

**IRAN'S STRUGGLE FOR POWER:
A SENSE OF VULNERABILITY OR REGIONAL HEGEMONY?
1991-2006**

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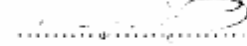
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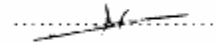
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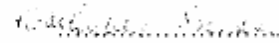
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Dedication

*To my beloved country, my parents and my husband, all of whom
are the source of my achievements and success.*

May God protect all.

Acknowledgement

First, I praise Allah the Almighty and the most highly praised for his blessings and for granting me the insight, strength and resilience to finish this thesis in the best manner possible. Second, I would like to express my deep gratitude for my beloved country, for believing in the potential of its students, for being so generous and supportive, facilitating my pursuit of higher education and professional knowledge, and especially, believing in the potential of Saudi women. In addition, I thank the University of Jordan represented by all members of its administrations, for their cooperation and for making my study at the Department of International Studies an enriching and beneficial experience.

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LIST OF CONTENTS

Subject	Page
Committee Decision.....	II
Dedication.....	III
Acknowledgement.....	IV
List of Contents.....	V
List of Tables.....	VII
List of Maps and Diagrams.....	VIII
List of Abbreviation.....	IX
Abstract (in English).....	XII
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: The Literature On The Iranian Struggle for power and the Nuclear Program.....	16
1.1.The Criteria For Selecting Different Schools Of Thoughts.....	16
1.2.The Predominant Variables Affecting the Iranian Realistic Quest for Power.....	17
The Security School.....	17
The Ideology School.....	20
The Economy School.....	23
The Nationalism School.....	27
1.3.The Secondary Variables Affecting the Iranian Struggle for Power.....	28
The Competition Between the Conservatives and the Reformists.....	29
The Nuclear Program As A Mean of Distraction From Domestic Problems.....	30
The Nuclear Program As An Indication of The Rise of A Regional Power.....	30
Revisionist Policy and Decrease of Political Influence as Variables Affecting Iran's... Foreign Policy.	31
Rationality as a Variable Affecting Iran's Foreign Policy.....	31
1.4.Positive Aspects And Limitations of The Interpretations of the Literature Iranian Foreign Policy.....	33
Chapter Two: Iran's Motives for Power Struggle:	39
2.1. Iran's Political and Ideological Motives.....	45
2.2. Iran's Economic Motives.....	53
2.3. Iran's Security Motives.....	60
2.3.1. The Role of History in Shaping the Iranian Concept of Security.....	62
2.4. Iran's Goals: Quest for Hegemony, Economic Influence and Prestige.....	66
Conclusion.....	72
Chapter Three: Iran's National Power.....	73
3.1.Elements Of National Power:.....	77
3.1.1.Tangible Elements of Iran's National Power:.....	79
3.1.1.1.Geopolitics.....	79

The Influence of Geopolitics on Iran's Security.....	84
3.1.1.2. Demography.....	87
3.1.1.3. Economy and Natural Resources.....	92
3.1.1.3.1. Iran's Economic Policy.....	99
3.1.1.4. Industry.....	112
3.1.1.5. Military Capabilities.....	116
3.1.2. Intangible Elements of Iran's National Power:.....	130
3.1.2.1. Iran's Political System.....	131
3.1.2.2. Iran's Ideological System of Beliefs.....	134
3.1.2.3. The Quality of Foreign Policy: The Duality of the Iranian Security Strategy.....	143
3.1.2.3.1. The Duality of the Foreign Policy: A Historical Background.....	145
3.1.2.3.2. The Duality of the Foreign Policy During the Early 1990s.....	147
3.1.2.3.3. Iran's Foreign Policy 1990-1997.....	149
3.1.2.4.1. Iran's Regional Foreign Policy: Links to Resistance and Terrorist Groups.....	154
3.1.2.4.2. Iran's Regional Foreign Policy: Influence in Afghanistan.....	157
3.1.2.4.3. Iran's Regional Foreign Policy: Manipulation in Iraq.....	160
3.1.2.4.4. Iran's Regional Foreign Policy: Connection to Shiites Political Parties in Iraq.....	167
3.1.2.4.5. Iran's Regional Foreign Policy: Connection to Kurdish Groups.....	168
3.1.2.4.6. Iran's Regional Foreign Policy: Iran's Alliance with Syria and Resistant Groups In Lebanon.....	170
3.1.2.5.1. International Foreign Policy: Russia and Influence through Economy.....	176
3.1.2.5.2. International Foreign Policy: Improving Relations with Europe, Caspian States Pakistan and India Through Energy Concessions.....	179
3.1.2.6. Political Leadership.....	182
3.1.2.7. Nationalism.....	189
Conclusion.....	192
Chapter Four: Iran's Nuclear Program.....	194
4.1. Nuclear Power As Deterrence.....	194
4.2. The Rationale Behind Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.....	196
4.3. Iran's Position Concerning Its Nuclear Program.....	202
4.3.1. Iranian Public Opinion Regarding the Nuclear Program.....	204
4.4. The Implications of the Iranian Nuclear Program on Both the International and regional Arenas.....	208
4.4.1. The United States and the Iranian Nuclear Program.....	209
4.4.2. The European's Position Regarding the Iranian Nuclear Program.....	215
4.4.3. Russia's Position Regarding the Nuclear Program.....	216
4.4.4. Turkey's Position Regarding the Nuclear Program.....	217
4.4.5. The Arab Countries Position Regarding the Nuclear Program.....	219
Conclusion.....	224
Conclusion.....	226
References.....	233
Abstract (in Arabic).....	253

LIST OF TABLES

NUMBER	TABLE TITLE	PAGE
1	Iran's Population Component.	88
2	Elements Of Interaction Between Iran and Its Neighbors.	91
3	Top World Oil Net Exporters, 2005.	94
4	Top World Oil Producers, 2005.	95
5	Natural Gas Production.	99
6	Iranian Budget.	110
7	Iranian Social and Defense Expenditure.	111
8	Iranian Gross Domestic Product 1985-2005.	116
9	Iran's Major Weapons Desired and Acquired, 1989-2000.	127
10	Military Weapons of The Gulf States.	129
11	Iran's Military Expenditure from 1988-2004.	130

LIST OF MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

NUMBER	TITLE OF MAP AND DIAGRAM	PAGE
1	Map of Iran.	80
2	Main Battle Tanks and Aircrafts in the Region.	123
3	The Political System of Iran.	131

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
U.S.	United States
FIS	Front Islamique Du Salut
IMF	International Monetary Fund
EU	European Union
U.S.S.R	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
NPT	Nuclear Proliferation Treaty
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
WTO	World Trade Organization
NCR	National Council of Resistance
DPIK	Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan
MBA	Masters of Business Administration
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
MNCs	Multi National Corporations
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party
NLA	National Liberation Army
MEK	Mujahideen E- Khalq
CSO	Shanghi Cooperation Organization

NIOC	National Iranian Oil Company
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
NIC	Newly Industrialized Country
IRGC	Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps
LEF	Law Enforcement Forces
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council.
NSC	National Security Council.
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
UN	United Nations
SCIRI	Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radial, Nuclear
NPP	Nuclear Power Plants
ISPA	Iranian Students Polling Agency
AKP	Islamic Justice and Development Party
AA	Anti Aircraft
RFE	Radio Free Europe
RL	Radio Liberty
Tcf	Tons cubic feet
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
M	Million

Km	Kilometer
Bpd	Barrels per day

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ABSTRACT

This Thesis analyzes the Islamic Republic of Iran's struggle for power from the Second Gulf War in 1991 to 2006. It focuses on the elements and circumstances that contributed to the forging of the realistic motives that affect the making of the Iranian foreign policy, whether they be interests, security, or power, in a period of extreme regional unrest. Iran's deeply rooted belief of its importance, cultural superiority and right to exert hegemony over the Gulf region shapes the dynamics of its foreign policy, in the sense that Tehran stresses the importance of its independence by refusing all kind of external interference, while it never refrains from abrogating other states' independence through supporting terrorism and radical groups. This thesis consists of three main themes namely; Iran's motives, Iran's elements of national power, and Iran's nuclear program. By investigating Iran's motives, the elements of national power, the ascension of military expenditure, and the international and regional changes affecting the foreign policy of Iran, this thesis endeavors to prove that the Iranian nuclear program is the culmination of a realistic venture to impose regional hegemony.

This thesis interprets the various literatures that have discussed the motives shaping Iran's foreign policy and its relentless quest for power such as ideology, vulnerability, and economy. Departing from the realistic school of thought concerning the analysis of international relations, the thesis will use the analytical methods of a realistic perspective, because realism's most enduring paradigms are interests that are defined in terms of security and power.

In addition, the thesis will discuss favorable regional and international political circumstances that contribute to Iran's acceleration of pursuit of power and hegemony such as the fall of the Soviet Union and the Second Gulf War in 1991, the war in Afghanistan in 2001, and the war on Iraq in 2003. Moreover, the thesis will investigate the changes at the domestic level including change in leadership, nationalism and the rise of oil prices, which have contributed to the increase in military expenditure and encouraged Iran to adopt a realistic and pragmatic strategy to safeguard the survivability of its regime, which is foremost of Tehran's priorities.

Introduction

Much controversy has been brought forward by Iran's refusal to stop its intention of pursuing uranium and plutonium enrichment cycle claimed for peaceful purposes. Such a stance raised fears of Tehran's old quest for power and regional hegemony, which prevailed during the Bahlavi reign, in the 1970's of the 20th century, and through the Islamic revolution's doctrine of exportation of ideological revolutionary ideals in the 1980's of the same century.

In 2004, the election of ultra conservative President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad, with his anachronistic rhetoric, represented a set back of the pragmatic foreign policy adopted by Khatami during the 1990s, and further enhanced those old fears of Iran's struggle for power and regional dominance. Furthermore, the Iranian nuclear program posed many questions regarding the domestic and external factors that led Iran to relinquish its relative accommodating foreign policy adopted during the last decade. Lately, Tehran resorted to a policy of bold confrontation, which reached its pinnacle with the refusal of all the European Union proposed incentives, aiming at avoiding imposition of sanctions and military strikes by the United States, and announced its intention of advancing its highly enriched, weapons-grade uranium production.

Iran's realistic quest for power was out-dated but started to accelerate in 1991 with figures indicating a continuous rise of military expenditure from 1.9 billion dollars in 1991 to nine billion dollars in 2005.¹ Regardless of the insecurities evoked by the massive American presence in the region, Iran emerged as the only winner in the absence of a major

¹ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, (2006). The SIPRI Military Expenditure Data Base. www.sipri.org

regional power resulting from the elimination of two of its bitter enemies: Saddam's regime in Iraq and the Taliban in Afghanistan. Moreover, the disintegration of the Soviet Union relieved Iran from the burden of being a part of the game of the balance of power between the two world powers, the United States and the previous Soviet Union.

Relying on an ideological pillar whose major components are the spread of revolutionary ideals, embracing the Palestinian cause and the promise of "wiping Israel off the map,"¹ Tehran endeavors to establish itself as the patron of the Palestinian aspirations as means of maintaining its survivability through legitimizing its spread of ideological beliefs. On the Asian front, envisioning itself as the regional leader of the Islamic world, Iran has placed great emphasis on expanding ties with countries of the Former Soviet Union through consolidating its influence by expanding economic and cultural ties with the Central Asian Republics, particularly Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, trading religion for economic gains.

Internationally, soaring oil prices provided Tehran with the much needed income to purchase arms at cheap prices from the disintegrated states of the Soviet Union. Most importantly, high oil revenues proved efficient in securing Tehran the needed political, as well as, economic alliances and support. An emboldened Iran continues its challenge of the international community through manipulation of economic agreements and playing the financial cards with Russia, China, and the European Union, who all are in desperate need for Iran's oil and cash.

Domestically, Tehran found in nationalism and the prestige of acquiring the nuclear technology the necessary tool to distract the Iranians from growing internal discontent resulting from a continuous worsening social and economic status. Through resurrecting

¹ Fathi, Nazila, (2005), "Wipe Israel of the Map, Iranian Says," The International Herald Tribune, October 27.

the old dreams and glories of the ancient Persian Empire, the *Mullahs* of Tehran have contrived to distract their people from the fragility that jeopardizes the Islamic Revolution at its base. The Iranians are no more enchanted by the ideological discourse of the *Mullahs* of spreading the Islamic Revolutionary ideals and are more concerned with the reality of everyday life. Hence, the *Mullahs* found in using the nuclear program, and its defense under the name of nationalistic rights to development of nuclear technology, an efficient means of uniting the population against what is considered a provoked threat surrounding the Islamic Republic from all sides.

Notwithstanding domestic discontent and opposition that are aggravated by its economic and social problems, Tehran defiantly ignores international and regional calls for prudence and cooperation. By exploiting the rise in oil prices to build its military capability and attain nuclear power to intimidate neighbors, Tehran continues its interference in Arab state affairs through consolidating its new alliance with Syria, its connection to Shiites and radical groups in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, and even in Afghanistan by harboring Al Qaeda members and other escaping terrorists.

While debilitated Iran had to forsake its nationalist foreign policy in the early 1990's, the high oil revenues encouraged Tehran to use nationalistic derives to procure nuclear technology, by benefiting from the power vacuum created by the American's debacles in Iraq and Afghanistan. The prospect of acquirement of nuclear capability jeopardizes the whole region and engages the Arab countries in an arms race, threatening of putting the already inflamed region into combustion.

Major Theoretical Approaches of International Relations and Power.

Daugherty and Pfaltzgraf (1996) consider Frederick S. Dunn's definition of international relations as "*the actual relations that take place across national boundaries, or as the body of knowledge which we have of those relations at any given time*" as insufficient.¹ Both scholars contend that relationships between and among all actors- states, non-state, international and transnational- should all be studied in order to understand the political phenomena. Defining international politics as "*the effort of one state, or other international actor, to influence in some way another state, or other international actor,*"² would lead us to question the kind of power which the state or the actor needs in order to exercise and achieve such an influence.

Two major political approaches, Liberalism and Realism, gained dominance over theories of International Relations in explaining how states forge their foreign policy and the motives that govern their conduct with other states. These two schools differ fundamentally in their conception of man's nature and the interaction between man, society and politics, besides their level of analysis, and their scope of inquiry.³

The Liberal school asserts that a rational universal order that is based on idealistic principles can be achieved through cooperation between individuals and groups. Moreover, it assumes the goodness of human nature and attributes the recurrence of wars to deprivations, lack of education and effective social institutions.⁴

¹ Dourgherty, James E. and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. (1997). **Contending Theories of International Relations**, New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc. p. 17.

² Ibid, p. 18.

³ Burchill, Scott, (1996). Introduction. In: Burchill, Scott and Linklater, Andrew (Eds.), **Theories of International Relations**, (pp.28-66), London: Macmillan Press Ltd. p.17.

⁴ Morgenthau, Hanz J. (1982). A Realist Theory of International Politics. In John A. Vasquez (Ed.), **Classics of International Relations**, (pp.25-27), New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, p. 25.

Liberalists such as Francis Fukuyama see history as progressive, linear, dictating an evolutionary pattern, and reaching its ultimate destination at a liberal-capitalist democracy.¹ Moreover, liberalists believe that the elimination of war and global conflict depends on the adoption of “principles of legitimacy” evolving in certain political orders, and especially democracy.²

On the other hand, Realists assume that objective laws, which are deeply rooted in the human nature, govern world politics. Both Realists, to whom the major actor is the state, and Neo-Realists who consider the system as the major actor, contend that the world is anarchic and characterized by a struggle for power. Hence, the tendency to dominate and the opposing interests are the real causes of conflicts and wars. Morgenthau asserts that abstract moral principles cannot be applied to politics. He sees that the state has no right to let moral disapproval stand against achieving its successful political action or against its national survival. Morgenthau argues that “*prudence - the weighing of the consequences of alternative political actions - to be the supreme virtue in politics.*”³

With concentration on the state level of analysis, Realism views the ultimate aim of the state as achieving interests that are defined in terms of power. For Morgenthau, “*the mutual relations of control among the holders of public authority and between the latter and the people at large*” identify power.⁴ Robert Dahil regards power relations in a similar perspective but contends that power is determinant of the outcome in the sense that A succeeds in getting B to do something that realizes A’s own objectives.⁵

¹ Burchill, op.cit., p. 29.

² Ibid.

³ Morgenthau, op.cit., p. 26.

⁴ Ibid, p. 25.

⁵ Hanseung, Cho, (2001). “Power Distribution and Dyadic Dispute 1816-1985: Preponderant Power as Prestige of Non-decision.” St. Louis. International Studies Association Midwest Annual Meeting, p.4.

Realism asserts centrality of the power paradigm in the realistic thought by defining both international and domestic politics as “*a struggle for power*,”¹ where political power is achieved through a psychological relation of influence. Morgenthau identifies three sources for influence: “*expectation of benefits, the fears of disadvantages, the respect or love for men or institutions.*”²

Thus, the Realistic school, with its most enduring paradigm of states and systems, would be better fit in analyzing Iran’s conduct in international politics because of its primary concern with the state as a major actor striving to maximize power in an anarchic competitive system. The anarchic system, and sometimes absence of balance of power ultimately compels states to seek interests that are defined in terms of power and absolute gains. While Liberalism can analyze with more accuracy the relations between democratic and cooperative societies of the European states and other developed countries, Realism and Neo-Realism can offer a better understanding of the relations and politics of the Middle Eastern states, where security and survival are the primary concerns.

The Importance of this Study.

This study intends to enlighten the reader about Iran’s real ambitions and the motives behind its procurement of nuclear power through investigating whether Iran’s struggle for power since 1991 is motivated by a sense of vulnerability or by a realistic quest for power and regional hegemony. Through considering the motives behind Iran’s acceleration of power whose evident culmination is the nuclear program, and the elements of Iran’s

¹ Morgenthau, A **Realist Theory of International Relations**, op. cit., p.25.

² Ibid, p.25.

national power, the study suggests that a set of favorable, systematic as well as domestic changes animated Iran's old ambitions of regional hegemony.

The Purpose of the Study.

This study attempts to achieve answers to the following questions:

- § What are Iran's cores that drive Tehran's behavior toward escalation and confrontations, disregarding accommodation? (Ideology, survivability of Iranian political system).
- § How is the neo-conservative government in Iran using nationalism to compensate for the demise of Islamic politics?
(The rise of nationalism through the development of the nuclear program).
- § What are the geopolitical international and regional changes that encourage Iran to pursue regional power? (Fall of Soviet Union, war in Afghanistan, war in Iraq, Central Asia, oil prices, The Emirates Islands).
- § What are the effective measures needed to counter the Iranian attempts at imposing regional hegemony?

The Conceptual Frame Work.

Many Arabs, Americans, Europeans and Iranians themselves tried to explain Iran's behavior regarding the pursuit of nuclear technology. Yet, all emphasized one or two perspectives each according to their choices. Some highlighted Ideology, others economy, and most emphasized Iran's sense of encirclement and increased vulnerability boosted by the American presence in Afghanistan, central Asia, and the Gulf. This study suggests that although, security is a key variable explaining the inconsistency in Iran's foreign policy, quest for power and influence appears paramount.

The disagreement in the literature over key perspectives that motivate Iran's quest for power raises question over which factor or set of variables induce Iran's quest. The study will investigate and highlight a set of different ideological, political, economical, regional, and global variants that made Iran defy the international community to the extent of refusing European incentives and showing indifference to the prospects of imposed sanctions and preventive attacks on its nuclear facilities.

