and to conduct the referendum.

Attempts to monitor a "people to people diplomacy" is another phenomenon which is of great significance to us in the present discussion. According to the avowed policies and programmes, Tehran was out to establish contacts with Muslims all over the world. For that purpose alternative channels of contact and interaction other than that of External Affairs Ministry were needed. It is with this aim that the Ministry of Islamic Guidance and various other official and semi-official agencies undertook a number of projects such as holding several international conferences at Qom and

61. Ramazani, n.18, p.15

Tehran, active participation in the sponsoring of annual Haj conferences in many parts of the world, arranging visits for foreigners in Iran, continuous intensification of high-pitched propaganda network etc. Among these, the annual World Friday Prayer Leaders' Conference which is held under the auspices of the Secretariat of the Friday Prayer Leaders in Qom is a major event. It provides a platform for Iranian Islamic leadership to get the audience of, and to exchange views with, the senior ulema of other countries. In these assemblies the top men of the Iranian regime call their audience to follow the Iranian path. It is insisted that the ulema of all countries should organize the believers so as to enable them to revolt against the existing unjust systems.⁶²

Apart from all these, it is in the conduct of the Haj that the Islamic factor plays a vital role in Iran's Islamic diplomacy. One of the five pillars of Islam, Haj is an occasion where two million devotees from all over the world converge and, quite naturally, Tehran considers this as an appropriate meeting place best suited to propagate the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary ideology. Even though, to many, it is purely a religious gathering, the Iranian Islamic leaders stress on its political content and political potentiality. In their view :

... since Islam made no distinction between religious and political activity the Haj was inherently political, and those who had tried to make it a purely spiritual occasion had deviated from the true path laid down by the Prophet.⁶³

62. Ramazani, n.19, p.7

63. Malise Ruthven, Islam in the World (New York, 1984), p. 34

They hold the view that Haj is not an occasion merely to express passive submission before Allah. The true practice of the principle of Tawhid means fight against all kinds of domination over man. This can be carried out only by identifying the evil forces of the present time and by launching frontal attacks against them.

The pilgrims are invariably asked by the Islamic leadership to carry on the Haj ceremony in such a way as to reflect the Iranian view of it. For instance, Ayatollah Khomeini instructed Hojjatalislam Khomeiniha, the leader of Iranian Haj Committee, to

acquaint Muslims with what is taking place in dear Lebanon, in crusading Iran, and in oppressed Afghanistan. Inform them of their duties in confronting aggressors and international plunderers.⁶⁴

In 1983 Khomeini asked the pilgrims to make it "a vibrant hajj, a crushing hajj that condemns the criminal Soviet Union and the criminal America".⁶⁵ In the same fashion, President Khamenei stated that it was

necessary to reveal the real nature of super powers at a time when representatives of one billion Muslims would be performing one of the most important Islamic duties.⁶⁶

64. Hiro, n. 27, p. 339.

65. Shaul Bakhash, The Reign of the Ayatollahs : Iran and the Islamic Revolution (London, 1985), p. 234.

66. Basheer, Vol. 2, No. 7, september, 1985, p. 26.

As a result, with a view to spreading the message of the Islamic Revolution as well as to conveying the need to fight against the zionists, super powers and hypocrites, the Iranian pilgrims conducted marches around the holy city, holding placards, banners and portraits of Imam Khomeini. They shouted slogans like "Down With Russia", "Down with Ameirca", and "Down with Israel",

For the conservative Saudi Arabian regime, the militant Iranian behaviour within their own territory obviously posed a great threat. That was heightened by the fact that not much time had passed since the trauma caused by the capture of the mosque and Shi'i uprising in 1979. The Saudi government made strong protest. King Khalid himself wrote to Khomeini expressing his concern over the behaviour of Iranian pilgrims in Mecca which according to him, was contrary to the aims of Haj. But Thran was adamant. In a sharp reply to King Kahlid, Khomeini justified the Iranian stand by saying that from the time of the Prophet himself Haj was a religio-political occasion. He cautioned the King that

had the government of Hejaz (Arabia) made political-Islamic use of this political-religious assembly which is held every year in the sacred Haramain with the presence of millions of Muslims it would not have been in need of the U.S. and its AWACS aircrafts and other super powers, and the Muslims' problems would have been solved.⁶⁷

67. "From an Imam to a King : Imam Khomeini's Letter to King Khaled on the Latter's objection to the Behaviour of Iranian Pilgrims of the House of Allah", Message of Revolution, n.2., p. 21.

Next, the Minister of Islamic Guidance, in a message addressed to the Saudi Arabian Minister of Haj and Pilgrimage, strongly deplored Riyadh's hostile attitude towards the Iranian pilgrims and upheld the political thrust that Iran gave to the pilgrimage. It said :

the revolutionary Muslims of Iran, like the revolutionary Muslims throughout the world consider struggle against the predatory class of superciliously arrogant capitalists one of the best ways of worshipping God.⁶⁸

The Saudi-Iranian conflict over the conduct of Haj reached such a gruesome level that in the early years even violent clashes and arrests took place in the holy land. Fumbled by the Iranian militant Islamic posture, Riyadh began to portray it as an issue that fill within its political sovereignty - a question of the legal right to keep law and order within the national territory.⁶⁹ Still, Tehran remained adamant. For instance, when a news was circulated that the Saudi government would ban the entry of Iranian pilgrims in the Saudi territory, Khomeini gave a stern reply that in that case "there would be no Sheikhs or hirelings of the US left in the region"⁷⁰

In its effort to politicise Haj, the Islamic leadership has given political meaning to many rituals conducted during the pilgrimage. For instance, the ritual of "stoning of satan" is interpreted as an

68. "Hajj (Pilgrimage) : Manifestation of World Muslim Unity and Solidarity", Echo of Islam (Tehran), Sept-October 1981, p. 19.

69. Saudi Gazette (Riyadh), 5. August, 1983.

70. Tehran Times, 3 August 1983.

act of rejecting the evil forces in the present-day world. In a message to the Haj pilgrims in 1985, Ayatollah Khomeini said :

Jamarat awaits the devoted ones who have come from a country whose brave people have expelled all big, small, and medium satans from their homeland, ... and in the sacred places, too, stone and reject the group of satans of Mecca and (symbolically throughout) the world.⁷¹

The projection of the Iranian political position through these rituals is found not only in the leadership's statements but also in mass media, particularly sponsored magazines emanating from Tehran. The following cartoon from the October 1981 issue of the Echo of Islam which was widely distributed

among Muslims

in many parts of the world, is a typical example of the interpretation of religious ritual in a political mode.

Here the stone pillar in the Mina Valley is having the head of Uncle Sam the well known caricature of the USA.



The pilgrims in ihram dress are performing the ritual of throwing

71. Basheer, October 1985, p. 2.

pebbles at the stone pillar representing Satan, and Satan has clearly taken the form of USA.

As a pivotal instrument of its Islamic foreign policy, Tehran is still paying importance to the conduct of Haj. In a short span of time there is a sizeable increase in the number of Iranian pilgrims; from 70,000⁷² in 1981 to 150,000⁷³ in 1985. The highlight of last year's demonstration in Medina was that it was led by disabled war victims who moved in wheel chairs.⁷⁴

Does this stand mean that Iran has been pursuing a policy of political idealism tinged with Islamic overtones? There are enough indications to show that Tehran had been developing an equivocal stand in certain cases from the very beginning itself. The dealings with Islamabad and Ankara are good examples, as we have seen earlier. Turkey has a military government with secular system. It is as well a member of NATO. "Even then it enjoyed excellent relation with Iran".⁷⁵ The same way Tehran expressed its desire for "expansion of ties with Pakistan to such an extent that it may become a model

72. Hiro, n. 27, p. 337.

73. Basheer, September 1985, p. 27.

74. Ibid., p. 28.

75. Hiro, n. 27, p. 349.

for neighbouring countries."⁷⁶ In both cases Tehran justified its action by saying that these countries are Muslim countries.

