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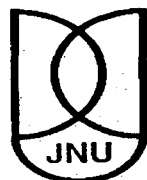
Dissertation Submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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Centre for West Asian Studies

SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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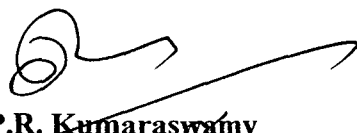
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Date: July 29, 2010

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "**The Offensive-Defensive Interaction Between Iran-Israel, 1979-2009**" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

VINEET CHATURVEDI

CERTIFICATE

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

Prof. P.R. Kumaraswamy

Chairperson, CWAS

DR. Ashwini Kumar Mohapatara

Supervisor

DEDICATED

TO

MY BABA AND LATE MAAJI

WHO SHOWED ME

WHAT LOVE AND CARE IS ALL ABOUT

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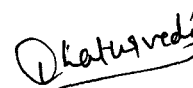
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29th July 2010

New Delhi

Vineet Chaturvedi

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Table 2.1- Hard Power Potential of Iran and Israel

Name of the country	Military Capabilities	Naval Force	Airforce	Defense Expenditure	Terms and condition
Islamic Republic of Iran	350,000 Army, 125,000 are Islamic Revolutionary Guard corps, while 350,000 as reserve force. Beside all this 40,000 as Paramilitary forces.	18,000 Navy forces, while Ex-Service volunteers are also there	40,000 Air force, while ex-servicemen volunteers are also there	90.4 tr, $1= r, in 2008. 2.87% of GDP(source-World Bank development report indicator)	Armed Forces General Staff coordinates two parallel organisations: Regular Armed Forces and Revolutionary Guard Corps
Israel	133,000 Army, while 500,000 is in Reserve. Beside all this Israel has 8,500 as paramilitary forces	9,500 Navy Force, While 10,000 is in Reserve	34,000 Air force, While 55,000 is in reserve	$14.77bn in 2008, 8.01% of GDP(source-World Bank development report indicator) $12.96bn in 2009	*Terms of service* officers 48 months, other ranks 36 months, women 24 months (Jews and Druze only; Christians, Circassians and Muslims may volunteer). Annual trg as cbt reservists to age 41 (some specialists to age 54) for men, 24 (or marriage) for women

Source- (2010) "Chapter Five: Middle East and North Africa", *The Military Balance*, Vol. 110, No. 1, 235 — 282

Table 2.2- Country Profile of Iran and Israel

Name of the Country	Population	Economy	Natural resources	Geography	Type of Government
Islamic Republic of Iran	74,196,000, Persian 51%; Azeri 24%; Gilaki 8%; Kurdish 7%; Arab 3%; Lur 2%; Baloch 2%; Turkman 2%	3,181tr in 2008, 3,563 tr in 2009. ($1=r), Growth rate 2.5% in 2008, and 1.5% in 2009	2nd in world gas reserves and 3rd in world oil reserve, 7th largest country in production of Uranium Hexafluoride.	1,648,195 km^2, 18th largest country in the world.	Theocratic i.e. Islamic Republic
Israel	7,170,900, Jewish 76%; Arab 20%; others 4%. (Muslim 17%; Christian 2%; Druze 2%)	US$199bn in 2008. US$198bnin 2009. Growth rate 4% in 2008, and negative in 2009	Rank 17th in world's most developed states (source- IMD's world competitiveness report). Global leader in water conservation and geothermal energy.	22,072 km^2, i51st largest country in the world.	Parliamentary Democracy.

Sources- (2010) "Chapter Five: Middle East and North Africa", *The Military Balance*, Vol. 110, No. 1, 235 — 282, and Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (2009) (.PDF). *World Population Prospects, Table A.1.* 2008 revision. United Nations. Retrieved 2009-03-12.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIPAC: American Israeli Public Affairs Committee

CENTO: Central Treaty Organization

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

EU: European Union

GCC: Gulf Co-operation Council

HAMAS: Haskal-al-Muqawamat-al-Islamiyyah

HEZBOLLAH: Party of God

IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency

IRGC: Islamic Revolutionary Guard Cops

IRIB: Islamic Republic of Iran Broad Casting

IUST: Iran University of science and Technology

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NCRI: National Council of Resistance of Iran

NPT: Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty

OIC: Organization of Islamic Countries

OPEC: Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

PFLF: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

PLO: Palestinian Liberation Organization

SNSC: The Supreme National Security Council

TNRC: Tehran Nuclear Research Centre

CHAPTER I

Conceptual

Framework

Introduction

International politics is a realm of uncertainties; today's friend can be tomorrow's potential enemy. This is because the state behavior in an environment characterized by 'anarchy' is determined as much by the global/regional systemic factors as their material power resources, internal political structure (nature of regime) and ideological preferences. In pursuit of their national interest (security and survival) and goal (influence-maximization abroad), states either adopt offensive or defensive strategy. It is important to note that state offensive behavior does not necessarily mean military offensive; it can become offensive through its diplomacy, politics and policies. Any state can become offensive in anyone of the ways specified above depending on its hard power resources, its intention and willingness to use them in the quest for power and hegemony. Besides, the offensiveness in the behavior of a state is also the result of uncertainty of intention of the others. However, states behave rationally by making policies according to their own calculations and perceptions of the changes in the external arena so as to maximize their gains and minimise the risks. Based on this analytical framework drawn largely on the neo-realist assumptions, the study makes an attempt to explain how changing regional dynamics and internal politics of Iran and Israel have led to offensive-defensive relations between the two key regional actors since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Realist theory in international relation is an important tool that helps analysts to understand the dynamics of foreign policy behavior of a state. It may not enable us to predict the foreign policy response of a state to a specific development in the regional or global environment. It is nevertheless useful in explaining "why a state behaves the way it does". "A theory is an intellectual construction by which we select facts and interpret them. The challenge is to bring theory to bear on facts in ways that permits explanation and prediction...theory also isolates one realm from others in order to deal with it intellectually. By depicting an international-political system as a whole, with structural

and unit levels at ones distinct and connected."[1] Thus to understand the interaction between two important non-Arab states, it is important to look through a theory. The present study is an attempt to use realist theory two explains peculiar relations between Iran and Israel in the West Asian regional systemic environment.

Realism

Realist theory is understood as "Philosophical disposition"[2] and "an attitude of mind with a quite distinctive and recognizable flavor."[3] Realist theory can be understood as "a spectrum of ideas rather than as a fixed point of focus with sharp definition."[4] It is a theory having room for so many theories. Generally "Theories of international politics tends to fall in to two categories. Realists hold that relations between states are governed solely by power and that morality plays no part in them. The opposite theory, propounded by most utopian writers, is that the same code of morality is applicable to individuals and to states"[5] Machiavelli is the first important political realist. The three important tenets implicit in Machiavelli's doctrine are the foundation stones of realist philosophy.

1. History is a sequence of cause and effect, whose course can be analysed and understood by intellectual effort, but not directed by imagination.

2. Theory does not create practice but practice theory.

3. Politics are not the function of ethics, but ethics of politics, "men are kept honest by constraints"

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[1] Kenneth N. Waltz (1990), "Realist Thought And Neorealist Theory", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.44, pp.21-38, pp.21, 27.

[2] R.G Gilpin (1986), *The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism*, 301-321 in R. O. Keohane (Ed.), *Neorealism and its Critics*, New York: Columbia University Press, p.304

[3] J.C. Garnett (1984), *Commonsense and the Theory of International Politics*, London: Macmillan Press, p.110.

[4] J. Haslam (2002), *No Virtue Like Necessity: Realist Thought in International Relations Since Machiavelli*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, p.249.

[5] E. H. Carr (1946), *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study Of International Relations*, 2nd eds.. New York: St Martin's Press, p.235.

Machiavelli recognized the importance of morality, but thought that there could be no effective morality where there was no effective authority. "Morality is the product of power"[6]

Modern realism differs, however, in one important respect from that of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Both utopianism and realism accepted and incorporated in their philosophies the eighteenth-century belief in progress, with the curious and somewhat paradoxical result that realism became in appearance more progressive than utopianism. Realism is more dynamic and relativist. Realism believes that "circumstances are the creator of most men's opinion." Theories are basically invented for explaining the course of events rather than moulding so is the realism. Realism argues that state and its diplomats should cloak the interest of his state as universal justice, even this can be understood by the behavior of great powers and its leaders like Mr. Churchill once told the House of Commons that "there must be moral basis of British rearmament and foreign policy."[7] The double process of moral discrediting the policy of a potential enemy and morally justifying one's own is very much in practice in international politics. This is just the practice of Walewski's maxim, that clothing his own interest in the guise of a universal interest for the purpose of imposing it on rest of the world. So Leaders sounds like what is best for the world is best for his country, and then reverses the argument to read that what is best for his country is best for the world. As far as morality is concern, social morality is always the product of dominant group so is the international moralist is the product of dominant state. This can be understood by the promotion of free trade by developed countries. Since free trade brings prosperity in the developed countries so these countries promoting by calling it promotion of prosperity of world as whole. Even international peace is in the vested interest of predominant powers. For Realists collective security is basically the "continuous danger of war."[8] Realist are also harsh critical of internationalism, according to them Modern Internationalism has its genesis in

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[6] N. Machiavelli (1985), *The Prince*,Translated by H. C. Mansfield, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 121, 193.

[7] (1938), "House of Commons", March 14: *Official Report Cols,* pp.95-99.

[8] Hitler used this phrase in 1938 Reichstag speech.

seventeenth and eighteenth century France, during which French Hegemony in Europe was at its height.

Jack Donnelly a foremost scholar of international relations has argued that the Realist theory is centered on the following four prepositions. i.e.

1. Anarchy- There is several explanation of anarchy in the international relations but widely accepted meaning is "absence of government". The absence of government makes international relations a qualitatively distinct domain of political action.
2. Egoism- Self interest is the primary locus of international relations. Individuals and states always tend to pursue self interest, which are narrowly defined.
3. Groupism- International politics takes between groups and within groups.
4. Power Politics- "International politics is always power politics."[9] This power politics is generated due to anarchy and egoism.

Realists rejection of ethics, principles, morality is well known, Thucydides who is known as most radical political realist also reject ethics in international affairs. "Rights, as the world goes, is only in questions between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and weak suffer what they must."[10] This is because of prevailing anarchy in the international system. Anarchy is understood as absence of government above the level of state. So anarchy doesn't mean that law of jungle should prevail but absence of world government which can keep check on behavior of states and to force them to behave in moral and just way. This absence of centralized enforcement of norms and agreements will increase the immoral and illegal acts and behaviour.

State is said to be unitary because any difference of view among political leaders or bureaucracies within the state are ultimately resolved so that the state speaks with one voice. It there are exceptions in practice (as when one agency of government adopts a

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[9] E. H. Carr (1946), *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study Of International Relations*, 2nd ed. New York: St Martin's Press, p.xi.

[10] Thucydides (1982), *The Peloponnesian War*, Translated By R. Crawley, New York: Modern Library, chapter V, p.89.

foreign policy line different from that of another agency of the same government), these cases are either seen as trivial issues or are corrected in due course by the leadership.

For realists "Universal principles are not principles at all, but the unconscious reflexions of national policy based on a particular interpretation of national interest at a particular time."[11] Morality does not have more relevance in international politics because "International politics is a practical exercise not a moral one."[12] Machiavelli also in his work *The Prince* insisted that one must "not depart from good, when possible, but know how to enter into evil, when forced by necessity."[13] And "no ethical standards are applicable to relations between states"[14]. Moral principles have nothing to do with the international politics that is why Morgenthau argued that "Universal moral principles cannot be applied to the action of states."[15] A political reality in any period and power an equation "justify and necessitates political policies which purely individualistic ethic must always find embarrassing."[16] Many realist thinkers argued that morality is more or less relative; it cannot be shared across states, societies, or cultures, or it can't be universal.

Non-state actors, such as multinational corporations and other transnational organizations and even terrorist organisations are decidedly less important. International organizations, such as United Nations or the NATO alliance (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), do not have independent standing because they are exposed of sovereign, independent, or autonomous states that determine what these international organizations will do. In short, for the realist, the focuses is on states and interstate or international

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[11] G. F. Kennan (1954), *Realities of American Foreign Policy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp.103, 47, 36.

[12] Ibid, p.48.

[13] N. Machiavelli(1985), *The Prince*,Translated by H. C. Mansfield, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ch. 18, para 5

[14] E. H. Carr(1946), *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study Of International Relations*, 2nd eds. New York: St Martin's Press, p. 153.

[15] Hans J. Morgenthau (1954), *Politics among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p.9.

[16] R. Niebuhr (1932), *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study of Ethics and Politics*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, p.xi

relations and consider states as coherent and dominant actors in international affairs. Finally power has led to formation of groups and politics within groups and between groups came into play.

Power Politics is an important phenomenon of international politics. "Power Politics may be defined as a system of international relations in which groups consider themselves to be ultimate end."[17] The basic purpose of power politics is survival of the state. "The statesman manipulates reality; his first goal is survival."[18] Survival has primary importance for state in Realist theory. In international politics "struggle for power is identical to struggle with the struggle for survival."[19] When survival of state is at stake, state is free to use all sort of deadly forces for self defense. Force is therefore considered as usable and effective instrument of policy.

Classical realism

Classical realism is based on human ambition. States have a "will to power" and a "limitless lust for power" hardwired into them because of the ambitions of their leaders. They constantly look for opportunities to take the offensive and dominate other states. According to William C. Wohlforth "Classical realism is thus not a school; it simply is the realist tradition in all its diversity as it unfolded prior to the publication of Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* in 1979."[20] Morgenthau's book *Politics among Nations* on classical realism is a key text, which stands above all the text on this theme.

Morgenthau's book brings a clear cut theory in realm of international relations under big tent of realism. His work is one of the foremost works of the realist theory of

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[17] G. Schwarzenberger (1951), *Power Politics: A Study of International Society*, London: Stevens, p.13.

[18] Henry A. Kisinger (1977), *American Foreign Policy*, New York: Norton Press, p.46.

[19] N. J. Spykman (1942), *American's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power*, New York: Harcourt Brace Press, p.18.

[20] William C. Wohrforth (2000), "Realism" in Jack Donnely (ed.), *Realism and International Realtions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.136.

international politics than any of his successor. His six principles of political realism can be understood as basic tenets of political realism.

1. Politics like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature. So it is important to understand the laws by which society lives.

2. The main signpost of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power. This principle helps us in guarding against two fallacies i.e. the concern with motives and concern with ideological preferences.

3. Realism assumes that its key concept of interest defined as power is an objective category which is universally valid, but ir does not endow that concept with a meaning that is fixed once and for all. "Identity of interest is the surest bonds whether between states and individual."[21] So only that relation sustains where there is not any clash of interest.

4. Political realism is aware of the moral significance of political action. Realism maintains that universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states in their abstract universal formulation. In other word politics works on maxim of prudence.

5. Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe. So this principle helps states and individuals in saving them from both that moral excess and that political folly.

6. The political realist maintains the autonomy of the political sphere, as economist, the lawyer, and the moralist maintains theirs.

Neorealism

Neorealism is a dominant theoretical trait of cold war period in the international realm. This tradition was deductive in nature and led by Kenneth Waltz. "His Theory of International Politics brought together and clarified many earlier realist ideas about how the features of the overall system of states affect the ways states interact. Waltz text had a

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[21] *See* E. H. Carr (1946), *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study Of International Relations*, 2nd ed.. New York: St Martin's Press.

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profound influence on the development of international relations scholarship in general and realist thought in particular."[22] Waltz theory professed the answers to the very important questions of international politics like why the modern states system has persisted in the face of attempts by certain states at dominance; why war among great powers recurred over centuries; and why states find cooperation hard. He also argues that the international system will become more unstable in multipolarity then in bipolarity. This instability will led to frequent war among states.

Neorealists have focused on balance of power as a strategy to maintain the power position in international affairs. Yet some other neorealist like Paul Schroder talked about other three strategies also. These strategies like bandwagoning, hiding, & transcending with balancing are the typical feature of international politics since its genesis. These strategies are classified on the basis of involvement and non involvement of states in power politics in active and passive ways. Neorealists like realist also believes that the nature of international politics is not determined by human nature but by anarchic structure of international system. Many neorealist scholars including Waltz has emphasised the power politics by saying that "The web of social and political life is spun out of inclinations and incentives, deterrent threats and punishments. Eliminate the latter two and the ordering of society depends entirely on the former..."[23]

Neorealist also highlighted the perpetual *security dilemma* among states and groups in international affairs. This security dilemma is also due to the anarchic nature of international politics. "The security dilemma should have a privileged place, for it is an old and brilliant concept for new and dangerous times."[24] Neorealist assumes "a hierarchy of issues in international politics, headed by questions of military security: the "high politics" of military security dominates the "low politics" of economic and social

[22] William C. Wohrforth (2000), "Realism" in Jack Donnely (ed), *Realism and International Realtions,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 137.

[23] Kenneth Waltz (1979), *Theory of international Politics,* New York: McGraw Hills, p.186.

[24] Ken booth and Nicolas J. Wheeler (2008), *The Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p.1.

affairs."[25] So neorealist also like classical realist identifies international politics by continuous conflict among states.

Offensive and Defensive Realism

Defensive realism, which is also known as "structural realism" emerge as a subschool of realist thought in 1970s with the appearance of Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Relations*. Defensive Realists believes that the primary aim of state is survival, and don't consider great powers offensive. They also believes that domestic politics can influence a state's foreign policy; while offensive realists tend to treat states as black boxes. Defensive realists argue that the structure of the international system forces great powers to pay attention to the balance of power, and to seek to enhance power because "power is the best means to survival."[26] They consider aggression is usually a mistake, because it causes other states to ally against another to balance out their power and involvement in actual conflict carries the most significant threat to survival. Indeed, great power balancing and the advantages usually enjoyed by the military and diplomatic defense over offense should discourage great powers from pursuing aggressive strategies and instead make them 'defensive positionalists.' Defensive realists have focused on preserving power, rather than increasing it, and pursue it as a predominant strategic objective. Waltz a foremost defensive realist has told emphasizes that "when great powers behave aggressively, the potential victims usually balance against the aggressor and thwart its effort to gain power."[27] Waltz, who propounded the offense-defense theory, argued that balancing checkmates offense.

Defensive realist Taliaferro also argued that "under very common conditions the war causing potential of anarchy is attenuated." With the continuation of realist assumption of

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[25] Robert O. Keohane & Joseph Nye (1989), *Power and Interdependence*, Boston: Little, Brown, Reprinted by Harper Collins Publishers, p.149.

[26] *See* John J. Mearsheimer (2001), *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York & London: W. W, Norton & Company.

[27] Kenneth Waltz (1979), *Theory of international Politics*, New York: McGraw Hills, p.186.

groupism, defensive theorists argued that the stronger group identity is, as in the modern era of nationalism, the harder it is to conquer and subjugate other groups.[28]

Offensive realists, on the contrary "were more persuaded by the conflict-generating, structural potential of anarchy itself. They reasoned that, with no authority to enforce agreements, states could never be certain that any peace-causing condition today remain operative in the future.... Given this uncertainity, states can rarely be confident of their security and must always view other states increase power with suspicion."[29] Mearsheimer is a foremost realist of present time. His famous book, *the Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, explained his theory of offensive realism in detail. Mearsheimer portrays offensive realism as the successor to Waltz's neorealism, which he equates with defensive realism. Mearsheimer said most state seeks power and hegemony but problem is that only few attain hegemony. Concept of true hegemony does not exist at present time. In this Waltz and Mearsheimer are same but their approach is different, for Waltz states are conscious about power to save them, while Mearsheimer said that states seek power for offensive purpose than defensive. Mearsheimer's offensive realism is based on his five assumptions, if all of his five assumptions taken together than his view become clear. His assumptions are as follows.

1. International system is anarchic that is lack of government.
2. All great powers inherently by definition of great power posses some offensive military capability to threat other. Most defensive military technology can be easily offensive. Purely defensive strategies like building forts are hardly visible in present time.
3. States can never be certain about intention of other state. They can only estimate capability. That is why all military planning are worst case scenario planning. States use intelligence, spy to know the intensions of other states.

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[28] *See* Stephan Van Evera (1999), *Causes of War: Power and Roots of Conflicts*, New York: Cornell University Press.

[29] William C. Wohrforth (2000), "Realism" in Jack Donnely (Edited), *Realism and International Realtions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.139.

4. Every state has primary goal of survival (which make them survive in international system). Fundamentally it means peaceful territorial integrity and political autonomy.

5. Great powers are rational actors i.e. they will do that which is suited for them or always involve cost benefit analysis. At any point of time they have to make policy which pay him best or profit most.

So every state has its own rational calculation and interest, immediate consequences are not always matter. All five assumptions together define Mearsheimer's offensive realism. Mearsheimer argued that "great powers fear each other. They regard each other with suspicion, and they worry that war might be in the offing... There is little room for trust among states.... States operating in self-help world almost always act according to their own interest and do not subordinate there interest to the interest of other states... one state's gain in power is another state's loss, great powers tends to have zero sum mentality... When great power achieves a distinct military advantage over its rival, it continues looking for chances to gain more power."[30] This quest for power stops when state achieved hegemony. The basic logic of offensive realism reflected in the concept of "security dilemma," this security dilemma led the state to develop its own security system and enhance military power as an alternative to decrease the security of other states. Mearsheimer also talked about hegemonic power, there is not any global hegemonic power as such up to the time but there are many regional hegemonic powers were there. International system without any global hegemonic power is referred as "balanced multipolarity" by Mearsheimer while international system with global hegemonic power is referred as "unbalanced multipolarity".

Offensive realism also discusses the hierarchy of state goals and "recognizes that great powers pursue their non security goals, but it has little to say about them, save for one important point: states can pursue them as long as requisite behavior does not conflict with balance-of-power logic, which is often the case."[31] It has also put emphasis on

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[30] *See* John J. Mearsheimer (2001), *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* New York & London: W. W, Norton & Company.

[31] Ibid

relative gains and concern for cheating in international behavior of states. But it cannot be concluded that offensive realism is against cooperation instead, what it conveys is that, state can cooperate, although cooperation is sometimes difficult to achieve and always difficult to sustain.

Apart from the play power politics and relative hard power capability, there are many other factors that in varying degree influence the foreign policy behaviour of a state. They include domestic political regime, objectives, geography, culture, ideology, & power structure. Finally it can be said that both defensive and offensive realism are exists as a different sub-school of realist thought.

Domestic Politics

Characteristics of state, governmental organization, individual leaders and bureaucratic politics are the pillars which collectively determine the external behavior of any state. In some cases "the personality of the ultimate decision makers, their ideological predilections, and psychological propensities invariably conditions the final choice of ends and means."[32] The culture and political constituency of any government also greatly influences its external behavior. Change in government also has some reflection on external behavior and objectives of state. Equally important is the culture and ideological basis of a state that affect the foreign policy behaviour. Because cultural unity and common historical experience make pursuance of an effective external behavior possible in sharp contrast to countries that are culturally and historically fragmented.

Geography

Geographical location of any state has a pivotal impact on its external behavior and its interaction with other states. Israel's peripheral doctrine of David Ben Gurion in 1950s is an illustrative example. Geography is key factor behind shaping of identity of any state

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[32] J. Bandyopadhyaya (1980), *The Making of India's Foreign Policy*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers, p.2.

in its neighborhood. It also determines the potential of development like size, topography, climate and natural resources. The impact of geography is however, not static "in the seventieth century, geographic considerations were tempered by modern military weaponry and advanced communications technology."[33] With geography the population also matters in deciding external behavior. With quantity of population its quality also matters i.e. its social cohesiveness, level of education and skill. This makes a notable difference in total capability of a state, which can easily be explicated by the Israeli example.

Objectives

Foreign policy objectives can easily be understood by identifying its principles and components of national interest. The objectives of all states is more or less same in this anarchic world, these objectives are not differentiated on basis of shape, size, capacity and can be summarized in following categories.