The absence of balance of power after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the elimination of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and Saddam's regime in Iraq freed Iran of substantial threats. Moreover, the boost in oil prices provided Iran with the instrument needed to consolidate its connection to resistant groups in Palestine and Lebanon, strengthen its influence on Shiite Muslims in Iraq, and invigorate its economic relations with China and Russia, all of which provided Tehran with much needed maneuverability. By using these bargaining chips, Tehran can exert influence, not only in the Middle East and the Gulf, but also on Turkey, Central Asia and the Caspian Sea.

The occupation of the three islands of the Emirates, the undertaking of military maneuvers in the Gulf as a show of force, as well as its attempts to gain Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and nuclear capabilities are all variants that will be interwoven in an analytical construct to prove Iran's expansionist intentions.

Hypothesis of the Study:

Although a sense of insecurity is an important motive, Iran's acceleration of its power quest since 1991 is motivated by a combination of political changes and by a realistic quest for power and regional hegemony.

Independent variables:

- § The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.
- § The ousting of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001.
- § The ousting of Saddam regime in Iraq in 2003.
- § Iran's growing ties with Shiite Muslims in Iraq, Hizbollah in Lebanon, Hamass in Palestine, Syria, China and Russia.
- § The American debacle in Iraq.
- § The soaring oil prices.
- § The domestic changes and the rise of nationalism in Iran.

Dependent Variable: Iran's acceleration of its quest for power and nuclear capability.

Definitions, Measurement and Operational Use Of The Concepts.

Concepts to be defined are key concepts of the Realism school: **power**, **motives**, and **hegemony**.

Maire A. Dugan defines **Power** as "the capacity to influence others' behavior, to get others to do what challengers want, rather than what the initial parties themselves want"¹

Louis Kriesberg definition of **power** is "from the position of a party in conflict: "A conflict party has three basic ways to induce adversaries to move toward the position it desires: it may try to persuade, coerce, or reward the opponents."²

Joseph Nye's definition of co-optive **power** is "the ability to shape what others want"¹

¹ Dugan, Maire A. (2003). "Power." **The Conflict Resolution Information Source**.

² Ibid.

Hegemony: “is the dominance of one group over other groups, with or without the threat of force.”²

According to Mearsheimer’s theory of Offensive Realism, states are not satisfied with a given amount of power and they seek hegemony for security. Recognizing the difficulty of becoming a global hegemon, he believes that state seek regional hegemony and endeavor to prevent other states from becoming regional hegemon.³

Gramsci’s definition of hegemony emphasizes the national level of dominance. For him, hegemony involves intellectual and moral leadership in the sense that a group dominates antagonistic groups and dictates the terms of trade and cultural perspectives to its advantage in a way leading to the empowerment of certain cultural beliefs and values.⁴

Iran’s National Power (Measurements).

According to Gregory Treverton and Seth Jones, “*state power can be conceived at three levels: the level of resources or capabilities, also known as power-in-being, the level of power conversion through national processes, and the level of power in outcomes, by which we refer to a state’s tendency to prevail in particular circumstances.*”⁵ Policy makers care most about power in outcomes which depend on how the power manifests itself and against whom the power is exercised.

¹ Nye, Joseph S. (1990). “Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of World Power.” **Political Science Quarterly**. Vol. 106. No. 2. pp. 177-192.

² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hegemony>, Hegemony.

³ Mearsheimer, John. (2001). **The Tragedy of Great Politics**. New York: W. W: Norton, p. 42.

⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hegemony>, Hegemony.

⁵ Jones, Seth and Gregory Treverton (2005). “Measuring Power, How to Predict Future Balances,” **Harvard International Review**, Vol.27. No. 2.

National Power is measured by capabilities such as the gross domestic product (GDP), the demographics, the economy, technology, defense and military spending.¹ In this thesis, military capabilities are considered the most important and are measured by the defense budget, air, naval and ground force capabilities and spending.

The second level of power is measured by the national performance, derived from the external pressures facing a country and the efficiency of its institutions, which this thesis explores when dealing with how the Iranian government responds to crises and regional disputes through the exploration of the quality of the Iranian foreign policy.

The third level is measured by the states ability to use strategic resources and convert them into an effective coercive power, which in the end constitutes the national power of the state, represented by the Iranian manipulation of proxy groups and connection to radical groups to distract the international community from its nuclear program.

All of these power variables are going to be examined to set the criterion to measure Tehran's quest and to predict future behavior through exposing the Iranians' manipulation of domestic, as well as external, elements to enhance their influence and achieve regional hegemony.

Time Period.

This study examines the Iranian foreign policy and its struggle for power from the Second Gulf War in 1991 up to 2006 and contemplates the Iranians' responses to following major regional and international geopolitical changes to expose how the Iranians were building up military forces and endeavoring to achieve nuclear power as means of achieving regional

¹ Jones and Treverton, op.cit.

hegemony. The researcher will refer to earlier events to give clear depiction of certain incidents and go well beyond the explanations of these incidents if she finds it is necessary for the study.

Methodology.

This thesis uses the descriptive and analytical approaches and refers to historical events whenever it is necessary. The subject of Iran's realistic struggle for power entails the discussion of the variables forging Tehran's foreign policy and its quest for hegemony. An analytical construct comprising basic components of the Realistic school such as power, security, interests, balance of power and deterrence, will be applied and compounded to better depict the interwoven global, regional and domestic, elements that propel Iran's acceleration of military power. An exposition of the Realistic school, with emphasis on a certain definition of power, is going to be tested in comparison, or according to Iran's national capabilities. The thesis will consider both the tangible and intangible elements of Iran's power that enhance its disposition toward imposing itself as a regional power such as its geography, demography, economy, natural resources, industry, and military capabilities. Among the intangible elements of power are Iran's political system, the role of ideology, the quality of its foreign policy, political leadership, and nationalism, all of which play pivotal roles in enhancing Iran's sense of aggrandizement and superiority.

Introducing a foreign policy analysis from a realistic perspective entails providing a systematic level of analysis as well as state and individual level of analysis. This thesis will use a descriptive, analytical approaches while investigating the duality aspect of the Iranian foreign policy through exposing the conflicting forces from within. In addition, the thesis

will use empirical data to accentuate Iran's elements of national power and reveal the increase in military expenditure from 1991 to 2005.

While some stress the important role which religious ideology and nationalism play in Iran's regional and international relations, this ideology-oriented perception alone cannot explain Iran's recent strategic choices. The security oriented analysts claim that Iran's vulnerability and sense of insecurity increased with the American presence in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Gulf. Being listed in the Bush Doctrine, outlined in the American National Security Strategy of 2002, as an axis of evil along with North Korea and Iraq, analyst claim that Iran's fear was aroused with the prospect of being the next target in Bush's new doctrine of preemption.

However, such security concentrated analysis seems valid but insufficient to explain why Iran is not choosing a strategy of cooperation with the Europeans in its nuclear file, as it did with the Americans at Bonne Conference in 2001, American invasion into Iraq in 2003, and its insistence to continue its plutonium enrichment program, regardless of the luscious incentives presented to it. There is a need to explain the course of events and evaluate different accounts and arguments of these events represented in the studies of various political figures and strategic analysts. This thesis will refer to primary resources and secondary resources, such as books, periodicals, newspapers, and internet articles from major international relations websites.

Structure of the Thesis.

Chapter One of the thesis is devoted to the literature concerning the major variables affecting Iranian foreign policy, and the notable schools analyzing the motives behind

Iran's quest for nuclear power namely: the security school, the ideology school, the economy school, and the nationalism school. On the other hand, the secondary variables are discussed by authors who considered them as minor and supplementary to the predominant ones. These variables range from rationality, political competition, realistic pursuit of power and the use of the nuclear program as a distraction. At the end of the chapter, both positive aspects and the limitations of the arguments are exposed to show that the secondary variable plus the combination of systematic and domestic changes are the real motivators behind Iran's quest for power.

Chapter Two begins by defining the term motive, before analyzing the political as ideological system of values that are major pillars propelling both Iran's motives and goals. Elaborate and detailed definitions by different authors are introduced in order to highlight the mechanism that brings together the concepts of motives, interests, and power in a manner leading to the imposition of regional dominance. In addition, the chapter investigates the role, which ideology, economy and security play in shaping Tehran's choices regarding both its foreign and domestic policies. At the end of the chapter, definitions of interests, objectives and hegemony are introduced alongside the exposition of Iran's set of goals of expansionism, regional hegemony, as well as, prestige and economic influence.

Chapter Three is the backbone of the thesis in which an elaborate discussion of the concept of power is introduced before exposing the most tangible and intangible elements of Iran's national power. Elements such as geography, demography, natural resources, economy, technology, and military capabilities are considered the most distinct of the tangible attributes of Iran. On the other hand, the role of leadership, nationalism and the quality of foreign policy, alongside alliances potentials are revealed as the intangible and

psychological components of the Iranian power. By virtue of its elements of national power, especially the military ones, Iran is disposed to be a regional hegemon that uses the nuclear power to compensate for the deficiency of its some of its military capabilities brought by the war with Iraq and the subsequent international sanctions.

Chapter Four begins by introducing nuclear power as deterrence in the theory of balance of power, which is a major concept of the Realistic school, and exposes the rationale behind the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Then, exposition of Iran's position and Iranian public opinion are introduced along side the implications of its nuclear program on both regional and international arenas. This chapter also discusses the United States' position, as well as, the Europeans, Turkish and the Arab positions regarding the nuclear program.

Finally, the conclusion refutes Iran's claims of the peaceful orientation of its nuclear program and proposes some recommendations regarding nuclear technology.

CHAPTER ONE

The Literature on the Iranian Struggle for Power and the Nuclear Program

Much literature has been generated by the latest development concerning Iran's nuclear program and its implication on the region's stability. Scholars, politicians, and journalists have engaged in deep scrutiny and analyses over Iran's old and new politics, which were subject to constant change beginning in 1991. The latest setback represented by the conservatives' resurgence to power and their quest for nuclear capabilities, urged analysts to readdress the changes, both at the domestic and international levels.

In this chapter, the literature will be divided into two parts representing the major schools of thoughts concerning the predominant variables and the secondary variables motivating Iran's foreign policy and its accelerated quest for power. The predominant variables and their writers will be classified into four schools namely; the security school, the ideology school, the economy and the nationalism school. Consequently, these schools will be discussed throughout the analysis by the writers of each school of the major factors affecting Tehran's foreign policy. In the second part, the secondary variables represented in the analysis of diverse strategists will be exposed. Both the positives as well as the limitations of those arguments will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

1.1. The Criteria for Selecting Different Schools of Thoughts.

Different analysts identified different variables while investigating Tehran's late defiant stance. Most of them stressed the change in the security environment and security constraints; others over emphasized ideology and the economy; and few considered

nationalism. While most of the writers discuss the same variables, they differ in the importance that they attach to each variable. Therefore, the criterion according to which schools and writers are divided is based on the level of importance the group of writers attaches to each variable.

1.2. The Predominant Variables Affecting the Iranian Realistic Quest for Power.

The following discussion deals with the major schools, which analyzed the factors shaping Tehran's foreign policy and its latest inclination toward achieving regional hegemony. The Security school includes Abtehi, Youssefi, Kemp, Hinnebusch, Ehteshami, Fathi, Rubin, and Brookes. The Ideology school encompasses Halliday, Khalaji, Hinnebusch, Donnelly, Ehteshami, and Byman. The Economy school includes Clawson, Pollack, Tellier, Moradi, Teller, Kechichian, Brookes, Al Qalam as well as Ehteshami. The Nationalism school includes Garton Ash, Hadian, Rubin, Soltania, Hiro, Halliday, Tellier as well as Hinnebusch and Ehteshami.

The Security School.

Applying a neo-realistic perspective to the behavior of states, Hinnebusch argues that distributions of power, as well as domestic and trans-state interactions are major determinants of a state's behavior. While responding to the systematic environment, some states maintain the status quo; others display a revisionist orientation as Iran and Iraq did after their Revolutions (Hinnebusch, 2002, p. 18).

Analyzing foreign policy from a balance of power perspective, Hinnebusch argues, “*Systematic insecurity induces uniform patterns of behavior notably balancing against threats*” (Hinennbusch, 2002, p. 1). Taking in mind the increased American presence in the Gulf and the region in general, Kemp explains that Iran’s security is threatened by the power imbalances in the regional system, indicating the presence of three nuclear states in the Middle East and Asia: Israel, Pakistan and India. Furthermore, he explains that systematic changes in the security environment compel Tehran to pursue a distinct position and respond to the demand of nuclear institutions within both the civil and military institutions.

According to Kemp, Iran’s nuclear ambitions are generated by both the need to develop a deterrent, to confront a hostile international system, as well as the need to realize economic and military self-sufficiency (Kemp, 2005, p. 8). Despite Iran’s connections to Shiite political groups in Iraq, Iraq represents an economic, religious and political rivalry, since a united Iraqi secular government that is economically strong can jeopardize Iran’s regional importance

Similarly, both Amir Youssefi (2006) and Mohammad Abtehi (2005) contend that security threats emanating from the United States hegemonic imperialism, and the constraints imposed by the uni-polar international system have taken their toll on forging of the Iranian foreign policy. Iran’s insecurity grew with the U.S presence and the new nascent pro-American democratic government in Afghanistan, American troops in the Gulf countries, Pakistan and India with nuclear capabilities, and with neighboring Turkey, who is a NATO member and U.S. ally.

While Youssefi does not hesitate to confirm Tehran’s gains and its supremacy in the Gulf, especially after the elimination of Saddam’s regime, he does describe Iran’s

foreign policy during the period from 1997 to 2005 as being constraint centered . Looming threats appear on the horizon with the probability of Iran being the next target according to Bush Doctrine of supremacy. Moreover, the future destinies of the Iraqi Shiites, and the prospect of moving the Shiite centre of power from the city of Qum to Najaf, endanger Iran's religious power (Youssefi, 2006, pp. 201-207).

Hinnebusch argues that through state consolidation, decision makers become autonomous of global and domestic constraints. Yet, decision makers face another regional challenge, as states become potential threats to each other (Hinnebusch, 2002, P.2). In such context, Kemp (2005b) sees that a realistic perspective of power governs Iran's foreign policy regarding Iraq. Iraq represents another serious challenge with the prospects of chaos and instability breaking the country apart. The ongoing fighting threatens to divide the country into separate autonomous regions with endless conflicts between the different rival factions of Shiites, Sunnis, Baathist, Kurds and Turks. Furthermore, a competitive outlook compels Iran to utilize its best soft security measures to benefit from the current situation. Tehran endeavors to prevent the government in Iraq from establishing good relations with the Arab countries, the United States, and Israel. The realization of such matter would enforce Iran's isolation and eliminate its religious and economic influence. (Kemp, 2005b, p. 241).

Discussing the foreign policies of the Middle East, Hinnebusch argues that state politics are shaped through the management of conflicting pressures emanating from three conceptually distinct environments. Those challenges emanate from the domestic level, the regional systemic level and the global and international level (Hinnebusch, 2002, p.2). While Kemp sees that a stable Iraq increasing its oil production is a regional threat affecting Iran's ailing economy, Abtehi (2005) identifies three levels of challenges and

threats facing the Gulf area as a whole. He accentuates the centrality of the Palestinian issue in regional politics, in the sense that the pressure which the United States exert on the countries in the region by supporting Israel expansionist intentions leads to the creation of national, regional and wider regional challenges. Terrorism is an outcome of frustrated feelings of populations entrapped in a gap between the societies and their political governments. For Abtehi, fanaticism is the real threat to which cooperation among the Gulf countries is the ultimate solution (Abtehi, 2005, P. 178).

Asserting the consequences generated by the American presence, Youssefi (2006) describes the occupation of Iraq as the most serious contemporary challenge. The invasion of Iraq ignited a growing suspicion of the United States' policy and confronted the Arab leaders with intensified internal pressures, which inflamed the whole region and directed a deadly blow to Arab nationalism and pan-Arabism. The most serious result of the war on Iraq is that threatened countries are forced to enter in an arms race and acquire non-conventional nuclear weapons (Youssefi, 2006, p.203).

The Ideology School.

The writers in this school acknowledge the important role ideology plays in the making of the Iranian foreign policy. Ehteshami (2002) admits that since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution, Islamic issues affected Iran's politics and its interaction with its neighbors especially the Arab ones. Tehran old ambition of maintaining regional supremacy was accentuated by what he calls a "messianic Shiism" intended to export the revolution (Ehteshami, 2002, p.287). By calling for an Islamic uprising all over the world, explicit, as well as implicit support for the growing numbers of Islamist movements since the 1980's,

Tehran challenged the status quo and raised suspicion among adjacent countries that endeavored to contain Tehran's growing influence. Additionally, Iran continues to support the following groups: Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) in Algeria, the Turabi regime in Sudan, Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine, the Muslim Group in Egypt, the Moro National Liberation Muslims in the Philippines and the Bosnian Muslims (Ehteshami, 2002, pp. 278-288).

Similarly, Fred Halliday (2005) asserts the important role values and perceptions play in the making of foreign policy. He stresses the influential role cultural differences play in shaping relations between states and societies. Halliday contends that states exploit Ideology to justify their actions by saying that they are defending Islam (Halliday, 2005, p. 33). Notably, he sets the Islamic Republic of Iran as an example of the government, which claims to be a model of the teaching of Prophet Mohammad in the seventh century while its institutions, as well as its theory of *velayat-e faqih* are of modern times (Halliday, 2005, p. 47).

Stressing the important role religion play in the Iranian politics, Eisenstadt draws Iran's profile as a state with a Shii religious doctrine that glorifies the suffering and martyrdom of its followers (Eisenstadt, 2005, p. 226). Such a religious background aggrandizes the image of an Iranian population who is willing to sacrifice itself and gives a mistaken depiction of the country as undeterrable. Eisenstadt explain that this image was even reinforced by Tehran's willingness to push forward with costly human-waves attacks during the first Gulf War, besides its prolongation of the war for the realization of a certain set of goals (Eisenstadt, 2005, p. 226).

Likewise, Halliday stresses the idea that Islam and Islamism provide the basis for formulating and pursuing foreign policy because the system can be used selectively to

endorse a state's action (Halliday, 2005, p. 63). Comparably, Fathi describes the Iranian concept of security as a major player drawing the basic contour of Tehran's international relations. He points to the important pillars sustaining the Islamic revolution, which range from the geo-strategic importance, ideology and economy, not to forget an old belief of Iran's historical and cultural superiority (Fathi, 2006, p. 56). Tehran's security concept is born out of past historical events when Iran found itself subject to continuous invasions and exploitations to satisfy other powers' interests, for example, during the two world wars through the reign of the Bahlawis.

Consequently, the Islamic revolution's exaggerated fears of foreign influence and imperialism had its prints on the Iranian conscious by making it suspicious of any foreign interference. Off all, the Islamic revolution developed deep need to rely on self-help and independence through the adoption of a new emblem that refuses to align itself neither to the west nor to the East. Fathi concludes that authoritarian decision-making, supported by the military control of governmental institutions and legislative apparatuses, distracts the Iranians from major issues. He contends that the ideological and historical backgrounds are key factors shaping Iran's quest for regional and international influence by which it seeks to stand as a powerful center for Shiism (Fathi, 2006, p. 56).