Actually, this was an expression of the inherent contradiction in Iranian theoretical position. On the one side, it professed its willingness to be in the array of the oppressed people in their fight against tyrant rulers, it deplored the existing international world order, and made vociferous calls for the integration of the Islamic ummah. On the other, it recognised the internationally accepted norm of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and expressed its wish to develop relationship with other countries on the basis of reciprocity and equality. According to the first line, there was no other alternative but to get isolated in the international arena and to be in touch only with liberation movements. But national interests and other domestic needs forced, the Tehran regime to develop relationship with countries having quite a different system.

The domination of this line of thinking found its expression in a shift in Iranian behaviour which is called as "Iran's open door policy."⁷⁷ The regime's main justification for the shift in the policy was that the true and correct Islamic code of behaviour for a nation is not to withdraw from the external milieu but to have peaceful relationship with all other nations except those who are in

76. Tehran Times, 2nd December, 1982.

77. Shaul Bakhash, "Second Thoughts in Iran", International Herald Tribune, 5 July 1985.

direct confrontation. Moreover, the need to develop cordial relationship with the rest of the world especially the neighbouring states was emphasised.

The efforts made by Tehran to appease the Western countries and other Islamic states seemed to be a deviation from the past rigidity to such an extent that, while defending the new policy, the semi-official daily, Keyhan International, in an editorial had to admit that for an outsider the new policy would appear like a "westward diplomatic turn."⁷⁸ Keyhan, in the same editorial, justified that the new yearning for developing harmonious relationship with other states was based on the Qurānic principles laid in the Constitution:

this was not merely a sign of good-will to others but an inspiration of the Constitution Law which cites the verses from Quran that permit the establishment of relation with those who do not engage any destructive acts against us.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, President Khamenei, addressing a group of ambassadors and charge d'affaires of the Islamic Republic abroad, said that "the Neither East Nor West" principles should be taken into consideration in all aspects of Iran's international relation.⁸⁰ But, at the same time, hinting at the new shift he claimed that if Iran expands ties with countries having different ideologies and culture, the interaction would in fact enrich Islam.

The spokesman of the regime once again clarified its position

78. Keyhan International (Tehran), 22 July 1984.

79. *Ibid.*

80. *Ibid.*, 31 July 1984.

by stating that, as in the past, Iran's relations with other countries would be in full conformity with the "Islamic ideology following Imam Khomeini's line."⁸¹ For that matter Khomeini, himself cited the example of the Prophet who had despatched ambassadors to every corner during his reign over the first Islamic State.⁸² And thereby he approved the new shift in the policy.⁸³ While endorsing his approval of the regime's attempts for a better exposure of Iran in the international arena, Khomeini reminded that it would be "against Islamic Laws to keep Iran abof from the rest of the world."⁸⁴ He said :

the policy of keeping Iran isolated internationally was indeed irrational and would definitely have resulted in the destruction of the revolution.⁸⁵

It was an oft-repeated warning but this time it was meant for upholding the new Iranian posture.

The zealous attempts made by Tehran to develop contacts and ties with various governments, unlike in the earlier phase, with little

81. Tehran Times, 7th August 1984.

82. While the role of prophet Mohammad -- "The Prophet with Sword"-- is well known it is not-so-well known that during his reign of the first Islamic State he had made use of the skillful manoeuvring of peace diplomacy too. For details regarding this aspect of the Prophet's life, see Afzal Iqbal, The Prophet's Diplomacy (Massachusetts, 1975).

83. Tehran Times, 29 October 1984.

84. *Ibid.*

85. *Ibid.*

reservation for the nature and character of the regimes, was suggestive of the recasting of Iranian foreign policy on the new lines. For instance, Tehran was seen hosting the foreign ministers of Kuwait and UAE in 1983, who had previously been branded as the "reactionary stooges of the US."⁸⁶ Last year, the Saudi Arabian foreign minister, Saud Al-Faisal, was given a warm welcome in Iran and the tone of the Iranian leaders during that occasion was quite expressive of the nascent temper in Tehran. Majlis Speaker Rafsanjani, while welcoming the Saudi minister, recalled that the Arab Muslims and Iranian Muslims are part of a united ummah and called for closer unity of various Muslim countries.⁸⁷ The Iranian foreign minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, disclosed his government's eagerness to accelerate the process to government level interaction and expressed the hope that "the continuation of these visits between the countries would give suitable and practical results in the future."⁸⁸ Another attempt on this line was the visit to Pakistan made by President Khamenei in the beginning of this year. Just before his trip in an interview, Khamenei stressed Tehran's interest in establishing "close and good relations" with its

86. Taheri, n. 50.

87. Teharan Times, 20th May 1985.

88. Tehran Times, 21th May 1985.

Muslim neighbours, implying Pakistan.⁸⁹ Yet another pointer was the aura attributed to the relationship with the 'other Satan' Soviet Union. In an interview at New York, Velayati described Iran's relation with Soviet Union as "exactly what relations between two neighbours could be."⁹⁰

Nevertheless, it will be incorrect to assume that the militant Islamic fervour of Republican Iran is in the process of getting totally vapourized. Tehran is still said to be functioning as the headquarters of many revolutionary Islamic organisations and a particular cell of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps - the Islamic Liberation Movement Unit - is maintained for the guidance and training of those organisations.⁹¹ Tehran's overt connections with the radical Shi'ites of Baalbek Valley in Lebanon is a well known fact.⁹² In the turbulent Middle East scenario, post-revolutionary Iran has now emerged as a potent center of the

89. News from the Islamic Republic of Iran, 14th January 1986. It is interesting to note that during his trip abroad, the President of the Islamic Republic, because of his religious obsession, was reluctant to shake hands with a female member in the row of welcoming VIPs in an African country. Nonetheless, he has seen at ease in the presence of military rulers like Zia-ul-Haq.

90. International Herald Tribune, 5th October 1984.

91. Ramazani, n. 19, p. .

92. Bakhsh, n. 65, p. 235. Speaker Rafsanjani, during a visit at Tripoli, last year, alluding to the Islamic Amal's successful

anti-zionist front, more evidently, since the inception of Tripoli-Tehran-Baghdad nexus. By developing contact with the christian Liberation Theologists of Latin America on the basis of shared views on the salvation of the oppressed people and anti-imperialism, etc, the Islamic leadership is trying to bring a wider area of influence under its political fold.⁹³

The seven-year experiment of Republican Iran with its Islamic foreign policy brings to the foreground a moot point. In the context of the existing global power configuration, to what extent could a Third World country pursue an ideologically oriented foreign policy? Leave aside the case of classical Islamic statecraft which was impelled to give up the notion of a Universal Statehood, there is the example of Communist China which was vociferously been articulating a foreign policy on extreme revolutionary tones.⁹⁴ But it has not taken much time for Maoist China to kneel down from the revolutionary stand of "solidarity with the people of all

car-bomb attack against the foreign military force in Beirut, claimed : "Now the Muslims of the world have reached a stage that if America, Britain, France or Italy ever decide to interfere in Lebanon and deploy their forces, the Muslim people, sitting in explosive laden trucks, will turn Lebanon into a hell of fire for them". Basheer, August 1985, p. 10.

93. Basheer, September 1985, p. 29.

94. Though a comparative study of Iranian foreign policy under Khomeini and Chinese foreign policy under Mao Zedong would

countries and hostility with the anti-people regimes." Does the Iranian policy fluctuation indicate that such a course is lying ahead for Iran too? Here, a brief overview of the new programme of Prime Minister Hussein Mussavi's cabinet could be useful as it throws more light on the present Iranian official view regarding its policy towards the external environment.⁹⁵

In a bid to chalk out a realistic policy, the said document, in categorical terms, clarifies :

to think that due to its world dimensions, the Islamic Republic should only establish ties with the people (and not with government) is not correct.⁹⁶

It is also made clear that the Islamic Republic would not be reluctant to establish relations with other governments, except a few enemy countries.⁹⁷ Concerning the relations with the neighbouring governments, it is specifically mentioned that "the good-neighbour policy is an essential part" of the Iranian foreign

be an interesting analysis on Third World behaviour in International politics, an exclusive study on this topic has not been done so far. For a brief account of the similarities in Maoist China and Khomeinite Iran see A.H.H. Abidi, China, Iran and the Persian Gulf (New Delhi, 1982), pp. 172-73.