1. Maintenance of national integrity
2. Protection and enhancement of economic interest
3. Maintenance of national security
4. Protection and promotion of national prestige and influence
5. Keeping links with other states

Maintaining peaceful territorial integrity and interest of state is the primary objective of statesmen, ensuring security to its citizen from all kinds of threat is foremost concern for any state. The cultural and political security is also included in native's security. Economy is also a deciding factor in international relations; states are also concern about the relative gains. Every state assumes the course subservient to its economic prosperity and security. So promotion of states economic interest is also in the agenda of states external behavior. Promotion of national prestige embraces the policies geared to focus on impressive image of the states abroad. The concept of revolutionary Islam in Iranian

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[33] Ali, E. Hilal Dessoukki and Bahgat Korany (1984), *The Foreign Policy of Arab States*, London: Westview Press, p. 73.

foreign policy can be understood as Iranian move to increase its influence in the region to establish itself as regional power. There is also a propagandist aspect of the external behavior; this is generally created with the help of mass media to gain desired result.

Power Structure

The structure of the international politics at any particular time is determined by the power configuration. This is dependent upon the great powers and relations among them. This always has influence on external behavior of any states and its interaction with other states in the international system. The international system is depending on the number of great powers in the system. This is "manifest in transformation of Iran's foreign policy from pro-west orientation during 1953-early 1960 towards a market disengagement trends during white revolution."[34] Such changes in external behavior were the typical features of cold war.

Increasing influence of international organizations also has a important role in determining the external behavior of any state. International norms, principles, treaties & laws have impact over deciding external behavior of states, ignoring them at any level (regional or sub-regional) may jeopardize the national interest of any state. This aspect is reflected in the changed attitude of Iran toward West-Asian peace process and Israel in its Tehran declaration, holding that "though it does not support the basis of process, it would not work to avert it either."

Ideology

Ideology like other aspects i.e. power structure, geography, domestic Factors, objectives, plays a pivotal role in deciding and justifying the external behavior and interaction of any states with other states. Ideology is basically popular belief which has also a central role in interaction of state with other states. It can be defined as system of abstract ideas held by an individual, which purport to explain reality, express value goods and contains programme of action for the retention and attainment of the kind of social

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[34] Sharam Chubin and Sepher Zabih (1979), *The Foreign Relations of Iran*, London: University of California Press, p.6.

order in which its proponent believes the goal can be realized. It is also used as an instrument to justify the behavior of a state while concealing the real motives for it.

Ideology is very ambiguous as its expanse may stretch from an individual to transnational communities. This can viewed in the manifestation of communist, Islamist, Zionist ideologies. Ideology is also interconnected with interests, it also hold interests. Most of the ideologies shaped by the states in order to pursue its interests and goals, this can easily understood by the British ideology of "Whiteman's Burden" and European's "Civilizing Mission to Asia" during colonial period to justify European colonialism.[35]

Ideology can also be understood as impact of common people on external behavior of their state and its interaction with other states in the system. Yet realists argue that ideology can never be alone a goal of any state, it is a facade. Ideology has relatively more influence during World War I & II, and to an extent in Israel, etc. In the words of Morgenthau, all politics; domestic or international is nothing but struggle for power and true nature of policy is concealed by ideological justification and rationalizations. In better way it can be summed up that external behavior of state is not fully determined by ideological mooring and values alone. But "long range objectives can be easily deduced from an ideology, shorter the time-scale, lesser the necessary correlation between the aspirations and actual policies."[36]

Within this analytical framework, the present study makes an attempt to examine Iran-Israel relations since the 1979 revolution. To what extent it is offensive-defensive and what are the factors that have conditioned such bilateral relations will be the focus. Also an attempt will be made to bring to the fore the ideological incompatibilities of the two powerful regional rivals and its bearing on their interactions, which could be arguably termed as "offensive-defensive".

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[35] *See* James N. Rosenau (1971), The Scientiffic Study of Foreign Policy, New York: Free Press.

[36] Frankel Joseph (1969), *International Politics,* London: Penguin Press, p.111.

CHAPTER II

Iran-Israel Relations: Historical Background

A state is called a regional power on the basis of its power potential, its location, its geography, and its natural resources. Both Iran and Israel are located in a region which is always volatile. The strategic location of region and oil boom made west Asia as field for great power rivalry. Intense rivalry is also due to "the end of cold war, and of the bipolar international system has brought about a reconstruction of the "region", while increasing the scope of action of any potential hegemon."[1] This rivalry made Iran and Israel an important player in regional as well as in global politics. The Islamic republic of Iran is one of the largest country in West Asia and the largest in Persian Gulf. It is also the largest non-Arab state in West Asia. Iran is also rich in petroleum products; it has the second largest gas reserves in the world with the third largest oil reserves. Iran can become energy superpower on basis of its reserves; Iran is the second largest oil exporter of OPEC. It is surrounded by Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan in north, Persian Gulf and Oman in south, Turkey and Iraq in west and Afghanistan & Pakistan in east. Onset of cold war made the region a battleground for the great power politics. Iran was also the part of this in some way or other. Similarly Israel is also a non Arab state in the region. It is located in the western side of the West Asia, neighbouring to Egypt in west, Syria and Lebanon to the north, Jordan, to the east and Saudi Arabia, to the south. Israel's existence in the region is questionable since its reemergence in 1948. "There has always been a sense of exclusiveness about Israel's place in the world. As a small nation, a democracy and the only Jewish state, Israel is, indeed, a unique international actor. Israel is also one of the few states not formally affiliated with any regional bloc; equally, it does not belong to any pact or alliance."[2] Most of the states of the region consider Israel as illegitimate entity. Many state even Iran didn't give the *de-jure* recognition to Israel even today. Iran-Israel relations were exploitative in nature since the encounter of both with one another, "a closer examination of the mutually exploitative connection between Iran and Israel

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[1] Ashwini Kumar Mohapatra (2001), "Turkey's Quest for a Regional Role in Central Asia", *International Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1, p. 30.

[2] Sasson Sofer (2004), "Towards Distant Frontiers: The Course of Israeli Diplomacy", quoted in Efraim Karsh(ed.), "Israel in International Arena", *Israel Affairs*, Vol. 10, No.1-2, autumn-Winter, p.1.

reveals more complexity than appears on the surface."[3] Islamic zeal of Iran, and non acceptance of Israel in the region put both the nation in security dilemma, this prompted both state to develop military and economy in the region to acquire the status of undisputed regional powers. Since "regional powers must possess a reasonable base of power-resources"[4], on basis of their military capabilities (*See* Table 2.1), natural resources, geography and population (*See* Table 2.2) the two West Asian state well fit in to the category of regional powers. Beside this Israel also have nuclear capability which gives Israel a edge in military dominance in the region while Islamic republic is on verge to acquire it. So Islamic republic of Iran and Jewish state of Israel are the two middle ranking regional power in West Asia In term of hard power potential.

Determinants of Iran's Foreign Policy

In explaining the source of the foreign policy principles, scholars have referred to two main origins in Iranian history, which dates back to its pre-Islamic past. The two elements that are seemingly influential in Iranian foreign policy behavior include, "Persian Empire"[5] and the "Iranian Jewry"[6]. "The Persian Emperor Cyrus liberated numerous Jews from captivity in Babylonian kingdom and gives them equal rights and dignities for human survival. Even the temple in Jerusalem was rebuilt in the fifth century BC with the "Persian assistance". "This liberation policy" of Cyrus was able to harbor a large Jewish population in Iran which till date remains the largest outside of Israel. "This liberation policy" forms an important part of the cultural memory of the people."[7]

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[3] Mansour Farhang (1989), "The Iran Israel Connection," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 1, Winter, p. 85.

[4] Ashwini Kumar Mohapatra (2001), "Turkey's Quest for a Regional Role in Central Asia", *International Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1, p. 31.

[5] Gawdat Bahgat (2005),"The Islamic Republic and the Jewish State", *Israel Affairs*, Vol.11, No.3, p.517.

[6] Ibid.

[7] *See* R.K. Ramazani (2004), "Ideology and Pragmatism in Iran's Foreign Policy", *Middle East Journal*, Vol.58, No.4, autumn.

Scholars like Jose Wiesehoter and Richard.N.Erye have commented on the nature of the policies framed under the Persian Empire and hold that the imperial interests were stronger than ideological imperatives in their workings. The *Magi* (*Majus*) had a limited role and were effective only within the boundaries of religion and education. Cyrus and later his successor Darius pursued policies in favour of imperial interests rather than religious orthodoxy. This feature becomes a permanent motif in the Achaemenid style of governance. Later the Sassanid dynasty revived the same model of government and kept on pursuing imperial interests over and religious ethics. Although in the Sassanid period, "the Zoroastrian ideology seems to take deeper hold of the populace yet the theory that kingship and good religion were 'siblings' rather than being. The same body held good and the balance between ideology and pragmatism was decided in favour of pragmatism."[8]

The coming of the Safavid Empire and the rise of Shiite clerics to prominence altered the balance between ideology and pragmatism due to the rigorous islamization of the state. According to an analyst that "Shah Tahmasp was 'a religious bigot' and he thoroughly shi'ized the state and pursued a policy of "religious indoctrination" by sword."[9] Later theorists have however found that though the Shi'I clerics were preposterously powerful in the Islamized state yet there was a strong under war at of secularization that gave state interests a growing space within the foreign policy realm. "By the time of Shah Abbas I, There was a general trend towards a secular foreign policy model as is exemplified by his signing of the peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire and giving up the Shi'I practice of "cursing the first three Sunni Caliphs"."[10]

It is argued that by some historians that the balance between "ideology and pragmatism in the Islamic period of the empire confirms the compatibility of humanism,

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Roger M. Savory (1980), *Iran Under Safavids*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 101.

[10] *See* R.K. Ramazani (2004), "Ideology and Pragmatism in Iran's Foreign Policy", *Middle East Journal*, Vol.58, No.4, autumn.

secularism and democracy with Islam."[11] Thus by the time the Western ideals of humanism and democracy arrived in Iran, the populace as well as the government had already been long developing a cultural proximity to such concepts. "The decision of the Musaddiq government to nationalize the Iranian oil supplies that triggered after a debate with Britain has also been justified as "Isteqlal ya Enqiad" or "independence of servitude" rather than thinking of it as an outcome of retrogressive nationalism."[12]

Unlike Iran, Israeli diplomacy during this period achieved some remarkable success in establishing the relations with United States, and early contacts with European Community (specially its strategic alliance with France in 1950s) since its emergence. Israel also actively followed the 'Peripheral Strategy' by involving Turkey, Iran and Ethiopia.

Historical Background of Iran-Israel Relations

Iranian Jews are the oldest inhabitants of Iran. "The earliest interaction between Iranians and Jews goes back to 597BC, when Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon sacked Jerusalem and took thousands of Jews. In 538 Cyrus the great, the first Achaemenian Emeror and founder of Persia, defeated Babylon and its Empire and liberated the Jews. Cyrus permitted the Jews and their descendants to return to Jerusalem."[13] Historically there was not such animosity between Iran and Israel even "Iran and Israel do not share common borders, have never fought each other in a war and have no territorial claims on each other's lands."[14] The two most powerful non-Arab states in West Asia, Iran and Israel had comfortable relations prior to the Islamic revolution in Iran. During the time of Reza Shah Pahlavi, Iran was in fact Israel's close friend and ally in the region, critics

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid

[13] Robert B. Keppa (1974), *Israel and Iran: Bilateral Relationship and Effects on the Indian Ocean Basin*, New York: Praeger Publishers, p.86.

[14] David Menashri (2006), "Iran, Israel and Middle East Conflict," *Israel Affairs*, Vol.12,No.1, January, pp.107-122,p. 108.

have termed their relation as 'relation of love without marriage contract'. During Shah Period, Israel was the principle arms supplier to Iran engaged then in the military expansion programme. "Israeli ties to Shah extended well beyond arms sales, however, and included an ambitious $1 billion project to develop jointly a surface-to-surface missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead."[15] The most significant collaboration between the two countries was the "Operation Flower", which came to end with the fall of the Shah regime. Shah wanted to establish Iran on same footing in West Asia as Japan in East Asia. In pursuit of this, he tried to build a militarily strong Iran by forging close strategic relations with United States and cultivating ties with the Jewish state. Yet, certain developments, notably Iranian support to the Arabs during the 1973 October War and the Israel's Litani offensive of 1978 weakened the bilateral ties between the two countries.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran which toppled the Shah regime in 1979 began an anti-Israel rhetoric, as the new revolutionary regime built up a forceful anti-Zionist and anti-Israel propaganda. But the relation between these two countries remains to some extent ambivalent and mixed even now. None of the periods in the Iran-Israel exchange can ever be quiet easily marked as a period of absolute antipathy or a period of cordial ties. It is a tenuous relationship that has elements of animosity and co-operation going hand in hand. Although the Iranian rhetoric has remained as strong as ever in reiterating its intentions for wiping the Jewish state off from the world map, and Israel too has been outspoken in its resistance to the possibility of a nuclear powered Iran. The relation even now is more than simply black and white. This chapter commonly serves as an introduction to the grayness of the exchanges between Iran and Israel.

Thus, the initial state of Iran-Israel relations has to be seen in context of a larger politico-strategic scenario of Great power rivalry in the immediate aftermath of the World War II and onset of the Cold War in the Near-East. Israel seemed neutral and ambiguous during the great power competition, whereas Iran sided with the U.S. due to the aggressive posturing of Soviet in the region since the end of the World War I. The

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[15] Jane Hunter (1986), "Israeli Arm Sales to Iran," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, November.

support for the Iranian Kurds and claim over oil led Iran to turn toward West to cope with Soviet challenge. While the Soviet Union is engaged in an influence competition with the United States in the West Asia, "it should be noted that Moscow as other goals as well. The Middle East provides water ways that are of importance to the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies."[16]

Israel, however started to expresses its interest in becoming an important strategic ally in the U.S.-led bloc, Iran's policy towards Israel also transformed and opened up into strategic military cooperation. "The extension of full *de jure* recognition to Israel by the United States in 1949; the Israeli acceptance of the four point programme in 1950 and the Israeli opposition to the communist invasion of South Korean in the same year acted as a catalyst in favour of an Iran-Israeli reapproachment."[17] It is also argued that Iran lost its interest in larger Arab nationalism due to the increasing closeness that many of its Arab allies started to develop with USSR. This factor was the main contributed to the progress of Iran-Israeli cooperation and almost unhindered strategic tie. Iranian attitude toward Israel is pro due to the fact that "they shared interests because they shared common threats"[18] but the relationship was in favour of Iran because Israel need Iran more than Iran need Israel.

The Musaddiq government in 1952 decided to distance itself from Israel with the closure of consulate in Israel. The Nasir regime in Egypt claimed that this was an official

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[16] Robert O. Freedman (1991), *Moscow and the Middle East: Soviet Policy since the Invasion of Afghanistan*, London: Cambridge University Press, p.3.

[17] *See* R.K. Ramazani (1978), "Iran and the Arab Israeli Conflict," *The Middle East Journal*, Vo. 32, No. 4, autumn, pp.413-428.

[18] Trita Parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance- The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, New York and London: Yale University Press, p.29.

withdrawal of the *de facto* recognition that was given to Israel by Iran.[19] This is also due to the "budgetary pressures on Musaddiq government."[20]

The Shah regime's "Calculated ambivalence"[21] stands as a testament of the powerful presence of consideration of "state interest" in Iranian foreign policy. The balance between ideology and pragmatism was definitely tilted towards pragmatism in the foreign policy period stretching from the Musaddiq Government through the Shah regime till the Islamic revolution 1979. The threat of Arab-Nationalism to Iran during Egyptian President Nasir's years was taken seriously. Iran was worried about territorial integrity due to expansionist design of Arab Nationalism. The Iran-Israel relation is also called as "an alliance of necessity"[22] by many scholars. Since Iran was surrounded by Arab countries, and all its Arab neighbours were anti-Iranians as reflected in their policies. "The ambivalence towards Israel was pronounced in painful moments of in decision till the 1950 de facto recognition given to Israel. Iran's ambivalence towards The Arab-Israeli conflict ended with the decision of the Musaddiq government to give de facto recognition but more interested co-operation with Israel began only after the Shah regime came to power in 1953."[23]

The end of the "Anglo-Iranian oil dispute"[24] coincided with the rise of U.S. interest in Iran oil and also the fall of the Musaddiq government. "Thus from this moment on the shah regime cast its lot resignedly with the U.S. block in the east-west conflict by

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[19] However, Ramazani and other scholars argue that the decision was affected by the "oil nationalization" debate in Britain that threatened to dry out Iran main revenue source.

[20] *See* R.K. Ramazani (1978), "Iran and the Arab Israeli Conflict," *The Middle East Journal*, Vo. 32, No. 4, autumn, pp.413-428.

[21] Iran's attitude at the time of birth of state of Israel then giving it de-facto recognition in 1950 is termed as 'calculated ambivalence' by Ramazani and other analysts.

[22] Trita Parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance- The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, New York and London: Yale University Press, pp.29.

[23] *See* R.K. Ramazani (1978), "Iran and the Arab Israeli Conflict," *The Middle East Journal*, Vo. 32, No. 4, autumn, p.413-428.

[24] This dispute occurred when Mussadeq government decided to nationalise the Anglo Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) IN 1951. This dispute was later settled by the International Court of Justice.

joining the U.S. sponsored Baghdad pact. "The Shah followed a policy of 'positive nationalism' and Nasir's policy of 'positive neutrality' reflected basically opposite strategies of alignment and non alignment with the superpowers on the one hand, and divergent regional policies on the other."[25] Contrary to Iranian alignment with the West the Arab block headed by President Nasir opted for Non-Alignment. These two poles soon become the warring factions during the "Arab cold war"[26].

The decisive break between the soviet block and the Israeli state came in 1954 which coincided with the Soviet arms sales to Egypt. The Egypt-Iranian Cold War along with the escalation of Arab nationalism and rising Soviet preponderance resulted in amazing expansion in Iran-Israel relations. Ramazani has termed this tendency as a desire in part of Iran to use Israel as a "bulwark against soviet expansion in the middle east."[27] This strategic importance increased due to two main reasons; "one The revolution in Iraq and its withdrawal from the Baghdad pact strengthened Nasir's camp and two the Moscow – Tehran animosity reached its peak with the failure of negotiations for a long term non-aggression pact."[28] Thus there were two main objectives there by Iran followed in its foreign policy during this period, relentless in pursuing an anti Soviet policy and a pro-western tilt. Thus ideological qualms of Iran eroded by the pragmatic national interest, and Iran maintain its relations simultaneously with Jordan, Lebanon and Israel as soon as they are anti-Soviet.

The history of the relationship between these two non-Arab regional powers can be written in two broad paradigms, – cultural and politico-strategic. "The quagmire of cultural concepts in confusing because a favourable policy stand taken by Iran can be

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[25] R.K. Ramazani (1978), "Iran and the Arab Israeli Conflict," *The Middle East Journal*, Vo. 32, No. 4, autumn, p.413-428, pp. 415.

[26] This term was coined by Malcolm Kerr for conflicts between Arab states during Nasir's period as Egyptian president. This cold war continued till Nasir's death in 1970. *See* Malcolm Kerr (1971), The Arab Cold War, London: Oxford University Press.

[27] R.K. Ramazani (1978), "Iran and the Arab Israeli Conflict," *The Middle East Journal*, Vo. 32, No. 4, autumn, p.413-428, p. 415.

[28] Ibid.

rationalized by an Islamic solidarity with the Arab world while undermines the Arab–non Arab conflict. While a favourable stand towards Israel can be confounding in terms of the centuries old conflict between Shi'I and Jewish cultures."[29] The overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979 by Ayatollah Khomeini in a popular revolution was a great setback to the developing relationship between Iran and Israel.

The Periphery Doctrine

In the Mid 1950's Prime Minister David Ben Gurion popularized the concept of "periphery doctrine" that advocated a non-Arab triangle formed by Turkey, Israel and Iran to tackle Soviet influence and Arab nationalism in the region.[30] This unwritten pact was the main pillar of the power configuration in the West Asia throughout the 60's. The entire situation changed with the 1973 war and the jading out of Pan-Arabism coupled with the break between Soviet Russia and Egypt took away common enemies and as the immediacy of danger decreased, as a result the unwritten pact also became weaker. Egypt took a pro-western stance thus ending the Arab-nationalist or Nasirist stand against Iran and Israel.

In the days of growing soviet influence, the Shah used his cooperation with Tel Aviv more and more as a trump card to hold both Arab nationalism and communism in check while effectively doing nothing in the interests of the Jewish state. As mentioned before, "Iran continued to use Israel as a bulwark against Soviet as well as Arab influence to exploit it for its own security interests rather than to build up any substantial cooperation which was envisaged by Ben Guiron in his 'aligns of periphery model'."[31]

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[29] R.K. Ramazani (1978), "Iran and the Arab Israeli Conflict," *The Middle East Journal*, Vo. 32, No. 4, autumn, p. 418.

[30] This triangle also included the Christian state of Ethiopia in the south and this unwritten pact became the pro US block in the region for countering both Arab nationalism and Soviet influence.

[31] Gawdat Bahgat (2005),"The Islamic Republic and the Jewish State", *Israel Affairs*, Vol.11, No.3, pp.517-534, p.517.

During the Pahlavi era, Iran was in fact closely allied to Israel due to its interest in the formation of a non-Arab block is the region. This is also because of the fact that Iran is Shi'I and region is predominantly Sunni and Arab, due to this Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi viewed Israel as "natural ally". As already noted, Iran was the one of the biggest buyer of Israeli weapons at that time of $500 million per year. Besides, there was also cooperation at intelligence level between both during Shah Period. "Iran was one of the very few countries publicly willing to sell oil to Israel, since other producers in the area were reluctant to defy Arab oil boycott."[32] It is argued by some analyst that prior to revolution "Iranian-Arab enmity is a permanent feature of Iran's security environment."[33] David Ben Gurion formulated the 'doctrine of periphery" to strengthen its standing in the region and to win some friends in the hostile environment of West Asia; "This theory argued that if Israel had no relations with its immediate neighbours it should seek the friendship of 'neighbours of the neighbour'."[34] This doctrine got some success in terms of Iran-Israel relations due to the permanent rivalry between Iran and Arabs. Although a Muslim State, Iran being needed a non-Arab friend to balance Arabs and to pursue its common interest in the region with that ally. "Meanwhile Iran was growing increasingly unstable and the end of the Shah regime in the late 1970s marked the end of this 'peripheral' relationship, though the peripheral doctrine partly explains Israel's military co-operation with elements within the Khomeini regime during the early 1980s."[35] Khomeini, who took up vehemently anti U.S., anti-Israel and ideological Islamist line destroyed the delicate balance of communication between Israel and Iran.

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[32] *See* Jane Hunter (1986), "Israeli Arm Sales to Iran," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, November.

[33] Sohrab Sobhani (1989), "*The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations, 1948-1988*", New York: Praeger, P.171.

[34] David Menashri (2006), "Iran, Israel and Middle East Conflict," *Israel Affairs*, Vol.12,No.1, January, pp.107-122, p.109.

[35] Gawdat Bahgat (2005),"The Islamic Republic and the Jewish State", *Israel Affairs*, Vol.11, No.3, pp.517-534, P.524

Iran and Arab-Israel conflict

In 1947 Iran favoured the UN minority plan to establish a federated Palestinian state with two autonomous areas for Jews and Palestinian Muslims. This was generally interpreted as Iran's solidarity with the Arab world. Iran also voted against the partition plan alongside Arab nations such as Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. This period of "Arab tilt" in the foreign policy of Iran has been explained as a form of "calculated ambivalence" by many scholars. This also marked out as the first phase of relationship between the two countries. The Shah stressed upon "Islamic solidarity" during his 1949 visit to the UN which has quite falsely been taken as the central reason for the 'ambivalent' attitude of Iranian government towards the newly fledged Israeli state and also its 'tilt' towards the Arab World. Scholars since then have, however, argued that this "ambivalence" was mainly a result of the indeterminacy of Israel's attitude towards "Soviet Russia". "Iranian nationalism coupled with anti-British sentiments" made if suspicion also of the growing soviet influence in the region and therefore made it favourable towards Arab – nationalism and 'Islamic Solidarity'.