On the other hand, Donnelly describes the mechanism by which the Iranians export their revolutionary ideal as unconventional. United States' State Department listed Iran as the most active state sponsor of terrorism in 2003 (Donnelly, 2005, p. 167). Similarly, Byman explains how Iran uses terrorism as way to deter Washington by having off the shelf options to strike at American targets in Europe, Asia, Latin America and elsewhere (Byman, 2006). Byman sees that Iran has cutback its interference in other parts of the world since the mid-1990's and has not struck at the United States directly; still, it backs anti-

Israel violence and can push back if the United States decides to push Iran's leaders to stop their nuclear program. While Tehran seems less vehement at exporting the revolution, it maintains close ties with the Shiite leadership in Baghdad who can cause great tribulation for the American troops in Iraq (Byman, 2006).

The Economy School.

The writers of this school give priority to economic variable in the making of foreign policy. Hinnbusch argues that despite the economic constraints emanating from economic relations with great powers, states still can display considerable autonomy regarding the making of their foreign policies (Hinnbusch, 2002, vii). The writers of this school stress Iran's struggle for political and economic independence from outside control by explaining that Iran's ultimate goal is to eliminate any reliance on Western powers and foreign forces. In this context, the writers accentuate the view of economic independence and stress that it is a prerequisite to a political one.

Hinnbusch holds the view that states of the periphery in the Middle East always made efforts to reduce economical asymmetries of their relation with core states. Oil resources provide the advantages of enhancing power capabilities that supports nationalist foreign policy (Hinnbusch, 2002, p. 5) Yet, Ehteshami argues that dependency on oil wealth increases the state's vulnerability and hinders Iran's attempt to disentangle itself from the international capitalist system at both pre and post revolution times (Ehteshami, 2002, pp. 286-287). Ehteshami explains that during the 1970's, Tehran's awareness of its economic potential started to grow with accumulated oil revenues. Oil was considered a magical means to the creation of a regional, as well as global, power. Yet, later the Islamist

leaders learned a dire lesson from their war with Iraq. Oil could not be a quick fix to the countries many problems and those in charge had to undergo economic and administrative reforms.

In such context, Al Qalam emphasizes economical problems as variables pushing the Iranian policy toward modernization and regression of ideological discourse; represented by Iran's social and political openness toward criticism, evaluation and discussion (Al Qalam, 2005, p. 198). He also stresses the negative effects of the Islamists' conservative stance on Iran's economic development in the sense that the majority of national income is directed to solve security issues and to support Islamic liberation groups in the region.

Accordingly, Al Qalam argues that economical problems will render the Iranian foreign policy more flexible and pragmatic; yet, Tehran will continue to use its connection to Hezbollah and other groups as bargaining chips to safeguard its existence against any invasion or attack by the United States. He believes that the domestic structure and the internal problems jeopardizing Iran's existence and urging it to give priority to national development over ideological discourse because of the changes in Middle East geopolitics. (Al Qalam, 2005, p. 201).

Clawson argues that economy plays an important role in the Iranian self-assurance. Oil and gas exports have shot up from \$23 billion in 2002 to \$ 55 billion in 2006 (Clawson, 2006). Furthermore, he elaborates that economic growth that sped up to 6.2% during 2002-2003 convinced the Iranians that they no longer need the Europeans nor the Russians as much as the others need them. Still, Iran's detachment from globalization and its policies with the IMF threaten to bring back a budget deficit. In addition, economic problems are on the rise with unemployment hindering 700,000 young people from finding jobs with the

GDP per capita 30 percent below what was in the 1970's (Clawson, 2006). Such an ailing economy is feeding social problems with an increase in drug problems, prostitution, divorce and corruption scandals (Clawson, 2006).

Looking for prestige and influence, Tehran has to exploit another front because oil exports are not a successful fix for Iran who faces international sanctions for its nuclear program. Moradi claims that Caspian pipeline politics can provide the *Mullahs* with positive opportunities for enhancing EU relations as Iran can be a passageway for carrying Caspian oil from the land-locked region to European markets (Moradi, 2006). Evidently, economic and geopolitical factors also play major roles in the game of balance of power in the region (Moradi, 2006, p p.173, 174). As Turkey fears a geo-strategic competition that pushes it towards aligning with Azerbaijan and Georgia, the United States seek to increase its influence through constructing an oil pipeline, which would provide it with a lot of influence on security and economic initiatives in that region.

Feller argues that Iran's road to becoming a regional power goes through the exploitation of Caucasus oil (Feller, 1998, pp. 45-46,101). Major oil corporations from the East and the West are engaged in a competitive game over resources, as Russia is competing to prevent Georgia from becoming a main corridor for Caspian oil in Azerbaijan to Georgia and then to Turkey. Feller contends that Iran profiles itself as a regional power inside the former U.S.S.R., while Iran is seeking influence by investing in a billion dollar gas pipeline destined to transport gas From Turkmenistan through Iran to Pakistan, and India, evading passing through Afghanistan (Feller, 1998, p. 45).

Despite High oil revenues, Kechichian claims that Iran faces complicated economic problems (Kechichian, 1995, pp.18-19). The Iranian people no longer tolerate the *Mullahs'* economic control and centralization. Iran's population continues to grow at a rates 3.6 to

3.8 percent, and the government has to compensate for their poor economic performance. The *Mullahs* continue to distract the people by outside confrontation and by expanding their sphere of influence in the Muslim world (Kechichian, 1995, pp.18-19).

Yet, Douglas Hanson and Mohamed Guadi see that all allegations about Iran's troubles and encirclement are exaggerated (Hanson and Guadi, 2005). According to Hanson and Gaudi, Tehran has one remaining open avenue for influence and that goes through the central region's gate. Dangling the economic and energy incentives to the Eastern front along its borders; Iran can still maintain good ties with Pakistan and India enough to ensure the survivability of its regime (Hanson and Guadi, 2005).

Therefore, Iran's manipulation of a nuclear stand-off to gain economic benefits out of disagreement between the Europeans and the Americans becomes much more plausible. Kenneth Pollack sums up the whole argument about Iran's foreign policy by explaining how Tehran's current stance regarding the nuclear program serves both hardliners and main stream conservatives, in the sense that it satisfies the hardliners' indifference for improved relation with the West, as well as, the conservatives' intentions to call "the European's bluff." (Pollack, 2006, p.4) Iran managed to escape any threats from the Europeans who always showed inclination to trade economic benefits over imposing sanctions to stop Iran's nuclear program. He points out that a similar attitude to that of the 1990s will allow the Iranians to enjoy their full benefits of a nuclear program, to continue support for terrorism, and to cherish the fruits of trade investment with both the Europeans and Asians.

The Nationalism School.

Writers in this school accentuate the impact nationalism plays in Iran's foreign policy. Hinnebusch argues that governments resist penetrations by nationalist movements and by organizing regional coalitions to deter external powers. He contends that unstable states have to cope with external exigencies by establishing autonomy of institutions while at the same time maintaining public support. States that are vulnerable domestically use the foreign policy to ensure their survival and legitimacy through exploiting nationalism against external imperialism (Hinnebusch, 2002, p. 10).

Hiro (2006) demonstrates a similar view by explaining how the government in Iran blends nationalism with religion. He describes the Iranians as chauvinists when it comes to their Persian identity, and as a population who is willing to stand up for the morals and ideals of shiism, which are deeply embedded in their conscience (Hiro, 2006).

Hadian argues that a good majority of the Iranians think there is a link between security and the nuclear program (Hadian, 2006). For many decades, Iran has been the victim of chemical weapons, especially in the last Iraqi-Iranian war where the international community stood watching, refraining from doing anything to hinder such crimes. Another group of Iranians went even further to advocate Iran's withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty claiming that IAEA inspectors are spies working to make Iran more vulnerable for attacks (Hadian, 2006). Ash claims that there is a widespread consensus regarding the construction of a nuclear program in Iran even among those who are critical of the government's policies (Ash, 2006).

In addition, Ali Soltania defends the program by claiming Iran's rights for peaceful nuclear technology. He explains that the subject is misled with biased politicized

information that is meant to deprive Iran of its right stated in article VI of the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty, which Iran signed in 1979, and of which had the right to withdraw by the time the Islamic Revolution was founded in 1979 (Sultania, 2006). Sultania justifies the reason behind Iran's insistence on procuring the complete fuel cycle by the domestic needs of the population, which doubled in 30 years and the increase in oil prices. (Sultania, 2006). Moreover, he counts the merits of processing fossil fuel instead of burning it to produce electricity, while accusing the Western nuclear states of failing to establish recognized principles concerning peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Soltania insists that acquiring nuclear weapons as a defensive strategy is by no means any of Iran's options, and confirms Iran's right for peaceful usage of nuclear energy (Sultania, 2006).

Tellier predicts that Ideology will no longer form the basis of the Iranian foreign policy (Tellier, 2006, p.5). He explains that the conservatives are less interested in Islamization and more inclined towards national independence and economic development. According to Tellier, the trend towards economic evolution lies not only within the political sphere but also within the mind of the population. Most Iranians exhibit a genuine desire for change, a matter the conservatives do not reject as long as it does not undermine their control. The conservatives see a stabilizing effect of this national trend and they tend to use the national tool as their predecessors, the reformists, did (Tellier, 2006, p.6).

1.3. The Secondary Variables Affecting the Iranian Foreign Policy.

In addition to the aforementioned predominant variables, some writers of the dominant variables schools considered other minor variables without concentrating on them as being most influential in motivating Iran's struggle for power or its foreign policy. Those secondary variables of rationality, political competition, the state's realistic pursuit of

power and the use of the nuclear program as a distraction, were discussed most by Iranian writers, as well as others, who saw the nuclear program as a rational step from a government who has all the potentials to defend its rights for development and survival.

The Competition Between the Conservatives and the Reformists.

Few writers see that Iranian foreign policy as being forged through a competitive game going between the hardliners and the reformists. Al Qalam (2005) identifies two political groups -the revolutionists and the internationalists (or the reformists) struggling to gain control in a manner leading to a contradictory manipulation of foreign policy as well as that of domestic politics. Acknowledging the restrictions imposed by the revolution and the need for change, in period when Iran was exhausted by its eight years of war with Iraq, the Iranian internationalists advocated modernization, information technology, economic development and adjusting to the requirements of globalization (Al Qalam, 2005, pp.194-197).

Al Qalam argues that the competition between the revolutionists - who gave priorities to fighting imperialism, and supported the Islamic ideology as a comprehensive dogma, and the internationalists led to many contradictions in the making of foreign policy. This revolutionary group advocates the state's control over education, and supports the ideological system and religious leaders (Al Qalam, 2005, p.197).

In reality, Iran is in a dilemma, torn apart by its desire to act as a natural state on the international level and its urge to maintain her revolutionary discourse, which calls for a change in the current situation. Concurringly, Tehran endeavors to become an active member in the international system; Iran struggles to be a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), while it questions the international organization and its calls for

equality. Most of all, Tehran, who calls for working with major powers to improve its economy is still hesitant to share power and dominance with major industrial countries.

(Al Qalam, 2005, p. 197)

The Nuclear Program As a Mean of Distraction from Domestic Problems.

Kechichian considers military build up as one of many actions by which the Iranian government responds to rising internal opposition. The *Mullahs* distract people's attention from domestic problems and seek foreign confrontation as a choice for allowing the reorganization and re-equipment of the military. Iran has been provided with valuable military experience during its eight-year war with Iraq besides the quantities of weapon it acquired that were sold in the black market after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

(Kechichian, 1995, pp.18-19).

The Nuclear Program as an Indication of The Rise of a Regional Power.

Writers such as Barry Rubin consider Iran's geopolitical assets, its Islamic regime, its nuclear program, and a power vacuum as part of the major twenty-first development that led to Tehran's rise as a regional power (Rubin, 2006). Tehran's regional influence has been enhanced by its sponsorship of both extremism and terrorism. The latest evidence of such growing penetration of Iranian control was felt during Israel's engagement with Hamas and Hizbollah in July and August of 2006. The Islamic regime, which has the ambition to spread its ideological beliefs and political control, learned that such a mission has to proceed cautiously and covertly (Rubin, 2006).

Revisionist Policy and Decrease of Political Influence as Variables Affecting Iran's Foreign Policy.

Sazhin (2006) interprets the victory of Ahmadi-Nejad in 2005 as setback of Iran's reformist policy adopted by Rafsanjani and Khatami during the past years. Reforms were preliminary measures to get Iran out of its self-isolation, beautify its image in the eyes of international community, and integrate into the global and political economy. Now, once circumstances were favorable, Iran started to resume its old role as an influential and leading power in the Middle East.

Sazhin points out to a multilevel strategic doctrine, which aims at reviving Khomeini's ideas to transform Iran into a regional hegemony. While Sazhin asks the questions and gives answers to the reasons behind Iran's obsession with hegemony, he does not mention the favorable systematic changes, which Iran is exploiting to become a regional power. According to Sazhin, Iran's obsession with power can be attributed to a combination of factors ranging from the geopolitical, military and political to the national and psychological ones (Sazhin, 2006). In addition, he stresses Iran's vital position with access to the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea and Central Asia that makes Iran a passageway for the transmission of oil, gas and hydrocarbon materials

5. Rationality as Variable Affecting Iran's Foreign Policy.

While Fathi interprets Iran's foreign policy and its quest for security and interests from an ideological perspective, Mostashari (2005) defends Iran's quest for power as a result of a rational strategy by which it gains many benefits from the international community. Mostashari praises Iran's rational calculations of the recent political outcome in international relations, which proves its ability to withstand international community

pressure, and the sanctions imposed on it by the United States (Mostashari, 2005). He explains how Iran's insistence on its right to civil nuclear development started to reap benefit out of the community's rigid stance. Iran was finally allowed to start membership negotiation with the WTO and expects more to come in the future from the European Union.

Mostashari claims that Iran has nothing to fear even if it is referred to the Security Council, with Russia and China's vetoes ready to block any sanctions. He denies that Iran is just a rogue state and asserts the benefits his country is gaining from soaring oil prices, from Iran's global economic engagement with key industrial states, and from the improvement of regional relations with the neighboring countries. In addition, Mostashari claims that Iran is not attempting to mitigate the United States' fear that it might use Hamas and Hezbollah for regional escalation once it is attacked. Not denying American allegations of harboring Al-Qaeda members is an implied threat that retaliation for any attack by the Americans is going to be deadly for the American troops entrapped in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Eisenstadt (2005) confirms Iran's rationality by exposing how it covers its action by ambiguity to provide itself with the opportunities of denial (Eisenstadt, 2005, p.230). In addition, Tehran reveals a talent at rational calculation and power assessment by refraining from direct confrontation and choosing, instead, to work through surrogates such as Hamas and Hizbollah. Unlike what appears to be indifference to great costs, Eisenstadt argues that the Iranians, who had to make great sacrifices during the Iraq-Iran war, were no longer capable of sustaining the revolutionary turmoil and he describes their handling of domestic and foreign policy as pragmatic (Eisenstadt, p. 228). He contends that Iranian politicians resort to the language of deterrence when they talk about their national security strategy,

indicating that national interest have been given priority over the observance of five pillars of Islam, and that such a policy of prioritizing national interest is unlikely to change.

Positive Aspects and Limitations of the Interpretations of the Literature on the Iranian Foreign Policy.

Although the aforementioned schools of thought have made valuable contributions to the study of the Iranian Affairs, a comparison between the various literatures represented by the different schools reveal that each school represents the major variable affecting Tehran's foreign policy and its quest for nuclear power. Moreover, the schools assume that by analyzing such variables, strategists can better understand the motivations and major dynamics of Tehran's foreign policy.

The Ideology School claims that ideology and the survival of the *Mullahs'* dogma shape the dynamics of the Iranian foreign policy and compels it to pursue a strategy that leads to the realization of its Islamic ideals. Ideology is a major pillar of many which constitute the Islamic revolution. Accordingly, this school tries to understand Tehran's international affairs and its quest for power by considering ideology as a major variable motivating Iranian politics.

The writers of the Ideology School introduce a valid argument concerning the major components of the Iranian foreign policy. They argue that the Iranian discourse remains ideological and the Islamic system is the only mean by which the *Mullahs* can heighten their stakes and protect their interests. Yet, they neglect to cast light on certain times of the history of the Iranian Revolution when it refrained from gaining influence through exportation of its Islamic Revolution. Writers of this school neglect projecting a comprehensive outlook of Iranian international affairs, especially in the 1990s, at a period

of diminished influence during Khatami's reign. The Islamic Republic had to forgo its ideological discourse and call for moderate approach and dialogue between civilizations.

Iran focused on developing economic links with its northern and southern neighbors especially states of Central Asia and the Caucasian States. If ideology is a major variable in Iran's foreign policy, an imperative question poses itself regarding why Iran refrained from exporting its revolution to the Islamic states of the disintegrated Soviet Union. Why did the Islamic Republic relinquish its dream of an Islamic empire and even choose cooperation with the Israelis in the contra affair? Another imperative question which demands answer is: Why did Iran keep calling for fighting imperialism and refrain from condemning the Russian's atrocities in Chechnya and Bosnia?

Writers of the Security school consider that survival of the Islamic Republic is dependant on the surrounding security environment. Survival of the Revolution and its ideology is intertwined with its security variables. Yet, despite the validity of the security constraints argument, it is necessary to acknowledge that the Iranians have created this surrounding hostile environment for themselves. Ayatollah Khomeini, the revolutionary leader, called for an uprising aimed at creating an Islamic empire that is to be the greatest of all powers. By calling for an Islamic revolt against Arab governments and calls for sweeping out the "the Great Satan" the United States, Iran alienated all of its Arab neighbors and threatened the prospects of any progress in the settlement between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Iran would not have been threatened if it had adopted an accommodating foreign policy that does not include anti-Americanism and sponsoring of terrorism as major mechanism for survival.

Notwithstanding Iran's domestic and foreign problems, Tehran continues to defy international pressure by pursuing its nuclear and non-conventional military weapons that

raise suspicion of Tehran's real intention. Iran's claims of pursuing a peaceful nuclear program cannot be justified, taking in mind the amount of resistance it demonstrates regarding both international sanctions and incentives. Concentrating on a Security dimension to understand Tehran's behavior is valuable but not sufficient. There is an urgent need to understand the collective elements that provide Tehran with the favorable opportunities to escape any punitive sanctions from the international community (Rubin, 2006).

As for seeing the Iranian foreign policy from an economic competition between the conservatives and the reformists, the argument could not be truer if the Iranian government did not monitor those who are legible to vote in the elections. The *Pasdaran* (or the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps) is considered the armed wing of the government and acts as a filter for future conservative leaders in Iran (Tellier, 2006, p. 18). The revolutionary government, supported by the *Pasdaran*, is willing to crush any opposition or calls for democratization and modernization in Iranian Politics. The *Pasdaran* is an economic and social power playing a major role in the monopoly of the state's economics.

In addition, the *Pasdaran* is pursuing a strategy that enables it to have control over the country's economy (Tellier, 2006, p. 18). Its strategy is primarily based on the realization of financial autonomy through managing underground economy and contrabands networks. They already control most of Iran's economic and Industrial independence by controlling the sugar industry, the energy sector and the supply of automobile and airplane parts. In addition, the *Pasdaran* control is going to be consolidated with the completion of its influence on the military nuclear energy (Tellier, 2006, p. 18).

Therefore, understanding the foreign policy of Tehran from the perspective of the competition between the conservatives and the reformists can be misleading. Believing that

the reformist control of power would make any alteration is optimistic, as Patrick Clawson argues, prioritizing economic construction over an ideological foreign policy is not going to make a difference regarding Iran's international relations (Clawson, 1993). Clawson sees that there is no big difference between Iran's moderates and its conservatives since any economization is meant to make Iran strong enough to pressure its neighbors. (Clawson, 1993, p. 46). After all, both the conservatives and the reformists consent that economic independence is a prerequisite for Iran's political independence.