95. Programme of the Government of Prime Minister Mir Hussein Musavi, n. 6.

96. Ibid, p. 8.

97. USA, South Africa, Israel, Iraq and Egypt come under the

policy.⁹⁸ Likewise, in international bodies also, Iran would be playing an active role in future despite its avowed reservations over the superpower domination in those bodies. Thus the desire for a better exposure to the international arena is discernable in the present Iranian posture. At the same time, it is to be marked that the perpetuation of the militant Islamic policy is not at all fully overruled. The act of rupture of ties with the USA is described as "a gift of God" and the importance of continuing the anti-American attitude as a necessary step in exporting the Islamic Revolution is also reasserted.⁹⁹ Similarly, the supremacy of Shariah is reemphasized and those decisions taken against Iran by international organizations are denounced as "treacherous to Islam."¹⁰⁰ In unequivocal terms, the document announced that :

acceptance of points or articles of the Charters of international associations not in harmony with Islamic tenets will be construed by the Islamic Republic as preferring temporal to divine laws, and, therefore,

category of enemy countries. On the other hand, causing Iranian hand in the terrorist activities of militant Shi'is in Beirut, Lebanon has unilaterally suspended its relation with Iran in 1983.

98. Programme of the Government of Prime Minister Mir Hussein Musavi, n. 6, p.9.

99. Ibid, p. 8.

100. Ibid.

an unforgivable sin.¹⁰¹

It is cautioned that the revolutionary Islamic foreign policy of Iran with its universal dimension, was instrumental in creating a model for the mustaz'fin of the world and, therefore, this image should not be allowed to get tarnished. Further, all possible help to the deprived people and oppressed nations in their fight against the existing corrupt world order is once again vouchsafed. And, above all, the "Export of the Revolution" remains to be the most important and immediate item in Musavi's programme and the motto of "Neither East nor West" continues to be its guiding principle. In short, the present Iranian position regarding its foreign policy, as it is reflected through this official document, is in correspondence with the initial militant Islamic posture. Meanwhile, certain positions are redefined due to the apprehension about the entanglement and isolation that can accrue following the adoption of a foreign policy which strictly follows a militant Islamic criteria.

Before closing this chapter, we may turn our attention to a related question as well. It is not at all a new venture to present Islam as an alternative ideology vis-a-vis Russian Communism and Bourgeois-Liberalism and to use Islam as an effective instrument in foreign policy operation. There

101. Ibid.

are well known precedents set by Nasser and Gaddafi.

Nasser, especially during the early phase of his rule, vehemently spoke of an "Islamic International Circle" and had shown heavy reliance on Islam for activating the Egyptian foreign policy.¹⁰² Gaddafi, the self-proclaimed heir of Nasser, is said to be on the same track.¹⁰³ In his Green Book he put forth the "third universal theory" purported to be the panacea for the ills of the Third World. Beside, there are other countries like Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Morocco, etc. which often resort to Islam in the conduct of their foreign policy.¹⁰⁴ Hence, it is appropriate to pose the question : what is the Iranian specificity and peculiarity in terms with the interplay of Islamic factor in foreign policy?

Foremost, it is the unique character of the Islamic Revolution which distinguishes the Iranian syndrome from others. In most of the other countries, the regimes owe their command and derive their legitimacy from the legacy of either coup d'etats like in the case of Libya or royal

102. See A.H. Dessouki, "The Limits of Instrumentalism: Islam in Egypt's Foreign Policy", Dawisha n. 18, pp. 86-89; R.J. Vatikiotis, "Islam and Foreign Policy of Egypt", in: Vatikiotis, ed., Arab and Regional Politics in the Middle East (London, 1984), pp. 32-59.

103. See Ruth Fist, The Prophet in the Desert, (New York, 1981).

104. See Dawisha n. 18.

inheritancy like in the case of Saudi Arabia. But the Iranian regime has the unshared privilege of being the off-spring of a popular Islamic Revolution. Secondly, except Ayatollah Khomeini, none of the other leaders of Muslim countries enjoys the distinctive position of holding the twin titles - the 'emerged ' Imam and the Head of the Nation. With regard to the popular psyche, it is likely that the credibility of the utterances and the teachings of a leader - for that matter, say, the Green Book as an appendix to the Book - can always be liable to criticism on theological grounds. But as far as the supreme leader of Iran is concerned, due to his religious rank - the Imam and Marj'a-e Taqlid - the commands have the exceptional mark of an infallible religious dictum. Similarly, in other countries while it becomes necessary to see fatwas on crucial state decisions for determining the Islamic legal validity, the clergy dominated structure of Iranian decision-making system does not call for such imperatives. Another distinctive mark in Iran is the vigorous pursuit of a people-to-people level diplomacy, aimed at promoting the "counter cultural Islam"¹⁰⁵ against the official and orthodox religious versions that prevail in most of the Muslim countries. The synchronization of religion and politics in such a way so as to present a new language and mode of behaviour in international politics is yet another feature of the Iranian Islamic foreign policy.

105. See Said, n. 44, p. 140.

Evidently it was this feature which was instrumental in widening the gulf between the "Islamic" Iran and the outside world and creating deadlocks on the normal channels of political communication. And, finally, Iranian regime has shown an apparent consistency with its alternative world view of Islamic universalism, unlike its counterparts who loosely interchanged various cards like pan-Africanism, Pan-Arabism, pan-Islam and etc.

Certainly, the present Iranian rulers have accomplished a great dream by establishing a theocratic state which even the mighty late-mideaval Popes could not fulfill entirely.¹⁰⁶ And they are still nourishing much greater dreams like their precursors. In the words of Ramazani :

... the gap between ideal and reality in Iranian political behaviour has been one of the most prominent features of Iranian political culture ... The monarchical dream of an Iranian monarchical universalism akin to Cyrus the Great's has been replaced by a utopian Islamic Universalism drawn from Ali Ibn Abu Talib, the first Shii Imam.¹⁰⁷

106. See Said Amir Arjomand, The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order, and Social Change in Shiite Iran from the Beginning to 1890 (London, 1984), p. 268.

107. R.K. Ramazani, The United States and Iran : The Patterns of Influence (New York, 1982), p. 168.

Perhaps, all the nations nurse some sorts of dreamy visions according to their own avowed ideologies. But in an era where the Machiavellian maxims are still in high currency, ideology is also often used by various regimes for justifying their selfish acts rather than for motivating or regulating state behaviour. In this exercise, all that matters is the skilful interpretation of ideology. And as for as Islam is concerned, the scope for varying range of interpretations is in plenty.¹⁰⁸ We have already seen the way in which Islam is used in both ways by the Iranian regime- for motivating the foreign policy operation as well as for its justification. In this light the dubious exercise of Islamic statecraft with the outside world turns to be lighter and easier for the Iranian clergy than what it appears to be at the outset.

108. See Maxim Rodinson, "Islam is both Religion and Politics", Link (New Delhi), 10th April 1983, pp. 26-27.

CHAPTER IV

IRAN-IRAQ WAR : A CASE STUDY ON ISLAMIC
MANIFESTATIONS

After the revolution in Iran, in the changed political context, new modes of expression of power relations began to stem up. The Iranian leadership's assertions on export of the revolution, the potentialities of the universalistic Islamic ideology of the Islamic Republic, and fear created by these factors on the political circles of different Gulf States contributed to the changed nature of power relations. Perceptions of the Gulf States on Iran, as noted in the last chapter, underwent drastic change. It was in such a state of affairs that full-fledged war started between Iran and Iraq in September 1980.