The 'Aliyah' of Jews to Israel "has always been crucial to the survival and development of the Jewish state, particularly during the formative years following Israel's birth in 1948. At that time Iraqi Jews, who outnumbered Iranian Jewry two to one, were subject to persecution, arrest and trials that at times resulted in death sentences."[36] The strategic cooperation between Iran and Israel can be clearly read as based on a "certain infrastructure of pre-existing contacts"[37]. The cooperation that the Iranian government extended in the immigration of Jews through its own territory was a political act of goodwill and seen as a gesture arising from deep cultures uprising from deep cultural memories of the "liberation policies" of Achaemenid and Sassanid dynasties. Iran also abstained from any violence against 10000 strong Persian Jewry that inhabited its territory. In fact, this population was thought of as potential 'Aliyah' by

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[36] Uri Bialer(1985), "The Iranian Connection In Israel's Foreign Policy", Middle East Journal, Vol.39, No.2 Spring,pp. 296.

[37] Ibid.

Mossad but the "Persian Jewry remained relatively unaware of any great need to immigrate to Israel"[38].

On the contrary in the 1940s, based on historic-cultural as well as politico-strategic considerations, Iran chooses to declare its preference for the Jewish state over and above the 'Arab World'. Iran also started to jealously guard its economic interests in the Israeli territory. The Iranian interests in Israel were endangered by the 1948 war which led to closer co-operation between Israeli agencies and the higher echelons of Iranian Government.

By early 1950s, Washington started pushing Israel to become an active political agent in West Asia- and to declare its loyalties contrary to its static non-Alignment Israel responded by opening up pathways to a cordial relationship with neighbouring non-Arab countries such as Turkey and Iran. Iran continued an ambivalent approach by taking pro-Arab stance in U.N. but helping Mossad agents confining Aliyah in its territory even though other Arab countries like Iraq had already begun persecuting its large Jewish population.

Iran's attitude towards Israel was guided by its strategic and political understanding of region, Iranian attitude towards Arab and its balancing towards Arab remain there but, "a change of tone of Shah had already been detected by Tel Aviv immediately after Israel's victory in 1967 war. Contrary to Tel Aviv's expectations, the crushing of Nasir's army did not prompt the Shah to move closer to Israel and recognize the Jewish state de-jure. Instead, despite warm congratulatory notes sent to Israeli officials by Iranian generals, the Shah froze all joint Iranian-Israeli projects and took tougher public posture against Tel Aviv."[39] Shah clearly supported the view of not recognizing any territory occupied by use of force. Shah was also supporter of solution of Israel-Palestine problem under UN Charter. "Shah also forbade Iranian officials from attending the 22nd anniversary of the founding of the Jewish state at the Israeli mission at

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[38] Ibid.
[39] Samuel Segev (1988), *The Iranian Triangle*, New York: Free Press, p.70

Tehran."[40] Even Shah did not invite the Israeli head of state on the occasion of 2,500 years of celebration of Persian Empire to avoid Arab boycott. Shah had the hegemonic aspirations for Iran in the region due to its glorious cultural strength, population and size.

The 1973 war between Arabs and Israel provided an opportunity to Iran. Even though Iran did not want the victory of Arabs due to the fact that the "Arab victory would bolster the Arabs and have them turn their focus towards Iran. Israel was a valued strategic asset to Iran in the sense that it absorbed so much of the Arab energy. Iran's Reasoning was that a strong Israel would divert the Arab countries towards looking at Israel as bigger threat than Iran."[41] Iran understood that, "a swift victory for either side would have been negative for Iran since it would boost the prestige and standing of victorious power. Iran's position was best maintained by ensuring that neither side came out of the conflict with a reassuring victory since that could challenge Iran's steady path towards regional domination."[42] Iran maintained the position of neutrality throughout the wars between the Arabs and Israel, but its position somehow tilted towards Arabs apparently. Even Shah criticized the Israeli policy of conquest to ensure security. Iran also supported the Arab sponsored resolution, which described that Zionism was a form of racial discrimination. The resolution was passed on November 10, 1975. This was seen as an attempt by the Shah to bring Arabs closer to ensure leadership role for Iran in the region. In the later years, political ascendancy of the Israeli right in the wake of the elections of 1977 led to an increasing Iranian criticism of Israel and its expansionist policies in the region.

The Arab Israeli conflict can also be seen as pointing towards a more ideological bent in Iranian policy rather than a straight and simple tilt towards national interest and pragmatism. Pragmatism has only served the interests of the ideological structure in Iran.

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[40] Asadollah Alam (1991), *The Shah and I: The Confidential Diary of Iran's Royal Court,* 1969-1977, New York: St Martin's Press, p.152.

[41] *See* Trita Parsi (2006), "Israel and the Origin of Iran's Arab Option: Dissection of a Strategy Misunderstood", *Middle East Affairs,* Vol. 50, No. 3, pp 493-512.

[42] Shahram Chubin, Muhammad Fard-Saidi (1975), *Recent Trends in Middle East Politics and Iran's Foreign Policy Options,* The Institute for International Political and Economic Studies, p.79.

Although the Shah's economic interests forced him to give de facto recognition to Israel, he never stopped supporting the Arab world in all his conflicts against Israel. The shah supported the original UN plan for the two autonomous regions within a single, federal Palestinian state. The shah also supported "Egypt's right to nationalize Suez Canal in the name of Arab and Egyptian nationalism, which sparked off a long standing offensive against the Israeli state.

Iran, on its part chose to adopt a policy of calculated ambivalence in a bid to undermine the popularity of President Nasir and Egypt's primacy in the Arab World, under the banner of Arab-Nationalism. Iran also used the Israel to counter Soviet influence in the region. Since 1950s there was a change in Iranian policy toward Israel, thus Iran never wanted Israel to become victorious in 1967 war. Since this Arab defeat cut to size the profile of Nasir both at the global as well as at the regional levels. Iran under Shah began to harbor ambition to emerge as a regional hegemon.

During the 1973 war, Iran however, totally reversed its attitude by siding with the Arabs. Iran sent the pilots and planes to Saudi Arabia to help Arabs and Even Iran disallowed the transfer of Jewish volunteers from Australia to Israel via Iran. In 1973 Iran viewed the Arab-Israel war as Arabs attempt to regain its lost territory in 1967 war, which is just. So "Yom Kippur war forced Israel to reexamine the nature of its relations with Iran. In a time of war, when Israel faced an existential threat, the Shah did not come to Israel's aid to balance Arabs. Instead the Shah, aiming to solidify Iran's own position in the region, balanced Iran's relations between the two sides."[43] This change in side can also be viewed as the rise of Israel as regional policeman, which was not acceptable to Iran, for having similar aspirations.

Iranian stand on Arab-Israel conflict is difficult to analyse but its stand was always in favour of "partition plan". Iran, like other Arab countries, opposed the UN plan. Iran also criticized the 1967 war and voted in the favour of resolution 242 with the

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[43] Trita Parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance- The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States,* New York and London: Yale University Press, p. 30.

understanding that "occupation and usurpation of the land of others is long past"[44]. Since 1948 Iran sided with the legitimate rights of Palestinian people and their right to self determination. While in Israel "Begin's Minister of Agriculture, Ariel Sharon, announced the plans to settle over one million Jews in the West Bank in coming 20 years, in stark defiance to UN Security Council Resolution 242."[45]

Two more important and crucial developments that determined the warming up of ties between Iran and Israel were the increased U.S. involvement in the region to check the Soviet influence and at the same time, Israel's decision to break off the Soviet to join the U.S. camp along with Iran and Turkey. The Israeli foreign policy was very much non-aligned until the end of the 1950 and "enjoyed the unequivocal military and political support of the soviet bloc during the critical stages of its establishment"[46]. Iran always supported the Palestinian cause and "Believes that the actual drawing of boundary lines is ultimately the responsibility of the parties to the conflict not of the bystanders"[47]. As far issue of Jerusalem is concerned, Iran's position is clear since 1967 war, "Shah told Secretary Kissinger in Tehran soon after the October war that it is not possible that the Muslim holy places be placed in the hands of non-Muslims"[48].

Scholars like David Menashri and Ramazani have argued against black and white periodization of the study of Iran-Israel relations. According to Ramazani the "Islamic revolution and Khomeini's rise to power the ideology vs. pragmatism balance was disturbed but ideology were much more in rhetoric than in action. Thus an ambivalent attitude protected the pre-eminence of pragmatism and national interest in the foreign

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[44] Shah own words after 1967 war during his visit to Egypt in January 12, 1975.

[45] Trita Parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance- The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, New York and London: Yale University Press, p. 32.

[46] Uri Bialer (1985), "The Iranian Connection In Israel's Foreign Policy", Middle East Journal, Vol.39, No.2 Spring, p. 298.

[47] R.K. Ramazani (1978), "Iran and the Arab Israeli Conflict," *The Middle East Journal*, Vo. 32, No. 4, autumn, p.426.

[48] Ibid, p. 425.

policy of Iran."[49] Menashri on the contrary argued for the historical process of "moderation" that all ideological movements go through "upon assuming power and facing the complex demands of governance."[50]

Fall of Shah ended the formal ties between Iran and Israel, but the geopolitical interests of both Iran and Israel did not changed radically, which in part explains why diplomatic channels were not closed completely. "Since 1979, however, there have been significant deviations from revolutionary dogmas as we have seen, resulting in adoption of more pragmatic policies by the new regime."[51] Animosity towards Israel has became one of the main hard-lining tenets in the revolutionary rhetoric, even Khatami tried to mend fences by attempting to separate the anti-American anti-Israeli tone.[52]

The following chapter will discuss the developments since the Islamic revolution in Iran, focusing mainly on the changes in foreign policy behavior of post-revolution Iran vis-à-vis the Zionist entity. It will unravel the extent to which Iran's anti-Israel posture was dictated by the Shiite brand of Islamism and imperatives of realpolitik

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[49] Ibid.

[50] David Menashri(2006), "Iran, Israel and Middle East Conflict," *Israel Affairs*, Vol.12,No.1, January, pp.107-122, p. 108.

[51] Ibid, p.120

[52]Ibid.

CHAPTER- III

Post Revolution Iran-Israel Relation:

Phase of Offensiveness

The Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 was one of the major milestones in the 20th century world history. This revolution ousted Iranian Shah from power and created a popular Republic under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini As the name suggests, the revolution was carried in the name of 'Islam' and thus the new state emerged out of it was named as the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Islamic Revolution of Iran is an important turning point in the West Asian region which has had a profound impact on Islamic World. "The revolution was a momentous event not only for Iran-it also sent shockwaves throughout the entire Islamic world. Through a popular revolution a pro-American dictatorship in the oil-rich Middle East had been replaced with the modern world's first theocratic regime."[1] The revolution brought certain drastic changes in the outlook and foreign policy of Iran.

Imam Seyyed Ruhollah Khomeini Al-Mosawi who was the chief architect of the Islamic Revolution in Iran was born into a religious family with an established clerical heritage in the city of Khomein in central Iran on May 17, 1900. He was very much renowned for his scholastic brilliance Islamic teachings and laws. He learned in the leadership of Ayatollah Sheikh Abdol-Karim Haeri-Yazdi. Since 1963 he was denouncing Shah's policy and his government. Due to this he spent most of his life outside his country. He was also imprisoned once for eight months. He spent his exiled life in Turkey, then later to Iraq. "In 1978, Saddam Hussein had had enough of the fiery ayatollah and expelled him, evidently in part because of Iranian pressure."[2] After Iraq he spent his life in France till his revolution, by the time Khomeini become most influential and powerful opponent of Shah.

The Iranian Revolution in 1978 was the outrage of Iranian people against Shah, his domestic politics as well as his foreign policy. Shah's alliance with America was a major irritant among the masses, this situation as reflected in the description of the Shah

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[1] Trita parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and United States*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 79.

[2] Nikki Keddie (2003),*Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*, New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 232.

as "The American King."[3] But the background of the 1979 revolution was laid in 1953 when Shah dismissed the democratically elected Muhammad Mussadegh government and later in 1963 Shah launched a massive crackdown on the his opposition led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. As for the immediate cause, it was a "Twin Revolution of rising alienation"[4] of 1972-77. This was a period when de-facto alliance between United States came into existence. Under this alliance US President Richard Nixon permitted Iran to purchase any type of weapon (other than nuclear) from United States, as a result Shah purchased military equipment of worth $6 billion as aptly summed up by an analyst. Islamic revolution changed the political landscape of the West Asia, entire western world took the revolution with surprise and people's discontent with the regime became public.

The ouster of the shah who was no less than a Western client in the region and beyond; and that too in the name of Islam had many implications. It shattered the myth ofn modernization and development there which presupposed westernizatioñ and ecularization of society, and signaled the resurgence of Islam in Muslin society and politics.[5] After the decades of Westernized rule, in which Islam was excluded from public life and especially from government the Islamic republic showed to the world that Islam could still be relevant to the state. Government could be based on Islam.[6]

After the Iranian revolution United States did not want complete break up with Iran because this would benefit the rival. But the revolution tilted the balance of Iran as well as of region away from West. Consequently Western world perceived it as "disaster in the midst of cold war"[7]. The Revolution was also anti-Soviet since it was theocratic in nature and hence antithetical to communism. intrestingly declassified CIA documents

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[3] R.K. Ramazani(1990), "Iran's Foreign Policy: Contending Orientations" In Ramazani (edited), *Iran's Revolution: The Search for Consensus*, Bloomington and India polis: Indiana University Press, p. 49.

[4] Ibid

[5] John L. Esposito (2001), "Introduction: From Khomeini to Khatami", in John L. Esposito & R.K. Ramazani (Eds), *Iran at Crossroads*, Newyork: Palgrave, p-01.

[6] Dr Iffat Mallik (2000), "role of Islam in Post Revolutiona Foreign policy," *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, autumn, p. 128.

[7] Trita parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and United States*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 89.

"show that Washington was well aware that Khomeini recognized areas of common interest between the two countries and that he favored the continuation of oil sales to the United States."[8] Later on some handful of Iranian students influenced by leftist ideology stormed the U.S. embassy in Iran on November 4, 1979, and took all diplomats and employees hostage. "Khomeini first refrained from endorsing the hostage-taking but was soon convinced by left-leaning elements among his supporters to back the students and their demand for the United States to hand over the Shah."[9] This incident became very popular in the history of Iran and known as "Hostage Crisis". As a result the U.S. broke off all its ties with Iran. Since then there is no cordial moment came in the relations of Iran and U.S. till today Iran is till date paying heavy price of that what it had done in 1979.

In contrast to United States, Iranian relations with PLO were cordial since revolution. PLO leader Yasser Arafat was the first guest of Islamic Republic of Iran. This was also due to the fact that Palestinians supported the Iranian Revolution since its beginning. Even many revolutionary guards were trained in the PLO camps. Due to "Without prior notice to the revolutionary government, PLO leader Yasser Arafat traveled to Iran on February 18, 1979, together with fifty-eight other PLO officials."[10] But this uninvited guest welcomed very well and high-end accommodations at the former Government Club on Fereshteh Street in northern Tehran. Arafat also traveled along Iran to setup PLO offices in various Iranian cities especially in Arabic speaking area of Iran. But this honeymoon did not last long due to Arafat's secular politics and Khomeini's Islamic roots. Khomeini emphasized the enforcement of Islamic roots in Palestinian movement, which did not go down well with Arafat for his leftist & nationalist approach. For Khomeini, Islamic orientation is necessary for the victory of Palestinian people, and

[8] Declassified CIA Intelligence memorandum,"Iran: Khomeini's Prospects and Views." Quoted in Trita Parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and United States*, New Haven and London: Yale Universtiy Press, p. 89.

[9] Nikki Keddie (2003),*Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution,* New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 248-49.

[10] Nader Entessar (2004),"Israel and Iran's National Security," Journal of South Asia and Middle Eastern studies, Vol. XXVII, No. 4,Summer, p. 5.

without involving Islam Iran did not have any role to play in the conflict. Only Islamic orientation of Palestinian cause could provide Iran a leadership role not only in the Palestinian struggle but also in the region.

The two revolutionaries did not meet again. They both created the images of one another in their minds. The ideological differences were the prime reason behind dark cloud over Palestinian and Iranian relations. While Palestinians considered that their support to Iranian revolution did not pay them much and Iranian support to Palestinian cause was rhetorical and verbal in nature on likewise Iranian considered of the Palestinians not religious enough as they drink alcohol and do all Un-Islamic things in their life.

Impact of Revolution on Iranian Foreign Policy

Following the revolution, Islamic issues emerged to affect Iran's regional profile and policy. Apart from the more obvious Shi'i-Sunni differences that Iran's Shi'i-led revolution and the post-Shah regime highlighted, its overt use of Islamic symbols, 'export of revolution' for instance, posed a serious threat to the regional status quo. Its use of terrorism as an instrument of foreign policy and support for Islamic movements in West Asia, particularly the Shi'is in Lebanon became a major source of Israeli security concern. As such, the post-Shia clerical regime under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini pursued anti-Israel policy since the revolution. He, for instance, called upon Muslims everywhere to proclaim the last Friday of the month of Ramadaan as "Jerusalem Day"[11]. The anti-Israeli rhetoric no doubt strengthened Iran's standing not only in West Asia but also in the entire world. Yet, Iran had a secret arms deal with Israel during Iran-Iraq war, as revealed by then Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon. This was basically meant to ensure the survival of Iran as well as to save the revolutionary creed in Iran. It was just like an alliance of necessity which prompted two enemies to trade. For Iran, Israel was just the consumable good and their relationship was tactical in nature. Israeli Operation named as peace for Galilee (1982) also bring the outrage at Iranian roads

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[11] *See* Trita parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and United States*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

against Israel, such type of Israeli offensives also work in order to made relations worst from bad.

Since Revolution, Iran became an all together different place with Islam dominating all the aspects of public life viz. politics press and even foreign affairs. Given this background, it would be useful to identify underlying principles of post- revolution Iran, which includes,

    i.   Designation of U.S. as the Great Satan

    ii.   Anti- Imperialism

    iii.   Support for suppressed people all- over

    iv.   No dependence on east or west

    v.   No – recognition of the state of Israel and denial to its risht to escit

    vi.   Liberation of Jerusalem

The first and the foremost feature of Iranian foreign policy in the post-revolutionary period was the hostility towards the United States (U.S.) there can be attributed to various reasons. The most important being the close association of the U.S. with the hated shah's regime. As seen earlier Shah performed as the American watchdog in the region and was overwhelmingly dependent on U. S., accepting both their dictates and support. U.S. influence was apparent both in shah's domestic agenda modernization, and in his foreign policy.[12] To end the Shah's de facto alliance with the U.S. immediately after the revolution, Iran withdrew from the central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), it also canceled the Iranian-US defense Agreement of 1959.[13] The height of the Iran-US hostility was reached by the seizure of the US embassy in November, 1979 and the 444-days hostage dispute that followed.

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[12] Dr Iffat Mallik (2000) "role of Islam in Post Revolutiona Foreign policy," *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Autumn, p. 129.

[13] *See* David Menashri (2001), *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society, and Power*, London: Frank Cass Publishers.

Along with the hostility to US, Iran adopted the policy of Non-Alignment- it went with what can be called as the policy of equilibrium (tavazon). It aimed at maintaining Iran's independence vis-a-vis U.S. as well as the Soviet Union- the two superpowers of the time which had engaged the world in cold war According to Iran's first Foreign Minister, Karim Sanjabi, revolutionary Iran's Non-Alignment policy was based on four pillars: "history Coventry's geography location, the spiritual and humanist ideals of Island the spiritual and humanist ideals of Islam and the principle of conspire reciprocity in relations with other countries."[14] To keep the Soviet Union also at distance Iran abrogated Article V & VI of Iran's 1921 treaty with the Soviet Union; "the Soviet Union claimed that these articles gave it the unilateral right to intervene in Iran militarily whenever it trudges that its security is threatened from Iranian territory."[15]

The second important feature of the post-Iranian foreign policy was its cry for "export of the revolution" The Islamic regime viewed its victory its victory as a stage in, and an instrument of an overall change in the world of Islam- a model for imitation by other Muslims.[16] Khomeini had asserted, "our movement for an Islamic goal, not for Iran alone'. In fact, Iran is only 'the starting Point'."[17] After their dramatic victory in Iran, Khomeini and his disciples firmly expected a chain of reactions in all Muslim societies. Khomeini even tried to breach the gap between the shin & Sunnis and started talking in terms of the whole Muslim Umma. Khomeini wanted to serve Islamic cause by means of Iran and its successful revolution. This attempt of exporting revolution by Khomeini brought him in strong contrast with his Gulf counter-parts. Moreover, their historical animosity, cultural distinctiveness (Persians vs. Arab), Sectarian differences (Shi'I Vs

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[14] FBIS-MEA, March 13, 1979, P.R-10, Quoted in R.K. Ramazani (1990), "Iran's Foreign Policy: Contending Orientations" In Ramazani (edited), *Iran's Revolution: The Search for Consensus*, Bloomington and India polis: Indiana University Press, p. 49.

[15] R. K. Ramazani (1979), "Treaty Relations: An Iranian-Soviet Case Study," In Albert Lepawasky, Edward H, Buehring, and Harold D. Laswell(eds), The Search for World Order, New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, P. 299.

[16] David Menashri (2001), *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society, and Power*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, p. 227

[17] Khomeini's interview with Al-Mustaqbal, 13Jan 1979, Quoted in David Menashri (2001), *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society, and Power*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, p. 227.

Sunnis) & politic and ideological differences made the situation even more troublesome. Khomeini regarded the Gulf rulers as corrupt men who fostered what he called as American Islam' or 'golden Islam'. In addition he denounced them for denying their subjects any role in the decision-making processes of the state.

Predictably, Khomeini's call for similar revolution evoked adverse reactions from the Gulf rulers, who were undoubtedly threatened by the increasing popularity of Khomeini and his ideology in the region, which could inspire similar moment in their countries through movements against their own regimes. In fact, the first victim of this popularity was Bahrain, which inhabited around 40, 00,000 Shi'I's making 60% of the total population. This Shi'I population was inflamed by Iranian model and stood up in an opposition against the ruling Sunni khalifa family. Though this movement was suppressed by the rulers, it had logs implications. The second state to feel the winds of the Iranian revolution was Kuwait, where 30% of population was Shi'I. Here also, Shi'I leaders opened contacts with Iran and stated was suppressed through bans restrictions on press freedoms and expulsions... The repression of the gulf rulers kept on increasing. Finally, the information minister of the Gulf States met in Riyadh and decided on guidelines for the state-controlled & state-guided media regarding the Iranian revolution. It stressed on playing down the news from down the news from Tehran & demoting the Iranian revolution from the status of all-Muslim one to purely Shi'I one, and then to downgrade it to a purely Iranian Shi'I one.[18]

The Arab Gulf states were genially alarmed by the Iranian attitude towards the U.S. which has hurt U.S. prestige in the region. It was detrimental to the interest of the Gulf rulers who were closely tied to U.S. prestige in the region. They started canvassing support for an internal security pact covering Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE and Oman. This proposition was further consolidated by the outbreak of 8-years long Iran-Iraq war, in the Gulf. This led to the emergence of the Gulf Cooperation council (GCC) at the Gulf Summit in Abu Dhabi in May, 1981. Addressing the GCC summit of the interior ministers in Bahraini in December 1981, Prince Nayif Ibn Abdul

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[18] Dilip Hero (1985), *Iran Under The Ayatollahs*, London, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 334-335.