As for Nationalism School, writers consider patriotism and nationalism as elements triggering anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist feelings leading to Iran's radical foreign policy regarding the West. It is necessary to note that such a policy usually triggers foreign alienation and economic hardship that risks evoking domestic instability. Nationalism should not be considered a major factor but should be regarded as a tool enabling the leaders of Tehran to realize their strategy. In an authoritarian or semi authoritarian regime like Iran, nationalism is mobilized by the state as a counter measures to the unsatisfied population. Oil revenues gave the leaders autonomy from the middle and lower classes that were distracted by external looming threats. Iran emerged weak and vulnerable from eight years of war with Iraq. Rafsanjani and Khatami were given permission to sell hopes of change to the devastated population that things were going to improve with the reformists.

Yet, Khatami failed to accomplish any serious reforms apart from giving an improved image of a pragmatic and moderate Iran who is willing to open up to the outside world. Khatami was mobilized by Iran's *Mullahs* to expand their power and appease neighboring, as well as power states, with an accommodating policy needed to counter economic troubles and sanctions. Iran's accommodation came at a time of a self isolation and diminished influence. Iran, who lost its role after the end of the Cold War, and

especially with the ongoing Peace Process in the early 1990s, had to exploit the rivalries at both international and regional levels. Once, oil revenues were high, Tehran started mobilizing nationalism in order to counter the impact of the American presence and external pressure on the state.

Most of all, the aforementioned schools have made valuable contribution in their analysis of the major pillars constituting the Iranian foreign policy. Nevertheless, the writers overlooked the secondary variables and considered them as minor. Writers tended to disregard that realism's major paradigm regards states as monolith units whose major aim is to maximize power. While some writers acknowledged Iran's rationality and pragmatism, all minimized the fact that Iran nourishes an old realistic pursuit for regional power and hegemony. The nuclear program represents the ultimate outcome of a state struggling to regain its past influence over the Gulf and the region in general.

Without the fall of Soviet Union and the ousting of Saddam' regime and the Americans' entrapment in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Iranians would have been deprived from the chance to accumulate military build up. Tehran's connection to Hamas and Hizbolla, revitalized their alliance with Syria, and high oil revenues are other helping factors. Fearing fierce retaliation from Iran through terrorist groups, the Americans have to carefully calculate the consequences of attacking the Islamic Republic. Ironically, now, there is a consensus among the American and their allies over the need to involve Iran in the process of stabilizing the situation in Iraq. Furthermore, the Americans are eager to welcome the involvement of Damascus and Tehran in making Iraq secure.

Thus, despite the strong validity of the writers arguments, most failed to see the combination of domestic as well international changes that helped Iran to accelerate its old quest for regional hegemony. The late escalation between Tehran and the international

community is the ultimate culmination of a military build up which Tehran started after the end of the first Gulf War and the demise of the Soviet Union aiming to impose Tehran as the major power of the region.

The late political events reveal that the secondary variable, which the writers tended to regard as having minor influence on the process of decision making such as rationality and pursuit of regional hegemony, seems paramount. Iran's positions in the international system with its geopolitical imperatives, domestic capabilities, as well as its position in the distribution of power provide it with a great advantage for undergoing revisionist and hegemonic maneuvers. Tehran seems more willing to subordinate exporting ideology and its revolution for the accumulation of military capabilities and dominance.

The election of Ahmadi-Nejad as an ultra-conservative, realist leader and the accumulating building of military power are meant to compensate for unstable power balance created by ousting of Saddam's regime and the American occupation of Iraq. The high insecurity, the vacuum created by the power absence in Iraq, and the access of oil revenues induced Iran to threaten its neighbors by accelerating its quest for nuclear power.

At such times, Tehran's ambitions started to materialize supported by its strategic importance and its spheres of regional influence in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. Tehran is provided great maneuverability with the demise of the Soviet Union, absence of regional balance of power, a boosting economy, and hydrocarbon economics. Moreover, the leaders in the Islamic Republic could easily expand their regional influence by exploiting the rivalry between the United States, Japan and the European Union over the riches of the Gulf region and those of Central Asia.

Chapter Two

Iran's Motives for Power Struggle.

In this thesis, the term motives include all of the domestic and external variables that shape Iran's Foreign Policy and impel it to adopt a realistic quest for power that satisfies the aspirations of the group of its decision-makers. Some scholars consider the state as the major and most important institution by which they begin in order to arrive at complete understanding of politics and international relations.¹ Therefore, political studies endeavor to understand how states realize their interests, maintain their goals and the way they counteract the constraints they face during their struggle to maintain autonomy and independence. The word state indicates two concepts: the first is of a "*national territory*" and the second implies the ruling institutions, represented by the government and its administration.²

While attempting to analyze the state's foreign policy, it is crucial for the investigator to seek explanation through considering the state as a major paradigm of an institution whose administrators exercise authority and control over its territories, people and resources.³ Exploring the ability of a state to control domestic and external challenges requires an understanding of the domestic needs that are generated by the political system and public policy-making. Furthermore, a deep understanding of the relationship between individuals and institutions and the impact of social environment on such relationship can explain the changes and continuity in the policy. Hence, a thorough understanding of the

¹ Halliday, Fred, (2005). **The Middle East In International Relations, Power, Politics and Ideology**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 41.

² Ibid, p. 46.

³ Ibid, p. 41.

structure and orientation of foreign policy cannot be successfully accomplished without considering the national interest and national ideology that are the sources of all decisions and their outcomes.¹

Analyzing Iran's foreign policy from a realistic perspective necessitates considering all the motives that lies behind its latest quest for power. Rosenau identifies motives as all the factors that had been considered as internal sources of foreign policy and as the elements that enhance or limit the external behavior of societies.² These factors may include the role of geography³ or the role of other social, economic, cultural and psychological elements.⁴

Hence, Rosenau considers foreign policy as a reaction to both internal and external stimuli.⁵ On the other hand, Snyder identifies two kinds of motivation that propel the decision maker towards certain choice of policy.⁶ The first type of motives is the “*in order to*” motives which the decision maker acquire during his participation in the process of decision making, and which are intended to realize a certain state of affairs. The second type of motives is the “*because of*” motives which is composed of the discriminative choices the politician adopt during previous experiences.⁷ Here, it is necessary to mention that the analysts need not investigate the “*because of*” motives as a satisfactory explanation

¹ Berkowitz, Morton, Bock, P.G., and Fuccillo, Vincent J. (1977). **The Politics of American Foreign Policy: the Social Context of Decisions**, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, p.251.

² Rosenau, James N., (1971). **The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy**, New York: The Free Press, Collier-Macmillan limited, London, p. 96.

³ Sprout, Harold and Margret, (1965). **Man-Milieu Relationship Hypotheses in the Context of International Politics, World Politics**, Princeton: Center of International Studies, p.21.

⁴ K'nor, Klaus, (1965). **The War Potential of Nations**, Princeton: Princeton University Press, Part I and Part II.

⁵ Rosenau, op. cit., p.98.

⁶ Snyder, Richard C., Bruk, H. W., and Sapin, Burton, eds. (1945), **Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics**, Princeton: Organizational Behavior Section, Foreign Policy Analysis Series, No. 3, pp. 68-117.

⁷ Ibid, pp. 137-173.

of foreign policy can be reached without investigating them.¹ However, in this thesis, analysis will include both the “*in order to*” motives and the “*because of*” factors motivating Tehran’s quest for power and nuclear technology.

Investigating the process of decision-making and the motives behind its rationale, Holsti emphasizes the domestic and international needs that help shape state motives rather than identifying them as unique objectives.² On the other hand, Morgenthau defines state interest as an objective struggle for power and accentuates the importance of producing a successful political outcome while minimizing the importance of identifying the underlying motives behind the action itself.³

Similarly to Rosenau and contrary to Morgenthau, Holsti contends that analysts tend to ignore the domestic and international needs that shape the collective interests and values, which political units endeavor to achieve.⁴ Negating that external objective of states is defined only by power accumulation at the expense of others, Holsti contends that,

*“ nation states are multi-purpose entities, whose objectives express no single factor such as a desire for power” but whose “ behavior is conditioned by a combination of environmental (Systemic) characteristics, immediate actions by other states which impinge on the interests or values of the state in question, and domestic social and economic needs.”*⁵

¹ Rosenau, op. cit., p. 263.

² Holsti, K. J., (1976). **International Politics: A Framework For Analysis**, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. p.125.

³ Hans J. Morgenthau, (1973). **Politics among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace**, (5th ed.), New York: Prager, p.6.

⁴ Holsti, op. cit., p.124.

⁵ Ibid, p. 125.

Highlighting interests as major motives directing foreign policy, Rosenau identifies two dominant schools of thoughts dealing with the concept of a states' interest.¹ The first school is identified as the objectivist, which assumes the existence of real and objectified national interests upon which the survival and prosperity of the state depend. Advocates of this school do not endeavor to depict how national interest is in accord with reality or direct the reader's conceptualization of national interest.² Morgenthau, who defines interests from the perspective of the objectivist school, envisions "*interests in terms of power*" - power that provides its upholders with the ability to exert influence on others' behavior. Accordingly, a nation's major goal is to maximize power, power that is measured by its capability to pursue goals of overextension with the constraints imposed by other states' capabilities.³

On the other hand, the second school, the subjectivist, stands to shed lights on the limitations of the objectivist school.⁴ Upholding the rationality of the decision maker, the realistic school neglects to identify the end or the goal that power seekers struggle to achieve while influencing the other party's behavior.⁵ Hence, the subjectivists assume that national interest is not an objective truth but "a pluralistic set of subjective preferences that change whenever the requirements and aspirations of the nation's members change."⁶ Therefore, national interest manifests through the choices undertaken by the decision makers of the state in regard of the fulfillment of the members' needs and goals.

Unlike democratic societies where subjectivist ideas manifest themselves in the political processes that take into consideration the needs of their populations, an

¹ Rosenau, op. cit., p. 241.

² Ibid.

³ Morgenthau, Hans, (1973). **Politics among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace**, op.cit., p. 241.

⁴ Rosenau, op. cit., p.242.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

authoritarian regime like Iran has to endorse decisions that serve the interests of the elites the *Mullahs* favoring them over those of the population.¹ From such a perspective, it seems appropriate to assume that different institutions within the Iranian political system are manifestations of the dynamics by which the *Mullahs* maintain their control and power. The Iranian political system projects the goals of the clerical elites more than it reflects the needs and goals of the Iranian population, and hence, power and not the satisfaction of the population remains the major goal for the *Mullahs*. By using Islamic Ideology and aspirations, and the exploitation of the national economy, the *Mullahs* can easily sustain control over their subjects and incarnate their interests in the larger one, that of the national, because their authority and the survivability of their regime depend on it.

Yet, such an argument should not exclude national interest from the analysis of the Iranian foreign policy because national interest is shaped by the struggle among political, economic and social forces within the society. Still, semi authoritarian regimes such as the Iranian one always impose rules and laws that strengthen their control in a manner facilitating the embodiment of their interests within the national one. Here, it is necessary to mention that states do not need legitimation only regarding foreign policy. They need legitimation also with domestic issues to justify exploitation of national resources, economic procedures, and military spending.²

Thus, in order to understand a state's behavior, Halliday argues that a state should not be regarded as a unitary entity but rather as an "*institution of coercion and appropriation which operates on two levels, the internal state-society dimension and the*

¹ Ehteshami, Anoushiravan, (2002). The foreign Policy of Iran. In: Raymond Hinnebusch, Anoushiravan Ehteshami, (Eds.), **The Foreign Policy of Middle East States**, London: Lynee Rienner Publishers, Inc. p. 291.

² Halliday, Fred, (2005). **The Middle East in International Relation: Power, Politics and Ideology**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 48.

external state-state dimension” which is better understood by historical sociology, which encompasses all of the variables in a systematic analysis. Hence, Halliday contends that the foreign policy of the state is a product of interests and clashes emanating from state and classes alike.¹

Some scholars, such as Abraham Maslow, tend to explore foreign policy by analyzing motives from the perspective of a psychological and individual level of analysis, which is taken into consideration when dealing with the role of the leader and specifically the role of Ahmadi-Nejad as a leader in shaping both the domestic as well as the foreign policies of Iran. Abraham Maslow accentuates the *“list of needs the satisfaction of which predisposes the individual toward various action patterns depending on the level of need that must be satisfied.”*² While such perspective seems efficient in certain cases - as with leaders like Woodrow Wilson and Adolph Hitler - the need to explore the complexity of decision-making necessitates considering the group of variables behind the process of decision-making.

Hence, Cottam defines motivation as *“a compound of factors that predispose a government and people to move in a decisional direction in foreign affairs.”*³ He recognizes economy, grandeur or prestige, religious messianism, cultural messianism as well as the defense and military interests as major types of motivation. Since motivation is a complex process that involves all or some of the above-mentioned variables, the analysis of this thesis will include the major Iranian motives such as political ideology, security and the economy within which many of the previously mentioned motives are included. Iran’s

¹ Halliday, op.cit., p. 37.

² Cottam, Richard W. (1977). **Foreign Policy Motivation : A General Theory and a Case Study**, Pitterspurgh: Pitterspurgh University Press, p.32.

³ Cottam refers to the dignity and prestige of a community with which a large group of individuals identify and which in this study referred to the dignity of Shiite ideals, Ibid, p. 33.

motivational system is governed by its upholding a system of values that constitute its national identity, and which is a major determinant of its foreign policy behavior.

2.1. Iran's Political and Ideological Motives.

In his analysis of the international relations of Middle East, Fred Halliday stresses the important roles, which values, ideals, norms, and people play in shaping the state's behavior, and depicts such variables as "*real constraints*."¹ Halliday reveals that three strands of ideology contributed to the formation of Middle Eastern politics, namely nationalism, revolution and Islamism.² He describes the revolutionary ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the most dramatic of all revolutions. Calling for an uprising of all the Muslim "*mustaz'afin*"³, through the exportation of the revolution, Islam and Islamism provided the basis by which the Islamic government of Iran can endorse a selective foreign policy and justify its state's actions.⁴

In the context of foreign policy making, a state is regarded as a regime of power where decision making is affected by the way power is organized and the determinants that constitute it.⁵ From such context, it is easy to discern that the drive toward regional supremacy has long been a major feature of the Iranian foreign policy. Religion became one of many instruments by which the Islamic Republic projects its power capabilities and enhances its regional influence.⁶ However, religion is not the sole variable influencing the Iranian Foreign policy. Religious ideology and norms are part of the constitutive political

¹ Halliday, op.cit., p. 63.

² Ibid.

³ The term *Mustazafin* means: the powerless And the oppressed. "Political Thought and Legacy of Khomeini" (n.d.) Retrieved 2 June, 2006 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_thought_and_legacy_of_Khomeini,

⁴ Halliday, op.cit., p.63.

⁵ Tripp, Charles, (2002). The Foreign Policy of Iraq. In: Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushirivan Ehteshami (Eds.), **The Foreign Policies of Middle East States**, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p.171.

⁶ Ehteshami, op. cit., p. 287.

and bureaucratic structure shaping Tehran's foreign policy within which interests and clashes of state and classes occur.¹ Ideology and norms are part of the process of legitimation and coercion, through which Tehran confronts the socio-economic problems and counteracts the opposing social forces affecting its relations with states and social classes alike.²

Most of the literature concerning the motives underlying Iran's quest for power considered them as an outcome of a combination of domestic and external constraints and not as a sole objective by itself. Nevertheless, it is imperative to investigate the role political ideas and religious values play in shaping Iran's external and internal behavior. Interests had to be considered alongside the values and the group or classes who articulated them.³ Here, it is necessary to analyze Iran's external behavior from the perspective of international sociology as well, which, similar to realism, considers the state the first paradigm; however, unlike realism, it does not consider foreign policy as the product of the state actor, but rather as the manifestation of the state's influence on the social context.⁴ Hence, historical and international sociology consider the core components of political and social order, the state, ideology and society and focuses on the mechanism by which political, social or religious power is maintained.⁵

Departing from a realistic analysis of Iran's external behavior, political survivability was the cornerstone on which the nascent Islamic Revolution was based. Emerging on the international scene as "*a defiant, fiercely independent, proactively religious, and non aligned power*" that disrupted the regional order, and provoked the greatest crises of the

¹ Halliday, op.cit., p.37.

² Ibid, p.38.

³ Ibid, p.31.

⁴ Ibid, p. 36.

⁵ Ibid.

Carter and Reagan administrations, the Islamic Revolution had to maintain its survivability.¹ At the beginning of its inception, the Islamic Revolution, which emerged as a political, nationalistic and ideological movement, committed the same security, strategic, domestic and external miscalculations of the Shah.² Moreover, it continued to embrace the Shah's ambitions of imposing Iran's regional hegemony, of distorting its relations with its regional neighbors and the rest of the world, and of damaging the Iranian economy to the extent that led the ruling *Mullah* to deal ferociously with the slightest student squabble as an internal security threat.³

Political legitimacy was and continues to be a major concern for the Islamic Republic of Iran. Notwithstanding Khomeini's concept of proper governance was primarily based on the celebration of religious autocracy over democratic accountability and its pluralistic imperatives. Still, Khomeini managed to capture popular support by displaying a national narrative that reinforced aversion to imperial powers, their manipulation, intervention and encroachment of Islamic domain.⁴ The conflict between Islam and the West provided a basis to introduce a new version of a politicized, revolutionary and uncompromising dogma. Such a dogma succeeded in capturing the hearts of the poor and weak religious people by declaring them as capable of "*defying the international arrogance.*"⁵

Shortly after Khomeini came back from his exile in 1979, members of the Islamic Revolution held the personnel of the American Embassy as hostages. The incident

¹ Ehteshami, op. cit., p. 283.

² Fathi, Mamdouh Aneess, (2006). **The Iranian National Security, The Sources of Threats And The Confrontations Mechanism**, (1st ed.) Abu Dhabi: United Arab of Emirates, P.45.

³ Ibid, p. 44.

⁴ Takeyh, Ray, (2006). **Hidden Iran, Paradox and Power in the Islamic Republic**, New York: Henry Holt and Company, p.16.

⁵ An interview with Hashemi Rafsanjani in Al Jazeera about the goals of the Iranian Revolution in December 12, 2000 mentioned in Fathi, op.cit., p. 45.

succeeded in attracting the world's attention to the belligerence the Iranian regime held regarding the United States and of its disregard for International laws and customs¹. Moreover, soon enough, Khomeini started to abdicate many of his avowed promises about democratic governance, general liberties, human rights and the role that religious institutions had to play in realizing his Revolutionary ideals.² This, beside the ongoing Iraq-Iran war, and the menace of exporting the revolutionary ideology to Iraq and neighboring countries, inflamed the regional political arena and threatened of annihilating the incipient Revolution.

Avoiding a major domestic collapse, the Islamic regime embarked on a relentless race for power. Takeyh argues that revolutionary regimes usually collapse once their ardent supporters grow disillusioned and abandon their faith.³ The Iraq-Iran War of 1980-1988 elevated the Islamic Republic vulnerability as it envisioned a Union of enemies plotting to bring its downfall.⁴ Above all, the Gulf countries, along with Egypt, were regarded as regional coordinators allowing the transgression of the "*Great Satan*" - the United States.⁵

Hence, Iran's political and ideological ambitions called for a complete metamorphosis in the political and Ideological system of the Islamic world and especially in the Arab countries.⁶ Consequently, such attempts to change the political regimes in the Middle East were affronted with great aversion that led to many regional developments. Among those were the Iraq-Iran War in 1980, and the establishment of the Gulf

¹ Fathi, op.cit., p.45.