It is true that the conflict between Iran and Iraq has got a long history going back to five centuries.¹ But, in the wake of the Iranian Islamic Revolution and resulting transformation in the political circumstances, the nature of the rivalry changed considerably. And the change was manifest mainly in the acquiring of explicit Islamic overtones. Even though, historically, the Shi'i - Sunni schism contributed to the rivalry, the Islamic element now has got a new political content. This politico - Islamic content accrued mainly from the new expansionist Iranian political ideology based on Islam.

On the one hand, it was the expansionist thrust of the Islamic ideology, wherein export of the revolution to Iraq was involved which

1. For a historical account of Iran - Iraq conflict, see "Introduction" in Tareq Y. Ismael, Iraq and Iran : Roots of Conflict (New York, 1982), pp. 1-40.

contributed to apprehensions in the Ba'athist regime. Thereby, it became one of the major causes of the war. On the other it was the same religious ideology through which the attack by Iraq was defended and mobilization of men and resources were undertaken by Iran. With the nascent vigour acquired from the revolutionary struggle, the new Iranian leadership began to assert its uncompromising policy towards imperialists and the Ba'athist regime. The propaganda campaign by new Iranian regime, aimed at the Shi'i community in Iraq, was intended to incite a revolt against the Sunni- dominated Iraqi regime. Furthermore, the Ba'athist ideology was attacked as anti-Islamic and the overthrow of Saddam Hussain's regime, which was described as the "enemy of Islam and Muslims" was demanded.

Direct call to overthrow Saddam Hussain's regime by the Iranian leadership and the Iraqi Ba'athist government's quest for checking Iranian Ideological and potential political aggressions along with the imperialist powers' urge to fish in the troubled waters in the Gulf contributed to the out break of the war. The official Iranian view was that the war was started by the "naked aggression" by the un-Islamic Ba'athist regime and that it was unleashed at the behest of Western imperialism led by the "Great Satan", the United States of America.³

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2. M.S. El Azhary, Iran - Iraq war : A Historical, Economic and Political Analysis (London, 1984), p. 1.
 3. Abdel Majid Farid, Oil and Security in the Arabian Gulf (London, 1981). p. 145.

The official Iranian position is clear from the pamphlet released by the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, at New Delhi. It said inter-alia :

Following the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, which created a center of social, cultural and political dynamism in the region, the U.S. deputized the Baghdad regime to invade Iran and to overthrow its fledgling government, thus attempting to contain the growth of the Islamic Revolution and prevent it from flourishing in the region and disseminating its liberating message to the farthest corners of the globe, inspiring the deprived masses to break the centuries-old yoke of superpowers dominance."⁴

In almost all the official pronouncements the Ba'athist imperialist entanglement was brought to light. In another official publication, it was noted that the United States was planning a coup-d'etat against Iran which had miserably failed and, having failed in all its efforts, it "used its pawn named Saddam to start a war against the Islamic Iran."⁵ The following were mentioned as the objectives of Saddam's regime for starting the war with the help of "Satanic power of United States" :

(1) to defeat the Islamic Revolution and to prevent the

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4. Feats of the Islamic Revolution, The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, (New Delhi, n.d).
 5. The Devil's War against Islamic Iran, Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, (n.p., n.e.) p. 2. It is hard to believe that these official statements are mere propaganda materials. The inter-locking of the interests of Iraq and imperialist powers was a logic of discussion in circles outside Iran also. For instance, the London based journal A World to win

spreading of the Islamic Revolution to Iraq;

- (2) to divert the attention of the Iraqi people away from internal problems to outside questions and to unite them against a foreign power (Iran) in order to put a cover on the crimes of the Ba'athist regime with pretext of defending the Arabs;
- (3) to justify the non-participation of the Iraqi troops in the Arab and Palestinian war against Israel;
- (4) to gain the leadership of the Arab world via force and aggression; and
- (5) to control the oil-fields.

Also, according to the official Iranian version, the main aim of the United States in inciting the war was "to annihilate the Islamic Revolution in Iran"; to divide and weaken the anti-Zionist forces, and to strengthen US position in the region.⁶

One of the striking features of the Iranian official documents and declarations on the war is that all of them contain Islamic terms

writes : "Saddam Hussein's mercenary war is indeed valuable not just to the U.S. and Western imperialists but to the Soviet social imperialists as well. In fact, the vested interests of the Imperialists from both blocks tend to favour a tilt towards Iraq. The U.S. has made it clear, it will not tolerate Iraq's defeat."; "Maelstrom in the Gulf", A World to Win (London), Vol. 1, No. 1., 1985. p. 62.

6. Ibid, p. 4.

and expressions and, in general, the whole 'language assumed an explicit religious tone. Ayatollah Khomeini remarked thus :

Saddam Hussain revealed his ugly, anti-Islamic and anti-human face, having made up his mind to destroy Islam and the religious university of Nafaj [Sic].... He treated the scholars of Islam, especially Hazrat Ayatollah Sayyid Baqir Sadr, the way Reza Khan and Mohammad Reza Pahlavi treated the scholars, theologians and other classes of people. Saddam Hussain must know that he is digging the grave for himself and his own dictatorial, anti-human and illegal Ba'athist regime, through his anti-Islamic actions."⁷

The Iranian leadership contended that the reason for Saddam Hussain's onslaught on Islamic elements inside the country and his outside aggression was the fear of the effects of the Islamic revolution on the Muslim people of Iraq.⁸ This position showed Iran's concern over the suppression of Muslims in general and those in Iraq in particular... and it also indicated Iran's assertion of the potentialities of Iranian Islam and its universalistic content. In such a milieu, wherein political statements were articulated through Islamic

7. The Imam and the Ommat : The selected message of Imam Khomeini concerning Iran and the war Iraq imposed upon Iran, The Ministry of Islamic Guidance, (Tehran, n.d.), p. 39.

8. "Iraqi Ba'athist Regime : A Serious Threat to the Arab Cause", Message of Revolution (Tehran), No. 5, September - October 1985, p. 49.

connotation, the secularist Iraqi regime also had no other option but to respond and convey its message through Islamic expression which evidently manifested the influence of Islamic factor on Iraq. Dilip Hiro notes that although he headed a secular political party, Saddam Hussain resorted to traditional Islamic imagery in pronouncements concerning his country's war against Iran.⁹ For example, in October 1980, Saddam Hussain used the eve of the religious festival of Id al-Adha as an occasion to make a television speech in order to inspire the Iraqi soldiers. He said :

Strike powerfully, because you are truly God's swords on earth. The necks you are striking are those of Magians, collaborators with the lunatic Khomeini.¹⁰

It is interesting to note the parallel between the declarations of Ayatollah Khomeini and Saddam Hussain. Both talked in Islamic terms, the latter being influenced by the former.

Apart from the interplay of Islamic factor in and through various official statements and pronouncements, the Iranian leadership was attempting to project its stand on the war by making use of the Islamic factor in the following aspects :

- (a) the war projected Islamic universalism as against nationalism;

9. Dilip Hiro, "Khomeini's Revolution : Riding the Wave of Islam's Past", The Nation (New York), Vol. 240, No. 5, February 1985, p. 143.

10. Ibid.

- (b) the war was projected as a Jihad ;
- (c) the war was depicted as a defensive one;
- (d) rejection of the interference of international organizations and other mediatory efforts which go against the Islamic thrust of the Republic's policy ;
- (e) seemingly adamant stand on conditions of ending the war on Islamic lines; and
- (f) important religious events, symbols and motifs were used for mobilisation.

The theme of Islamic universalism vs. nationalism has to be comprehended so as to have a proper understanding of Iranian ideological and policy stand`concerning the war. The Iranian Islamic leadership's contention is that nationalism, especially Iraqi Ba'athist nationalism, is un-Islamic and, therefore, has to be fought with. Ayatollah Khomeini's speech on 9th August 1980 on the occasion of the "Day of Qods (Jerusalem)" makes the Iranian position clear.