Aziz, Saudi Arabian interior minister, stated, "The Iranians, who said, after their revolution that they did not want to be the policemen of the gulf, have become the terrorists of the gulf"[19].Thus, Iran provided the strong cementing force for the 6 Gulf States coming together at the multilateral platform of GCC. In turn, Khomeini called the Gulf States to abandon their obedience to free you of the disgraceful load of belling under the control of the superpowers. These powers want to force your black gold (of oil) out of your throats.

Meantime, Iran's export of the revolution policy found its echo in Bahrain where Tehran supported two abortive coup attempts in 1981 and 1983 engineered by a group called the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain. It expressed support for Shi'I bombings of the American and French Embassies in Kuwait. Attempted coups and demonstrations occurred in several other countries though many of them were suppressed with a heavy hand. Explaining the policy Iranian foreign minister yezdi stated "These liberation movements have stemmed from internal and natural conditions. They wanted to benefit from Iran's experience (of national life ration) & gain strength from Iran's support."[20]

The new regime in Tehran was based on theocracy and emerged after a revolution which ended up with the dethroning of pro-West Shah. But revolution was supported by two factions of Iranian society: Left & Right. So after revolution Iranian policy was supportive to the Palestinian cause. Left opposition to Israel is due to its closeness to the United States while Right opposed Israel due to Islam. Religious bloc considers Israel as illegitimate, usurper of Islamic land, and anti Islam. The religious revolutionaries maintained that Israel was "by its very nature against Islam and the Qur'an," and that it was the religious duty of every Muslim to confront it.[21]

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid. p. 337.

[21] David Menashri (2001), *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society, and Power,*, London: Frank Cass, p. 266.

Iran supported the Palestinian struggle but sought to ensure its leadership role in the movement by Islamising it. Khomeini initially supported Arafat but later due to Arafat's secular and nationalistic approach toward Palestinian struggle Khomeini distanced itself from him. Arafat also understands this in due process and concluded that Islamic Iran would lend the Palestinians only verbal and rhetorical support. "Arafat had the support of Ayatollah Taleqani, the ailing ayatollah was becoming increasingly marginalized in Iranian politics, and opponents of the PLO were gaining ground. Some revolutionaries, such as the U.S.-educated Mostafa Chamran, Iran's minister of defense, supported the Shi'I Amal movement in Lebanon, which was at odds with the PLO. Others, like the commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps, had close ties to Arafat's rival, George Habash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)."[22]

Khomeini became critical of Arafat for the latter's secular politics while, at the other side criticizing other Arab rulers for anti-Islamic attitude. Consequently Iran's relations with the other Arab countries deteriorated to the point of fuelling bilateral tensions. Khomeini also accused the PLO & PFLP for such deserted relations between Iran and Arabs. To cover up the political loss in the region "Khomeini declared August 17 as Quds (Jerusalem) Day and urged Muslims worldwide to demonstrate on that day in support of the Palestinians."[23] Despite the sporadic tensions with the Islamic regime in Tehran, PLO did not break relationship with Iran due to its regional status and political weight. Until the outbreak of Iran-Iraq war, the honeymoon of Iran-PLO persisted, adding the Islamic dimension to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Iran's Relations with Israel

Khomeini who gave the Israel-Palestine conflict a religious dimension appeared to be anti-Israel. His criticism of Israel was always in religious language and he considered Jewish state as enemy of Islam. "From the day one of the revolution, Tehran

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[22] Trita parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and United States*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 85.

[23] Ibid.

has been extremely hostile to the Jewish state, refusing to recognize it and supporting the Palestinian cause."[24] For Khomeini Israel was a 'cancer' which should be cured otherwise it will destroy Islam & Muslims. In fact "it was one area in which Iran's revolutionary policy remained excessively uncompromising; that was its hostility toward Israel its persistent and resonant rejection of Zionism and legitimacy of the jewish slate of Israel."[25] The anti-Israel policy of post-revolutionary Iran was diametrically opposite to that of the Shah of Iran, who had been a closest ally of Israel in the region. In fact, Iran was one of the first Muslim countries that de-facto recognized Israel. Their close strategic relations were based on David Ben Gurion's 'periphery strategy' through which both sides tried to create alliance on the periphery of the region. All these pre-revolutionary factors had a propound impact on Khomeini's policies and ideas. Iran called Israel the 'Lesser Satan' as against US, the 'Great Satan' or the 'Unlawful child of the Great Satan'. All these slogans reflect extremely 'offensive or 'confrontational' dimension of Iran's behavior towards Israel. It was considered as the great enemy of Iran and Islam. "Israel should be eliminated" (i.e., *Isra'il bayad mahv shavad*).[26]

Iran and Israel never shared common borders; never had any conflict against each other, neither had they claims over each other's territories. But yet, Iran was hostile towards it and championed the Palestinian cause. The main cause of this can be attributed to the Islamic nature of the revolution. According to Rafsanjani, "Iran's Islamic arguments have put the Arab-Israeli conflict on a totally different footing - a religious crusade as against a political-national conflict..."[27] this explained why Iran later supported terrorist organizations like Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad. Iran's policy toward Israel was decided by supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeini who put his anti-Israel argument in two ways, Ideological and humanitarian. In the humanitarian notion it

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[24] Dr Iffat Mallik (2000) "Role of Islam in Post Revolutiona Foreign policy," *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, autumn, p. 133.

[25] David Menashri (2001), *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society, and Power*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, p. 261.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Rafsanjani on Tehran T.V., Feb 1ˢᵗ, 1993, Quoted in David Menashri (2001), *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society, and Power*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, p. 262.

asserted that the Zionist regime was a usurper government occupying the Palestinian land an important part of Muslim lands causing displacement and innumerable sufferings to the Palestinians.[28]

What this reasoning implies is that the cause of Palestinian plight is Israel and hence, Iranian support is crucial. In this regard, Ayatullah hadi Khosrowshahi, the Iranian Ambassador to the Vatican, argued that, the Muslim peoples of Iran, Afghanistan, Palestine & Lebanon had the right to defend their 'freedom, faith, honor and independence from the aggressor' by 'whatever means they see fit', further added by saying "This honorable defense is a right for every free human being, and dying in this noble cause is in our view martyrdom in the way of god."[29]

Since during that time, Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) led by Yasser Arafat was considered as the representative of the Palestinian cause, Iran's support to it was taken as its support to Arafat's PLO in the beginning. In fact, immediately after the seizer of power from Shah, Khomeini severed its relations with Israel and the former Israeli mission in Tehran was overnight handed over to the PLO, when Yasser Arafat, accompanied by 31 aides, had arrived in Tehran. Moreover, Arafat, in the presence of the leaders of the revolution raised the Palestinian flag over the former Israeli mission to Iran.[30] Arafat appointed Hassan al Hani, his foremost political advisor, as the PLO ambassador to Iran. This showed the importance he attached to revolutionary Iran. Moreover Iranian government offered financial assistance to PLO. As mentioned earlier, differences between Iran and the PLO began to emerge over the PLO's support to Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in the wake of Iraqi attack on Iran. The major cause of this being PLO's support to Iraq in the war and its brand of Arab Nationalism. As the subsequent developments indicate, Iran was successful in strengthening ties with the

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[28] Amir M. Haji Yousefi (2003), "Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran Towards Israel, 1979-2002", *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1, Spring, p.57.

[29] Dilip Hero (1985), *Iran Under The Ayatollahs*, London, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 347.

[30] Samuel Segev (1988), *The Iranian Triangle: the Untold Story of Israel's Role in the Iran Contra Affair*, New York: Free Press, pp. 114-115.

Palestinian faction like Hamas. Thus, Iran's opposition to Israel no longer meant supporting the Palestinian cause.[31] But, Iran nevertheless continued to support the Palestinian cause, with the intention though to cultivate ties with Palestinian groups other than PLO due to the tension occurring in its relations with the same.

Ideologically, Iran's foreign policy toward Israel was totally uncompromising in nature. Iran denies Israel's right to existence. In fact, many of the leading revolutionaries including the revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini had repeatedly stressed on this point in their writings and speeches. Due to Iran's self image as the proponent of Islamic issue, Tehran took the lead in rejecting Israel's right to exist. Although some of its main arguments were similar to those that had been raised earlier in Arab political discourse, significant religious elements were injected into them.[32] "Iran viewed the conflict as involving two diametrically opposite powers: the absolute good embodied in Islam and blasphemy personified by its rivals; the struggle between righteousness (*haq*) and falsehood (*fatel*), between light and darkness."[33]

Khomeini also talked about the liberation of Jerusalem, which is considered as 'the first *qifla* of Muslims' or the third important religious place for Muslims only after Mecca and Medina. Khomeini urged the entire Muslim community of the world to fight for the Palestine, as it is there religious duty to fight against the enemy of Islam and the Quran. Khomeini also attached his principle i.e., 'anti-imperialism' to its anti-Israel attitude. As seen earlier, he called Israel, the 'lesser Satan' or the 'unlawful child' of the 'great satan'. In Khomeini's words, "Israel was created by imperialism 'in order to suppress and exploit the Muslim people,"[34] and has been supported ever since by all the imperialists.

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[31] Amir M. Haji Yousefi (2003), "Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran Towards Israel, 1979-2002", *Strategic Studies*, Vol 23, No. 1, Spring, p. 58.

[32] David Menashri (2001), *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society, and Power*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, p. 264.

[33] Ibid, p. 265.

[34] Khomeini's letter to do Iranian student in the West (July 10, 1972) in Islam & Revolution, Quoted in David Menashri (2001), *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society, and Power*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, p. 210.

As Iran's honeymoon ended with the PLO, Iran started building its relations with radical religious organizations of the region. But Iran's support to the anti-Israel organizations has to be studied through the prism of its relations with Lebanon and its active role in it. As we have already seen, Iran's revolution had an overwhelming influence over the Shi'ite community in Lebanon, which is mainly concentrated in the southern part of the country, which borders Israel on south. Being a frontline state, Lebanon has been involved in clashes with Israel right from Israel's formation. In fact, in 1978, the Israeli forces had attacked Lebanon, but could not achieve its goal of removing the PLO bases and fighters away from Israel's northern borders with Lebanon.

Then in 1982, an assassination attempt on the life of the Israeli ambassador to Britain served as the trigger for the massive invasion of Lebanon in 1982, known as 'Operation Peace for Galilee', intended to complete the uncompleted job of 1978. This invasion made Lebanese Shiites even more radicalized, which ironically facilitated the rise of Hezbollah, which led the Shi'ites in Lebanon against Israel thereafter.[35] Initially Southern Shi'ites in Lebanon had shown the willingness, to help Israel against PLO, but the stubbornness of Israel, its continuing links with the South Lebanese army and heavy casualties among Shi'ites turned them against Israel.

During this period, Iran itself was fighting Iran-Iraq war and it played an indirect campaign against Israel, in the form of Hezbollah in Lebanon, and in the form of Palestinian Muslim groups like Islamic Jihad and Hamas in Palestine. Iran's influence in Lebanon and the supporting Palestinian Muslim factions such as the Islamic Jihad and Hamas were the best and most significant levers of power in counteracting Israel.[36] As noted, Iran had played a key role in the formation of Hezbollah. It was the Iranian revolutionary guards, who provided the full-scale training to the gorillas of Hezbollah. With military training, Tehran also provided the monetary help to the victims of Israeli

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[35] Gawdat Bahgat (2006), "Israel and Iran in the New Middle East," Contemporary Security Policy, Vol. 27, No. 3, December, p. 370.

[36] Fouad Ajami (1985), "Lebanon and Its Interiors", Foreign Affairs, Spring, in Amir M. Haji-Yousefi (2003); "Foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards Israel, 1979-2002," Strategic Studies, Vol. 23, No. 1, Spring, p. 60.

invasion and to the Shiite radical group to run the social service programme so that Hezbollah could have larger acceptability in the society.

In all, Iran's anti-Israel stance, according to some analysts "enhanced its credentials as a major regional power and a leading Islamic state, dovetailing with its ambitions. With other rejectionist states having withdrawn from the scene, as a result of strategic choice (Syria), military defeat (Iraq) or marginality (Libya), Iran saw its leadership of the anti-Israel campaign as a means of enhancing its credentials as a major regional power."[37] Besides "Tehran also viewed the success of the Palestinian Islamist movements as well as Hezbollah as a tribute to its own revolution, a manifestation of the spread of its influence in the region."[38] In short Iranian policy toward Israel is a delicate mixture of Ideology and interests. The newly established republic of Iran under Khomeini sought to play a key role in the region, in pursuit of which its anti Israel stance was a prime factor.

Israel and Iran-Iraq war

The most outstanding challenge to Iran's foreign policy came with the outbreak of Iran- Iraq war in 1980. The reasons of this war were manifold. Iraq was a powerful and ambitious neighbour of Iran. Apart from geographical proximity there are major differences between the two, the important among which was cultural i.e. Iran being Persian speaking Shi'I state and Iraq being Arabic Speaking Sunni majority state. Unlike Iran, Iraq is socially divergent society with a very large Shi'I population staying in it. Keepings this in mind Iran was trying to fire anti –regime sentiments among Iraqi Shi'I. Iran denounced Iraqi regime of Baath Socialists government under the leadership of Saddam Hussein as being 'atheist' & called for its overthrow. As against this Saddam Hussein, who was a popular leader in Iraq tried to make use of internal upheavals in the Iranian politics. The contradictory goals of two led to escalation of tensions between them.

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[37] David Menashri (2001), *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society, and Power*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, p.281.

[38] Ibid, p.282.

These underlying tensions were intensified by the Shatt-al- Arab waterway issue. The sovereignty over this waterway was divided between the two countries through the Algiers Agreement in 1975. But finding Iran in troubles, Saddam Hussein though it fit to improve its share on the water way, Iraq invaded Iran on September 22, 1980, thereby starting the eight-year long war. The outbreak of war shook the entire global scenario and was proved at the litmus test for new Iranian regime; within and outside Iran. This threw Iran absolutely in the international isolation as all the major powers in the world including the two superpowers sided with Iraq during the war. The major help to Iraq came from the GCC countries, especially Saudi Arabia, and the UAE who supplied millions of petro–dollars to Iraq .This gave Iraq the upper hand, but Iran still didn't lose the confidence and refused to accept the ceasefire.

Although Arab states had gone against the Khomeini regime, Iran could bind one Arab friend in Syria and thus broke the Arab unity, Syria was the first Arab country to recognize the Khomeini regime. President Nafez Al-Assad, who was a Soviet ally, was sympathetic towards Iran's anti- Americanism. Moreover, the revolution occurred when relations between Syria and Iraq were fast deteriorating as result of the emergence of Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 1979. Thus, Syria was interested in befriending enemy's enemy. Syria and Iraq were ruled by the two factions in the Baath Party which was another reason for conflict. With this background Syria supplied weapons and ammunitions to Iran in its war against Iraq. There was another strong reason behind this friendship; that was Iran's anti- Israel stand. Syria was the leader of the anti-Israel front consisting of Libya, Algeria South Yemen and P.L.O. The front invited Iran as an observer to its foreign ministers conference in Tripoli, Libya in September 1981.

On the whole, Iran found itself isolated during the war and two great powers i.e. U.S. & Soviet Union with Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt provided the technological and military aid to the Iraq. "While Saudi Arab and Kuwait also provided the economic aid to Iraq with partial exceptions of Libya and Algeria."[39] As far Israel was concerned, "notwithstanding Khomeini's anti-Israel rhetoric, contact between Iran

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[39] Gawdat Bahgat (2005), "The Islamic Republic and the Jewish State" *Israel Affair*, Vol. 11, No. 3, p. 525.

and Israel reportedly continued on an informal basis. Much of this relationship was centered on Iran's need for weapons and spare parts for its American equipped armed forces."[40] By this time, Iran had also started playing active role in Lebanon. In fact Lebanon was the state where export of the revolution was most successful and where the greatest Iranian involvement was seen;[41] "About 30% of Lebenese population was Shiite, and was the largest community. Get the National pact of 1943 gave them only 19 parliamentary seats and only the position of the speaker of the parliament."[42] Lebanese shi'Is, which were concentrated in the South were influenced by the Shiite revolution in Iran. They had to fight on two fronts against internal under- representation and also against Israeli attacks from south. They received Iranian support in their struggle for political primacy in the fragmented Lebanese Republic as well as in their resistance against the Israeli presence in the so called security zone in the southern Lebanon since 1978. Iranian also championed the cause of Palestinians through its anti- Israel stand.

Iran Contra-Affair

Surprisingly Ayatollah Khomeini's regime, while condemning Israel and asserting that it had no right to exist, had secretly entered in to have a relationship with the state of Israel. This relationship, which was known as, Iran contra-affair was best represented through its import of arms and ammunitions from Israel. In fact, "the observers were puzzled by Israel's assistance to a regime that excoriated it as the 'little Satan' or by Ayatollah Khomeini's willingness to buy weapons from Jewish Israel, a state he deeply hated, in order to fight a war of attrition against Muslim Iraq."[43] This was an affair where pragmatism prevailed over ideals. As Iran was fighting a long war with

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[40] Nader Entessar (2004),"Israel and Iran's National Security," Journal of South Asia and Middle Eastern studies, Vol. XXVII, No. 4,Summer, p. 6.

[41] Dr Iffat Mallik (2000) "Role of Islam in Post Revolutiona Foreign policy," *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, autumn, p.131.

[42] Dilip Hero (1985), *Iran Under The Ayatollahs*, London, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 345.

[43] Mansour Farhang (1989), "The Iran-Israel Connection" *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 1, winter, p. 85.

Iraq, where all the major powers in the world and region were directly or indirectly supporting Iraq, Iran was badly in need of arms. This was the time when "US had imposed an embargo on Iran; but yet Iran was interested in US-made weapons and spare parts because the pre-revolutionary military was almost completely American equipped and trained."[44] And they found in Israel an only possessor of such arms. On the other hand Israel was also interested in arms sale to Iran since it was the only mean to keep the communication channel open with the Islamic Republic. "There is no public information about the actual costs of the Israeli arms sales to Iran, but it is estimated that the total exceeds $3 billion."[45] Israel has been selling arms to Iran since the early days of Khomeini regime. And in May 1982, Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon told NBC that Tel Aviv had supplied Iran with arms and ammunition because it viewed Iraq as "being dangerous to the peace process in the Middle East."[46] Sharon added that Israel provided the arms to Iran because it felt it was important to "leave a small window open" to the possibility of good relations with Iran in the future.[47]

As far as Iran Contra affair is concerned, Israel had a key involvement. This also mentioned in the Tower Commission report, according to it "Israel virtually encouraged the United States to deal with Iran on matter of arms. It was Israel that pressed the Iranian intermediary, Manuchehr Ghorbanifar, on the United States. The Tower commission also reiterated the charge of U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee that Israel's role in the affair was much more extensive than had been publicly acknowledged in either Washington or Jerusalem."[48] But by the summer of 1987, Americans become anti-Iranian and "issued the explicit warning to the Israel to desist from supporting Iranian war effort in any

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[44] Ibid, p. 88.

[45] Ibid.

[46] "Sharon Reveals Arms Supplies to Iran," BBC,May 28, 1982. Quoted in Trita parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and United States*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 108.

[47] "Israel Sends Military Equipment to Iran,"Associated Press,May 28, 1982. Quoted in Trita parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and United States*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 108.

[48] Mark Tessler (1989), "Israel, Arms Export, and Iran: Some Aspects of Israeli Strategic Thinking" *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 1, winter, p.100.

way."[49] As a result by 1988 Israel became fully supportive of U.S. policy in the region, and Israel also wanted the end of the Iran-Iraq war due to increased arm race in the region. This arm race was very harmful to the Israel since it increased arms in the hands of the Arabs will problematic for the Israel in future tense.

The entire episode raised the question as to why was Israel interested in exporting arms to Iran & Despite the confrontational character of Iran's foreign policy towards Israel, the later didn't want to cut off its relations from its old ally. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, "there was presence of about 80,000 Jews in Iran"[50]. Secondly, Israeli's supposed that the regime of Khomeini would not sustain and would collapse. Thus it was also trying to staging a pro-western coup in Iran. Thirdly, Iran-Iraq was seen by Israel as a positive development for Israeli security because it could keep the Iraqi forces engaged, divert attention from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and destabilize or preoccupy the Arab states of the Persian Gulf. On the other hand enmity between Iraq and Israel was world known; Iraq had the history of participation in three major wars with the Arabs against Israel in the past. However, the phase of Iran Contra-Affair should not be mistaken as good conduct off relationship between Iran and Israel. By and large, Iran's relations with Israel in the post-revolutionary period under the rule of Ayatollah Khomeini (1979-1989) were confrontational or offensive.

Despite the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and reinvention of Islamic identity for Iran by Khomeini, the regional equations remained same. The fundamental common threats for Iran remain same even after the Islamic Revolution. These threats for Israel also same, but "worldview added an ideological dimension to Iran's foreign policy, which was further fueled by the religious bloc's failure to view Iran as a state. Rather, the clerics initially defined their allies and enemies based on their respective perspectives on Islam."[51] In contrast Arab neighbours were not supportive of Iran and Khomeini regime

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[49] Joseph Alpher (1989). "Israel and the Iran-Iraq War" in Efraim Karsh (ed.), *The Iran Iraq War: Impact and Implications*, The Macmillan Press, p. 160.

[50] Amir M. Haji Yousefi (2003), "Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran Towards Israel, 1979-2002", *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1, Spring, p.59.

[51] Shireen Hunter (1990), *Iran and the World: Continuity in the Revolutionary Decade*, Indiana University Press, p.36.

due to his policy of 'exporting revolution' and Khomeini's desire of Iran as powerful regional power. Some countries like Saudi Arabia were also not finding itself comfortable with the Shi'I brand of Islam. It is also because "Iran's challenge to the existing political systems among the Arab states was particularly troubling for the Arab kingdoms with strong ties to Washington, whose form of Islam was branded "American Islam" by Khomeini."[52] Revolutionary Iran was also feeling insecure by the countries having Sunni regime but sizeable Shi'I population like Bahrain, Iraq, Saudi Arabia due to Iran's close proximity with Shi'I population of these countries.

Egypt lost its leadership role in the Arab world and was shunned by the Arab states after signing the Camp David Accord with Israel. But Khomeini took the opportunity to win legitimacy in the Arab world by rejecting Sadat's offer and by accusing Cairo of betraying the Palestinians.[53] By May 1980, Iran had ended all its relations with Egypt. The situation changed in the West Asia due to the emergence of Iran with its messianic zeal and ambition to project power beyond its border. Most of the Arab countries became skeptical of Iranian intentions, and pan-Arab threat to Iran had been replaced with an Islamic and a specifically Shi'I Islamic threat to the Arabs. Iran made no distinction between Washington and Tel Aviv; "while the United States was the "Great Satan," Israel was "Little America." Consequently, opposition to Israel became a defining characteristic of Islamic Iran, in which the Jewish State and Zionism were seen as enemies of Islam and ideological threats to Iran's Islamic identity."[54]

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[52] Trita parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and United States*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 93.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Interview with a prominent Iranian reformist strategist, March 2, 2004, Washington, D.C. Quoted in Trita parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and United States*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 83.

Chapter IV

Iran and Israel Relation under Rafsanjani and Khatami: Defensive Phase

Towards the end of 1980s, many significant changes occurred, that had bearing on Iranian foreign policy. These changes were at three levels, domestic, regional and global. Domestically, the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, the most influential leader in the post-revolutionary period, who himself had drove the forces of revolution gave a serious flow to politics of Iran. At the time of Khomeini's death, Ayatollah Died on June 3, 1989, His Islamic republic has succeeded him to the present day. After his death, Ayatolah Sayyed Ali Khamenei, the former two term president, was named the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic, and remains so today. Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was the second most influential leader of Iran, who was the speaker of Iranian Parliament. He was a man with highly developed political skills and represented moderate faction. Hence his assumption of presidency in 1989 naturally tilted the balance in the favour of pragmatist faction.