² Ibid, p. 47.

³ Takeyh, op.cit., p.22.

⁴ During his term as a parliament speaker, Hashemi Rafsanjani expressed his concern over the relation between America, Saddam and the internal opposition. **Agence France Presse**, June 4, 2003.

⁵ Takeyh, op. cit., p. 19.

⁶ Al-Qalam, Mahmoud Sarree', (2005). Iran's Growing Ideology of Regional Security: Internal Sources and the International Variables. In: **The Gulf: Future Challenges**, Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, p.185.

Cooperation Council, not to forget the American-Israeli alliance against the Islamic government in Tehran.¹ Consequently, Iran posed itself as a political and security dilemma as its Ideological ambitions far exceeded the Islamic world.² The Islamic Republic contrived to reshape the political structure of other states by facilitating the Islamists way of political governance. Its maneuvers were confronted with strong opposition from all over the world, a matter that affected its reputation and exhausted its national resources.³

The first decade of the history of the Islamic Revolution could be described as the most dramatic of all as it began by committing many political and strategic miscalculations.⁴ Iran's interaction with the United States had undervalued the American power through accelerating the American troops' withdrawal from Lebanon, through exposing the American hypocrisy in the Contra-Iran Affair; and through the strategic warfare, it adopted during the Iraq-Iran war, which ranged from "*Mines warfare*" to "*tankers warfare*" and "*armada warfare.*"⁵

However, Iran, under Khomeini, committed many political blunders by legalizing the use of terror and violence to intimidate its regional and domestic oppositions.⁶ The *Mullahs'* foreign and domestic political maneuvers were far from being flawless. Aside from trying to use the "*war of people*" which China relinquished, against the Gulf countries, Iran continued its war with Iraq, trading victory for defeat, and provoking the Gulf countries by attacking Kuwaiti tankers and used special squads to trigger instability.⁷

¹ Al-Qalam, op.cit, p. 186.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Fathi, op.cit., p.46.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Takeyh, op.cit, p.20.

⁷ Fathi, op.cit., p.47.

Respectively, Tehran tried to consolidate its power and theocratic legitimacy through rejecting the notion of compromise and armistice.¹

Halliday argues that external influences have their impact on the shaping of both foreign and domestic policies of the Middle East to the extent of creating the need for external confrontation and to the extent of affecting military expenditure and deployment of regional investment.² As a result, the United States' counter measures adopted to undermine the political and ideological existence of the Islamic Republic were considered as a major impact in shaping Tehran's domestic, as well as external, behavior. The need for political legitimacy and the insecurity, evoked by the religious dimension of Iran's power projection ability, affected Tehran's regional profile and enforced suspicions of its intentions, a matter that encouraged regional neighbors to counteract and contain the Iranian influence.³

The menacing power of the United States, whether it is overt or covert, enhanced Iran's sense of insecurity. The American presence increased in the Gulf after the Second Gulf War in 1991, and the Gulf countries signed defense treaties with the United States, which were considered as part of United States' efforts to rebuild the military capabilities of the Gulf States in a step directed at containing Iraq and not Iran.⁴ However, those treaties augmented Tehran's sense of insecurity and led to its adoption of a hostile counter security strategy that opposed the Madrid Peace Process of 1991, and supported radical Islamic movements, in a manner that intended to send warning signals of Iran's intentions to

¹ Takeyh, op.cit., p. 169.

² Halliday, op.cit., p. 68.

³ Ehteshami, op.cit., p.287.

⁴ Fathi, op.cit., p. 52.

impose regional hegemony. In addition, those adverse intentions were clearly manifested in the decision to oust Emirates' citizens from the island of Abu Moussa.¹

Consequently, the United States started to question the legitimacy of the Islamic regime soon after Khomeini's death and the end of the First Gulf war, as consensus was subverted by its restive public.² Domestically, debate over the essence of the theocratic politics was on the rise and public concordance started to eradicate. The United States started to exploit the discontent by launching a plan of \$85 million to promote democracy and regime change in Iran.³

As Realism suggests, external, regional and international determines all foreign policy.⁴ The connotations of the United States sanctions on Iran posed threats to the Islamic regime, which endeavored to mitigate people's content of the elite control and unequal distribution of income among the army and theocratic elites.⁵ Exploiting the economic vulnerability and the Iranian government inability to undertake effective reforms capable of providing Iran of badly needed income,⁶ the United States imposed the policy of "dual containment" in the 1990s⁷ that targeted oil exports and Iranian financial foreign assets and restricting American companies from investing more than \$40 million in Iran.⁸ The American government found in economic instrument an effective tool of coercion and of pressuring those states, which like the Iranian government, were burdened "with debt and

¹ Fathi, op.cit., p. 53.

² Takeyh, op.cit., p. 218.

³ The United States tried to use the same strategy it had used with Eastern Europe by using radio broadcast and providing direct support for opposition groups to undermine the Revolutionary regime, Ibid, p. 218.

⁴ Halliday, op. cit., p. 67.

⁵ Ibid, p. 293.

⁶ Donnelly, Thomas, (2005). Strategy for A Nuclear Iran. In: Henry Sokolski, Patrick Clawson (Eds.), **Getting Ready For A Nuclear-Ready Iran**, (pp. 159-176). Strategic Studies Institute, p. 181.

⁷ Halliday, op.cit., p.287.

⁸ litwak, Robert, (2000). **Rogue States and US Foreign Policy: Containment after the Cold War**, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press. Cited in Fred Halliday, **The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 287.

nationalism,” and which had to endure the menacing forces undermining their political legitimacy and existence.¹

The Europeans stance regarding the Iran’s political ambitions does not differ considerably from that of the United States. Contrary to what it seems to be, the Europeans fear Iran’s ambitious dreams of regional dominance.² Evidently, a nuclear radical Tehran would inhibit the Europeans’ maneuverability in the Middle East provided Turkey is admitted into the European Union, as the realization of such an event will provide Europe with borders within the Middle East; and hence, jeopardizes regional stability.³ Certainly, a radical Iran will not refrain from transmitting nuclear technology to other states, especially, when considering Tehran’s involvement in terrorism, and its cooperation with Pyongyang in the development of North Korea’s ballistic missile programs.⁴

Departing from such a perspective, many writers accentuated the insecurity of the Iranian regime evoked by the American presence in the Middle East and Central Asia.⁵ They considered the change in the security environment, represented by the menacing American presence surrounding Tehran’s imperiled regime in Turkey, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan, as the real motivation behind its quest for power.

¹ Halliday, op.cit., p. 287.

² Delpech, Therese, (2005). What Transatlantic Strategy on Iran? In: In Sokolski, Henry and Clawson, Patrick, (Eds.), **Getting Ready For a Nuclear-Ready Iran**, Strategic Studies Institute, p. 293.

³ Ibid, p. 293.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See Halliday, **The Middle East in the International Relations**, Kemp, “ the Influence of the Iranian program on the Gulf Security,” p. 233, Youssefi, “Evaluation of Iran’s Foreign Policy in Iraq,” p. 203, Abtehi, “Iran and the International Relations,” p.176, Fathi, **the Iranian National Security**, op.cit.

Unquestionably, Tehran is wary of the instability in both Iraq and Afghanistan.¹ However, regardless of the economic and political upheaval, Cordesman argues that Iran does not fear serious internal violence.² However, he acknowledges that domestic opposition constitutes one of many Iranian political, as well as security, concerns. Iran's population includes minorities, among them the Sunni Kurds whose Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (DPIK) advocate violent struggle for independence or autonomy.³ Moreover, the National Liberation Army (NLA) and National Council of Resistance (NCR), who operate under the People's Mujahideen Organization, are considered as an Iraqi-financed Front Group.⁴ Regardless of the fact that Iran emerged as the only winner from the American war against Iraq, Iran is wary of the havoc along its borders with Iraq.⁵ The growing violence between the various radical militias is pressurizing Tehran, as it fears another regional alignment against it from adjacent countries.⁶

2.2. Iran's Economic Motives.

At a global level, economy plays a crucial role in shaping the relationship between the core and periphery states.⁷ Departing from Galtung's "Structural Theory of Imperialism", periphery states of the Middle East are subordinated within a global hierarchical system where periphery states are dependent on the core ones while weakly tied to each other.⁸ As

¹ Kemp, Geoffrey. (2005b). The Influence of the Iranian Program on Gulf's Security. In: **The Gulf: Future Challenges**, (1st ed.): (pp.231-260). Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Studies and Strategic Studies, pp.232-233.

² Cordesman, Anthony H., (1994). **Iran's military Forces: 1988-1993**, CSIS Middle East Dynamic Net Assessment, September, p.68.

³ Ibid, p.69.

⁴ Ibid, p.71.

⁵ Nasr, Valin, (2007). "Who Wins in Iraq?" Foreign Policy, March/April.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Brown, Carl, (1984). **International Politics and the Middle East: Old Rules Dangerous Game**, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp.3-5.

⁸ Hinnebusch, op,cit., p.3.

Brown reveals, weaker states that are threatened by the regional hegemon set in motion, always sought a superpower's protection.¹

Hinnebusch argues that the incorporation of the economy of weak Middle Eastern states in the international capitalist system hindered the development of economic interdependence among them.² In such a context, the foreign policy of the Middle Eastern states was affected by economic needs where weak states tended to trade favorable foreign policy to great powers in return for economic aid. As Keohane and Nye argue, in similar circumstances "powerful states make the rules". Core powers and industrialized states with power resources, especially military ones, determine the international regimes and attempt to reduce the incongruity to their favor.³ Struggling to expand the capitalist system and control oil resources, core powers resort to the withdrawal of aids, economic sanctions, and the use of military force against any regional power trying to shape the system against them as the United States did with Iran and Iraq.⁴

Hence, Iran's attempt to reduce asymmetries and seek autonomy from Western dominance becomes another major motive constituting its foreign policy. Halliday argues that, "*historically, Iran was little affected by the world economy; it had endured military occupation in World Wars, but not colonialism.*"⁵ In the early 1960s, oil revenues helped Iran undergo economic reforms and modernized measures to strengthen the power of the

¹ Brown, op.cit., pp.3-5.

² Hinnebusch, op.cit., p.3.

³ Keohane, Robert O. and Nye, Joseph S., (1977), **Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition**, Canada: little, Brown and Company, Inc. p.42.

⁴ Hinnebusch, op.cit., p. 4.

⁵ Confronted with social unrest and aided by the United States, the regime in Iran introduced state-led industrialization, land reform, literacy program and the promotion of women's public life, Halliday op.cit., p.103.

state.¹ Similarly, oil revenues enabled the leaders of Iran to resist the economic pressure and sanctions imposed by the external power, the United States. Yet, the fall of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the American hegemony, besides the globalization of capitalism rendered the success of any resistance more difficult to achieve.² It's no wonder that during the 1990s Iran tried to increase its strength, not only through arms purchases, but also through seeking economic cooperation with the Gulf countries, states of Central Asia and the Caucasus as well as Europe especially Germany.³

Evidently enough, economics is a major player in the Iranian domestic and external scenes. The availability of large sums of money through oil revenues and foreign investment and the provision of rent for security reasons do contribute to regime stability in many countries.⁴ Yet, as Keohane and Nye argue, *“one should therefore expect international regimes to be undermined from time to time by economic and technological change; but they will not disintegrate entirely, at least not for long. They will quickly be reconstructed to adapt to economic and technological conditions.”*⁵ With antagonism towards the revolutionary egalitarian dogma is on the rise, ironically, the neo-conservatives of Iran – who recently rose by the reformists' defeat - have to undergo economic reforms that introduce solutions to the social and economic inequalities generated in the past by the oligarchy of Tehran's radical clerics.

¹ Halliday, op.cit., p. 103.

² Ibid.

³ The Iranians struggled to boost oil prices during the First Gulf War, which compelled them to cooperate with regional oil producers with whom Tehran had been extremely offensive during the War. Ehteshami, op.cit., p. 289.

⁴ Halliday, op.cit., p. 293.

⁵ Keohane and Nye, op.cit., p. 40.

In every part of the world economic issues, domestic and eternal alike, are interconnected with politics. Only in the Middle East, and in this case Iran, are economic projects planned in order to enforce the ruler's power.¹ Soon after the revolutionary regime was established, the theocratic government declared new economic and social strategies that aimed at developing the industrial sector, encouraging agricultural production and the acrimonious controlling of oil exports.²

However, by the end of the Iraq-Iran war in 1988, the Iranian leaders were confronted with the horrible realities resulting from the revolution economic and political mistakes in the 1980s. The ills of the Iranian economy ranged from negative growth, high rates of unemployment, shortages of investment capital, high imports, to shortage of accessible resources that were magnified by Iran's dependence on oil to provide the capital needed for the importation of technology and industrial expertise from the West.³

In addition to the physical damage inflicted on the Iranian infrastructure by the war with Iraq-especially in southern Iran, contradictions and economic misapplication became the outcomes of a political strife leading to a failure in achieving the minimum petroleum output needed for national survival.⁴ Dependency on oil income augmented by the

¹ Halliday, op.cit., p.262.

² Dean, Lucy, Appeatu, Catroina Holman, Canton Helen, McIntyre Philip , Preston Ian, Frame Lain, Gollan Nichola, Marcham Catriona, Walmsley Nicholas. Ward Daniel, Maher Joanne. Eds. (2005). **The Middle East and North Africa 2005**, Exeter: the Gresham Press. p. 407.

³ Ehteshami, op.cit., p.290.

⁴ In 1979/80 GDP declined by 13% and 10% in 1980/81, a matter that led Imam Khomeini to declare 10 years of austerity as further fall was recorded in the following year, recording a shortage in domestic sources and incapability of meeting population needs, Dean and others, **The Middle East and North Africa, 2005**, op.cit., p. 407.

vulnerability of the Iranian regime as the world was passing through a period of recession leading to falling in oil prices and a 13% downgrading of oil production in 1984.¹

In the context of Iran's politics, the economic imperatives compelled the state's elite to be alert to the economic needs that were aggravated by the disagreement over government's involvement in business, which was intensified by the lack of an efficient and positive leadership, and by the government's strong inclination, toward nationalization of foreign trade.² However, Tehran had to respond to expedient needs of its war with Iraq as the annual expenditure of the war cost \$ 5-9 million.³ In addition, the need to improve the economy to satisfy the interests of the ruling elites compelled the state to trade nationalist foreign policy for the sake of enticing foreign investment.⁴

After all, the revolutionists had to accept the emergence of new variable and actors in the international system, and they had to recognize the role in which globalization and information technology play in creating the intricate connections between states, regardless of their impingement on transforming the cultural and ideological identity of the state.⁵ Hence, before the election of 2005, the *Pasdaran* - the Republic social and military power - admitted that the new social dynamics would necessarily affect the Iranians electoral choices.

The new rising generation, often educated abroad, with MBAs and PhDs from Western countries, ultimately longed to participate in the political arena and endeavored to

¹ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 407.

² The Council of Guardians, which was responsible of conforming legislation with Islamic precepts succeeded in postponing radical reforms favoring governmental control over trade and industry. Ibid, p. 407.

³ Ibid, p. 407.

⁴ Hinnebusch, op.cit., p. 17.

⁵ Fathi, op.cit., p.147-148.

realize its neo-liberal aspirations by favoring its interest over the sustaining of ideological ideals.¹ The conservatives comprehended well the new lesson well, which dictated that the Iranian population is more disposed to accept whatever policies promise economic and social relief.²

Hence, at the end of the first Gulf War, Iran tried to resume economic development but was encumbered by political tension with the West. Additionally, the Iranian leaders had to appease domestic demands whose fulfillment of which was delayed by the fluctuations of oil prices. The Iranian population which was recorded at 25,788,722 in 1966, increased at an average annual rate of 1.6% recording 66,479,838 people in 2003.³ Iran's expanding population became a major economic constraint on the country's development. Notwithstanding the growing numbers of refugees coming from Afghanistan, Iran continued to receive other considerable number of Iraqi Kurds and Shiite who escaped after the American invasion of Iraq. Farmers found difficulty meeting the demand for food while the unemployment rate rose up to a 20% high.⁴ Those problems were aggravated by the government's control of business, the nationalization of foreign trade and the conservatives' opposition to radical reforms.⁵

It is necessary to explore the impact of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, on the Iranian perspective of economics. The end of the Cold war and the establishment of the American hegemony compelled Iran to accept the factuality imposed by globalization and growing economic interdependence as the rise of internationalist coalitions to power inside

¹ Tellier, Frederic, (2005). **The Iranian Moment**, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus No. 52. p.11.

² Tellier, op.cit., p. 11.

³ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 407.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, p. 439.

states created an environment suitable for the integration of the global economy and the settling of regional conflicts.¹ Accordingly, Realism argues that in such an atmosphere economic gains displace security agendas.² Yet, matters seem more difficult to realize with states who demonstrate great resistance to penetration and the universalization of a capitalist economy as Iran and Syria do. In the case of Iran, oil provided it with a shield against the economic effects caused by the end of the Cold War.³

Hence, Globalization was denounced by the Iranians as a continuation of the imperialist project under a new name and new means.⁴ Nevertheless, its effects were so apparent on the politico-economics; it compelled the radical clerics of Iran to accept the realities and try to reconcile their dogma to the rules of the new economic game. Iran had to accept the growing role, which organizations such as World Trade organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF) play in creating new political, economic, technological as well as military transformations in world international relations. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund played a significant role in the proliferation of transnational organizations and the growth of international capital funds.⁵

On the social side, the revolution in technology and information broke social and cultural barriers and accentuated the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and multi national corporations (MNCs).⁶ Therefore, having assimilated that economic development could not be realized while isolated from the world economy, Iran adopted a more moderate policies that acknowledged the systematic forces, the United States'

¹ Hinnebusch, op.cit., p. 22.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, p. 63.

⁴ fathi, op.cit., p. 146.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid, p. 147.

manipulation of the world economy, and the need to adapt to the realist rules of geopolitics. Globalization played a significant role in identifying the winners and losers in the new game of world economics.¹ Definitely, they were not the radical nationalist states like Libya, nor were they the Islamist states - such as Iran - who depended on oil revenues for the realization of their ambitions.²

2.3. Iran's Security Motives.

A state's power and security are central features of international politics whose interpretation is ascribed to the values embedded in the individual system providing their base.³ Acknowledging physical security as dependent on the interplay of the state system and the behavior of its units, diplomatic behavior is regarded as the evident manifestation of the state's political decisions and actions.⁴ However, Greene argues that it is misleading to equate security with power, since a state can become powerful without being secure. While power can be measured by the state's capability or capacity to coerce, influence others and attain security, Greene negate the susceptibility of measuring a state's security by comparing it to the amount other states enjoy. Furthermore, he claims that the attainment of certain interests can compete with the attainment of security, no matter how many these interests seem costly and burdensome.⁵

¹ Ehteshami op.cit., p. 347.

² Ibid.

³ Greene, Fred, (1966). **Dynamics of International Relations: Power, Security and Order**, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, p. vii.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, p. vii.