That which I often repeat, that it is nationalism which is the root of Moslem's misfortune in that this evil of nationalism brings my Iranian nation into confrontation with other Muslim nations, the Iraqi nation with the others, and similarly with other nations. This is a scheme and a conspiracy drawn by the oppressors lest the Moslems be unified amongst themselves.¹¹

Khomeini's anti-nationalistic position, stressing the importance of Islamic internationalism , is in well in tune with his world view centering around the concept of ummah . He contends :

11. The Imam and the Ommat , n. 7, p. 49.

There are no nationalities in Islam. It supersedes and abolishes all of them... There is no difference between an Arab and a non-Arab, even though the Prophet is Arab and the Koran was revealed in Arabic... All Muslims are brothers in the view of Islam and all Muslims must shed whatever divides them be its source nationalism, race or colour."¹²

When the Islamic propagation of these Islamic principles mounted Saddam Hussain's regime which adheres to both Iraqi and Arab nationalism had no other option but to rely more on the Islamic thrust. This is why he "regularly invoked the memory of the Muslims, yet Arab leaders of early Islam."¹³ Again, in order to counter Iran's Islamic fervour, Saddam Hussain characterised his war against Iran as the "Second Qadisiya". This was a reference to the battle of Qadisiya in 637, when the Sassanid Persian army was defeated by the Arab Muslims.¹⁴ In the same context, the battles of Badr, al-Yarmuk and Hittin were also recalled for propaganda purpose.¹⁵

As Tariq Ismael noted, being a country bordering Iran, Iraq which is an exponent of Arab nationalism was bound to clash with

12. Quoted in Ismael, in. 1, p. 34.

13. Added Dawisha, "Invoking the Spirit of Arabism : Islam in the Foreign Policy of Saddam's Iraq", in A. Dawisha, ed., Islam in Foreign Policy (Cambridge, 1982), p. 125.

14. Ibid, p. 144, 122. See also Dilip Hiro, Iran Under the Ayatollahs (London, 1985), p. 169.

15. The battle of Badr was the first major offensive by the

Iran, an exponent of Islam and Islamic government.¹⁶ Such a confrontation in the ideological realm explains the basic thrust of the war and it was in this context, for upholding the Iranian stand, Khomeini stated the following, on the first anniversary of the war:

Those who bring separation and division among the Muslims by resorting to phrases such as nationalism or nationality and the like are the army of Satan, contributing to the Super Powers and the enemies of Islam.¹⁷

In short, Iran's Islamic universalistic appeal posed against nationalism gained an upperhand in the region's political milieu. As a reaction to the Islamic assertions of the Iranian Republic, the following postures were necessary for the Iraqis:

- (a) projecting the Islamic traditions in order to cope with Iranian supranationalism;
- (b) portraying the whole scenario in the framework of different nationalism, wherein Arab nationalism was encouraged to counter Persian nationalism ; and
- (c) depicting on nationalistic lines the ethnic divisions among the Shi'is of Iraq and the Shi'is of Iran.

Prophet against the pagans of Mecca; the battle of al-Yarmurk resulted in the victory of the Muslims over the Byzantine army and in the battle of Hittin, the crusaders were defeated by the Islamic warrior, Salahudin.

16. Ismael, n.1, p. 34.

17. Ettelaat International (Tehran), 23 September 1981, cited in ibid, p. 34.

An important aspect of the Iran-Iraq war is that it has acquired the characteristics of a Jihad¹⁸ (holy war). When Iraqi forces crossed the Iranian borders in September 1980, every attempt was made by Iran to present the whole issue as noted before, on Islamic lines. When the war lingered on the immediate task of mobilization and pushing Iraq back to its territory and the goal of bringing Saddam Hussain's Ba'athist regime down from power were juxtaposed with the ultimate aim of liberating al-Qods (Jerusalem). Thus, the war was elevated to the level of a Jihad. That meant that the objectives of war were widened so as to include religious and political dimensions. The idea of liberating al-Qods evoked and attracted religious as well as political sentiments. The Iranian leadership, though aware of the impossibility of such a liberation, was making use of the symbols of Jihad in order to activate the emotions of the people.

From the early days of the war itself, the Iranian leadership projected two phases of its Jihad. First, liberating Karbala and Najaf, the Shi'i holy places in Iraq, and second, liberating al-Qods, Islam's third holiest shrine. The former was to serve as a step towards achieving the latter.

There were conscious efforts on the part of Iran to establish

18. Hiro, no. 9, p. 143.

at least indirect links between Saddam's regime and Zionism, apart from the well projected Ba'athist-Imperialist entanglement. Defeating Zionist power and its proxies and the liberation of Palestine is often repeated by Tehran as a part and parcel of the establishment of the Islamic Ummah. Thus, Iran's fight with Iraq, in its eyes a proxy of Zionism, is a step towards achieving the above mentioned aims. That was how, the main goals of the Islamic Jihad namely, liberating Najaf and Karbala on the one hand and Jerusalem on the other, were brought together with Iran's war with Iraq.

The Jihad concept is prominently projected, again, to justify the modes of conduct of the war and the continuation of the war. That apart, international propagation of the issue of Jihad at an international level is undertaken by the Iranian leadership. For example, the statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemning death sentence of African National Congress workers by the South African regime said that :

The Muslim nation of Iran, which is itself engaged in a Jihad (Holy War) against the Iraqi aggressors and mercenaries of Saddam, expresses its strong sympathy to the oppressed nation of Azania.¹⁹

19. "Announcements and Statements of the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran", Message of the Revolution, n. 8, p. 30.

Iran takes advantage of this situation by equating Saddam's regime with that of racist South Africa and thus striking a parallel between the Iranian Jihad against Iraq with the struggle of the African people against racism. Thus, through such instances, the Islamic Republic tried to intentionally legitimize its war against Iraq as a Jihad .

At the same time, Iran has been often asserting that its war against Iraq is defensive in nature. In Ayatollah Khomeini's words :

Today , Iran is still bound by what is said at the outset : we have no intention of fighting against any country, Islamic or non-Islamic. We desire peace and amity among all; to date we have engaged only in self-defence which is a divine duty and human right enjoined by all. We have never had an intention of committing aggression against other countries.²⁰

Iran's adherence to self-defence and non-aggression concerning the war necessitated it to face the task of justifying its counter-offensive. As Ramazani notes, "... paradoxically, Islamic ideology has been invoked both in rationalising Iran's defensive against, and its invasion of, Iraq."²¹ The dilemma of preaching defensive war and waging counter offensives was eased by relying upon certain Quranic verses.²²

20. FIBS, Daily Report, South Asia , Vol. 8, No. 197, 13 October, 1981.

21. R.K. Ramazani, "Khumayni's Islam in Iran's Foreign Policy", in Dawisha , n.13, p. 25.

22. Such as: "Fight for the sake of Allah those that fight against

In Iranian view, since Iraq initially undertook an aggression against them, launching counter-offensive against Iraq, while adhering to defensive-war concept, is justified through the Quranic dictum. Meanwhile, the idea of an Islamic Jihad, stemming up from Iran's Islamic Internationalism, calls for establishment of the ummah through liberating Jerusalem by marching over Karbala and Najaf. The entire course takes a clearly offensive line.

// Since Iran has been reiterating the Islamic factor as the basis of the conduct of its foreign policy, secular laws governing international politics, which, in Iranian opinion, are the creation of Western Imperialism, are not acceptable and not binding upon the Islamic Republic. Iran is not ready to accept mediatory proposals of international organizations for ending its war with Iraq, because it considers these moves are un-Islamic and imperialist-sponsored. This is specially true with Iran's stand and United Nations mediatory efforts and resolutions.