Regionally, the long running Iran-Iraq war had finally ended in 1988 with the signing of an armistice between the two; this relieved the warring countries in particular and the whole region in general. This was followed by another dramatic event in the gulf region with the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait in 1990. This completely transformed the strategic and psychological arrangements in the region and thus had its implications on Iranian foreign policy. Last but not the least the global upheaval in 1990- 91 which started from fall of the Berlin wall and finally reached its climax with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and creation of 15 independent states in the heart of Eurasia. This broke the decades-old bipolarity, as the communist block dramatically crumbled down giving a way to democracy and market economy. While people were talking about emergence of unipolarity with US emerging as the victorious superpower this situation was pregnant with several other problems and tensions.

While for Iran, it had major political, diplomatic and strategic implications. For the first time in 17 years, Iran's stable international frontiers with the Soviet Union seemed threatened as a consequence of the emergence of a congeries of weak and unstable new republics in trans-Caucasia and Central Asia on both sides of the Caspian Sea. As a result, Iran's political independence and territorial integrity in the north became

the major source of concern just shortly after it seemed that the end of the Iran-Iraq war had put to rest, at least momentarily, threat from Saddam Hussain's Iraq.[1]

Iran under Rafsanjani

Hashemi Rafsanjani was elected as the president of Iran soon after Khamenei's ascension. He campaigned on economic reforms for the new republic, Rafsanjani's goals largely focused on rebuilding a paralysed Iranian economy devastated by Iran-Iraq war. "Rafsanjani also aimed to decentralize large industry, and to eliminate mismanagement and corruption. However many of his initiatives were stalled by those Islamic clerics who feared privatization in the nationalized economy."[2] Rafsanjani politics and policies were totally concentrated on ending Iran's international isolation and to restructure Iranian economy. President Rafsanjani's lack of domestic success was mirrored by a difficult relationship with the United States. "Rafsanjani grew up frustrated with the United States refusal to unfreeze Iranian assets after the release of the western hostages in Lebanon."[3] The Iranian nuclear program and its support to international terrorism and terrorist organization was remaining an irritant in United States-Iran relations.

In reply, Rafsanjani publicly denied that Iran was attempting to acquire or construct nuclear weapons and accused United States of trying to block peaceful nuclear program vital to Iranian economic expansion. Rafsanjani was aware of the US concerns for Nuclear Proliferation, and there obsession for security rather than stability. But many Iranian, and clerics believed that West had itself had not fulfilled its NPT obligations by cooperating on civil nuclear technology. Rafsanjani was the supporter of any peace between Palestine and Israel which is acceptable to Palestine while radical camp

[1] R. K. Ramazani (2001), "Reflections on Iran's Foreign Policy" Defining the 'National Interest'" in John L. Esposito & R. K. Ramazani (eds), *Iran at the Crossroads,* New York: Palgrave, pp. 218-219.

[2] Chris Hedges (1993), Rafsanjani re-elected in Iran, But without a huge mandate", *The New York Tomes,* June 14, PP.8, Quoted in Yonah Alexander & Milton Hoenig (2008), *"The New Iranian Leadership",* London:m Praeger Security International, p. 7.

[3] Scott Harrop (1994), "Clinton Team Should Heed Iranian President Signals", Christian Science Monitor, June 29, pp.29, Quoted in Yonah Alexander & Milton Hoenig (2008), *"The New Iranian Leadership",* London:m Praeger Security International, p. 7.

advocated the more activist line against Israel. Ultimately Rafsanjani's popularity as president greatly diminished during his second term after he was unable to complete many of his far reaching economic reforms. Rafsanjani still serves in high political office of the Iranian government. Rafsanjani and his followers were known to lean toward the right on the most political and religious issues, largely when considering Iran's legal and education system. "Rafsanjanist" also tend to be opposed to strict social code in Iran, especially on topics related to women education.

Foreign Policy of Iran under Rafsanjani

The supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamanei to supreme leader and president Rafsanjani together determined the formulation of new policy priorities based on national interest rather than ideology. In 1989, Iranian constitution was adopted, giving the president more decision-making power and given the president more decision making power. Thus,, Rafsanjani under the changed circumstances began to focus on economic development and post war reconstruction rather than waging ideological battles..

Collapse of Soviet Union, Death of Khomeini, end of Iran-Iraq war, and presence of US in the Persian Gulf since Kuwait crisis has major impact on basic Iran's strategic outlook. Besides, collapse of bipolarity resulted in the Iranian policy of 'neither east, nor west' becoming defunct; this policy was replaced by 'either north, or south'. "It does not meant that Iran has moved towards dependence on a superpower. Rather, it suggests that since the eastern superpower in the sense of its Cold War concept ceased to exist, Iran paid more attention to its north and south."[4] In the changed international scenario, Rafsanjani brought some new changes in Iranian foreign policy. He shifted the emphasis in Iran's international dealings firmly onto building it into an economic and military power. He sought to achieve it through engagement and co-operation, rather than pursuing the Khomeini-era confrontation.[5] Rafsanjani realized that in order to recover

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[4] *See* R.K. Ramazani (1992), "Iran's Foreign Policy: Both North and South", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 3, Summer.

[5] Dr Iffat Mallik (2000) "role of Islam in Post Revolutionary Foreign policy," *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Autumn, p 136.

from the devastating effects of Iran-Iraq war; country would have to carry reconstruction activities.

According to an analyst, the Islamic republic since- the 1980 American hostage crisis and the events following the start of the Iran-Iraq war, the Islamic republic "lost the ability to provide its armed forces with the hardware, especially, American, which they had become accustomed to.... During the same period, Iran's adversaries and competitors in the Persian Gulf region were equipping themselves with the most modern weapon systems available."[6] Thus a key element of the leadership's strategy for the rebirth of the nation was the modernization of the armed forces and the restoration of defensive capabilities.

The second important step taken by Rafsanjani was getting closer to Arab neighbourhood in order to break its long isolation. Isolation is not the route to strength and prosperity; it is the interaction which is required in a stable, peaceful environment.[7] That was the time when pragmatism and national interest prevailed over ideological dogma in Iranian foreign policy. Rafsanjani made it clear the Iran's foreign policy was 'not expansionist', as he in a official statement urged to southern neighbours to "cooperate with us in order to resolve existing issues concerning the oil market, maritime laws and resolution 598."[8] This was also due to the fact the without bridging Arab-Persian divide, Iran could not fulfill its leadership ambitions. Even Iran started recognizing the fact that "Iran's long term security is better achieved by befriending Iran's permanent Arab and Sunni neighbours than by seeking to balance them constantly through transitory alliances with more remote states."[9]

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[6] Anoushiravan Ehteshami (1992), "Iranian Rearmment Strategy", *janes Intelligence Report*, p. 312.

[7] Dr Iffat Mallik (2000) "role of Islam in Post Revolutionary Foreign policy," *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Autumn, p 136.

[8] Anoushiravan Ehteshami (1995), *After Khomeini: The Iranian Second Republic*, London: Routledge, pp.138-9.

[9] Trita Parsi(2006), "Israel and the Origins of Iran's Arab Option: Dissection of a Strategy Misunderstood", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 2, p. 494.

As far as export of 'Islamic Revolution' is concerned, Islam continuously played an important role in the foreign policy of Iran. Since abandoning this will end the revolutionary charm of Iran as well as will negate the entire revolution, but the aggressive export of Islamic Revolution to other Muslim countries replaced by policy of persuasion. Second republic opted for persuasion instead of forcing others to follow. Rafsanjani administration pursued the policy of reconciliation with the Arab states. It sought to improve its relations with the GCC states, especially Saudi Arabia. The GCC Summit at Doha in 1990 marked the highest point of Iran's reconciliation with these states. Iranian ambassador to Qatar, Nasrollah Nirzaill Nasir ended this summit that underlined importance of serious action to settle differences between Iran and GCC members. This opened up the prospects for what was called as "GCC seven". Iran was allocated 'observer status' in 1991. Despite the long survived tension between Iran & UAE over the islands of Abu Musa, greater Turfs & lesser Turfs, the relations in general remained cordial. They were underlined by high-level visits to and discussions with Kuwait, Bahrain, and the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

When it comes to Iran's reconciliation with its Arab neighbours; the most important was the stance of Rafsanjani on the Gulf War. Iran openly condemned the Iraqi action in Kuwait and supported the Kuwaiti government in exile. More importantly, it made common diplomatic cause with France, Soviet Union & others to find a peaceful solution before Operation Desert Storm; it observed UN resolutions imposed on Iraq. But during the Operation, Iran opted to observe 'Active Neutrality' to maximize its own national interests by standing on the sidelines without antagonizing either Baghdad or Washington. Even "Rafsanjani coupled his outreach to Arab neighbours with a policy of 'development first, rearmament second.' Iran significantly cut its arms spending. Its military forces shrunk from 654,000 in 1988 to an average of 480,000 in 1990-1995 period, and its military expenditure dwindled from $9.9 billion in 1990 to $5.3 in 1995."[10]

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[10] Trita Parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance- the Secret dealings of Israel, Iran and the US*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, p. 146.

During the Kuwait crisis, Iran avoided the temptation to exploit the Shi'I and Kurdish rebellions in Iran. Because of sectarian shi'ite affinity & their anti-Saddam Hussain stand. They actually deserved Iranian support during their rebellion in 1991 in Southern Iraq. But "Tehran didn't come unequivocally & substantially to their aid, and with a good reason: it feared that they would ultimately fail and that Iran's support would harm its own interests – a clear sign of a preference for national interest over pure dogma."[11] Iran preferred to view these events as an exclusively internal Iraqi affair.

Similarly, "in dealing with the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union, the main focus laid in expanding Iran's interests rather than advancing an ideological creed. Iran was therefore careful not to antagonize Moscow and to maintain good relations with the republic's governments."[12] Here, "Iran's increased geostrategic significance as a result of the disintegration of the Soviet Union required a stable North-West Asia for the promotion of Iran's interests in the region. Iran could become the cheapest and the shortest transit trade route for the transport of oil and gas supplies of the Caspian Sea basin across Iran to World markets through the Persian Gulf."[13] Iran shared borders with Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan on the two sides of the Caspian Sea and had religions - linguistic or cultural ties with most of these republics. For example, Azerbaijanis share Shi'ite Islam with Iranians and they have ethnic and linguistic affinities with Iranian Azerbaijanis'. Tajik people share linguistic affinity with Persian-speaking Iranians.

For all these resources, Iran had to take careful steps in this region. In the changed scenario, Rafsanjani had befriended Russia right from Gorbachev period. It took extremely cautious stand on the Chechen issue. Iran was also concerned with the call for the creation of greater Azerbaijan, which would unite former Soviet Azerbaijan with Iranian Azerbaijan. This prompted Iran again to take cautious stand in the Armenia-

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[11] David Menashri (2001), *Post Revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society and Power*, London: Frank Cass Publisher, p.233.

[12] David Menashri (2007), "Iran's Regional Policy: Between Radicalism and Pragmatism", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No.2, p. 156.

[13] R. K. Ramazani (2001), "Reflections on Iran's Foreign Policy: Defining the 'National Interest'" in John L. Esposito & R. K. Ramazani (eds), *Iran at Crossroads*, London: Palgrave, p. 221.

Azerbaijan armed conflict over nagorno–Karabakh. Thus, in Central Asia and Caucasia, "the Islamic component of Iran's national interest became a cultural basis for friendly ties with neighbours rather than a militant ideology for export."[14] In case of the US, there were sign of a considerable change or moderation in the Iranian attitude. Given the irresistible US interests in the Gulf region, Iran pursued the policy of status quo rather than that of confrontation. Rafsanjani era was also marked by Iran and European Union Cooperation and engagement. Iran's increasing ties and exchanges with the EU countries facilitated its economic reconstruction. Thus, foreign policy initiated by Hashemi Rafsanjani marked a significant shift from that of Ayatollah Khomeini. It brought pragmatic shade to Iranian foreign policy, which was more radically continued by his liberal successor President Khatami.

Iran-Israel Relations under Rafsanjani

With the collapse of the bipolar system, US emerged as the only major actor in the West Asian region. Thus, the choice of the countries in this region for gaining and guaranteeing their security was to seek the US support. The changed global scenario had its impact on the foreign policy orientations of all the states. Israel in this era felt the tension about its strategic significance to the US. Israel decision makers came under tensions because there was no powerful to U.S... Israel was worried of being reduced to the lesser priority on US agenda. In addition, the Gulf War and liberation of Kuwait caused the strengthening of the United Nations, since the formation of international coalition and the outbreak of war against Iraq was due to the failure of Iraq in the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council of the UN. Fact was a matter of concern for Israelis since they feared a new attempt by the international community, or at least by a part of it, for implementing the previous resolutions of the UN, not implemental by the Israelis up to then (particularly those relevant to the occupied lands of 1967).[15]

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Amir M. Haji Yousefi (2003), "Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran Towards Israel, 1979-2002", *Strategic Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1, Spring, pp. 64-65.

While, the renewed concern for Iran in early 1990's was the domination of the West Asian region by the US. The US at that time was seeking a new enemy and Muslim countries, or 'Islamic Fundamentalism', was considered to be a good substitute for the former Soviet Union.[16] Thus, US would make every attempt to contain Iran, which it considered to be the most important source of Islamic fundamentalism. During 1990's Iran was threatened by the US policy of dual containment viz containing Iran and Iraq. These factors led to the troubled engagement between Iran and Israel; with the latter portraying Iran as an international threat, especially for the US became one of the major goals of the then Israel.

Immediately the end of the Cold War, there were opened "Peace Negotiations between the Arabs & Israel. This led to the 'periphery doctrine' of Ben Gurion, which made Israel befriended Iran against the Arabs' becoming defunct. "The Madrid Peace talks of 1991-92 indicated that the establishment of peace with Arabs was possible. From then on, Israel took a new approach towards the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran was considered the most important threat to Israel and hostility of Israel against Iran was clearly expressed. The foreign policy of Israel at that stage was to put Iran into isolation."[17]

At the same time the foreign policies initiated by Hashemi Rafsanjani were highlighted by pragmatism and national interest. Thus the Islamic Republic of Iran took extremely cautious, defensive stand towards Israel. Although Iran explicitly opposed the West Asian Peace talks by declaring that it would not lead to a just & comprehensive peace in the region, Iran did not create any obstacles before it. During this period the major goal of Iran was to attain the stability and security in the surrounding region mainly in the northern neighbourhood (Caucasus and Central Asia) and Southern region (Persian Gulf) thus this assumed priority in Iranian foreign policy. In addition, Iran was

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[16] Ibid.

[17] *See* Bulent Aras (2000), "Turkish-Israeli-Iranian Relations in the Nineties: Impact on the Middle East", Middle East Policy, Vol. VII, No. 3, June.

engaged in its own economic and military rebuilding and thus could not focus much an Israel.

Thus Iranian response to the Madrid peace accords brought with it the moral and material support to the Palestinian militant resistance; it was also due to non-invitation to Iran in the Madrid peace process. This support to militant resistance is also helping Iran to enhance its credentials as major regional power and a leading Islamic State. "Iran's transition to global terrorism began in 1994 with the bombings of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires and Jewish Community centre in Argentina."[18] Although Iran did not publicly support the terrorist acts that led to many casualties in 1994-96 within Israel, it came close to justifying them. Many Iranian sources claimed that under the circumstances the Palestinians were left with no choice but to fight the enemy. While insisting that, we do not approve of terrorist acts' President Rafsanjani in one of his interview to Der Spiegel argued that the Palestinians 'do not have any other means of defending themselves.'

Though this being the case, Iran did not loose even a single chance of criticizing the peace process. "On September 14, 1993, on the day of signing of Oslo Accrds, Rafsanjani accused the PLO of having "committed treason against the Palestinian people" and that the signing of the historic peace agreement was a "treacherous step... with the crippling result of divisions within the Islamic nations of the world." Rafsanjani condemned Jordanian and PLO leaders agreeing to 'sit at the same table with the Israeli leaders' and repeated the ritual calls for 'Jihad' against Israel."[19] He predicted Israel's future similar to barbaric, bloodthirsty crusaders. Many Islamist argue that Israel success lies in its war, but "Israel wins because it is faithful to its religion, and the Arabs are defeated because they are insufficiently devoted to Islam"[20].

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[18] Trita Parsi (2005), "Israel-Iranian Relations Assesed: Strategic Competition from the Power Cycle Perspective", *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, June, p. 265.

[19] Clark Staten (1993), "Israeli-PLO Peace Agreement- Cause of further Terrorism", *Emergency Net News Service*, September 14, Quoted in Trita Parsi (2005), "Israel-Iranian Relations Assesed: Strategic Competition from the Power Cycle Perspective", *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, June, p. 264.

[20] Ghassam Salame (1993), "Islam and the West", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 90, spring, p. 29.

Iran, which in early 1990's reduced its financial support to Hezbollah and which leaked strong ties & presence in the Palestinian territories, started to reach out and develop relations with rejectionist Palestinian groups after the Madrid Conference.[21] In fact 'Iranian-sponsored terrorism' against Israel began after its exclusion from the formation of the new regional order. "In September 1993 itself, Tehran convened another conference on Palestine; pledging to spare no effort to sdefeat them and promising 'limitless support" for their opponents."[22] This Iranian support to Islamist movement and Hezbollah is tribute to its Islamic revolution, and an instrument to spread its influence in the region. Through its actions, however, Iran under Rafsanjani contributed to its own isolation. Iran's opposition to the West Asian peace process created significant tensions with the E.U. while its anti Israeli position won it few friends in the Arab world. Iran's rejectionist position and its direct or indirect support for anti-Israeli violence confirmed, in the eyes of many, the Israeli argument that Iran was a threat to the stability of the West Asia.

Iran under Khatami

When Rafsanjani's second term ended in 1997, he was unable to run again due to Iran's two-term limit and seyyed Mohammad Khatami was elected on may 23, 1997 to succeed him. The May election verdict was loud and clear in many respects. "It marked the beginning of new era in the politics of Iran, which is moving toward change because the existing order has been unable to fulfill the aspirations and expectations of people. The voting behavior of the 1997 presidential election has reflected all these things and unfolded the shortcomings of existing regime"[23] the 1997 elections was glorified by various intellectuals and academician. The election was considered as "a renaissance of

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[21] Trita Parsi (2005), "Israel-Iranian Relations Assesed: Strategic Competition from the Power Cycle Perspective", *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, June, p. 264.

[22] Iran Times, September 17, 1993, Quoted in Trita Parsi (2005), "Israel-Iranian Relations Assesed: Strategic Competition from the Power Cycle Perspective", *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, June, p. 264.

[23] Shah Alam (2000), "Conservatives, Liberals and the Struggle Over Iranian Politics," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. XXIV, No. 3, p. 569.

social and political thought that engulfed secular and religious intellectuals alike."[24] According to election results, there was 91% voter turnout, up from 53% in the previous election. Khatami enjoyed widespread popularity during his campaign. Khatami also succeeded in garnering the support of non clerical organization like Sazman-e Mojahedin-e Enqelab-e Islami and left wing. "Although his main rival, Majlis speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nuri, was identified with the conservative establishment, Khatami too was supported by elements within the system, most prominently, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani."[25]

Khatami's victory was the hope and enthusiasm at home as well as abroad. In an opening speech, Khatami called for reapproachment with western government, including United States, as long as they respect Iran's dignity and national interests: "if we do not have relations with an aggressive and bullying country such as America, it is due to the fact that America does not respect those principles."[26] Khatami became one of the first figures in post revolutionary Iran to consider developing a formal U.S.-Iranian relationship. Iran also invited the American Wrestling team to Iran in order to organize the Wrestling matches, during that time US flag was also hoisted with singing of US national anthem. This was the first time after two decade.

A significant ideological clash developed between the reformists and the conservatives leading to plotting and undertaking terrorist activities within the country. Member of Hezbollah were linked to fires and bombing of newspapers and magazines printing reformist materials as well as a break-in at a dormitory at the university of Tehran. President Khatami denounced the attack while Khamanei supported the

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[24] R. K. Ramazani (1998), "The Shifting Premise of Iran's Foreign Policy: Toward a Democratic Peace?" *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 2, Spring, p. 179.

[25] David Menashri (1998), "Whither Iranian Politics" in Patrick Clawson and others (eds), *Iran Under Khatami: A Political, Economical and Military Assesment*, Published by Wshington Institute of Near East Policy, p. 16.

[26] Kenneth Pollack (2004), *the Persian Puzzle: the Conflict between Iran and America*, New York: Random House, pp. 310-311.

activities, asserting that "today the enemy is striking Islam from home."[27] After Khatami failed to capitalize on his wide popularity, Ayatollah Khamenei tightened his hold on the reformist agenda. President Bill Clinton administration wishing to develop a better relationship with Khatami, partially lifted its trade embargo with Iran.

Iran however, rejected these moves. On October 30, 2001, Khamenei was critical of any attempt, which would circumvent his authority in creating bilateral relations with United States. The remainder of the Khatami's second term was directed by the Council of Guardians, who steadfastly refused to relinquish any real power to presidency. Iran also expanded its support to international terrorist organisations. Additionally, evidence surfaced that Iran had secretly established advanced nuclear program in two locations: a facility in Arak for plutonium upgrades, and a second in Natanz, designed for advanced uranium enrichment. After President George W. Bush labled Iran as part of "axis of evil" in his 2002 state of the union address, President Khatami also abandoned his efforts at improving relations with America. "When big power uses a militant, humiliating and threatening tone to speak to us, our nation will refuse to negotiate or show any flexibility," Khatami declared in the press.

Foreign Policy of Iran under Khatami:-

The landslide victory of Syed Muhammad Khatami, a well educated and known liberal reformist, in the 1997 presidential elections was the clean mandate from the people of Iran for the continuation of the pragmatic process that was already underway. This was also highlighted by the defeat of conservative elements represented by Ali Akbar Nateq Noori. In the sphere of foreign policy, Khatami pursued the path of dialogue and detente which led to the unprecedented degree of reconciliation with the whole of the world. Being a reformist, "he seemed to suggest that democracy at home and peace abroad were two sides of the same coin."[28] The Tehran Declaration, adopted by Khatami on December 11, 1997 highlighted the principle elements of Iran's newly launched

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[27] Ibid, p. 328.

[28]*See* R. K. Ramazani (1998), "The Shifting Premise of Iran's Foreign Policy: Towards a Democratic Peace?" *The Middle East Journal*, Vol.52, No. 2, Spring.

foreign policy of democratic peace. It "stressed the need for cooperation, dialogue and positive understanding among cultures and religions while rejecting the ideology of confrontation which creates mistrust and diminishes the ground for cooperation among nations". In November 1997 Khatami's Foreign Minister condemned the terrorist attack on tourists by underground Islamic group Hamas and Hezbollah. However, Iran continued to extend support to the terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah, Iran even funded, trained and armed these terrorist groups. Several official meetings took place between the Iranian officials and representatives of Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad. The Iranian support to Hamas, Hezbollah was justified by their common commitment of both to fight against Israel, which also helped Iran to prove its revolutionary credentials. "Iran continues to arm and train the Lebanese organization Hezbollah, which has engaged in terrorist attacks in Jewish and Israeli targets in the past, likewise, in the past Iranian intelligence personnel have been involved directly in terrorist attacks in Israel and on Israeli interests but such engagements were not found during Khatami's era."[29]

The most influential and dramatic initiative by Khatami was on Iranian-American relations. It came as a surprise to many people that Khatami's first major foreign policy statement was addressed to the American people. "He drew parallels between the American and the Iranian revolutions by emphasizing the comparability of religion & liberty."[30] Such attitude of Khatami was astonishing for many Iranians. "Muslim Khatami said, should look at the West 'with a neutral outlook,' devoid of sentiments, to avoid its dangers but to benefit from its human achievement."[31] According to President Khatami there was nothing wrong with 'utilizing the experience of other human communities' but in opposition of following them blindly in order to abandon their own identity, in this

[29] Michael Eisenstadt (1998), "The Military Assesment" in Patrick Clawson and Others (eds), *Iran Under Khatami: A Political, economic and Military Assesment,* Published by The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, p. 87.