Kegley and Wittkopf describe national security as “*a nation’s psychological freedom from fear of foreign attack.*”¹ Trying to identify security from the dynamics of a new world order, Kegley and Wittkopf define security as “*the protection against all major threats to human survival and well-being, not just military threats.*”² Both argue that defining security from the prospective of a state’s military capability to deter invasion and attack is insufficient. They assert the need to define security in a new meaning that embrace all the new hazards that jeopardize human life in the Third Millennium, when states find themselves subjects to new kind of threats emanating from environmental, epidemiological as well as economical crises. Hence, proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons as well as AIDS and economical hardship are considered serious threats to the stability of our world against which a global approach must develop and replace the old Zero-sum security game.³

Yet, the application of such global concept of security to Iran seems futile when considering its isolation on the external and domestic fronts alike. On the contrary, Iran’s pervasive sense of fear seems to generate more insecurity as Iran’s military build up raises suspicion of its real intentions and urges its regional neighbors to engage in an arms race. Military preparedness and capabilities will never eliminate the security threats Iran conceive while its neighbors endeavor to contain and deter the new menace envisioned in

¹ Kegley, Charles W. and Wittkopf, Eugene R., (1993). **World Politics: Trend and Transformation**, New York: St. Martin’s Press, p. 389.

² Ibid, p. 434.

³ Ibid.

the Iranian nuclear program. Thus, the solution to the security dilemma lies in the control of force rather in its expensive pursuit.¹

2.3.1. The Role of History in Shaping the Iranian Concept of Security.

The historical background takes its toll on the shaping of the Iranian concept of security. Iran is a country whose civilization dates back seven thousands years and whose population is constituted of many cultures and ethnicities, a matter that adds to its insecurity.² Having witnessed three distinct revolutions, the Iranians developed a pattern for revolutionary discourse both at the domestic and external levels alike.³ Above all, the Iranians had to endure a century and a half of superpower exploitation, that manipulated the domestic politics through interference in government formation and the exploitation of natural resources. This created the enclosed shield by which the Iranians isolated themselves and refused any kind of penetration and interaction with the outside world, hence, rendering the modernization process a superficial one that did not reach the essence of the Iranian culture.⁴

The need to protect the nation's political sovereignty and the freedom of political maneuver is a security challenge facing the Islamic Republic who considers confronting the "American project of a New Middle East" as a major peril compromising its sovereignty.⁵ Regardless of the American wishes for eliciting regime change in Iran, and regardless of the possibility of economic and political upheaval, the Iranian government does not seem to

¹ Kiggley and Wittkopf, op. cit., p. 433.

² Fathi, op.cit., p. 57.

³ The revolution which toppled the Shah, the Islamic Revolution, and the one which transforming the Republic into a theocratic country. Ibid, p.57.

⁴ Ibid, p. 57.

⁵ Ibid.

fear internal instability triggered by minorities, including the Azeri, who despite their apathy still support the central government.¹

However, ethnic minorities continue to pose threat especially the minorities in Kurdistan and Khuzestan who could be manipulated by foreign elements and urged to seek autonomy or independence.² Moreover, they could form a potential vulnerability with only 51% percent of population being ethnic Persians speaking Farsi, while the rest are divided as the following: 24% Azeri; 8% Gilaki and Mazandarani; 7% percent Kurd; 3% Arab, 2% Baloch and 2% Turkmen.³

Interestingly, Iran's predominant threat stems from the Kurds, especially the Iraqi Kurds, whose independence might trigger a domino effect in Iran and Turkey.⁴ Yet, the division among the Kurds in Iran, into pro and anti-regime factions seems to weaken their influence as Iran continues to support the pro-regime members of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), whose militia is estimated to be about 12,000, the Kurdistan Workers of Iraq; and the anti-Turkish Kurdish groups - the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). On the other hand, the anti-regime Kurds include the Kurdish Communist Party and most importantly of all the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (DPIK) who exhibits a tendency toward violent confrontations and undertaking of assassinations, evoking retaliatory assassination by the Iranian intelligence agents against DPIK leaders in Europe.⁵

¹ Cordesman, Anthony, (1994). **Iran's Military Forces: 1988-1993**, CSIS Middle East Dynamic Assessment, Washington, DC: Center for strategic and International Studies, p. 68.

² Saddam Hussein was expecting the Arab population in Khuzestan province to support his attack into Iran in 1980, Takeyh, op.cit., p. 96.

³ The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, **Iran's Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions**, op.cit., p. 86.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ **New York Times**, November 15, 1992, p. A-9, May 6, 1993, p. A-6, cited in Cordesman, op.cit., p. 69.

Another important opposition group is the People's Mujahideen and its National Liberation Army (NLA), which was established in the 1960s by a group of collage - educated leftists who opposed the pro-Western Shah, Mohammad Reza Bahlavi and who continued to oppose the Islamic Revolution after its establishment in 1979.¹ This group was packed, equipped and funded by Saddam's regime starting in 1986, and continued to be so until the invasion of Iraq in 2003, when the U.S. forces cracked down on their bases in Iraq.² The Mujahideen -e- Khalq (MEK) is the largest and most militant group opposing the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was included on the U.S. State Department's list of foreign terrorist groups in 1997 for being responsible for the murders of several American officials in the 1970s and for the murder of many influential Iranians, risking the lives of civilians, and causing civilian casualties by targeting governmental buildings in crowded cities.³

The action taken by the Iranian troops against the Mujahideen camps during the Gulf War in 1992 and 1993 reveals how serious is the threat emanating from them. The Iranians did not hesitate to attack the Mujahideen bases near Baghdad by launching 8-12 Iranian F-4 and F-5 air strikes, marking the first Iranian attacks on Iraqi territories since the cease-fire of 1988.⁴ While exaggerated reports claim that MEK troops escalated from 15,000 to 45,000 in 1992, real estimation of their military manpower is estimated to be about 18,000.⁵ However, journalists who visited the Mujahideen camps remain skeptic

¹ Global Security.org. (2006). Military. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/mek.htm>.

² Cordesman, op.cit., p. 69.

³ Global Security.org, Military, op.cit.

⁴ **Armed Forces Journal**, March 1992, pp. 26-28; **Washington Times**, January 16, 1992, p. G-4, April 6, 1992, p. 8.

⁵ Cordesman, (1994). **Iran's Military Forces: 1988-1993**, op.cit., p. 70.

regarding the former's claim of raising about \$45 million from Iranian exiles considering the poor situation they found the poorly armed guerrillas in.¹

Despite the elimination of the Taliban regime, Saddam's regime and the weakening of opposition groups outside Iran, the Mujahideen e-khalq, for example, the Iranians still fear the American's hegemonic attempts to control oil resources and maintain Israel's security the most.² The complexity of defining the Iranian sense of insecurity lies in the submerging of the survival of the political community of Iran in the national security that is implicated in Iran's sense of fear of outside attack. The American military presence surrounding Iran in the Gulf, Afghanistan and Caucasus threatens the regime's survivability, the matter that emphasizes the linkage between the domestic and external threats. Added to the aforementioned factors, the enhanced economic expectations of the Iranians whose population's growth and the pace of industrialization causes frustration especially among the Youth, among whom unemployment reaches 14%.³ The failure to fulfill domestic demands impend generating social instability, that if compounded with the exigencies along its frontiers magnifies the Islamic Republic's insecurity and its predicament for collapse.⁴

¹ Cordesman, (1994). **Iran's Military Forces: 1988-1993**, op.cit., p. 70.

² In 2003, French authorities raided MEK compound outside Paris and arrested about 160 people including Mariam Rajavi wife of Massoud Rajavi, Global Security.org, **Military**, op.cit.

³ The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, Iran's Nuclear Program: Realities and Repercussions, op.cit., p.85.

⁴ Brian Hocking and Michael Smith, (1990). **World politics: an Introduction to International Relations**, New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, p.138.

2.4. Iran's Goals: Quest for Regional Hegemony, Economic Influence and Prestige.

In his analysis of national interests, Greene negates the possibility of identifying a specific set of interests that is applicable to all states alike.¹ Apart from the aforementioned motives, Greene recognizes the role in which interests such as expansionism and national pride play in directing the external policies of a state. Moreover, he recognizes that “*the desire to subject all nearby states has served as a motive for throughout history*”² On the other hand, many strategists consider state's objectives as a product of the national interest.³

Here, the term objectives refer to the “*image of a future state of affairs and future set of conditions which governments through individual policy-makers aspire to bring about by wielding influence abroad and by changing or sustaining the behavior of other states*”.⁴ Thus, any objectives could not be regarded as such unless they are preferred and endorsed by the political community of the state.⁵ Hence, regional hegemony could be considered a major goal provoking Tehran's quest for nuclear power since the goal has long been considered as part of the Iranian ambitions.

Here, the word hegemony refers to the “*preponderance of power and influence,*”⁶ which enables the hegemonic power to have control over material resources, capital and markets and the production of valuable good.⁷ Moreover, the advantage of being

¹ Greene, op.cit., p.37.

² Ibid, p. 48.

³ Malhotra, Vinay Kumar, (2001). **International Relations**, New Delhi: Amol Publications Pvt. Ltd, p. 185.

⁴ Snyder Richard C., Bruck H. W., and Burton Sapin, (1962). Decision-Making as an Approach to International Politics. In Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin, (Eds.), **Foreign Policy Decision-Making**, New York: Free Press of Blencoe, Inc. p. 82, cited in Holsti, (1976), **International Politics, A Frame Work for Analysis**, op.cit., p.127.

⁵ Malhotra, op.cit., p. 185.

⁶ Kegley, and Wittkopf, op.cit., p. 214.

⁷ Ibid, p. 214.

hegemonic lies in the ability of the hegemonic state to impose rules that facilitate the imposition and fulfillment of its interests. Many analysts of International Relations such as Charles Kindleberger, acknowledge the positive side of hegemony through emphasizing its role in bringing order and stability especially to the world economy. The preponderant state plays a stabilizing role in international economics through setting rule for states' conducts and the provision of public goods to subordinate weaker states.¹

Conversely, Giplin accentuates the negative side of hegemony by exposing coercion as the means by which hegemonic states enforce rules regardless of its positive or negative consequences to the coerced states.² Hence, it is plausible to discern that Iran's ambitious dreams of resurrecting the prestigious legacy of its ancient Persian empire, besides the revolutionary dreams of spreading the Islamic Ideology and maintaining the survivability of the theocratic regime, are the major determinants propelling its thriving for regional preponderance. However, this thriving necessitate the development of the regime's military and technological capabilities, along with nuclear power, a matter that provides Iran with the most influential means of deterrence against external threats surrounding the Revolutionary regime from all sides.³

Historically, Iran had, and still exhibits, expansionist interest through the region and the Arabian Gulf in general, as the Arabian Gulf is Iran's most direct link to the international petroleum market.⁴ In addition, Iraq has its historical importance for the Iranians because it was the capital of the Persian Empire from 226 to 651AD under the

¹ Kegley and Wittkopf, op. cit., p. 215.

² Ibid.

³ Fathi, op.cit., 284.

⁴ Takeyh, op.cit., p. 63.

Sassanid dynasty in Iraq.¹ The Sassanid's capital was on the western Iraqi shores of the river that is known today as Shatt al-Arab. According to Shaul Bakhash, this provided the Iranians with the needed propaganda during their war with Iraq in 1980s to justify and rationalize their territorial and political control by using cultural superiority in the past.² Considering the historical background of its ancient civilization, which is amplified by its strategic location and its important demographic factor, Iran always resisted being second in the position of being a regional power.³

Hence, soon after the British declaration of their intention to leave the Gulf in 1968, the Shah of Iran claimed the three islands of Abu Musa, the Tunbs and Bahrain, and though he had stopped pressing his claims to Bahrain, the Shah continued seizure of the three Emirate Islands.⁴ Regardless of the rational used to justify the Iranian's occupation of the three Emirate Islands of Abu Musa, and the Greater and lesser Tunbs, one day before the British relinquished their military control on the 30th of November, 1971, the Iranian marines used hovercraft to seize the three islands.⁵ The action itself was considered as declaration of Iran's growing regional power and its attempts to rearrange the balance of the power to its favor. The occupation of the islands enhanced Iran's control of the Straits of Hormuz; the vital entrance to the Gulf; through which 20% of the world's oil passes. Most importantly, it extended the Iranian waters by providing Iran with much needed

¹ Bakhash, Shaul, (2004). The Troubled Relationship: Iran and Iraq, 1930-80, In: Potter Lawrence G. and Sick, Bary G., (Eds.), **Iran, Iraq and the Legacies of War**, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, Ltd., p. 12.

² Ibid, p. 12.

³ The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, **Iran's Nuclear Program Realities and Reprecussions**, op.cit, p. 67.

⁴ Cordesman, op.cit., p.15.

⁵ For detailed explanations on both sides' claims to the Islands read Anthony H. Cordesman, (1994). **Iran's Military Forces: 1988-1993**, op.cit.,p. 15.

protection for its naval bases, as well as the control of oil and gas passage through the Gulf.¹

The ambition of projecting political as well as economic influence is another major goal of the conservative Ahmadi-Nejad who is displaying a setback in domestic policy towards Khomeini's legacy through the advocacy of a statist economic policy and through the application of strict Islamic rule.² On the international front, Ahmadi-Nejad is avowing to punish the Arab countries, and even the radical Palestinian groups who enjoy his assistance and support if they consent to a sign peace treaty with Israel,³

'If someone is under the pressure of hegemonic power (i.e. the West) and misunderstands something is wrong, or he is naïve, or he is an egotist and his hedonism leads him to recognize the Zionist regime – he should know that he will burn in the fire of the Islamic Ummah (nation)'⁴

Considering prestige as the by-product of foreign policy and not its primary objective, national societies do seek the substance of power rather than its reputation.⁵ However, national societies who are protected in their existence by an integrated system of social institutions can indulge in competition for prestige, as its loss or gain has effect on their power position in the international system.⁶ Hence, Iran's tenacious pursuit of prestigious status in the international system can be attributed not only to the Iranian psyche in which the unique history of splendid and ancient civilizations is inscribed, but

¹ Cordesman, (1994). **Iran's Military Forces: 1988-1993**, op.cit., p. 15.

² Takeyh, op.cit. p. 212.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Middle East Media Research Institute, Memri, (2005). Iran, A Special Dispatch Series No. 1013.

⁵ Morgenthau Hanz J., (1978). **Politics among Nations, The Struggle for Power and Peace**, New York: Alfred. A. Knopf, p.85.

⁶ Ibid.

also to the humiliation felt by the Mongol and Arab conquest of their lands, notwithstanding their influence and cultural distinction which dominated the Arab courts.¹

Worst of all, Iran became part of the Western struggle for domination of Central Asia, once between the Russians and the British and the second between the Americans and the Soviets.² Contrary to what appears to be, the Islamic Republic's inflammatory rhetoric about Islamic aspiration reveals its isolation and the paradox governing its foreign behavior. This seems behind the neo-conservatives' latest inclination towards economic liberalization that would enhance economic development, while asserting its national independence.³

Iran's aspiration of gaining economic influence revived after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, thinking that time is ripe to gain its lost influence over the Southern Caucasus as attempt to revive the glories of its Persian Empire.⁴ Today, the Iranians are enhancing their cultural influence, as they cannot realistically stand as economic power considering the domestic problems they have to solve first. In an attempt to gain economic influences in the Caucasus countries, the Iranians are using cultural means, as Central Asia seems more receptive to that, considering the national reforms the Iranian have to undertake before dictating any economic strategies on the young Central Asian States who are going through economic troubles.⁵ However, the competition between Turkey and Iran is inflaming over who gains power since both nations have stepped into the power vacuum

¹ Takeyh, op.cit., p. 61.

² Ibid, p. 62.

³ Tellier, op.cit., p. 5.

⁴ Gerny, Francois, (2004). "Iran Ambitious Regional Power," translated by Marie Anderson, Politics, article published in 14/2/2004, in Politics. www.Caucaz.com.

⁵ Ibid.

left by the disintegrating union to reassert ancient cultural, religious and commercial bonds with more than 50 million Soviet Muslims.¹

Facing an economic predicament with the prospect of the United Nations' implementing sanctions against Tehran, the Iranians are trying to play another card that would guarantee them some economic, as well political, influence. Nationalism and the economy are the twofold nature of the Iranian neo-conservatives, who endeavor to realize the Chinese model by enriching the middle classes through economic and social liberalization, while not challenging the theocratic legitimacy of the Republic.² While nationalism is played domestically, the economy is used externally to exert some influence that would help Iran break up its political isolation. Iran's latest expression of its desire to be a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) represents its intent of entering into a political and economical alliance with Russia, China and the former Soviet States.³

Iran's ambition of achieving economic dominance in Asia is the device by which it struggles to circumvent the prospect of economic sanctions imposed by the Europeans and the Americans. Securing an influential friend among the Security Council members could prove profitable for both parties.⁴ Iran is in desperate need for the reconstructing of its gas and oil infrastructure, and so is China who needs to satisfy its thirst for energy required for its industrialization.

¹ Drozdiak, William, (1991). "Iran and Turkey Vie for Political Influence in Soviet Muslim States," **The Washington Post**, November 24.

² Tellier, op.cit., p. 13.

³ Glover, Peter C., (2007). "Facing Economic Squeeze, Iran Plays Asian Energy Game," **World Politics Watch**, February 7.

⁴ Ibid.

Conclusion.

The aforementioned analysis of Iran's motivation for power quest reveals that security as well as political and ideological survivability of the regime are among the major motives propelling Iran toward the accumulation of military capabilities and nuclear power. However, the economy, as well as regional influence, plays crucial roles as Iran faces domestic disturbances that could be exacerbated by the imposition of economic sanctions against the regime. Success in maintaining political and ideological survivability is conditioned by the improvement of the economic situation, and the acquirement of nuclear technology will enhance its regional and international position and facilitate the realization of its long wished for dreams of dominance.

CHAPTER THREE

IRAN'S NATIONAL POWER.

Power is one of the defining features of the realist state-centric perspective of international relations.¹ Depicting international politics as “*a struggle for power*,” Morgenthau argues that no matter whether the struggle is defined in religious, philosophic, economic or social terms, or the means adopted, power is the ultimate aim.² Although power is a core concept for realists, non-consensus regarding its definition prevailed, as some defined it as the military, economic, technological and diplomatic capabilities of the state; others see it as “capabilities relative to the capabilities of other states”.³

Maire Dugan defined power as, “*the capacity to influence others’ behavior, to get others to do what challengers want, rather than what the initial parties themselves want*”.⁴ Similarly, Joseph Nye defined co-optive power as “*the ability to shape what others want*”.⁵ On the other hand, Louis Kriesberg described the mechanism by which an adversary or a party achieves a desired outcome as such: “*A conflict party has three basic ways to induce adversaries to move toward the position it desires: it may try to persuade, coerce, or reward the opponents*”.⁶

¹ Brown, Chris and Ainley, Kirsten, (2005). **Understanding International Relations**, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 91.

² Morgenthau, Hanz J. (1973). **Politics Among the Nations, the Struggle for Power and Peace**, (5th ed.), New York: Prager, p. 27.

³ Viotti, Paul R. and Kauppi, Mark V. (1999). **International Relations Theory, Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond**, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p.64.

⁴ Dugan, Maire A. (2003). “Power,” The Conflict Resolution Information Source.

⁵ Nye, Joseph S. (1990). “Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of World Power,” **Political Science Quarterly**. Vol. 106. No. 2, pp.177-192.

⁶ Dugan, op.cit.