The official Iranian news agency, IRNA, reported on 24 February 1986 that Prime Minister Hussain Mussavi told Karbala

you, but do not attack them first. Allah does not love the aggressor" (2:190); "Permission to take up arms is hereby given to those who are attacked, because they have been wronged. Allah has power to grant them victory those who have been unjustly driven from their homes only because they said: Our Lord is Allah" (22 : 39 - 50) N.J. Dawood, trans., Koran (London, 1983), pp. 352, 404.

combat volunteers that the Islamic Republic would have been defeated in the war with Iraq if it had heeded recommendations of International Organizations.²³ This statement was made immediately after the UN Security Council issued a resolution on the war without condemning Iraq as the aggressor. Mussavi further said :

But our revolution is a spiritual one and the masses who have firmly stood up against the enemy will not be deceived by decisions of international organizations'.²⁴

On several occasions, most vociferous accusations were made by the Iranian official circles against the United Nations. For example, an official document on the war stated :

In fact, the United Nations, alongside the west, was entertaining the notion that persuading Iran to submit to its (UN) conditions for ending the conflict would result in a political defeat for the Islamic Republic and a victory for Iraq.²⁵

Again, Ayatollah Khomeini, the supreme leader of the Iranian regime, strongly criticized the United Nations for doing nothing against the Iraqi regime which, he said, was bombing innocent people in Iranian border towns.²⁶ Iranian Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, pointed out that Iran was not responding to

23. News from Islamic Republic of Iran (New Delhi), 26th February 1986.

24. Ibid.

25. A Glance at Two Years of War (Tehran, n.d), p. 159.

26. Indian Express (New Delhi), 26 October 1983.

the calls for the peaceful settlement of the conflict by the Security Council because many questions like the Security Council not condemning the flagrant aggressions by Iraq and its not requesting the withdrawal of the Iraqi occupying forces, are still unanswered by the UN body.²⁷ On yet another occasion, when the Security Council was trying to work out a formula for ending the war, the Iranian delegation in the UN issued a statement from its Foreign Ministry saying that compliance with any Security Council resolution "will be impossible before the Council corrects its previous and partial position and condemns Iraq for having started the war."²⁸

In short, the Iranian official stand on the UN is that, on the one hand, from its Western orientation it has got the inherent un-Islamic character and thereby myopic in its view on the Islamic Republic and, on the other hand, due to its pro-Iraqi attitude it has no moral ground to call for a peaceful settlement of the war.

Even with regard to the peace efforts by a Islamic body like the Organization of Islamic Conference, (OIC), Iran held certain reservations. It has been officially stated that the intensity of efforts launched by the peace mission of OIC fluctuated in keeping with the interests of influential Islamic Governments in the Gulf, namely Saudi

27. Basheer (New Delhi), Vol. 1, No. 10, December 1985. pp. 14-15.

28. The Sunday Statesman (New Delhi), 30 October 1983.

Arabia, Kuwait and others.²⁹ The fear was that the Organization might be serving the interests of Iraq and other Gulf states and Tehran wanted the OIC to undergo perceptive changes in its outlook. Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati sent a message on 23 June 1985 to OIC Secretary General, Sharifuddin Pirzada, calling for more fundamental measures to be taken so as to halt Iraqi attacks on civilian areas.³⁰ He pointed out :

In fact, the dimension of Iraqi infringement of international, Islamic and humanitarian regulations had reached the extent that further presence of the Iraqi representations in the Organisation was a disgrace for all Muslims.³¹

Iran wants the Organization not only to throw un-Islamic Ba'athist Iraq out and condemn the Iraqi aggression and atrocities against Islamic Iran but also to perceive the selfish interests of reactionary Arab Gulf states and try for the weakening of their bonds with the un-Islamic regime of Saddam Hussain.

Iran has adopted a seemingly adamant stand on the issue of ending the war through a 'peaceful settlement'. The so-called adamant position has its roots in the Iranian Islamic outlook wherein the war is treated as a "war of truth against falsehood."³² And the ultimate

29. A Glance at Two Years of War, n. 25, p. 161.

30. Basheer, Vol. 2, No. 6, August 1985, p. 17.

31. Ibid.

32. The Devils War, n.5, p. 22.

victory of truth over falsehood is where the war could end. The establishment of the Islamic ummah worldwide where the rule of the mustaz'afin would prevail is the ultimate Iranian goal. Victory over Iraq and the liberation of Jerusalem are the intermediate stages in the venture. Official Iranian publications lay down that

... following the eventual liberation of the oppressed people of Iraq, Qods (Jerusalem) will have to be liberated next and, thereafter, the war shall not cease, until the oppressed overthrow the oppressors in the world.³³

In a limited sense, as Ayatollah Khomeini said, the following is expected by Iran :

I hope that in the same way that we were able to topple the deposed Shah empty handed and cut off the hands of the super powers from our country, we can also overthrow this person (Saddam) who is a greater enemy than the deposed Shah, and liberate the country and people of Iraq, who are our brothers, so that the Iraqis themselves can determine their own destiny.³⁴

Iran was not ready to accept the suggestions by any mediator for various reasons. This was as noted earlier, because of its reservations about the credibility of international organizations and its insistence on toppling, the Ba'athist regime of Baghdad. This was made clear in the early stages itself by the then Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Rajai, that Iran would

Accept neither mediation, nor reconciliation, discussion or anything ... our dispute with Saddam Hussain is a dispute between Islam and blasphemy, and as long as Saddam remains in his blasphemy, it is essential for us to continue this jihad³⁵

33. Ibid

34. Ibid

35. Quoted in Ami Ayalon, "The Iraqi - Iranian War", in Colin Legum,

On the whole, based on Islamic principles, Iran's conditions for a settlement on the war continue to be basically three. Those are : removal of Saddam Hussain; overthrow of the Ba'athist regime; and liberating the holy shrines of Najaf and Karbala. Iran's long term twin objective is liberating Jerusalem and establishing an integrated Islamic ummah. This being the theoretical position which Iran upheld at the pragmatic day to day political level, Iran also adopted a comparatively less rigid position. This is where Iran set forth seemingly practicable conditions for a settlement of the dispute. They were Iraq's unconditional retreat from the occupied land; identification and condemnation of the aggressor; reparation for all the inflicted damages estimated at \$ 150 billion; and repatriation of Iraqi refugees counted to be over 120,000 in number.³⁶

At every level of the conduct of the war from the very beginning itself, Islamic patterns of interpretations and Islamic symbols and motifs were made use of by Iranian leadership. Immediately after the Iraqi aggression, Iranian leaders equated Saddam Hussain with Yazid, the arch villain in Shi'i history. Fighting the war against Saddam Hussain has been termed as a "Hussainic act."³⁷ This helped in

ed., Crisis and Conflicts in the Middle East (London, 1981), p. 48.

36. The Devil's War, n.5 p. 20.

37. See Ayalon, n. 35.

boosting the vigour of people and thus enabled them to defend the war and later to launch counter-offensives. In Jan Hjarpe's opinion, the concept of martyrdom, and the internalising of this concept by liturgical repetitions, the Ta'ziya, undoubtedly played a considerable part in lifting the morale of the Iranians in their fight against Iraq.³⁸

Ramazani also sounds on the same :

"Islam has also been a ferocious motivating force for the Muslim masses which form the backbone of the regular [Revolutionary guards corps, the Pasdaran] and especially the irregular forces [Mobilization force, the Basij].³⁹

Religious occasions especially like the Day of Qods and Ta'ziya of Hussain in the month of Moharram were utilized by the Iranian regime for mobilizations and counter offensives.⁴⁰ It is reported that symbolic keys to the "Gate of Paradise"⁴¹ were distributed to the soldiers on the eve of offensive. Quranic verses and hadiths were often quoted by leaders in many of the declarations.

38. Jan Hjarpe, "Predicting Political and Religious Movements : Iran", in William Page, ed., The future of politics : Governance, Movement and World order (London, 1983), p. 83.

39. Ramazani, n. 21, p. 24.

40. For an exposition of the occasion of Ta'ziya of Hussain and its utilization by the Islamic leadership for mobilization and regime legitimation, see Jan Hjarpe, "The Ta'ziya Ecstasy as Political Expression", paper presented at the symposium on "Religious Ecstasy", held at Abo, Finland; 26-28 August 1984.