[30] R. K. Ramazani (2004), "Ideology and Pragmatism in Iran's Foreign Policy", The Middle East Journal, Vol. 58, No. 4, Autumn, p. 557.

[31] David Menashri (1998), "Whither Iranian Politics" in Patrick Clawson and others (eds), *Iran Under Khatami: A Political, Economical and Military Assesment*, Published by Washington Institute of Near East Policy, p. 25.

way he was in favour of enriching his culture by having positive dialogue with the west. He gave a call for "civilisational dialogue":

As a result, Clinton administration took steps to ease the atmosphere of tension. Iran under Khatami took several steps to engage the states in the European Union. In the case of Britain, Iran took a bold initiative by distancing itself publically from Khomeini's fatwa on Salman Rushdie as Khatami announced that the issue was completely finished. Iran also developed ever-closer relations with Italy, France, Germany, Greece, Austria and others; especially in the economic field. Khatami tried to forge even closer ties with the Muslim world. Khatami's views of Iranian Foreign Policy was very well received at the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) meeting in Tehran in December 1997, which brought together representatives of all the Muslim states of the World. This era experienced unprecedented reapproachment with Saudi Arabia. The world views of President Khatami and Crown Prince Abdullah happened to converge significantly as both opposed hegemony of the great powers in the world. This era experienced unprecedented reapproachment with Saudi Arabia. "The world views of President Khatami and Crown Prince Abdullah happened to converge significantly as both opposed hegemony of the great powers in world politics; both urge their own and other Muslim societies to engage in self-criticism, and Khatami's concept of 'dialogue' and Abdullah's notion of 'call' (dawah) aimed at providing the world with the paradigm of ethical Islamic behaviour."[32] This ushered in the improvement of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia from the Iranian perspective, reapproachment with Saudi Arabia was a key to improving relations with other GCC states as well.

It is worth nothing the Iranian relations with Gulf Countries that had started improving during the tenure of Rafsanjani, gained momentum during President Khatami's rule. The Iranian relationship with the Gulf countries and other Muslim world was based on the realization of importance of bulling up confrontational security based on trust. Yet, most of the issues like gulf countries support to Iraq in Iran-Iraq war,

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[32] R. K. Ramazani (2001), "Reflections on Iran's Foreign Policy: Defining the 'National Interest'" in John L. Esposito & R. K. Ramazani (eds), *Iran at Crossroads*, London: Palgrave, p. 225.

relations of Gulf countries with United States, ideological disparities, even like Syrian peace talk with Israel etc. between Iran and Gulf left unresolved even in this period.

The second half of the 1990's saw dramatic events in Afghanistan with the Sunni radical Taliban taking over Kabul in 1996. Since, Iran shares a long border with Afghanistan on its east, events there are bound to bring implications on Iran's foreign policy. "The Taliban rule was a serious security problem for Iran, especially because more than a million Afghans worked in Iran and border was riddled with smuggling. Taliban members were viscerally hostile to Shi'a Islam and were politically allied with extremist Sunni terrorists active in Pakistan and eastern Iran, an area with large Sunni minority."[33]

A series of such developments prompted Iran to take several pragmatic steps. Firstly, Iran along with Russia played conciliatory role in ending the long-lasted Tajikistani Civil War (1992-97). This lead to the formation of what was called as, 'national conciliation' government with the warrying radical elements being allocated a sharing in power. Then Iran participated in the formation of so called northern alliance in the North of Afghanistan especially concentrated in Panjsher Valley region. This alliance, mainly consisting of the Tajik Afghans controlled approximately 5% Afghan area in the north. Here Iran took part along with powers like Russia, India. The formation of the northern alliance had two implications on the region. Firstly, it acted as a catalyst between Talibani Afghanistan and Islamic Central Asia and thus stopped Sunni radicalism from spreading into Central Asia. Secondly, it brought together important powers of the Asian continent viz. Russia, India and Iran against Sunni Fundamentalism.

In all, the policy of dialogue, détente and deterrence employed by Seyyed Khatami was underlined by pragmatism and it drew Iran completely out of the post-revolutionary isolation. In a way, Khatami's foreign policy was even more assertive continuation of the policy of pragmatism and national interest initiated by Hashemi

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[33] Patrick Clawson (1998), "The Khatami Paradox" in Patrick Clawson and others (eds), *Iran Under Khatami: A Political, Economical and Military Assesment*, Published by Wshington Institute of Near East Policy, p. 6.

Rafsanjani, which engaged Iran in relations with the world in the decade of 1990s. By the end of 2003, Khatami's position was usurped by the conservatives at the International level. This also happened due to the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003, which gave rise to the sectarianism not only in Iraq but also in entire West Asia. Sunni domination of Iraq was replaced by Shiite led coalition, bolstering the Shiite power position in West Asian politics. In a way, the developments in post-Saddam Iraq become a major source of cocern for the Sunni regimes of the region. This was first then fuelled by Hezbollah and its Iranian backers on Arab streets. Thus, the rise of Shia to power in Iraq and Iran's growing assertions in regional politics became a serious issue for Israel and Western powers as well. What is more, since 2002 the debate over Iran's nuclear capability has intensified Western powers, led by US, accuse Iran of seeking to build nuclear weapons, while Iran categorically has denied these accusations and continue to claim that their nuclear programme is only for peaceful purposes.[34]

Iran-Israel Relations under Khatami

The second half of 1990s saw the change of regime in both in Israel and Iran. As already discussed, election of the moderate Khatami as Iranian President brought about a qualitative shift in the country's foreign policy in the latter half of the 1990s, thereby giving the moderate towards the continuation of the pragmatic foreign polices initiated by Rafsanjani. Khatami was initiating dialogue with the West but was ready to talk to everyone and to have good and cordial relations with every nation except Israel. He also supported the Palestinian cause. All the same, the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was confident of a breakthrough, as she once said, "What is more important are actions, not words."

In Israel, in May 1996, the US educated head of the Likud Party Binyamin Netanyahu won the elections in May 1996, which was in-fact referendum on the Peace process. Both these regime changes had propound impact on Iran-Israel relations. The

[34] Gawdat Bahgat (2006), "Iran and Israel in the New Middle East", *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 27, No. 3, p. 364.

Netanyahu victory marked the beginning of the end of the Oslo process and paved the way for a brief than in Israeli-Iranian relations. As the Likud government put an effective freeze on the peace process, it also initiated re-examination of its relations with Iran. Netanyahu sought to avoid any unnecessary provocation against Iran that could lead to more terrorist attacks with unpredictable political consequences.[35] So Netanyahu adopted the moderate policy towards Iran as he started targeting PLO in order to avoid any terrorist attacks, which undermind his popularity like Labor Party. Iran preferred Likud party over labor, since Likud launched four wars against Arab and against peace process. This always suited to Iranian policy makers. In 1999 Netanyahu reversed his policy toward Iran by referring to Iran as much bigger threat to Israel than Iran due to its global ambitions. But in general for Iran "the Israeli-Arab conflict did not emanate from any specific policy of a particular party in Israel, but from the very essence of its existence"[36].

Khatami employed even more moderate stance in Iran's relations with Israel. Reiterating Iran's opposition to the peace process Khatami pledged not to take action to disrupt it. in addition he believed that peace and security in the West Asia would be established only through the recognition of the rights of all Palestinians including the inalienable right to self-determination, return of refugees and liberation of all the occupied territories. At the same time, Khatami was also critical of Zionism as he termed it as continuation of Fascism, the root cause of state terrorism, violation of international law, and gravest threat to the peace, security and stability of the West Asian region. Khatami was pessimist regarding the ongoing peace process between Iran and Israel.

Khatami was very clear to his support to the Palestine as well as Hamas, he also hosted the Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmad Yasin in May 1998, and expressed his hope that one day Palestine will become a state in complete sense. "Future will be in favour of righteous side and Zionist regime will become no more" he added. He believed that

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[35] Trita Parsi (2005), "Israel-Iranian Relations Assesed: Strategic Competition from the Power Cycle Perspective", *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, June, p. 266.

[36] David Menashri (2006), "Iran, Israel and Midlle East Conflict", *Israeli Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 1, January, p.114.

"there is no tribe on earth which is more deprived, outcast and oppressed than Palestinians." But Iranian supreme leader Khamenei was very critical of the Palestine-Israel peace process because it was 'unjust, arrogant, contemptuous and illogical'. For him Israel usurped the Palestinian land so 'it should be erased from the map of the middle east.' He reiterated that "Iran 'can never compromise' on the question of Palestine. Support for Palestine has been at the core of Iran's policy."[37] He also reiterated that Iran can never recognize "the Zionist Usurper Israel for one hour" because this state according to him is the creation of imperialist forces to 'suppress and exploit Muslims'. Khamenei was also critical of United States for its support to Zionism and Israel; he considered that supporting Zionism was as bad as supporting Nazism. Khamenei asserted his criticism of United States and Israel based on Islamic and logical principles. "Khamenei elaborated his approach shortly after the outbreak of the Intifada. Depicting Israel as a 'racist reghime', established to 'prevent the Islamic World from enjoying any unity, honour and integrity'. The only remedy for the malaise spread by Israel, he believed, was 'to destroy the root and cause of crises' - the Zionist regime."[38] The animosity of both states has reached such a level that many Iranian believe that Israel was behind the United States move to include Iran in the list of 'Axis of Evil' states.

The Iran-Israel relations were not normal even in the Khatami era but some sort of détente was there. The stalled peace process between Palestine and Israel somehow disillusioned the Arabs as well as Iranians; on the other hand right wing government in Israel was not taking any responsibility of such stalled peace process. Even "Iran's opposition to Israel and the Arab-Israel peace process serves as a form of ideological legitimation for the country's clerical leadership, even if the great majority of Iranians are

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[37] David Menashri (1998), "Whither Iranian Politics" in Patrick Clawson and others (eds), *Iran Under Khatami: A Political, Economical and Military Assesment*, Published by Wshington Institute of Near East Policy, p. 33.

[38] David Menashri (2006), "Iran, Israel and Midlle East Conflict", *Israeli Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 1, January, p.117.

largely indifferent to events in the Israeli-Palestinian arena."[39] The Iranian opposition to the peace process is also due to the fact that "the peace process and Israel's diplomatic efforts to form a new order in the Middle East were damaging to Iran's strategic position."[40] Iran has not stopped support to terrorists' organizations like Hamas, Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad didn't cease even today. It is unlikely that Iran will abandon anti-Israel rhetoric anytime soon."The Islamic Republic of Iran, like any other state, enjoys a social code reflecting its particular identity and strengthening its political actions. This social code, suggesting value preferences of the government, leads it to take certain actions. Therefore, the foreign policy of Iran towards Israel lies parallel to a combination of some of its value preferences."[41]

Khatami's Presidency was the period when Iran's international orientation underwent steady changes as reflected in the overall pragmatic approach but towards Israel, Iranian policies showed no signs of compromise or ideological dilution. While Israel's policy toward Iran was rational throughout the period, it was more of a reaction to Iranian offensive posture. During this period, Israel maintained its relations with United States and avoided complete isolation in the region as well as in the international arena. During this period, Israel realized that it was necessary for it to dominate the region militarily in order to avoid any future damage to the Jewish State. In pursuit of retaining military edge in the region for its own security, Israel tried hard to prevent the rise of Iran as a rival power armed with nuclear weapon capability. After all, Israel was well aware of fact that there was not voluntary acceptance in the region, which underlines the compulsion for acquiring hard power potential in order to enjoy politico-strategic leverage. Iran, on the contrary, remained isolated between all the regional as well as the international arena with a role deficit. This goes to explain why Iran under Ahmadinejad

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[39] Michael Eisenstadt (1998), "The Military Assesment" in Patrick Clawson and Others (eds), *Iran Under Khatami: A Political, economic and Military Assesment,* Published by The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, p. 91.

[40] Kenneth Pollack (2004), *The Persian Puzzle: the Conflict between Iran and America,* New York: Random House, p. 245.

[41] Amir M. Haji Yousefi (2003), "Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran Towards Israel, 1979-2002", *Strategic Studies,* Vol. 23, No. 1, Spring, p. 73.

begins to assert itself more aggressively than in the past decade. It is argued in the following chapter that Iranian behavior or the nuclear issue is more of a reaction to its continuing isolation combined with constant articulation for pre-eminence in greater West Asia.

Chapter V

Rise of Ahmadinejad in Iran and its impact on Iran-Israel Relation: Back to Offensive Phase

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is the sixth and current President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the main political leader of the Alliance of Builders of Islamic Iran, a coalition of conservative political groups in the country. An engineer and teacher from a poor background, Ahmadinejad joined the Office for Consolidating Unity after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Appointed a provincial governor, he was removed after the election of President Mohammad Khatami and returned to teaching. Tehran's council appointed him mayor in 2003. Ahmadinejad is a controversial figure both within Iran and internationally. His emergence "was both a consequences and a product of the Khatami era."[1] He was very popular among Iranian elite and had ability to out-focus Khatami and could complement Khamenei, since Khamenei was alone not able to challenge Khatami a liberal *mullah* in Iranian politics. Ahmadinejad has been criticized domestically for his economic lapses and disregard for human rights. He supports Iran's nuclear energy programme. His election to a second term in 2009 was widely disputed and caused widespread protests domestically and drew significant international criticism. Major opposition parties, traditional clerical circles and influential Iranian politicians questioned the legitimacy of his presidency.[2]

Ahmadinejad is an outspoken critic of the United States, Israel, and United Kingdom. He abides by Iran's long-standing policy of refusing to recognize Israel as a legitimate nation or as representative of the region's population. He advocates "free elections" for the region, and believes Palestinians need a stronger voice in the region's future. "To millions of displaced Palestinian refugees, poor Arab masses in the street and a vast majority of Wshington-bashers among the Non-Aligned movement, he is a savvy and indisputable hero. Third World revolutionaries and Muslim Jihadists have embraced him as their Icon."[3] But not to forget, he was the first Iranian president whose cabinet

[1] Ali M. Ansari (2008), "Iran under Ahmadinejad: Populism and its Malcontents", *International Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 4, p. 696.

[2] http://www.spacewar.com/reports/Iran_reformists_attack_Ahmadinejad_foreign_policy_report_999.html, accessed on 15/07/10.

[3] Jahangir Amuzegar (2007), "The Ahmadinejad Era: Preparing for the Apocalypse", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No. 2, pp. 36-37.

nominees were not approved by the Majlis, even Majlis did not cooperate with him in starting days of his presidency. "Staunchly religious, yet vigorously nationalistic to the point of chauvinism, as president he has pursued populism and authoritarianism in almost measure. He is lauded for his apparent popularity and his common touch with ordinary people, yet his presidency has nevertheless evinced some of the most repressive tendencies of any since 1979."[4] His 2005 presidential campaign, supported by the Alliance of Builders of Islamic Iran, garnered 62% of the runoff election votes, and he became President on August 3, 2005.

Ahmadinejad's Rise to Power

In 1976, Ahmadinejad took Iran's national university entrance contests and soon enrolled in the Iran University of Science and Technology (IUST) as an undergraduate student of civil engineering. According to Alireza he was among the first to join the IRGC while he was a student of the University in IUST. He took his PhD (1997) in transportation engineering and planning from IUST when he was the Governor of Ardabil Province. "During the U.S. embassy takeover and hostage crisis that lasted from November 1979 to January 1981, Ahmadinejad worked as the chief interrogator in the IRGC... Six former hostages told American media they recognized Ahmadinejad as one of their captors when they saw him on television coverage during 2005 Iranian Presidential elections. Those who worked at the university with Ahmadenijad in the 1990s recall that he presented him with radical, militant Islamic zeal that many others of his generation had shed."[5]

Supporters of Ahmadinejad consider him a "simple man" that leads a "modest" life. Some details of Ahmadinejad's life during the 1980s are not very much known, but he held a number of administrative posts in the province of West Azerbaijan, Iran. "Many

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[4] Ali M. Ansari (2008), "Iran under Ahmadinejad: Populism and its Malcontents", *International Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 4, p. 684.

[5] Alireza Jaferzadeh (2007). *The Iranian Threat: President Ahmadinejad & the Coming Nuclear Crisis*, Newyork: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 12 &19.

reports say that after Saddam Hussein invaded Iran, Ahmadinejad joined the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution and served in their intelligence and security apparatus"[6]. The Islamic Iran Developers Coalition, the party of ultraconservative hardliners who run the Tehran City Council, appointed Ahmadenijad the new mayor of Tehran in April, 2003. This political appointment since the end of the Iran-Iraq War gave Ahmadenijad a much wider platform through which he projected his radical fundamentalist ideology on society. Ahmadinejad was lightweighted candidates in comparison to others. His ineptitude and eccentricity paid him, and downsized many reformists their predictions that he would not be in post for long. Ahmadinejad very smartly put himself as a candidate of the masses. He was very simple, straight and firm during his entire campaign. "He soon acquired a reputation as a good manager, someone with a deft personal touch."[7]

As mayor, he reversed changes made by previous moderate and reformist mayors. He put religious emphasis on the activities of cultural centers they had founded. "Many of the Ahmadenijad's mayoral speeches were throwback to the rhetoric of his glory days as a militant student leader. In one statement he declared that the executive brand of the government had lost its focus on the values of the Islamic revolution and that Iran had a monumental historic duty to fulfill the Prophet's mission and blaze the trail for a global Islamic movement."[8]

The election of Ahmadinejad, according to many analysts was the one of the biggest political upheaval in Iranian politics in recent times. "But as we have seen, Ahmadinejad was only one part of a broader hard-line conservative attempt to seize power in Iran,"[9] Ahmadinejad won 62 % of the vote in the run-off poll against Akbar

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[6] Ibid, p. 11.

[7] Ali M. Ansari (2007), *Iran Under Ahmadinejad: The Politics of Confrontation*, London: Adelphi Paper 393, IISS, p. 28.

[8] Alireza Jaferzadeh (2007). *The Iranian Threat: President Ahmadinejad & the Coming Nuclear Crisis*, Newyork: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 22.

[9] Ali M. Ansari (2007), *Iran Under Ahmadinejad: The Politics of Confrontation*, London: Adelphi Paper 393, IISS, p. 32.

Hashemi Rafsanjani. One of the prominent candidates Mostafa Moin was barred from participating in the election by the Guardian Council, which later turned down with the intervention of the Supreme Leader Khamenei. But he lost badly due to lack of charisma as a leader.

Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani as main contender in the election came late in the ring with firm belief that he will definitely win, as Iran was in very bad economic condition at that time, but he lost badly against Ahmadinejad in second round of voting. Because "Ahmadinejad promised to put the country's oil wealth on people's dinner tables, arguing that since 1989, the few had acquired oil wealth at the expense of many. Such claims, targeted squarely at Rafsanjani and his family....Rafsanjani found it difficult to convince people they were wrong. He had lost the trust of the people...while Ahmadinejad worked hard to convince electors that he actively could be trusted."[10] So, in 2005 presidential election the victory of Ahmadinejad was against the corruption, his pro-poor agenda and clean past made him victorious beside all this "Ahmadinejad's campaign followed the same themes that he had stressed in Mayoral speeches, highlighting the glories of martyrdom, the need to return to the pure Islamic values of revolution, and the superiority of Islamic government over all other types of government"[11]. Many of the observers considered Larijani as one of the front runners as well as the candidate of the Supreme Leader in the election, but this turn wrong.

Entire campaign of Ahmadinejad "rested on three basic pillars: the Islamist government must effectively serve the people and protect its simple, Islamic way of life; it must promote social justice; and it must fight corruption"[12]. Many candidates including Mostafa Moin denounced the election results, and accused the authority for vote-rigging. The coup of 2005 election defeated four popular, experienced and attractive rivals' in

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[10] Ibid, p. 38.

[11] Alireza Jaferzadeh (2007). *The Iranian Threat: President Ahmadinejad & the Coming Nuclear Crisis*, Newyork: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 27.

[12] International Crisis Group (2007), Iran: Ahamdinejad's Tumultous Presidency, *Middle East Briefing No. 21*, February, p. 6.

hands of Ahmadinejad. Ahmadinejad was the darkest of all dark horses in every respect. In the elections all exit-polls favoured Rafsanjani; instead of this he defeated Rafsanjani in the run-off election. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei authorized Ahmadinejad's presidency on August 3, 2005. Ahmedinejad kissed Khamenei's hand during the ceremony to show his loyalty.

Foreign Policy of Iran under Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Iranian foreign policy has grown more complex and nuanced since 1980s. It is remains hostile to United States since Islamic Revolution with some exceptions during Khatami. Yet it should also keep in mind that Iranian foreign policy is such not due to Mullahs only, moderates as well as militants, reformers as well as revolutionaries all types of people are in power positions. According to Karim Sadjadpour a known Iranian expert "decisions in Iran are made by consensus rather than decree", yet The Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) has a final say in the matter of foreign policy which is headed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, thus Supreme Leader has final say on matter of foreign policy but Ahmadinejad has some influence over foreign policy. As well he appoints the cabinet and the head of the SNSC, but power remains mostly in the hands of the SNSC and the Supreme Leader. The Supreme Leader also serves as commander-in-chief of the armed and police forces; the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), the state ministry in control of television and radio; and leader of the country's judiciary. According to Mahmood Sariolghalam, a professor of International relations at the National University of Iran [Many of] the first-generation revolutionaries of Iran are still pursuing an ideological or kind of a defensive strategy to maintain the country's revolution[13], Expediency council also enjoys clout in foreign policy making, it arbitrates between Guardian Council and Majlis, Expediency Council at present headed by Rafsanjani.

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[13]http://www.spacewar.com/reports/Iran_reformists_attack_Ahmadinejad_foreign_policy_report_999.html, accessed on 15/07/10.

As far as Revolutionary Guards are concerned, they are training Shiite militia in Iraq which is against US interest in the region in general and in Iraq particularly. President Ahmadinejad is one of the most popular leaders of region and he is the one of the most powerful president of Iran till date due to his hardline approach. Non-confrontational attitude of large number of Majlis members two days after his anti-Israel comments, Khamenei came out publicly to say Iran's official policy was one because of nonaggression toward all members of the United Nations. The Iranian Foreign Policy during Ahmadinejad is different from the past. His first tenure was full of rhetoric's and conflicts.

"Since establishment of the Islamic Republic, Europe and the United States (as well as some other countries) have opposed several of Tehran's domestic and foreign policies. The list includes violation of human rights, opposition to the Middle East peace process between the Israelis and the Arabs, attempt, to acquire and develop weapons of mass destruction (biological, chemical and nuclear weapons) and sponsoring international terrorism."[14] Officially, Tehran and Washington have had no formal diplomatic relations since the Iran hostage crisis in 1979. There has been some low-level cooperation between Washington and Tehran on antidrug policies, counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan in the aftermath of 9/11, and anti-oil-smuggling efforts in Iraq. More recently, in the lead-up to the 2003 Iraq war, during Ahmadinejad, Iran is having a very high profile contact with the United States in almost 30 years. US presence in the region, US posture towards Iran's regional ambitions and US attitude toward Palestinian problem are major issues for Iran. After 2003 US led war in Iraq and Iranian involvement in the Iraq, the U.S. has sent signals to Iran that it's posturing against Israel's right to exist is unacceptable in their opinion, leading to increased speculation of a U.S. led attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. Yet "there is a general consensus among the political factions on Iran's right to nuclear energy, moderates have accused Ahmadinejad of provoking the crisis with an overly confrontational stance. The government insists it is merely defending Iran's natural rights and Ahmadinejad claimed the latest US intelligence report on the Iranian nuclear drive

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[14] Gawdat Bahgat (1999), "Iran and Terrorism: The Transatlantic Responses", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 22, p.141.

was a "great victory" for the Islamic republic."[15] Even though Iran has denied involvement in Iraq, then President Bush warned of "consequences," sending a clear message to Iran that the U.S may take military action against it. The Bush administration considered Iran to be the world's leading state supporter of terrorism. Iran has been on the U.S. list of state sponsors of international terrorism since 1984, a claim that Iran and Ahmadinejad have denied.