During the 1960s and 1970s, researchers diverted their attention from studying national power as a determinant for international relations and center of world politics, to the study of international interdependence and the role of transnational organization in shaping international relations.¹ However, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the proliferation of nuclear weapons during the present decade, national power, especially military power regained its significance as a major variable in world politics.²

While military capabilities dominate other forms of power, national resources, national capabilities and the possession of raw materials are perquisite to the achievement of state power, since resources are the means by which an actor - in this case, the state - has the potentials to influence outcomes.³ Morgenthau defines political power as “a *psychological relation between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised*”⁴. Morgenthau argues that the impact of this psychological relation on one party is derived from the expectations of benefits, fear of disadvantage, and the respect for men and institutions.⁵ Conversely, Joseph Nye contends that potential bargaining is still needed for exploiting the asymmetries of interdependence between those who exercise power and those with whom it is exercised.⁶ States’ preoccupation with power derives from the set of interests, which range from self-preservation, national identity, wealth, prestige and the freedom of decision and maneuverability.

¹ Greene, op.cit. p.145.

² Knorr, Klaus, (1983). **Power, Strategy and Security**, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 34.

³ Morgenthau, Hans J. (1973), **Politics Among Nations, the Struggle for Power and Peace**, op.cit., p.28.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Keohane, Robert O., and Nye, Joseph S., (1977). **Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition**, Canada: little, Brown and Company, Inc. p.11.

Most strategists identify power from the perspective of a relation of influence in which people, groups, or states exert influence on others to get their way in the world.¹ Similarly, Robert Dahl depicted relational power as the ability to get another actor to do what it would not otherwise have done or not to do what it would otherwise have done.² He contends that power cannot be measured by attributes but rather by its action, still not denying the relation between both aspects, as the exercised power is a reflection of the actor's attributes.³ Comparably, Holsti argues that, in the contemporary international system, the achievement of most collective domestic and external goals are dependent on the reactions and actions stimulated by another state's influence.⁴ Hence, the relationship between power as "*influence*" and resources are paramount as resources are crucial while promising rewards or when threatening punishment.⁵

Morgenthau draws distinctions between four different kinds of power: Power as influence, power as force, usable and unusable power, and legitimate and illegitimate power.⁶ For Greene, Power has three main aspects: the physical, the economic, and the power of persuasion.⁷ In contrast to the domestic world, where coercion is less required than the other two aspects, in the realm of international politics, physical force is usually required to coerce or achieve support whenever security and survival are at stake.

¹ Brown, Chris and Ainley, Kirsten, (2005). **Understanding International Relations**, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, p.82.

² Dahl, Robert, (1970). **Modern Politics Analysis**, New York: Prentice Hall, mentioned in Chris Brown and Kirsten Ainley, op.cit. p. 82.

³ Brown and Ainley, op.cit., p.83.

⁴ Holsti, K. J. (1976). **International Politics: A Frame Work Analysis**, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. p.192.

⁵ Brown and Ainley. op.cit., p. 86.

⁶ Morgenthau, (1973), op.cit., p. 29.

⁷ Greene, op.cit., p.148.

Power is exigent for a state's survival.¹ However, power is not always force,² since there are other uses of power.³ Power sustains the state's ability to negotiate in order to avert major crises; it bestows flexibility, broader maneuverability, and a variety of alternatives that help pursue difficult objectives. Moreover, it determines the degree of the state's freedom and its ability to respond to changes as well as the state's reliance on other alliances that might limit its options and stratagem.⁴

Nevertheless, power is relative, not absolute, and is subject to change.⁵ As states may compete over the achievement of one international objective, their powers might be equal or unequal. Yet, a weaker power could influence a stronger one and cause its defeat.⁶ The asymmetries in powers do not necessarily give advantage to the state with the grandest armament or advanced military technologies over the other states or weaker states because power does not constitute of force only, and because a weaker state may succeed in achieving its objective by other means.

Some powers are "*impotent*".⁷ When security is connected to power, an improvement of one state's power means a lesser security of the other.⁸ Moreover, an increase in military build up of a state could stimulate a decrease in its security,⁹ as in the case of Iran, which is facing economic sanctions and a potential preemptive attack by the United States against its nuclear facilities. Thus, assessment of differential powers should

¹ Greene, op.cit., p.151.

² Walter, S. Jones, (1991). **The Logic of International Relations**, Long Island: Harper Collins Publishers, p. 242.

³ Greene, op.cit., p.151.

⁴ Ibid, pp.152-155.

⁵ Morgenthau, (1973), op.cit., pp. 154-156.

⁶ Knorr, op.cit., p. 5.

⁷ Jones, op.cit., p. 242.

⁸ Greene, op.cit.p. 159.

⁹ Ibid.

be based on their success of achieving outcomes, as greater power is ascribed to the actor who prevails regardless of the fact that the possessed power is weak or disorganized.¹

Psychology and perception play an important role in outlining the power relationship.² Rosenau argues that since power relationships are dyadic, the relationship is governed by the dynamics of conscious effort to control that is impinged by the two parties' perception of each other rather than by factors which lie either within or outside the interactive relationship, and which cause the behavioral modification one party achieves by influencing the other party.³ Hence, power is:

“a state’s influence (or capacity to influence or coerce)” that “is not only determined by its capabilities (or relative capabilities) but also by (1) its willingness (and perceptions by other state of its willingness) to use these capabilities and (2) its control or influence over other states” whose success is determined by the outcomes resulting of states’ interaction.”⁴

3.1. Elements of National Power.

Rosenau contends that the concept of power is illusive and ambiguous.⁵ He ascertains that power components are subject to dispute because many of its elements are intangible, such as morale, which necessitates introducing the system of values while assessing the importance of the individual power components.⁶ Regardless of the fact that measuring

¹ Rosenau, (1990). *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*, op.cit. p. 183.

² Ibid.

³ For more details on the control and influence relationship read Rosenau, James, (1963). *Control as a Unifying Concept in the Study of International Politics and Foreign Policy*, Center for International Studies Research Monograph no. 15, Princeton: Princeton University, p. 183.

⁴ Viotti, Paul R., and Kauppi, Mark V., (1999). *International Relations Theory, Realism, Pluralism and Globalism*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p.65.

⁵ Rosenau, (1990), op.cit. p.244.

⁶ Ibid, p. 455.

national power is as contentious, as is the definition of power itself, the task is of importance when it comes to understanding a state's behavior and its operation in the international system, especially at times of war and peace.¹

The difficulty of measuring power arises from the nature of power which is composed of material (tangible) and behavioral (intangible) resources.² Among the tangible, geography, population, and natural resources are considered the most important ingredients of power.³ In addition to the tangible, Morgenthau recognizes national character, national morale, quality of society, quality of diplomacy, quality of government and the political system, as part of the socio-psychological elements that enhances a state's power.⁴ In addition, he recognizes nuclear power as a kind of unusable power and negates that an increase in military power is contributive to political power.⁵ However, he contends that nuclear power is effective in foreign policy against a state that lacks the same capability.⁶

The aforementioned theoretical discussion is to introduce an understanding of Iran's national power by considering the most important tangible and intangible elements of power. Most Iranians believe that their country has the potential of being a regional power by dint of geography, demography, and natural resource endowments like gas and oil.⁷ In their view, destiny and geopolitics dictate that Iran be the dominant power in the Arabian Gulf. Since Iran is the largest Gulf state, elements such as geography, demography, natural

¹ Viotti and Kauppi, op.cit., p. 65.

² Jones, op.cit., p. 241.

³ Ibid, p. 243.

⁴ Morgenthau, (1973), op.cit. pp. 112-134.

⁵ Ibid, p. 29.

⁶ Ibid, p. 29.

⁷ Eisenstadt, Micheal, (2001). "The Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, An Assessment," **Middle East Review of International Affairs**, Vol.5, No. 1, March.

resources, economy, technology, and military capabilities are considered when dealing with tangible elements of the Iranian power.

On the other hand, intangible elements will include the role of leadership, nationalism and the quality of foreign policy, alongside alliance potentials - which will be dealt with while considering Iran's security strategy – which considered the most psychological elements constituting the Iranian power.

3.1.1. The Tangible Elements of Iran's National Power.

Iran is a large country with a great civilization and its national power contain different elements. Chiefly among them are the following:

3.1.1.1. Geopolitics.

Iran is the largest, most populous, and potentially most powerful state in the Middle East.¹ Morgenthau considers geography as one of the most important, permanent elements of the state's power, which has a role in forging the future of the state.² The location of the state has its implication on the sense of ease the state exhibits by its size, or the sense of insecurity, which is represented by the difficulty in guarding the length of its hostile borders.³ Moreover, geographical factors such as climate, topography, location and size influence the power potential of a nation and its susceptibility to become a great power capable of expansion, or its vulnerability to invasion.⁴

¹ El-Shazly, Nadia and Hinnebusch Raymond, (2002). The Challenge of Security in the Post-Gulf War Middle East System. In: Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan, Ehtashami (Eds.), **The Foreign Policies of the Middle East States**, (pp. 71-90), London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p. 80.

² Morgenthau, (1973), op.cit. p.158.

³ Jones, op.cit. p. 244.

⁴ Malhotra, op.cit., p. 58.



Figure 1. A Map of Iran

<http://www.iranatom.ru/media/iri/map/mapc.htm>

Iran is located in the southwestern Asia, which makes it an outlet for the three land locked countries along its borders: Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. Thus, serves as a connection to the Gulf and to South East Asia.¹ The size of a country is an important element; as in any comparison between states, the larger country has the advantage over the smaller ones, as Iran does when compared to smaller states in the Gulf such as Bahrain and Qatar.² Iran's land area is 1,648,000 square kilometers, which is about one-fifth the size of the continental United States and ranks as sixteenth in size among the countries of the world.³

From a realistic perspective, geopolitics and a state's capabilities are important determinants of foreign policy, to the extent of shaping its strategic importance or vulnerability of its location by creating its threats as well as ambitions.⁴ Iran's land mass constitutes 99.3% and about 12 square Kilometers is water which is 0.7% of its space.⁵ Being one of the world's most mountainous countries, Iran's mountains have helped in shaping both the political and the economic history of the country for several centuries.⁶

Iran shares its entire northern border with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan.⁷ This border extends for more than 2,000 kilometers, including nearly 650

¹ Fathi, op.cit., p. 12.

² Greene, op.cit., p. 171.

³ Library of Congress Country Studies, [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+ir0005\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+ir0005))

⁴ Hinnebusch Raymond, (2002). Introduction: The Analytical Frame work. In Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, (Eds.), **The Foreign Policies of the Middle East States**, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers. p. 21.

⁵ fathi, op.cit. p. 14.

⁶ Library of Congress, Country studies, op.cit.

⁷ Fathi, op.cit. p.14.

kilometers of water along the southern shore of the Caspian Sea.¹ Its other borders are with Turkey to the west, Iraq to the south, terminating at the Shatt al Arab, which Iranians call the Arvand Rud. From the south, it over looks the *Arabian Gulf* and the Gulf of Oman, and its littoral waters form the entire 1,770-kilometer southern border including the vital Strait of Hormuz.² To the east lies Afghanistan on the north and Pakistan on the south.³ Iran's diagonal distance from Azerbaijan in the northwest to Baluchestan via Sistan in the southeast is approximately 2,333 kilometers.⁴

Iran's sovereignty claims 12 nautical miles over territorial waters in both the Caspian Sea and The Arabian Sea, a factor that augmented Iran's regional importance, and its economic and trade influence.⁵ The importance of sea power is not confined to the marine and naval maneuverability implicated by the needs of security, but also to the importance in facilitating international trade and the provision of other services that are vital to the national enrichment.⁶ However, the topological nature of the Arabian Gulf is shallow and full of coral coasts at the Arab side while it is rocky and very precipitous at the Iranian side.⁷

Iran's strategic importance stems from its location, which overlooks the Strait of Hormuz. In 2003, it was estimated that the vast majority (about 90%) of oil exported from the Arabian Gulf is transited by tanker through the Strait of Hormuz, which is located

¹ Library of Congress, Country studies, op.cit.

² Since the 1960s, starting with Gamal Abdel Nasser and the proponents of pan-Arabism, Arab states have often used the name *Arabian Gulf* for the body commonly known as the Persian Gulf, even in their English publications. Seven countries overlook the Arabian Gulf: Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Oman. Gulf states contain 118 million people. **An Introduction to the Gulf Region**, <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/country.shtml>

³ fathi, op.cit. p. 13.

⁴ Library of Congress Country studies, op.cit.

⁵ Fathi, op.cit., p. 13.

⁶ Jones, op. cit., p 245.

⁷ fathi, op.cit, p. 13.

between Oman and Iran.¹ The Strait consists of two channels, which are two miles wide for inbound and outbound tanker traffic, as well as buffer zone, which is also two miles wide. Oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz account for roughly two-fifths of all world traded oil, and closure of the Strait of Hormuz would require the use of longer alternate routes (if available) at increased transportation costs.² Such routes include the approximately 5-million barrels.per.day capacity East-West Pipeline across Saudi Arabia to the port of Yanbu, and the Abqaiq-Yanbu natural gas liquids line across Saudi Arabia to the Red Sea. The 15.0-15.5 million barrels.per.day or so of oil, which is transported through the Strait of Hormuz, goes both east to Asia (especially Japan, China, and India), and west (via the Suez Canal, the Sumed pipeline, and around the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa) to Western Europe and the United States.³

The control of such a large space provided Iran with the potentiality to be a regional power; yet, its assets have been deployed in defense of its autonomy against Western interests.⁴ However, the ability to disrupt the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz and its being a connection between Central Asia, Middle East and the Caucasus, enhanced Iran's strategic importance and helped in forging the Iranian's sense of pride and greatness by rendering them open to the outside world and other civilizations.⁵ Nevertheless, Iran's important location not only enticed the United States to use it as part of its policy of containing the Soviet Union, but also attracted the European Union to enter into

¹ Energy Information Administration, (2004). Persian Gulf Oil and Gas Exports Fact Sheet, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/pgulf.html>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ehteshami, op.cit., p. 284.

⁵ fathi, op.cit., p. 13.

partnership, considering Iran's relatively stable environment and its adjacency to dangerous part of the Balkans and the Middle East.¹

The Influence of Geopolitics on Iran's Security.

Iran's geo-strategic importance is considered an asset as much it is considered a liability when it comes to Iranians sense of aggrandizement.² Situated on the Eurasian crossroads, the legacy of the ancient Persian Empire has its repercussions on shaping the modern Iranian regional ambitions by extending them to the borders of Western Asia.³ As the size and location, as well as the neighboring states play a significant role in shaping national history, the implications of geo-strategic significance have both positive and negative consequences.⁴ On the positive side, it facilitated spreading the Persian dominance in Asia, while on the negative side, it threatened the Persian's security by exposing it to the manipulation of outside and far non-regional powers, hence, creating a perpetual fear and a strong tendency towards nationalism.⁵

Consequently, the Iranians were disposed to perceive the Arabian Gulf as the natural extension to their national security dimension because they have the longest coastal line compared to that of the Arabic countries and because 80% of Iranian oil is transported through it.⁶ Hence, the Iranians' expansionist ambitions were generated by a competitive outlook towards the Arab countries and the Arab nationalism emanating from those countries, while Iran continuously had to protect its territorial integrity against adverse

¹ Fathi, op.cit., pp. 27-28.

² Ibid, p. 28.

³ Ehteshami, op.cit., p. 283.

⁴ Greene, op.cit., p. 170.

⁵ Cottam, Richard, (1997). **Nationalism In Iran**, Pitterspurgh: Pitterspurgh Press, as cited in Ehteshami, op.cit., p. 248.

⁶ Fathi, op. cit., p. 30.

historical empires (the Ottoman Empire) and against the interference of Western/Eastern powers.¹ However, Iran's resurrected ambitions of regional hegemony supported by its misconceived beliefs of its invincibility; added to this a sense of exaggerated arrogance, playing a significant role in isolating Iran and undermining its attempt to sustain political and regional influence.²

Geography has and still plays a significant part in shaping Iran's foreign policy.³ The implications rely on the fact a nation who is protected at its borders by buffers or some kind of other political or physical barriers, has some advantage over an unfriendly neighbor.⁴ Here, topography plays an important role in the defense of a the nation as mountains, valleys and rivers may create natural boundaries, limiting other nations' natural expansions by creating difficulties to an enemy intending to occupy a large territory.⁵ The depth, which Iran enjoys in the east and northeast, represented by a basin surrounded by a series of mountains that form a barrier against any military attack form the East.⁶ Moreover, Iran enjoys land depth from its frontier with Iraq.

However, a large frontier can also be a threat more than a protection.⁷ Iran is land locked from the north, east and west, and shares borders with Turkey, Pakistan, Central Asia and the Caucasus, with whom it lacks strategic homogeneity, a matter that complicates the application of a comprehensive security strategy, considering the personal alliances and

¹ Ehteshami, op.cit. p. 285.

² The Iranians perception of being able to counter outside pressure is apparent in Ayatollah Khomeini's words, "America cannot do anything", Ibid, p. 285.

³ Ibid, p. 248

⁴ Greene, op.cit.p. 169.

⁵ Malhotra, op.cit., pp, 58-59.

⁶ Fathi, op.cit., p. 16.

⁷ Greene, op.cit., p. 169

coalitions of the individual countries.¹ Acknowledging the vital and strategic importance of Strait of the Hormuz, Iran continues to exploit the difficulty of delimitations, due to the presence of many small islands, by violating both the littoral shores of Oman and the United Arab Emirates and by installing surveillance patrols there.² Most importantly, oil wells exist in the important region of Khuzestan, bordering the Gulf, a matter that has its implication on the security of those wells.³

The aforementioned analysis suggests that Iran's geostrategic distinction is considered an asset more than a liability. Therefore, being one of the largest states in the region, any major unrest in Iran will have repercussions on the Arabian Gulf, The Middle East, Central Asia and Turkey.⁴ The American support for the neighboring Azerbaijani government and the encouragement given to the Pakistani-Azerbaijani and Turkish alliance against Iran concerning the construction of gas pipelines from the Caspian Sea is another example of the war launched to prevent Tehran from enhancing its strategic and economic position⁵. Yet, Iran is capable of dire retaliation either by overt or covert actions such as thwarting the vital goals of the United States in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and disrupting its presence in the region.⁶

¹ Fathi, op.cit., 30.

² Ibid, p. 31.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Perkovich, George and Manzanerio, Silivia, (2005), Iran Gets The Bomb-Then What? In: Henry Sokolski and Patrick Clawson (Eds.), **Getting Ready for a Nuclear Ready Iran**, (pp.177-206), Strategic Studies Institute. P.177.

⁵ Fathi, op.cit. p. 31

⁶ Perkovich, George and Manzanerio, Silivia, (2005), Iran Gets The Bomb-Then What? In: Henry Sjkolski and Patrick Clawson (Eds.), **Getting Ready for a Nuclear Ready Iran**, Strategic Studies Institute p.177.