41. Times of India (New Delhi), 9 February 1984

By projecting the involvement and fighting in Iran's war against Iraq as the God's cause, Iranian leaders were trying to elevate the battle to a higher plane. An editorial in Tehran Times said thus in March 1986:

The result of the Iranian victory during the 2000 days of the war has proved the superiority of faith over modern weapons, pointing to the fact that it is the faith of a nation that can overwhelmingly overshadow the effectiveness of weapon no matter how sophisticated they may be."⁴²

And, on the occasion of Id-e Qurban, Khomeini wished the people in the following way :

I wish happy Eid for all Moslems, for the Iranian nation which is at war now, and for all those whose members of their family have martyred. I pray to God to bless us by giving us the opportunity to achieve martyrdom for His cause.⁴³

With the touchy appeals on these lines, mobilisation became easier.⁴⁴

Through such mobilization and through legitimization of the war as

42. Tehran Times, 15 March 1986.

43. The Imam and the Ommat, n. 7, p. 104.

44. The mass mobilization of paramilitary forces has reached such an extent that President Khamenei claimed : "The number of paramilitary volunteers was so large that the Government could not promise to send them all to the warfronts In the Ministry of Education some ten thousand people had volunteered while

as supreme cause, the Iranian regime could not only provide the basis for concerted war effort, but also sustain the war in a seemingly non-ending way.⁴⁵

we might be needing only 500 people this month [April, 1986] and thousand the next". Tehran Times, 10th April 1986. Also see "And the War goes on", Frontline (Madras) Vol. 3, No. 5, March 1986, pp. 30 - 41.

45. The starting of the war and its prevalence have contributed, in the official version, to unity among different sections of the people and increased the legitimacy of the regime. Prime Minister Mir Hussain Musavi observed : "with the perception that Islam granted us as we look upon the imposed war as a great favour bestowed upon us, for in the course of this war we managed to build up our political, defensive, economic and cultural strength;" M.H. Musavi, "Preface" in Summary Report : An Estimate of the Economic Damages of the Imposed War (Tehran, 1983), p. XII.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS

A study of the Islamic factor in the foreign policy of post-Revolutionary Iran entails a brief purview of the role of ulema in the political history of Iran, the specificity of 1978/79 Revolution and the inception and the solidification of the Islamic Republic. The dominance of Shi'i Islam in Iranian polity stretches back to the 16th century when, under the Safavid rule, it became the official religion of the state. In due course of time, the Shi'ite ulema became a dominant social strata mainly because of the state patronage provided by the Qajar rulers and the final outcome of the ijtihad/taqlid controversy among the Akhbaris and the Usulis. The pivotal role played by them in two corner-stones of modern Iranian history, the Tobacco Revolution and the Constitutional Movement, were demonstrative of the influence and command of the ulema over the populace. In spite of the discord among them regarding the controversy over the nature of the Islamic polity during the period of al-ghaibah and occasional fatwas imposing restrictions on political activity, a section of the ulema continuously engaged in building up strong opposition against the rulers who were keen on introducing various modernization programmes in collaboration with their foreign advisers.

By mid-Seventies, Iran entered into a turbulent and critical phase and this was manifested through the presence of an array of social, political, economic and military syndroms, typical of

neo-colonial states in their collapsing juncture. Presumably, this provided the necessary fertile ground for a political debacle and like in the case of any other fascist dictator, Reza Shah's fate was also sealed. The dynamic leadership of the religious figure, Ayatollah Khomeini, and the absence of a mass-based secular and class-oriented oppositional front on the one hand, and the ideological contributions made by the Shi'i intellectual renaissance in the Sixties and the increased popular affinity for religion on the other hand, helped the Islamic forces to assume the central role in the mounting opposition. The unprecedented mass mobilization during the upsurge was made mainly through various religious motifs and platforms. The resultant popular upsurge attributed a clear mark of distinction to the Iranian revolt that it was neither a military coup de'tat, ballot revolution nor the culmination of a protracted guerrilla warfare, but it was an "Islamic Revolution".

Amidst the euphoria following the realization of the immediate objective of the popular uprising, i.e., ouster of the Shah from the Peacock throne, the Islamic forces were keen on sustaining their leadership and dominance. By telling that only the first stage of the revolution was over, Khomeini, on his return from exile, unveiled the plan for the implementation of an absolute Islamic political system on the lines of his politico-religious treatise: Velayat-e Faqih. Through concerted and deliberate efforts the Islamic segment, following the line of Khomeini, managed to promulgate a new Constitution and accordingly new political

institutions and political roles were introduced. Even after the inception of the Republic, they continued to tighten their grip over the system and managed the consolidation and the solidification of the new theocratic state.

Being the main architect of the Revolution and the Republic, quite obviously, it was Ayatollah Khomeini's world view which became the central pillar of post-Revolutionary Iran's foreign policy. For a better understanding of the Khomeinian world view, the legacy and setting of the Iranian political thought has to be taken into account. The notion of "a corrupt periphery and a pure core" which is one of the specific features prevalent in the Iranian political psyche, and in addition, the absence of direct territorial invasion by the colonials impelled the Iranian nationalists to engage in an exercise of unravelling and unfolding the dubious colonial schemes through which indirect plundering of their motherland was made possible. The "gharbazdegi theory" propounded by Jalal ^aAl-e Ahmad and "social solidarism" professed by Ahmad Kasravi were part of such an enquiry. The Musaddeq interlude of 1951-53 was an exhibition of the bold attempt of a Third-World country fighting for unchaining from foreign strings. But, rather than the secularists, it was the religious-oriented nationalists who made a headway in the long run in this effort. Ayatollah Kashani, prominent one among them, stressed that the Muslims are duty-bound to carry out the struggle against political oppression and appealed for the solidarity of the Muslims and non-Muslims of Afro-Asia in their fight

against colonial powers. The great humanist and scholar, Ali Shariati, through his various writings and lectures, attempted in designing, what can be called, an "Islamic Liberation Theology" in place of the scholastic and jurisprudential Islam. All of them, in one way or the other, were trying to reinterpret Islam as a political weapon to reinstate the spirit of the country which had got tarnished by Occidental domination.

Ayatollah Khomeini, on the same line, upheld Islam as the panacea for the maladies of the present-day world and staunchly advocated the inseparability of religion and politics. Relying on the ultimate victory of the Tawhidi principle, he called for the creation of a new world order wherein the Islamic tripple themes of Justice, Freedom and Equality would be guaranteed and the rule of the mustaz'afin would be established. Questioning the very geneology of modern nation-states, Khomeini accused the existing international territorial configuration as a product of the imperialist ploy of dividing and fragmenting the great ummah. Terms of international law and dictums of international forums and concepts like political sovereignty, nationalism etc. become either unobligatory or secondary since shariah, according to him, is the supreme law. The duty of the believer is to launch a Jihad against the Islamic forms of government and to transform the world in accordance with the Islamic principles. Iran, in its capacity as the sole Islamically-ruled state, is assigned a speical role in the Khomeinian design.

Like all major world revolutions, the Iranian revolution as well was embedded with a trans-territorial dimension and thrust, or rather a universalistic characteristic. This, along with the Islamic content of the Revolution which was functioning as a political ideology, in itself necessitated the formulation and adoption of a foreign policy position encompassing the idea of la grande nation. The universalistic vision of Islam interpreted on Khomeinian lines was to make Iran a nucleus for the realization of the rule of the mustaz'afin and to transform it from the role of a mere nation-state to the much more pivotal status of a geographical area of the ummah. The relevant parts of the Constitution also vouch for the same.

Even though limitation on envisaging the grand design was accepted, there was no escape from the contradictions emerging out of the interactions of those ideological positions with the question of practical conduct of policies. Adherence to Islamic internationalism based on the shariah on the one hand and the need for the acceptance and recognition of territorial sovereignty on the other represent the crux of the problem. For sure, this is not a new phenomena. In the classical Islamic world-view itself, there existed an in-built contradiction in the form of the conflict between Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb and the ways to resolve it. The Islamic statecraft, in later stages, had to adapt with the reality by recognising the political sovereignty of other nations and to give up the notion of a "religiously and legally obligatory state of war" - Jihad - between

the two domains. It could be seen that the dichotomy encountered by the present regime in Iran, to a certain extent, is an extension of this old contradiction : political idealism and/or ambition vs. political realism and/or pragmatism.