Ahmadinejad invited President Bush to a debate at the United Nations General Assembly, which was to take place on 19 September 2006. The debate was to be about Iran's right to enrich uranium. Then again in 2009 Ahmadinejad also challenged President Bush to a live TV-debate about world affairs and ways to solve those issues. George W. Bush turned down this offer. "Both Ahmadinejad and George W. Bush have used their fundamentalist interpretations of their faith traditions to place the world in a Manichean perspective of good versus evil. The certitude of their positions regardless of evidences to the contrary, their sense that they are part of a divine mission, and their largely successful manipulations of their devoutly religious constituents have put these two nations on a dangerous confrontational course."[16]

In a speech given in April 2008, Ahmadinejad described the September 11, 2001 attacks as a "suspect event." He minimised the attacks by saying all that had happened was, "a building collapsed." He claimed that the death toll was never published, that the victims' names were never published, and that the attacks were used subsequently as pretext for the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. In October 2008, President Ahmadinejad happily expressed his views on global financial meltdown, as it is a fatal blow to the liberal economy in general and US economy in particularly.

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[15]http://www.spacewar.com/reports/Iran_reformists_attack_Ahmadinejad_foreign_policy_report_999.html, accessed on 15/07/10.

[16] Stephen Zunes (2007), "My Meeting with Ahmadinejad", John Feffer (eds), September 28, http://www.fpif.org/articles/my_meeting_with_ahmadinejad, accessed on 15/7/10.

On November 6, 2008 (two days after the 2008 US Presidential Election), President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad congratulated Barack Obama, the newly elected President of the United States, and said that he "Welcomes basic and fair changes in U.S. policies and conducts, I hope you will prefer real public interests and justice to the never-ending demands of a selfish minority and seize the opportunity to serve people so that you will be remembered with high esteem". It is the first congratulatory message to a new elected President of the United States by an Iranian President since the 1979 Iranian Hostage Crisis. "Iran's newly aggressive foreign policy has sharply increased regional tensions. U.S. officials have implicitly threatened to use force to destroy Iran's nuclear program, and in late 2006 and early 2007 they arrested several Iranian officials in Iraq and moved a second aircraft-carrier battle group into the Persian Gulf."[17]

Ahmadinejad gave the speech on September 23, 2009, in UN General Assembly and accused the Western powers of spreading "war, bloodshed, aggression, terror and intimidation" in the West Asia and Afghanistan. He added that Iran is ready to "warmly shake all those hands which are honestly extended to us". He also spoke against West hypocrisy on democracy promotion by violating the fundamental principles of democracy.

Other than United States and Israel, Iran under Ahmadinejad have good relation with other countries. Ahmadinejad has moved to strengthen relations with Russia, setting up an office expressly dedicated to the purpose in October 2005. He has worked with Vladimir Putin on the nuclear issue, more recently; Iran has been increasingly pushed into an alliance with Moscow due to the controversy over Iran's nuclear program. Ahmadinejad has sought to develop ties with other world leaders that are also opposed to U.S. foreign policy and influence like Hugo Chavez of Venezuela. Venezuela voted in favor of Iran's nuclear program before the United Nations, and both governments have sought to develop more bilateral trade. On the regional front, immediately after

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[17] Mark Gasiorowoski (2007), "Mesa Roundtable: Mutual Threat Perceptions in the Gulf," *Middle East Policy, Vol. XIV, No. 2, Summer, p. 125.*

the Islamic Revolution, Iran's relations with most of its neighbours, particularly those with large Shi'a minorities, were severely strained. Ahmadinejad's priority in the region has been to improve ties with neighbours in order to strengthen Iran's status and influence in both the West Asia and greater Muslim World. "Iran has historically considered stability in the region to be vital to its own security and development. Recognition of this reality motivated Iran to play an instrumental role in efforts to stabilize TajiKistan and Afghanistan."[18] But Iran's nuclear aspirations are against the will of the Iranian neighbours, all Iranian neighbours and regional countries are against Iranian nuclear program. Since Iranian nuclear program will negatively influence the clouts of other regional players like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt etc. However, on economic front Iran's relations under Ahmadinejad have expanded with its neighbours for example, Iran signed a multi-billion dollar gas pipeline deal in late 2007 with Turkey, despite the stiff US opposition. Ahmadinejad's relations with Turkey also improved due to the rise of the AKP, an Islamist leaning party of Turkey. Besides, the recent Gaza crisis has also brought Turkey and Iran on same side and Turkey has even supported the Iranian civil nuclear program.

The nature of Islamic Revolution is a major reason of suspicion between Iran and Arab countries. Like Syria and Iran relations become exacerbated due to the Lebanon war 2006 with Israel. But Ahmadinejad has sought reconciliation with the Arab states by encouraging bilateral trade and posturing for Iranian entry into the Gulf Cooperation Council. Ahmadinejad was the first Iranian president to visit India where, and he criticized United States during his visit. "Iran's actions in Iraq also have produced growing concern, not only for the United States and Britain, who accuse Iran of supporting attacks against their armed forces, but also for Saudi Arabia and other nearby countries, who fear Shia dominance and deeper sectarian violence in Iraq."[19]

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[18] Mohammad Javad Zarif (2007), "Tackling the Iran-US Crisis: the Need for a Paradigm Shift", *Journal of International Affairs*, spring/summer, Vol. 60, No. 2, p.73.

[19] Mark Gasiorowoski (2007), "Mesa Roundtable: Mutual Threat Perceptions in the Gulf," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, Summer, p. 125.

Iran-Israel Relations under Ahmadinejad

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, become Iran's president in August 2005, and created a storm of controversy. He stunned the diplomatic world on 17, September 2005 with his speech at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. Instead of resolving the issues with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), new President made the harsh remarks on United States and Israel. "On 26 October Ahmadinejad delivered a fiery speech at a state sponsored conference held at Ministry of Interior titled "The World without Zionism" in which he called for Israel to be "Wiped off the Map" and threatened that any government in the Islamic World recognized Israel "will be eternally disgraced and will bury in the fury of Islamic Nations." Even Ahmadinejad cast doubt on whether Holocaust had occurred and demanded that Europeans move Israel to Germany or Austria."[20] Ahmadinejad consider Zionism as an ideology which established new form of slavery.

It can be said that "the last semblance of rationality in Iranian politics appeared to have gone with Khatami, and in his place was an individual who seemed to relish international attention whatever the consequences. Ahmadinejad was no 'Iranian Chavez'; his radical politics featured an obsessive religiosity and, notably, a special animosity towards Israel"[21]. Ahmadinejad gave a speech on October 26, 2005 at a conference in Tehran entitled "World without Zionism". According to widely published translations, he agreed with a statement he attributed to Ayatollah Khomeini that the "occupying regime" had to be removed, and referred to it as a "disgraceful stain [on] the Islamic world", that needed to be "wiped from the pages of history." "Combining anti-American and anti-Jewish sentiments, Ahmadinejad has made anti-Israel rhetoric a defining characteristic of his presidency. The Israeli-Palestinian confrontation, he said, is

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[20] Masoud Kademzadeh (2007), "Ahmadinejad's Foreign Policy", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and Middle East*, Vol. 27, No.2, p. 421.

[21] Ali M. Ansari (2007), *Iran Under Ahmadinejad: The Politics of Confrontation*, London: Adelphi Paper 393, IISS, p. 51.

one stage in the historical war between the "forces of arrogance" and Islam."[22] His comments were condemned by the major western governments. Though, the Iranian president is not commander-in-chief of the armed forces, so Ahmadinejad would be incapable of ordering an attack on Israel even if Iran has the means to do so. "Though the clerics certainly take hard-line positions on a number of policy areas, collective leadership normally mitigates impulsive actions such as launching a war of aggression. Indeed, bold and risky policies rarely come out of committees."[23]

"No cause has greater symbolic appeal in the Islamic world than the plight of the Palestinians; hence it is an issue that can be considered a gauge of leadership."[24] Iran considers it as Islamic issue which gives them legitimate right to get involved. So Ahmadinejad also trying to champ-ionize the Palestinian cause in order to fulfill Iran's regional aspirations and maintain his domestic constituency consolidated. It is also important to know that "struggle between Iran and Israel was primarily fought through proxies. Iran supported violent anti-Israeli groups, and Israel used its allies within American domestic political scene to isolate Iran"[25].

Ahmadinejad reiterated the words of Ayatollah Khomeini in his website and where read,"O dear Imam (Khomeini)! You said the Zionist Regime that is a usurper and illegitimate regime and a cancerous tumor should be wiped off the map. I should say that your illuminating remark and cause is going to come true today. The Zionist Regime has lost its existence philosophy... the Zionist regime faces a complete dead-end and under God's grace your wish will soon be materialized and the corrupt element will be wiped

[22] David Menashri (2007), "Iran's Regional Policy: Between Radicalism and Pragmatism", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No. 2, spring/summer, p. 158.

[23] Stephen Zunes (2007), "My Meeting with Ahmadinejad", John Feffer (eds), September 28, http://www.fpif.org/articles/my_meeting_with_ahmadinejad, accessed on 15/7/10.

[24] Shahram Chubin (1994), *Iran's National Security Policy: Intentions, Capabilities & Impact*, Washington DC: a Carnegie Endowment Book, p. 18.

[25] Trita Parsi (2007), "Iran and Israel: The Avoidable War", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XIV, No. 3, fall, p. 80.

off the map"[26]. Though his then interior minister tried to explain by saying that Ahmadinejad didn't mean that Israel should wiped off the pages of history but he was speaking with the reference of Palestinian people, Palestine and he is talking about regime change. But many other translators denied that, for them speech didn't mean the regime change only; it means removal of Israel from the pages of history. According to Gawdat Bahgat, "the fiery calls to destroy Israel are meant to mobilize domestic and regional constituencies" and that Rhetoric aside, most analysts agree that the Islamic Republic and the Jewish state are not likely to engage in a military confrontation against each other.[27]

The Islamic republic of Iran is one of the handfuls of states that have opposed the efforts to make peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors including the Madrid Peace conference in 1991, Oslo agreement in 1993, and the Egyptian and Jordanian peace treaties with Israel. A number of beliefs, deeply entrenched in revolutionary Iran's socio-political milieu, appear to be responsible for such Iranian policy towards Israel. The reasons appear to be as follows:

• The Iranian leaders perceive the West Asian conflict as less between two nationalities -'Arabs vs. Israelis'- and more between the Islamic civilization and a 'Zionist entity.' Within this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran becomes a party to the conflict.

• The opposition to Israel is seen, at least by some factions in Tehran, as a way to enhance the Islamic regime's legitimacy.

• Iran has always had special relations with the Shi'ia community in Lebanon. The plight of the Shi'ias in southern Lebanon, who fought the Israelis for more than two decade, is an important concern for Tehran, and an important factor in its perceptions about Israel.

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[26] Statement from the Conference "World Without Zionism" held in Tehran, http://www.president.ir/en/?ArtID=10114, quoted in Alireza Jaferzadeh (2007). *The Iranian Threat: President Ahmadinejad & the Coming Nuclear Crisis*, Newyork: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 31.

[27] *See* Gawdat Bahgat (2006), "Nuclear Proliferation: The Islamic. Republic of Iran", *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3, September.

- Finally, Tehran perceives the peace process as an attempt by the United States, the main mediator, to impose American hegemony in the region and isolate Iran. In line with this perception, rejecting the peace process means resisting Washington's influence.

However, Arab world does not want any type of interference of Iran in Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As the Saudi king Abdullah put it, "the Israeli-Palestinian conflict need not involve the Iranian and should be resolved by Arabs Alone". He further added in a interview with Kuwait's Al-Segasiah newspaper, "we don't want anyone to trade in our issues and become stronger through them".

Ahmadinejad compared Israel's actions in the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict to Adolf Hitler's actions during World War II saying that "like Hitler, the Zionist regime is just looking for a pretext for launching military attacks" and "is now acting just like him." During his meeting on December 2, 2006, with Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyah in Doha, Qatar, Ahmadinejad said, "Israel was created to establish dominion of arrogant states over the region and to enable the enemy to penetrate the heart Muslim land." For Ahmadinejad "the real cure for the conflict is elimination of the Zionist regime"[28]. For Ahmadinejad, Israel is a tension in the region imposed by the imperialist forces and it is a gravest threat to the security of region. While "Israelis have tended to express disillusionment with what they view as the limited successes of the Lebanon campaign as well as the ability of Hezbollah to disrupt normal life in the northern Israel through the campaign of attack using the small but deadly Katusha rockets."[29]

Ahmadinejad also criticized Israel for its attack on Gaza in December 2008, and Israeli "inhuman policies" in Gaza strip. In one of his speech Ahmadinejad asked that

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[28] *See* Patrick Bishop and Sebastein Berger (2006), "Israel Fighting War Against Humanity: Iranian President", National Post, August 4.

[29] Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri (2007), *Iran, Israel, and Nuclear War*, Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, p. 39.

how the crimes of the occupiers against defenseless women and children could... be supported unconditionally by certain governments. And at the same time, the oppressed men and women are subject to genocide and heaviest economic blockade being denied their basic needs, food, water and medicine? For Ahmadinejad, Israel is trying to dominate regional politics on the basis of its military edge. His policies focused largely on the plight of the Palestinian people and a blaming of Israel, though without mentioning the nation or Jews, referring only to "the occupiers" and "the Zionist regime". While Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said in the return, "the statements of the Iranian leadership at the conference underline once again the unacceptable character of the Iranian policy and underline the danger to Western civilization as a whole from such a state"[30].

After years of enmity, the Arab masses and Arab opinion-makers continue to perceive Israel as a more acute threat. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad understands this well: "he has been raising the heat on the Palestinian issue precisely because he wants to make headway among Arab people and understands that they do not share the anti-Iranian sentiments of their governments."[31] A new aggressiveness displayed in Iran's foreign policy has caused great concern in Washington and European capitals and among many of Iran's neighbors. It is assumed that Iranian nuclear program is aimed at producing nuclear weapons. Together with it, Iran's longstanding support for Hezbollah in Lebanon and radical Palestinian factions, have led many to believe that Iran is seeking regional hegemony.

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[30] Statement by Ehud Olmert made on official visit to Germany, December 11, 2006, Quoted in Yonah Alexander & Milton Hoenig (2008), *The New Iranian Leadership, Ahmadinejad, Terrorism, Nuclear Ambition and the Middle East*, London, Westport: Praeger Press, p. 205.

[31] Vali Nasr and Ray Tayyip (2008), "The Cost of Containing Iran; Washington's Misguided New Middle East Policy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 1, Jan/Feb, p. 90.

Iranian Nuclear Programme

The ongoing turmoil between United States, Israel and Islamic republic of Iran brings entire West Asian region under deep scrutiny. Many in the West believe that Islamic Republic of Iran want nuclear bomb and United States and Israel want to bomb Islamic Republic of Iran. By making it so simple, we some are how ignoring the wider implication of war. It is well known that United States is in search of prestigious escape from the Iraq, United States army knowingly or unknowingly, willingly or unwillingly stuck in Iraq. President George W Bush's war on terror get sad end from bush's perspective. This weak condition definitely not allows United States to enter in new adventurism in Iran in form of military intervention for regime change, to stop its nuclear program, and to teach lesson to Ahmedinejad. Yet Iran has suddenly emerged as one of Washington's and Israel's foremost concerns.

At the same time one cannot ignore any possibility of Israel's strike on Iranian nuclear centre or attack in Iran in order to avoid Iran to become nuclear state. Since "Israeli officials do not believe that Iran's nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes. Rather, the Israelis claim that Iran is secretly developing a nuclear weapons program… Israel's concerns over Iran's nuclear capability are magnified by the fact that Iran already posseses a surface-to-surface missile known as shehab-3missile"[32]. Islamic Republic of Iran again and again instigating Israel by behaving as irresponsible state who want to destabilize regional peace and stability. "Come and hit me strategy"is used by Iran continuously with United States and Israel. This type of unwanted exercise had isolated Iran from world community.

Historically "Iran is one of the few Muslim countries with which Israel has had close ties, even a strategic alliance, under the monarchy and especially since the 1960s. That is why When Iran's nuclear programme began in 1974; Israel did not perceive it a

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[32] Gawdat Bahgat (2005), "Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East: Iran and Israel", *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 26, No. 1, April, p. 38.

threat to her survival or a looming challenge to her deterrence capability"[33]. Iran and Israel have already departed from cold warfare to warm warfare, with lethal armed competition of ideology and competitive world vision already underway proxy in southern Lebanon and Israel. Iran's support to trans-regional terrorism and interference in West Asian peace process made Iran as one of the killer of peace in the region. Iran has remained excessively uncompromising and has been the inherently hostile to Israel, rejection of Zionism and the legitimacy of Jewish state is still questioned by Iran. "In the view of Islamic regime in Iran, Israel remained the enemy of Iran and Islam, and a threat to mankind. 'Death of Israel remained a central theme in Iran's revolutionary politics."[34] Iran's involvement in Lebanon and its moral, political and logical support for Islamist movements (Hamas, Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad) made it more directly involved in the Arab-Israel conflicts. Some scholars argue that Iran should not be more Palestinian than the Palestinians, "Palestine is ready to bring peace with Israel then who is Iran to meddle between them. Iran view Israel as a 'racist regime', established to prevent the Islamic world from enjoying any unity, honor, and integrity. Even supreme leader of Iran Khomeini in past and Ahmedinejad at present said that the only 'remedy' for malaise spread by Israel, was 'to destroy the root and cause of the crisis'. Most of the Iranian believed that it was Israel behind American move to include Iran in its 'axis of evil' in January 2002, both states perceive each other expansionist and having their foreign & security setup based on denial of each other aggression and expansion. Both perceive itself as 'reluctant belligerent' with defensive intentions.

The entire episode began with the information of Iran's alleged programme of uranium enrichment, increasing the risk of yet another round of military confrontation in West Asia speculating that Iran is under the shadow of war. "Over past many years Washington has come to see the containment of Islamic Republic of Iran as the primary

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[33] Sujata Ashwarya Cheema (2009), "Israel's Perception of Iran's Nuclear Programme", in Anwar Alam (Edited), *Iran and Post 9/11 World Order:, Reflection on Iranian Nuclear Program,* New Delhi: New Century Publication, p. 182.

[34] David Menashri (2006), "Iran, Israel and the Middle East Conflict", By *Israel Affairs,* Vol. 12, No. 1, January, p. 120.

aim of its Middle East policy. It holds Tehran responsible for rising violence in Iraq and Afghanistan, in tribulation of Lebanon, and encouraging Hamas. It is visible that balance of power is shifting toward Islamic republic of Iran and its Islamic allies."[35] United States is behaving aggressively while at the same time Islamic Republic of Iran behaving ultra aggressively. Such mutual behavior turns the bad situation into worse. Iran which is working .as killer of peace between Arabs and Israelis is issue of concern for United States of America Israel both.

Contrary to Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in a speech on October 1, 1988 observed "Chemical and Biological weapons are poor man's atomic bomb and can easily be produced, we should at least consider them for our defense, although use of such weapons is inhuman, the war taught us that international laws are only scraps of paper with regard to chemical, bacteriological, radiological weapon training, it was made very clear during the Iran-Iraq war that these weapons are very decisive... We should fully equip ourselves both in the offensive and defensive use of Chemical, Bacteriological, and Radiological weapons. From now on you should make use of the opportunity and perform this task."[36] As far as the history of Iran's nuclear Programme goes, it is pertinent to note that the programme was supported by the US back in the 1950s, during this period Mohammad Reza Shah signed a civilian "atoms for peace" agreement with the Eisenhower administration and later received an American reactor for the Tehran Nuclear Research Centre (TNRC)."[37] Although suspended for a while, the programme was a revived after the eight-year-long Iran-Iraq war with the technical support of Russia and China. Faced with accusations of violations IAEA conditions, President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad said in his first press conference in Tehran on June 26, 2005, "It is the right of the Iranian nation to move forward in all field and

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[35] Vali Nasr and Ray Tayyip (2008), "The Cost of Containing Iran; Washington's Misguided New Middle East Policy", Foreign Affairs, Vol. 87, No. 1, Jan/Feb, p. 85.

[36]Shah Alam (2008), "Nuclear and Foreign Policy Calculations of Iran", India Quarterly, Vol. LXIV, No. 2, April-June, p. 112.

[37] Jahagir Amuzegar (2006), "Nuclear Iran: Perils and Prospects", Middle East Policy, Vol. XIII, No. 2, summer, p. 91.

acquire modern technology... Nuclear technology is the outcome of the scientific progress of Iranian youth."[38] Even before to Ahmedinejad, Khatami was also in favour of peaceful use of nuclear technology for energy purpose. "The first shock came in August 2003 when US intelligence reported that Iran had built extensive facilities for the enrichment of uranium in Natanz, approximately 200 miles south of Tehran."[39] "With so much international attention and world-wide concern focused on Iran's nuclear weapons Program, it is hard to imagine that prior to August 2002 all was quiet on the Iranian front. That changed when the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) revealed the precise location and functions of two top-secret and well camouflaged nuclear site in central Iran."[40]

It is also important that nuclear weapon state have no right to stayed any other states nuclear program specially program for peaceful production of nuclear energy but will you do for a fundamental, hardliner, and radical Islamic religious state whose nuclear program is doubtful whether it is civilian or military. On April 11, 2006, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, announced that the Islamic Republic had joined the "the club of nuclear countries." Calling it "a very historic moment" of epochal significance,"[41] on April 9, 2007 President Ahmedinejad addressed the national day of nuclear technology ceremony at Natanz site, he said "Several world powers are using their influence to stop Iranian program. They should know that the great Iran nation will not allow them to do so...From now on, Iran is placed in the category of the nation's producing fuel at

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[38] Shah Alam (2008), "Nuclear and Foreign Policy Calculations of Iran", *India Quarterly*, Vol. LXIV, No. 2, April-June, p. 110.

[39] Ray Takeyh (2003), "Iran's Nuclear Calculations", *World Policy Journal*, summer, p. 21.

[40] Mohammad Mohaddessin (2004), *Enemies of Ayatollahs: the Iranian Opposition and its War on Fundamentalism*, London & New York: Zed Books, p. 29.

[41] Jahagir Amuzegar (2006), "Nuclear Iran: Perils and Prospects", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XIII, No. 2, summer, p. 90.

industrial level..."[42] However, America is not ready to buy Iranian denials and firmly believes that Iran is on its way to becoming a nuclear power.

Likewise, the present Iranian leadership does not trust United States, as comment by an Iranian columnist since Khomenei's period Iran conceived that "the problems of United States has with Iran are not about our external behavior be it nuclear issue, opposition of Israel, or support for Hezbollah- but our very existence as an independent Islamic government on one of the most strategic patches of real estate in the world. Deep down Iran believes that the only thing that will appease the Americans is a change of regime, to go back to the patron-client relationship they had with Iran during the time of the Shah." Besides, the fear of United States attack on Iran in near future has also prompted Iran to acquire nuclear capability.

Since Iran is a signatory of NPT and "Article 2 of the treaty on Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons requires that non nuclear weapons states party to the treaty undertake "not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and not to seek or receive any assistance" in their manufacture. Under Article 3, each such non-nuclear weapons state "undertake to accept safeguards" as established by the international Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards system, for the exclusive purpose of verification of the fulfillment of its obligations assumed under this treaty"[43], Due to all these circumstances UN imposed sanctions on Iran's nuclear program by passing resolution 1737 on December 23, 2006 and again added tough sanctions on its nuclear program on March 24, 2007. Despite the UN Security Council's two sanctions on Iran's nuclear programme, it celebrated its nuclear technology achievement as "National Day of Nuclear Technology" on April 9, 2007. "The level to which Iran's leaders have misled and outright lied to IAEA reveals nothing less than

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[42] Shah Alam (2008), "Nuclear and Foreign Policy Calculations of Iran", *India Quarterly*, Vol. LXIV, No. 2, April-June, p. 120.