It was around the doctrines of "Export of the Revolution" and "Neither East, nor West" that the Islamic Republic gave practical shape to its foreign policy. The former one was a policy posture not only designed for extending the universalistic Islamic revolutionary ideology beyond Iranian boundaries but was also moulded for serving the national interest and the very existence of the Republic. The later doctrine had its roots in the historical specificity of Iran, especially in Musaddeq's policy of Muvazeneh-e Manafi (Negative Equilibrium). The regime, in accordance with the spirit of the anti-imperialist revolution, adopted a non-aligned posture and posed Islam as an alternative ideology to the 'materialist ideology' of both the Super Powers.

Iran's new militant Islamic posture was evident in its seeking membership at the NAM, cancellation of West-sponsored alliances and the defence pact with the USA, unilateral abrogation of two crucial Articles of the 1921 treaty with the Soviet Union, severe criticism launched on Israel and handing over of the Israeli embassy to the PLO, breaking of its ties with South Africa etc. This radical position, in general, reflected the new regime's aspiration of complete independence from Super Powers and its anti-Zionist and anti-apartheid sentiments.

The Islamic Republic found the Arab side of the Gulf as the fertile ground for the operation of its Islamic foreign policy. As a result, repercussions of the militant Islamic posture were discernable in the monarchical regimes of the region, especially in Saudi Arabia. The formation of the Gulf Co-operation Council and various other measures were intended to counteract the militant Islamic appeal. In that process, deliberate attempts were made to portray the Tehran regime as a Shi'ite one having Persian expansionist motives. In fact, Tehran was incapable of building up warm relations with most of the Muslim countries due to its militant posture and, because of the same reason, it was deprived of realizing diplomatic goals in the Islamic international bodies as well.

It was of no wonder that the Islamic regime resorted to a near total antagonistic policy towards the United States as anti-Americanism was manifested as a main component of its Islamic Revolution. This was evident from Tehran's wide scale anti-American propaganda, naming it as the "Great Satan", the humiliation inflicted by the hostage crisis, and the accusation of its alliance with Saddam Hussain's regime. Countering the Iranian position was not an easy task for the United States by labelling it as "the Communist in disguise" or with similar devices mainly because of the Iranian ideological position. This is where we could find the outpour of various books and articles on Islam and the special cell in the Department of State engaged in Islamic studies for exploring the

possibilities of resuming relations with Iran!

It was with the Soviet Union that the Iranian regime could employ the Islamic factor in a more evident fashion. Moscow's initial remarks of upholding the Iranian Revolution and the preparedness of the Soviet Union to develop good relationship with Iran on an equal footing had the potentiality of developing better bilateral relations. But the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan created suspicion and contempt on the part of the Iranian leadership. They feared, that the Soviet Union would use its hold over Afghanistan in eliminating the emerging Islamic militancy. Many developments, especially the expulsion of the Soviet diplomats from Tehran and the arrest of the Tudeh Party leaders, contributed to the deterioration of the relationship between the two countries. The Islamic factor played a crucial role in Iran's dealing with the Soviet Union as there exists a considerable number of Muslim population in the Southern Soviet Republics. Heavy propaganda on the part of the Iranian regime and its influence on the Soviet Muslim citizens provoked the Soviet leadership to organise various religious conferences and to launch counter propaganda saying that 'Communism and Islam are fully compatible'!

On various international issues, Iran's position was one of extending support to the deprived and struggling people of the world. It was in accordance with this that the establishment of a special department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was opened

up and close relationship with the struggling groups and organizations were maintained.

The Iranian regime took a position befitting its Islamic outlook in the case of its stand on the norms of International Law and Organizations. Since its ultimate allegiance was to Shariah, Tehran claimed that it was not binding upon the Islamic Republic to accept the existing international codes. This was evident in the capture of the US embassy and its unwillingness to accept the judgement of the International Court of Justice and its declining to accept the Security Council Resolutions. As far as the existing international institutions were concerned, most of them were depicted as bodies dominated by imperialist influence and un-Islamic in character. Tehran was found constantly emphasising an "Islamic solution" to the Afghanistan crisis, the Iran-Iraq war, the Palestinian question and the like, irrespective of its legitimacy or applicability among the other concerned parties.

The awareness on the part of the Islamic leadership of the disadvantages of the existing un-Islamic channels of diplomacy prompted them to monitor a "people to people diplomacy". As a part of this, several international conferences were organized at the religious centre in Qom and at Tehran and various official and semi-official agencies undertook this task. That apart, the Ministry of Islamic guidance was constituted to popularize the Islamic content of the Iranian Islamic ideology. The conduct of the annual World Friday Prayer Leaders' Conference in Qom called upon

ulema of other countries to organize the believers to challenge the existing un-Islamic system of governments.

It was in the case of Haj that the Islamic factor played an even more significant role in Iran's Islamic diplomacy. The occasion was made use of by the Iranian leadership to expose the Super Powers and to question the subservience of the monarchical regimes of the Gulf to imperialism. It was also an event for calling upon the Muslims all over the world to annihilate "the Present-day Satans" - USA, Soviet Union, Israel and Iraq. The religious rituals during the Haj were given explicit political meaning; the "stoning of the Satan" was an example. Haj still occupies a pivotal role in Iran's foreign policy which has been indicated by the steep rise in the number of Iranian pilgrims going for Haj. Politicization of Haj naturally antagonised the Saudi leadership and created strong reactions from Riyadh. They even began to portray the issue as an intervention in the legal right of Saudi's to keep law and order within their national territory. Resorting to legal explanations and using state force on the Iranian pilgrims at Madina had shown the curious phenomena of a conservative Islamic government's clinging on secular terms in order to counter militant Islamic assertions! //

But Tehran has been following an equivocal stand in its relation with certain countries from the very beginning. For instance, the military government of Ankara which is also a NATO member, the military dictatorship of Islamabad whose pro-US stand is well-known and the Ba'athist regime of Damascus which was merciless

in repressing the Islamic militants in Hama valley etc. were found to be in the good books of Tehran. It is clearly discernable from this stand that Tehran resorted to a contradictory position of political manoeuvrings necessitated by immediate national interests, while preaching political idealism coated with Islamic overtones. Such a contradiction is one which is inherent in the Islamic Republic's ideological and policy postures. On the one hand, the regime deplored the existing un-Islamic world order and called on the mustaz'afin for channelling their struggles for the ultimate establishment of a coherent and solidified ummah. On the other, there was even constitutional acceptance of internationally accepted forms of non-interference in the affairs of other countries and of reciprocity and equality as basis of bilateral relations. The possibility of isolation emanating from the first position was an issue of concern in Iranian policy-making circles. Iran's "open door policy" was thus its result. The supreme leader, Khomeini, himself approved this new shift in policy by citing the example of Prophet Muhammad who had despatched ambassadors to the different corners and who used skilful manoeuvring of peace diplomacy. The new programme of Prime Minister Husaain Musavi's cabinet reflects the apprehension of its isolation resulting out of a strictly militant Islamic stand. At the same time, caution was taken for not deviating too far from the avowed position.

The interplay of the Islamic factor in the Iranian foreign

policy is most evident from the conduct of the Iran-Iraq war. The Iranian leadership projected Islamic universalism in interpreting the war as against nationalism and presented it as a Jihad. The war was also depicted as a defensive one. One of the important dimensions of the war in Islamic lines is that the mobilization of soldiers for the war was conducted using religious psychology. The general official expressions concerning the conflict were made in what can be called an Islamic language. Mediatory efforts by different international bodies were rejected as Tehran considers that these initiations would go against the Islamic thrust of its policy. Again, the outwardly adamant stand on the issue of ending the war is mainly because it wants to show that an end to the war should be on Islamic lines.

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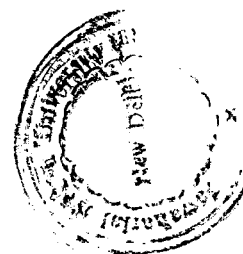
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