[43] Editorial (2005), "Iran's Nuclear Program", *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 99, No. 1, January, p. 270.

contempt for anyone who tries to get in the way of its nuclear ambitions, which are tried to its ideological ambitions to exports its 'Islamic' Revolution throughout the Midldle East."[44]

Just after an hour of the resolution passed, Iran's Foreign Minister stated on state television "Iran consider the new UN Security Council resolution an extra legal act outside the frame of its responsibilities and against the UN Charter. Ali Larijani reacted "If the Western want to use the Security Council as an instrument, it will not affect our will, and it will make us more decisive in realizing our nuclear arms."[45] Similarly President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad in his speech in Tehran dismissed the UN Security Council resolution just as a scrap of paper, he said "West World have to learn to live with Iran possessing nuclear technology, whether the West like it or not, Iran is a nuclear country, and it is in their interests to live along side Iran."

All the offensive statements have put Iran's nuclear program under wider suspicion, many believes that within few years Iran will have nuclear bomb. Because of emerging conditions, there is a great existential threat to Israel. Even Arab countries increasingly feel insecure due to this changing geopolitical dynamics of the West Asian region. For all developed world, "this government, this Iranian regime with nuclear weapons, is completely unacceptable for stability in the region. U.S. and Israel will never tolerate it. This is an existential threat for them"[46]. "Contrary to Western assumptions, Iran's nuclear calculations are not derived from an irrational ideology, but rather from judicious attempt to craft a viable deterrent capability against evolving range of threats. Despite its dogmatic rhetoric, continuing support of international terrorism, and defiant opposition to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Iran has evolved during the past

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[44] Alireza Jaferzadeh (2007). *The Iranian Threat: President Ahmadinejad & the Coming Nuclear Crisis*, Newyork: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 155.

[45] Shah Alam (2008), "Nuclear and Foreign Policy Calculations of Iran", *India Quarterly*, Vol. LXIV, No. 2, April-June, p. 118.

[46] Ian Bremmer (2007), "an Interview with Ian Bremmer", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No. 2, spring/summer, pp. 116-117.

decade into a largely circumspect and cautious regional power whose strategic doctrine is predicted on preserving its independence and safeguarding its vital interests"[47] However "Iranian nuclear threat against Israel's more advanced nuclear forces, other than for self defense, are rather remote."[48] Israel is also considered as the sixth nuclear state in the world and first in the region. Israeli nuclear program is also an argument for Iran to pursue its nuclear ambitions but Simon Peres defended Israeli nuclear program by saying we didn't build this (nuclear) option to get to Hiroshima, but rather to get to Oslo. There is a strong belief in Israel that "at the end of the day, a UN security Council resolution can never protect Israel as well as two hundred nuclear warheads, Israelis believe. For them these are the weapons of peace"[49]. "The Suez campaign proved to be the genesis of Israel's nuclear-weapons program... France played a prominent role, fulfilling Israel's technological needs in the early stage of building nuclear infrastructure."[50] Even, "the mantra of the Israeli Ministry of defense has, since the Yom Kippur war, been survival through military domination. A core canon of Israel's security doctrine, that the very viability of the state will not withstand military defeat."[51]

Israel's growing insecurity due to Iranian nuclear program has led it to "Israel convinces the United States to take the leading role against Iranian nuclear pretensions, supplementing the aggressive peace pursued under Madrid banner. Israeli experts believe that Iran's entry into nuclear club could be preempted. Although Ephraim Sneh told that

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[47] Ray Takeyh (2003), "Iran's Nuclear Calculations", *World Policy Journal*, Summer, p. 21.

[48] Shahram Chubin (1995), "Does Iran Want Nuclear Weapons?" *Survival*, Vol. 37, No. 1, p. 92.

[49] Trita Parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance: the Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United Sates*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, p. 5.

[50] Gawdat Bahgat (2006), "Israel and Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East", Middle East Policy, Vol. XIII, No. 2, summer, p. 116.

[51] Editorial (2006), "Is nuclear parity with Iran a blessing in disguise for Israel?" *Jane's Intelligence Review*, January, p.34.

it is still possible to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear bomb and this accomplished since Iran threatens the interests of all rational states in the Middle East."[52]

The tumultuous presidency of Ahmadinejad is somehow responsible for increasing offensiveness in the Iran-Israel relations. Ahmadinejad elected on a platform of economic justice and clean government, has not been successful in redeeming his promises. He has, instead, used foreign policy to manage the domestic turmoil, particularly in the wake wide spread allegation of 'fraud' during the last presidential election. At the same time, the hawkish attitude of Israel and United States toward Iran and, have paid good dividends to Ahmadinejad on the domestic front. Iranians are now growing disconcerted by his eclectic ideology, but he nonetheless appears to have something for everyone, be they nationalist or devout Muslims. He considers criticism as a divine right and a source of intellectual enrichment. President Ahmadinejad's foreign policy rhetoric's, whether it is related to the country's nuclear ambition or fighting Israel have helped him consolidating his position back at home and along with it, the *mullah-cracy* in post-revolution Iran.

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[52]Geoffrey Aronson (2006), "Israel and Strategic Implications of an Iranian Nuclear Weapon Option," *in Iran's Nuclear Programme: Realities and Repurcussions,* Abu Dhabi: ECSSR, p. 99.

Conclusion

Foreign policy is an important aspect of any state. It is defined as the sum total of the principle interests and objectives, operations which a state seeks to promote through its relation with others. It has its context and its levels: domestic, regional and international. Any change in either of them will have considerable bearing on the context and nature of foreign policy. In this regard, modern Iran has experienced numerous ups and downs in the "operational environments"[1] of foreign policy. Fall of Shah ended the formal ties between Iran and Israel, but the geopolitical interests of both Iran and Israel remained the same. Due to these shared interests, diplomatic channels between the two countries was not closed completely. Animosity towards Israel has become one of the main hard lining tenets in the revolutionary rhetoric, which makes it hard to erase altogether. Khatami with his pro-reform agenda has tried to separate the anti- American and anti- Israeli flags[2] to make some headway.

Despite the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and reinvention of Islamic identity for Iran by Khomeini, the regional equations remain unchanged including the common threats for Iran. These threats for Israel are also same, but "worldview added an ideological dimension to Iran's foreign policy, which was further fueled by the religious bloc's failure to view Iran as a state. Rather, the clerics initially defined their allies and enemies based on their respective perspectives on Islam."[3] Interestingly, Arab neighbours were not supportive of Iran and Khomeini regime due to his policy of 'exporting revolution' and Khomeini's desire of Iran as powerful regional power. Some like Saudi Arabia found themselves comfortable with the Shi'I brand of Islam. It is also because of "Iran's challenge to the existing political systems among the Arab states was particularly troubling for the Arab kingdoms with strong ties to Washington, whose form of Islam was branded "American Islam" by Khomeini."[4] Revolutionary Iran was also feeling insecure because of the powerful Sunni regime in

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[1] *See* Michael Brecher (1974), *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy*, London: Oxford University Press.

[2] David Menashri(2006), "Iran, Israel and Middle East Conflict," *Israel Affairs*, Vol.12,No.1, January, p.120.

[3] Shireen Hunter (1990), *Iran and the World: Continuity in the Revolutionary Decade,* Indiana University Press, *p.* 36.

[4] Trita parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and United States*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p 93.

Arab states with sizeable Shi'I population like Bahrain, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia due to Iran close proximity with Shi'I population of these countries.

In between Egypt lost its leadership role in the Arab world and was shunned by the Arab states after signing the Camp David Accord with Israel. But Khomeini took the advantage of the opportunity to win legitimacy in the Arab world by rejecting Sadat's offer and by accusing Cairo of betraying the Palestinians[5] By May 1980, Iran had ended all its relations with Egypt. As a result situation changed in the West Asia due to emerging Iran and its changed role in regional politics. Most of the Arab countries became skeptical of Iranian intentions, and pan-Arab threat to Iran had been replaced with an Islamic and a specifically Shi'I Islamic threat to the Arabs. Iran made no distinction between Washington and Tel Aviv; "while the United States was the "Great Satan," Israel was "Little America."Consequently, opposition to Israel became a defining characteristic of Islamic Iran, in which the Jewish State and Zionism were seen as enemies of Islam and ideological threats to Iran's Islamic identity."[6]

The death of Khomeini was watershed in Iranian foreign policy as it coincided with several dynamic changes at different levels of foreign policy. It predictably brought commensurate change and shift in the courses of Iranian foreign policy. Besides the transition from cold war to an uncertain new world order appeared unpredictable for Iran. Because, this worldwide transition coincided with significant changes in the domestic arena of Iran and its neighborhood. Since the death of its spiritual founding father in 1989, dramatic changes at domestic, regional and international levels naturally produced the impetus for a thorough re- thinking of Iran's foreign policy assumption and norms of conduct. In order to respond to these changes of paramount significance, the post Khomeini leadership demonstrated a perceptible turnaround from the revolutionary romanticism and rhetoric. Besides, there emerged a gradual positive shift in the forces of political coalition, readjustment of political alignment and discernible changes in public attitude and reaction.

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Interview with a prominent Iranian reformist strategist,March 2, 2004,Washington,D.C. Quoted in Trita parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and United States*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p 83.

The transformation started surfacing with the assumption of leadership by Rafsanjani, who launched the process of withdrawal of radical and revolutionary commitment and pragmatically pushed Iran into the anti Iraq group in the wake of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. This not only displayed a noticeable shift in approach but also resulted into a steady improvement of Iran's international image. Itself, the most pertinent question is whether the Islamic revolution can adapt to the global changes and to what extent and how? Can it survive the ideological geopolitics and institution constraints? Because, all these possess considerable potential to reduce the horizon of ongoing policy changes and may preempt the process eventually.

In this context, a smooth transition requires Iran to balance its constructive opportunities and difficulties. The leadership needs to be continuously vigilant and flexible in order to steer the process of changes in consonance with the changes in the positive direction. In the arena of Foreign policy, the new regime is required to examine and re orient its policy vis a vis the gulf states. In this regard, the Islamic regime has demonstrated a considerable degree of maturity and reliability in the crisis triggered by Iraqi expansionism. This marked shift from the turbulent hostage diplomacy of the previous decade and once again showed Iran's potential for the stability in the region. The posture of 'positive neutrality' made significant headway, as the US- Iraq crisis had an enlightening impact on the US policy of 'dual containment'. Instead of the revolutionary slogans of "Death of Sheikhdom" and "export of revolution", the post Khomeini regime, voiced the goals of creating a "Common Gulf House" and "Gulf without Enemies". "Iran's Arab option did not emerge out of the ideological musings of Iran's Islamic revolutionaries, but out of Iran's new-found position as the region's preeminent power under the Shah. The sustainability of this role required Arab acceptance of Iran's position of preeminence, which could only be won through a tilt in Iran's foreign policy towards the Arabs and against Israel."[7]

"Ayatollah Khomeini may be gone, but the oppressive and tyrannical system he invented and installed in Iran is still very much alive. The ease, with which he lied about his plans for the country, deceiving both the West and his own people, remains a dark inheritance of the regime. The most alarming evidence of this is that Iran

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[7] Trita Parsi (2006), "Israel and the Origins of Iran's Arab Option: Dissection of a Strategy Misunderstood", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 2, p. 494.

successfully hid its nuclear program until 2002."[8] It is also important to know that the current nuclear program was born nearly 50 years ago with the full consent and support of United States, not only endorsed but encouraged by Washington. But now there is a fundamental belief in U.S. administration that Iran cannot be constructive actor in terms of ensuring stable, peaceful and secure West Asia. Even it is hard to change the unsavory behavior of the Islamic Republic. This is mainly due to the Iran's support to the international terrorist organizations.In fact the former Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati stated in 1999 that all our friends and enemies knew perfectly well that Iran was the supporter of the Hamas and the Hezbollah in their struggle against Israel.[9]

This was the period when Iran's international orientation went through steady changes and towards pragmatism but in case of Israel, Iranian policies remain uncompromising and self defeating more or less. While Israel's policy toward Iran, was reaction to the Iran's offensive attitude. During this period Israel maintained its relations with United States and avoided itself from complete isolation in the region as well as in the International scenario. While Iran isolated in the region as well as in international politics with a role deficit. Israel tried to form 'new periphery' to outflank Iran. During this period Israel realized that, it is necessary for it to dominate the region militarily in order to avoid any future damage to the Jewish State. Israel understood that it is impossible for Israel to get a voluntary acceptance in the region so military edge in comparison to the military might of the entire region is required. The period of Rafsanjani and Khatami may be described as period of reintegration of Iran in the international system. The tenure of two famous personalities of Iran as president was successful in many ways, especially in foreign policy to develop cordial relations with the regional actors except Israel.

The tumultuous presidency of Ahmadinejad is somehow responsible for increasing offensiveness in the Iran-Israel relations. Ahmadinejad, who was elected on a platform of economic justice and clean government, has rather used foreign policy to alleviate the growing frustration with his rule. At the same time the hawkish

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[8] Alireza Jaferzadeh (2007). *The Iranian Threat: President Ahmadinejad & the Coming Nuclear Crisis*, Newyork: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 39.
[9] *Jomhuri-ye Islami*, April 4, 1999, quoted in David Menashri (2007), "Iran's Regional Policy: Between Radicalism and Pragmatism", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No.2, p. 160.

attitude of Israel and United States toward Iran, has paid good dividend to Ahmadinejad on the domestic front.

The bilateral tensions in the recent years reached to such stage that Israel even threatened to attack Iran. On the other side Officials in Jordan, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries have warned of an emerging "Shia crescent" stretching from Iran through Iraq into Lebanon and have issued veiled threats that they might support Sunnis against Shia in Iraq if Iran does not back down. Some observers have speculated about the possibility of an alliance between moderate Arab states and Israel, Turkey and the United States against Iran. Indeed, many now believe that a military confrontation between the United States and Iran is likely, perhaps even inevitable. "Every June has come and gone without a shot being fired. This does not mean, of course, that Unites States, or Israel will never attack. However, it does suggest that there are obstacles in the way."[10] The strained relationship between Iran and Israel is also due to the historical animosity of Iran with Israel and West since its Islamic revolution. But the economic conditions of Iran continue to constrain Iran's aggressive behavior while political compulsions restraining Israel to go all offensive. Despite moderate economic growth during the Rafsanjani and Khatami, unemployment remains high and living standards remain somewhat lower than at their pre-revolutionary peak some 30 years ago, fueling popular discontent. The reformist in Iran are lacking with institutional resources and political power to bring any sort of positive change in foreign policy outlook of Iran.

Foreign relation in Iran is under the Supreme leader, even matters related to foreign affairs was absent in Ahmadinejad's campaign. But now Ahmadinejad's foreign affairs has become hall mark of his administration. He has changed the Iran's position from that of a defendant to that of a prosecutor. Ahmadinejad is a strong defender of Iran's right to enrich Uranium and develop Nuclear energy for peaceful purpose, and he is also trying to prove himself as a staunch supporter of Palestinian cause against Israel. Yet these policies of Ahmadinejad are having remote relevance to the common people and their needs. "On the Palestinian issue by offering aid and comfort to Hamas and Hezbollah. And organizing a bizarre conference on "A World without Zionism" in October 2003 and an even stranger gathering on "Review of the

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[10] Richard W. Bulliet (2007), "Iran between East and West", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No.2, p. 1.

Holocaust: A Global Vision" in December 2006, he has tried to enhance the Iran's leadership status in the Muslim world."[11]

Self-reliance and technical independence are among the main slogans of the radicals, and Ahmadinejad and others in his camp constantly emphasize the importance of scientific and technological accomplishments as a way to enhance Iran's regional and international status. "Israelis are understandably appalled by President Ahmadinejad's belittling of the Holocaust and denial of their right to a Jewish State in the Middle East." [12] The stretching Shia might from Iran to Iraq to Syria to Lebanon is not a threat to Israel but also to the Sunni regimes in the region. Yet "denying Israel's legitimacy, raising questions about the Holocaust and disparaging Jews, the Idea that a non-Arab country that is geographically distant and has no recent history of anti-Semitism represents an unprecedented threat lacks rational credibility"[13]

Israel has three principal concerns regarding Iran in the region. Firstly, Iran is one of the states which is participating and supporting International terrorism i.e. Hamas and Hezbollah. Secondly, Iran is one of the key states which remain resistant in opposition to forging a just peace between Arabs and Israelis. Thirdly, Iran is in the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and alleged its nuclear program. All these concerns are important for Israel due to Iran's tough attitude towards Israel and it considered Israel an illegitimate entity and running dog of U.S. imperialism.

The opinion among scholars on Iran's nuclear programme is divided,while some do not consider Iran's nuclear program as a threat to West Asian peace, stability and security, others fear an inevitable horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. Kenneth Waltz is one of the prominent neorealists, who do not consider nuclear proliferation as a problem. According to him, "'proliferation' means to spread like wild fire. We have had nuclear military capability for over fifty years, and we have a total of nine militarily capable nuclear states. That's hardly proliferation, that is, indeed a glacial spread. If another country gets nuclear weapons, and if it does so for

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[11] Jahangir Amuzegar (2007), "The Ahmadinejad Era: Preparing for the Apocalypse", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No.2, p. 48.
[12] Richard W. Bulliet (2007), "Iran between East and West", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No.2, p. 1.
[13] Ibid, p. 12.

good reasons, then that is not a great worry."[14] Waltz believes that whoever will have the nuclear weapons will behave with the caution and moderation. Contrary while Scott Sagan believe that nuclear weapons are not controlled by states. They are not controlled by the statesman. "They are managed by imperfect, normal human being inside imperfect, normal organization."[15] There is a concern that nuclear capabilities will make the nuclear state more offensive and aggressive. There is also the problem of terrorist theft sales of nuclear weapons and technology to the terrorist with the state like Iran since Iran is also supporting terrorist organization in the West Asian region. "After the end of the Cold War and the defeat of Iraq in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the strategic consideration that had put Iran and Israel on the same geopolitical side in the latter part of the twentieth century evaporated. Israel feared that Israel's strategic weight would suffer if Iran emerged as the undisputed power in the Middle East, Israeli politicians began painting the regime in Tehran as fanatical and irrational."[16]

All the same, for the Iranian President Ahmadinejad, the nuclear crisis is a mean to a political end, nothing more, nothing less. He is presenting himself a sole champion of Iranian national interests.[17] The Iranian leadership under Ahmadinejad is projecting itself as the most trustworthy guardian of Palestinian, rather than supporting peace. Iran seeks destruction of Israel and its replacement by Islamic Palestine. Whereas Israel is allegedly planning to destroy Iranian nuclear sites as also it did on Iraq in the early 1980s. However, any sort of new war in the region will cause severe global crisis.

The American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which is a strong lobby for Israelis in United States, has relentlessly, criticized Iran and President Ahmadinejad for its alleged nuclear program. There are basically four options left with Israel in order to stop Iran from becoming a nuclear capable state. Firstly, Israel can attack Iran and can use its military capability to retard or to stop Iran but this

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[14] Kenneth Waltz (2007), "A Nuclear Iran: Promoting Stability or Courting Disaster?" in a debate among Scott Sagan, Kenneth Waltz, & Richard Betts in *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No.2, p. 136.

[15] Scott Sagan (2007), "A Nuclear Iran: Promoting Stability or Courting Disaster?" in a debate among Scott Sagan, Kenneth Waltz, & Richard Betts in *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No.2, p. 136.

[16] Trita Parsi (2007), *Treacherous Alliance: the Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and the United States*, New HaveN & London: Yale University Press, p. 2.

[17] Ali M. Ansari (2007), *Iran Under Ahmadinejad: The Politics of Confrontation*, London: Adelphi Paper 393, IISS, p. 50.

method will embolden the Iranian reputation and leadership in West Asian region. Israel can use diplomatic method which will not only help in gaining goodwill in the international arena. It can isolate Iran by using this method. This is the method that Israel appears to be using at present. Third option involves regime change. This method can only take place with the help of United States but this will make the Ahmadinejad popular among Iranians. The last resort to Israel is to accommodate with nuclear Iran, which though poses an existential threat to Israel. But "Israel also has a long-standing interest in not being the prime actor in efforts to retard by force or diplomacy or destroy the Iranian nuclear program."[18] Although, for Israel nuclear weapons in the hands of the theocratic regime in Tehran that sponsors terrorism in the region will undermine the security of the Israel in the region.

Although signatory of the NPT, Iran is allegedly involved in secret nuclear program since mid 1980s. This remains an enduring source of concern not only for the U.S. as well as Israel, but also for all West Asian states. There is also the possibility of direct military confrontation between Iran and Israel under two conditions. In the first case, if Israel attacks Iran's nuclear installation facility. In second case, if any terrorist attack takes place against Israel either by Hezbollah or Hamas with the help of Iran, the second situation will definitely bring both the non-Arab state to the verge of military confrontation. The mutual suspicion and hostility between Iran and Israel is due to the facts that Iran does not recognize the state of Israel and on the other side Israel insists on maintaining its nuclear monopoly. Iran's nuclear aspirations cannot be addressed in isolation from Israel's nuclear capabilities.

"Iran's wholly militarises nuclear program poses the gravest threat to the world in the new millennium. Ahmadinejad's mission is to give the mullahs their first nuclear bomb at any cost, and his mission is well underway."[19] Most of the countries in the world are unhappy with Iran's alleged nuclear programme. France, Germany, and Russia etc. all counties are against violation of Nuclear Proliferation. Even China

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[18] Geoffrey Aronson (2006), "Israel and Strategic Implications of an Iranian Nuclear Weapon Option," in *Iran's Nuclear Programme: Realities and Repurcussions,* Abu Dhabi: ECSSR, p. 111.

[19] Alireza Jaferzadeh (2007). *The Iranian Threat: President Ahmadinejad & the Coming Nuclear Crisis,* Newyork: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 155.

has showed its concern but favours diplomatic means to solve the crisis. "Iran must be made aware of the benefits of cooperation and the grave costs of confrontation, and it must see this from all angles, not only from the West"[20]

Domestic instability, regional conflicts, and penetration by global powers are not the only causes, but also the consequence of this fractured region. Unsuccessful peace attempts between Israel and Palestine together increased violence between them, have heightened the tensions in the West Asian region, apart from impeling some states to acquire chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, which in turn increase the risk of military confrontation, particularly between Iran and Israel.

It is often argued by some scholars and area specialist that "diplomacy offered the preferred solution to the ongoing standoff over Iran's nuclear programme, if pursued with a degree of urgency and seriousness; it might yet offer a modest prospect of success."[21] The military option cannot work without taking Iranian people into confidence. It can only work when people of Iran begin to realise, that nuclear Iran is also not in their national interest and then, regime change can take place from within rather than being externally induced as in the case of Iraq.

To conclude, Iran's external policy behavior is conditioned as much by the developments in the regional systemic environment as its domestic political and ideological factors, and even idiosyncrasies of the key decision makers. A brief study of its interactions with Israel since the 1979 revolution reveals that, its offensive behavior is organically linked to the Shiite messianism, whereas its defensive response have been conditioned by imperatives of realpolitik and pragmatism of leadership. In the backdrop of such peculiarities it is safe to conclude that this pattern of Iran-Israel relations will continue to sometime regardless of whether the crisis over its nuclear programme is settled or not.

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[20] George Perkovich (2006), "Iran's Nuclear Program After mthe 2005 Elections," *in Iran's Nuclear Programme: Realities and Repurcussions,* Abu Dhabi: ECSSR, p. 61.

[21] Patrick Clawson and Michael Eisenstadt (2008), "Halting Iran's Nuclear Programme: The Military Option", Survival, Vol. 50, No. 5, October-November, p. 18.

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