3.1.1.2. Demography.

Population is one of the tangible elements constituting the national power of states.¹ Notwithstanding the significance population plays in fulfilling the objectives of foreign policies, the quality of manpower is crucial and equals the importance of quantity, as a good population provides the needed military personnel, active civilians, technical workers, as well as the producers and consumers of national goods.²

Iran's population is diverse, encompassing people of different religions and ethnicities. In the 2006 census, Iran's population was declared to be 70,049,262 of whom 51% of present-day Iranians are Iranian people and native speakers of Indo-European languages.³ The diversity is as follows: 51% Persian, 24% Azeri, 8% Gilaki and Mazandarani, 7% Kurd, 3% Arab, 2% Lur, 2% Baluch, 2% Turkmen, and 1% Qashqai, Armenians, Persian Jew, Georgian, Assyrian, Circassian, Tats, and Pashtun.⁴ The minorities, of course, include Gilakis, Mazandarani, Lurs, and Baluchis. Turkic speakers, such as the Azeri, Turkmen, and the Qashqai peoples, also comprise a substantial minority.⁵ The remainder is primarily Semitics such as Arabs and Assyrians or other Indo-Europeans such as the Armenians.⁶ There are also small communities of Brahui in southeastern Iran.⁷

The distribution of the population is dependent on topographical and ethnical factors, as most of the people live either in the agricultural lands or in the areas near their

¹ Malhotra, op.cit. p. 59.

² Ibid.

³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran#Demographics>, Iran.

⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, (2007), The World Fact Book, Iran, <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ir.html#People>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran#Demographics>, Iran.

ethnic origins.¹ The majority of Iranians are Muslims; 80% belong to the Shii branch of Islam, the official state religion, and about 9% belong to the Sunni branch, mainly Kurds and Iran's Balochi Sunni². The remaining 3% are non-Muslim. Other religious minorities include Baha'is, Mandeans, Hindus, Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians.³

The latter three minority religions are officially recognized and are protected by having reserved seats in the *Majles* (Parliament)⁴. However, some sources claim that the Baha'i Faith, Iran's largest religious minority, is not officially recognized, and has been persecuted during its existence in Iran. Since the 1979 revolution, the persecution of Baha'is has increased with executions, the denial of civil rights and liberties, and the denial of access to higher education and employment.⁵ The following table represents the components of the Iranian population according to profession and social status.

Table 1. Iran's Population Component.

Population Component			Social Structure
Ethnicity	Language	Religion	
Persians	Farsi	Shiite Muslim	Religious Clerics
Azeris	Turkish Azeri	Sunni Muslim	Merchants
Gilakis	Kurdish	Judaism	Militaries
Kurds	Lori	Zradishism	Students
Arabs	Arabic	Christian	Tribes
Lurs	Qashqai	Kldan/Armen	Peasants

Source: Muhammed Saeed Al Sabagh, Direction of Reform in the Iranian Society, Middle East magazine, Issue No. 15, October 2005, p.162.

¹ Fathi, op.cit.p. 18.

² Wikipedia, Iran, Demographics, op.cit.

³ fathi, op.cit., p. 18.

⁴ Wikipedia, Iran Demographics, op.cit.

⁵ Ibid.

Iran's ethnic minorities share a wide spread sense of discrimination and deprivation from the central government of Tehran. Such feelings were aggravated by Iran's strategy of highly central development, creating a gap between the center and the periphery and resulting in uneven distribution of power and socioeconomic resources.¹ Unrest among minorities in Khuzestan and Baluchistan is increasing, as they continue to demand independence, stimulated by the success of other ethnic groups in neighboring countries, and by the example of Kurds and Turkmen who are playing important roles in the new Iraqi government.²

The Kurds in northwestern Iran, which is adjacent to Iraqi Kurdistan, comprise 7% of the Iranian population³. The Kurds have had previous insurrections against Tehran and now, with their ethnic brothers in Iraqi Kurdistan enjoying virtual independence, the urge for autonomy is greater than ever.⁴ Moreover, the Arabs (many of them Sunni Muslims) have been in open rebellion against the Shiite regime. Based in the oil rich province of Khuzestan (Arabstan) in the Gulf region of Iran, the Arabs who account for 3% of the population have been suffering from ethnic cleansing through displacing them with ethnic Persians.⁵ The Baluch (2 %percent of Iran's population) in Iranian Baluchistan represent another ethnic group with long and simmering grievances towards Tehran. Located in Southeastern Iran, the Baluch have more in common with their Baluch brothers in

¹ Bradley, John R., (2006). "Iran's Ethnic Tender Box," **The Washington Quarterly**, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 181-190.

² Ibid.

³ Puder, Joseph, (2007). "Iran's Non-Persian Ticking Time Bomb," **Front Page Magazine.com**, March 14.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Afghanistan and Pakistan, than with the Iranian regime. They too seek cultural autonomy and dream of a free Baluchistan that would incorporate all Baluchis.¹

As there is little tangible evidence to support the notion that Iranian Azeris, who comprise at least one-quarter of Iran's population, and, who are widely known to be well-integrated into Iranian society, are prepared to confront the government in Tehran. They are attracting increased interest from the U.S government as a means for causing regime change in Tehran.² Iranian Azeris – much like Persians, Kurds, Baluchis or any other ethnic group – have expressed frustration with the current political gridlock, the country's economic malaise and a lack of political freedom.³ Violation of the human rights of Iran's ethnic minorities had called the attention to the Amnesty International, which in turn, is calling on the government to ensure that all Iranian citizens are accorded, in both law and practice, with the linguistic and cultural rights set out in Iran's constitution as well as in international law.⁴

However, the ethnic, religious and linguistic interaction between Iran and its neighbors is considered an asset to the Iranian Islamic Republic, which can exert influence over the Shiite communities in the neighboring countries.⁵ In order to bring together various ethnic groups and control such multifariousness, the Iranian regime exploited religion to achieve national integrity among its population in a way that led to the enhancement of the clerics control over both the military and political objectives of the

¹ Puder, op.cit.

² Molavi, Afshin, (2007). "Iran's Azeri Question: What Does Iran's Largest Ethnic Minority Want?" A Eurasia Net Commentary, March 15.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Amnesty International, (2007). "Iran's Ethnic Minorities Facing New Wave of Human Rights Violations," February 27.

⁵ Fathi, op.cit., p. 32.

state.¹ Consequently, the Iranian Government diverted much of its attention to the looming threat on the domestic level by asserting the national identity and considering it as one of the most imperative of its national security issues.² Evidently, and as Morgenthau argues, a nation “without a population sufficiently large enough to create and apply the material implements of national power” cannot be competent to acquire a regional power.³ Hence, the Iranians became aware of the power implicated by the large demographic advantage regardless of its dissimilitude.

Table 2. Elements of Interaction between Iran and Its Neighbors.

State	Elements of Interaction between Iran and Its Neighbors		Ethnicity
	Shiite Sect	Persian Language	
Iraq	63%		15% - 20% Kurds
Turkey	15%		20% Kurds
Armenia		1%	4% Kurds
Azerbaijan	64%		
Turkmenistan			
Afghanistan	21%	50%	
Pakistan	20%	2%	
Oman	17%		
United Arab Emirates	16%		2% originally Iranians
Qatar	18%		10% originally Iranians
Bahrain	68%		
Saudi Arabia	9%		
Kuwait	30%		4% originally Iranians

Source: World Atlas 2004, International Bank Census, Nossrat Abdullah Al-Bastaki: Gulf Security from Invasion of Kuwait to the Invasion of Iraq, Beirut: the Arab Institution for Press and Studies, 2003, p. 65.

¹ Fathi, op.cit., p. 18.

² Ibid, p. 19.

³ Morgenthau, (1973), **Politics Among Nations, the Struggle for Power and Peace**, op. cit., p. 127.

Iran's sense of aggrandizement is boosted by its demographic superiority over the demography of the Gulf countries, displayed by its ability to assimilate all of this cultural heterogeneity by using the ideological connection of Shiism and by being a source of labor to adjacent countries.¹

3.1.1.3. Economy and Natural Resources.

“One drop of oil is worth of one drop of blood of our soldiers.”²

Natural resources are a great contribution to a state's power as the state reliance on the outside world is diminished, so is the prospect of becoming vulnerable by negative sanctions.³ Throughout history, raw materials played a subordinate role in determining the power of a nation in time of peace and war alike.⁴ Strategists stressed the importance of having control of raw material and natural resources as such by explaining the relationship between self-sufficiency and the state's ability to advance its economic and military capabilities, in a manner that led to directing the state's policy towards autarchy and control of the nation's economic requirements.⁵ Since the First World War and with the advancement of mechanization of warfare and industrialization of global economy, oil has become more important for industry and war than other energy resource.⁶

As the importance of oil grew, so did the influence of the countries that possessed considerable deposits of oil in the sense that their impact on international affairs grew.⁷

¹ Fathi, op. cit., p. 19.

² Friednspurg, Ferdianrd, (1963). Die mineralischen Bodenschätze als weltpolitische und militärisch, Stuttgart: F. Enke, p. 175, cited in Morgenthau, (1973), op.cit., p. 117.

³ Jones, op.cit., p. 244.

⁴ Morgenthau, (1973), **Politics Among the Nations, the Struggle for Power and Peace**, op.cit., p. 117.

⁵ Greene, op.cit., p. 175.

⁶ Morgenthau, (1973), op. cit., p. 117.

⁷ Ibid.

Clemenceau declared during the First World War, “*One drop of oil is worth of one drop of blood of our soldiers.*”¹ Such growing importance of natural resources, especially oil, urged states to weigh the advantages of conserving raw materials against the disadvantages of growing independence on foreign sources.² Regardless of the fact, that certain materials are more important than others are, the value for raw materials changed suddenly, as did the growing importance of uranium as a vital metal for nuclear weapons.³ However, the need for oil by the industrialized world created conformance to the realities of accelerated economic development and augmented the impact, which the need of oil left on the international trading relations and is shaped by the logic of dependence on raw materials.⁴

Oil is not only the most important commodity traded internationally but also a key industrial mineral, without which no modern economy works.⁵ Iran’s role as a global supplier of oil makes it influential in the sense of being a shaper of regional dynamics as its supply of oil can affect the global economy, and therefore, world politics.⁶ The Arabian Gulf contains 715 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, representing over half (57%) of the world's oil reserves, and 2,462 Tcf of natural gas reserves (45% of the world total).⁷ In addition, at the end of 2003, Arabian Gulf countries maintained about 22.9 million barrels.per.day (bpd) of oil production capacity, or 32% of the world total production.⁸ Perhaps even more significant, the Arabian Gulf countries normally maintain almost all of

¹ Friedensburg, op. cit.

² Greene, op. cit., p. 175.

³ Ibid, p. 176.

⁴ Jones, op.cit., 246.

⁵ Gokay, Bulent, (2006). “Iraq, Iran and the End of the Petro Dollar, the Waning Influence of the US in the Asian,” **Le Grand Soir Info**, August 28.

⁶ Perkovich and Manzanero, op.cit., P. 177.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Country Analysis Brief, (2004). “Persian Gulf Oil and Gas exports Fact Sheet,” September, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/pgulf.html>

the world's excess oil production capacity.¹ Iran ranks fourth as top world oil exporters, and producers and according to the two charts on the following pages.

Table 3. Top World Oil Net Exporters, 2005.

4. Top World Oil Net Exporters, 2005* (OPEC members in italics)		
	Country	Net Oil Exports (million barrels per day)
1)	<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	9.1
2)	Russia	6.7
3)	Norway	2.7
4)	<i>Iran</i>	2.6
5)	<i>United Arab Emirates</i>	2.4
6)	<i>Nigeria</i>	2.3
7)	<i>Kuwait</i>	2.3
8)	<i>Venezuela</i>	2.2
9)	<i>Algeria</i>	1.8
10)	Mexico	1.7
11)	<i>Libya</i>	1.5
12)	<i>Iraq</i>	1.3
13)	Angola	1.2
14)	Kazakhstan	1.1
15)	<i>Qatar</i>	1.0
<i>*Table includes all countries with net exports exceeding 1 million barrels per day in 2005.</i>		

Source: Energy Information Administration, International Petroleum Oil Production, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/international/oilproduction.html>

¹Country Analysis Brief, (2004). "Persian Gulf Oil and Gas exports Fact Sheet," September 21. <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/pgulf.html>.

Table 5. Top World Oil Producers, 2005.

5. Top World Oil Producers, 2005* (<i>OPEC members in italics</i>)		
	Country	Total Oil Production** (million barrels per day)
1)	<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	11.1
2)	Russia	9.5
3)	United States	8.2
4)	<i>Iran</i>	4.2
5)	Mexico	3.8
6)	China	3.8
7)	Canada	3.1
8)	Norway	3.0
9)	<i>United Arab Emirates</i>	2.8
10)	<i>Venezuela</i>	2.8
11)	<i>Kuwait</i>	2.7
12)	<i>Nigeria</i>	2.6
13)	<i>Algeria</i>	2.1
14)	Brazil	2.0

*Table includes all countries total oil production exceeding 2 million barrels per day in 2005.
**Total Oil Production includes crude oil, natural gas liquids, condensate, refinery gain, and other liquids.

Source: Energy Information Administration, International Petroleum Oil Production,
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/international/oilproduction.html>

The major economic activity in Iran is the petroleum industry from which Iran's share represents 18% of the Middle East reserves and 11.4% of world reserves with proven oil reserves amounting to 130,700 barrels at the end of 2003.¹ The Doroud 1&2, Salman, Abuzar, Foroozan, and Sirri oilfields comprised the bulk of Iran's offshore output, all of which is exported.² Iran plans extensive development of existing offshore oilfields, and

¹ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 413.

² Ibid.

hopes to raise its offshore production capacity sharply to 1.1 million bpd from about 675,000 bpd currently.¹ In early October 2003, Iran re-launched a tender for eight exploration blocks in the Arabian Gulf after receiving little interest from a January 2003 announcement.²

One area considered to have potential is located near the Strait of Hormuz.³ Another interesting area is offshore near Bushehr, where Iran claimed in July 2003 to have discovered three fields with as much as 38 billion barrels of oil reserves.⁴ The oil export share in total export is 65-75 % of Iran's economy and its share in the GDP is 13-15%, which allowed Iran to finance its import.⁵ Moreover, oil export has played an important role in the growth pattern of Iran.⁶ The main part of government expenditures is being financed by oil export so that its share in government revenues is above 65%.⁷ In October 1990, crude oil output was declared above the OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) quota of 3.14m. bpd averaging 3.2m.bpd of which 60% was directed to the Asian countries especially to Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Philippines⁸.

While the Petroleum industry was badly affected by the continuous political turmoil, and with the first Gulf war of 1980, causing the loss of the needed foreign maintenance, Iran's conciliatory moves of compensating the U.S oil companies for reparations that had been expropriated during the revolution, led to the United States

¹Dean and others, op.cit., p. 413.

² Country Analysis Brief, (2004). "Persian Gulf Oil and Gas exports Fact Sheet," op.cit.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵Souri, Ali, (2006). "The Oil Export and the Growth Pattern of Iran", the International Input-Output Association.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 415.

ceasing its three-year ban on the purchase of Iranian crude oil.¹ Tehran increased its oil exports by 23.2% in February 1991 to an average of 2.7 million barrels a day. February production of crude oil in 1991 was 3.5 million barrels a day.² In 1999, Iran's oil resources has increased when the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), which took control of the state's crude oil as well as shipping operations, announced the discovery of the biggest oilfield in 30 years.³ Another discovery of oil wells in 2003 near the Southern port of Busher with 38,000 million barrels-worth of oil reserves enhanced Iran's strategic importance and role as a player in the global economy.⁴ In 2005, Iran was producing about 4.14 million barrels per day.⁵

In addition, statistics suggest that Iran ranks second in gas reserves.⁶ In early 2002, Iran's natural gas reserves were estimated at 22.9 trillion cub meters (812 trillion cubic feet), or 15% of the world's total reserves. Tehran's largest non-associated natural gas field is South Pars, geologically an extension of Qatar's North Field. Current estimates suggest that South Pars contains 280 Tons cubic feet (Tcf) or more (some estimates go as high as 500 Tcf) of natural gas, of which a large fraction will be recoverable, and equals over 17 billion barrels of liquids.⁷

¹ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 415.

² New York Times, (1991), "Iranian Oil Exports Rise," March 28.

³ Dean and others, op.cit. p. 417.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Table 11.5 World Crude Oil Production, 1960-2005, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/aer/txt/ptb1105.html>

⁶ Energy Information Administration, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/pgulf.html>

⁷ Encyclopedia of the Nations: Asia and Oceania: Iran. <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Asia-and-Oceania/Iran-ENERGY-AND POWER.html> .

Development of South Pars is Iran's largest energy project, already having attracted around \$15 billion in investment.¹ Natural gas from South Pars is largely slated to be shipped north via the planned 56-inch, 300-mile, \$500 million IGAT-3 pipeline, as well as the planned IGAT-4 and IGAT-5 lines.² Gas also will be reinjected to boost oil output at the mature Agha Jari oilfield, and possibly the Ahwaz and Mansouri oilfields. Besides condensate production and reinjection/enhanced oil recovery, South Pars natural gas is also intended for export by pipeline and possibly by liquefied natural gas (LNG) tankers. Sales from South Pars could earn Iran as much as \$11 billion per year over 30 years, according to Iran's Oil Ministry. Iran's dry gas production rose from 0.969 quadrillion (10)¹⁵ in 1991 to 3.129 quadrillion (10)¹⁵ in 2004.³

However, many analysts conclude that Iran's gas is doomed to dry up, using that argument to ascertain Iran's justification for developing nuclear capabilities.⁴ Both gas and oil are sold at highly subsidized rates with a loss of about \$5.5 billion a year because of the short fall of the quota set for Iran by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).⁵

¹ Encyclopedia of the Nations: Asia and Oceania: Iran, op.cit.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Isenberg, David, (2005). "The Fuel Behind Iran's Nuclear Drive," **Asia Times**, March 25.

⁵ **The Whashington Post**, (2006). "Iran Oil Revenue Quickly are drying Up," Analysis, December 26.

Table 5. Natural Gas Production.

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
Consumption (domestic)	62,800	67,200	76,000
Flared	13,800	13,300	10,800
Regional uses and wastes	6,600	5,500	8,000
Gas for export	-----	500	1,300
Total Production	83,200	86,500	96,100

Exc(million cu Meters, year ending 20 March) the figures refer to the metal content of ores and concentrates.*including gas reinjected into oil wells (million cu meters): 26,000 in 2000/1; 27,5000 in 2001/02 ; 26,400 in 2002/03(estimate). Estimates. Includes gas for household, commercial, industrial, generator and refiner consumption. **Source** : IMF, Islamic Republic of Iran, Statistical Appendix (September 2003). In Dean and others, **the Middle East and North Africa, 2005**, op.cit.

3.1.1.3.1. Iran's Economic Policy.

Strategists consider oil as one of the natural resources that is capable of altering the course of world politics.¹ Through accumulating huge trade surpluses and reserves of foreign currencies, states could induce rapid process of domestic development as well as disrupt imperialistic patterns.² Hence, oil and gas were the most effective weapons by which Iran struggled to counter adverse powers. During the 1990s, and because of its wealth in natural resources, especially oil and gas, Iran had to endure being subject to the U.S strategy of containment and a new world order that revolved around a balance of power exclusively favorable to regional allies of the United States.³

Iran, alongside Iraq, was perceived as major regional threat for their animosity toward the United States, for sponsoring terrorism and, above all, for their attempts to develop nuclear capabilities.⁴ Trying to debilitate the military and economic capabilities of

¹Jones, op.cit., p.245.

²Ibid.

³Sabet, Amer, (1999). "Dual Containment and Beyond: Reflections on American Strategic Thinking," **Mediterranean Politics**, Vol. 4, No. 3, in Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, Eds. (2002), **The Foreign Policies of the Middle East States**, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p.61.

⁴Hinnebusch, op.cit.,p. 60.

Iran and Iraq, the United States set its primary objectives of providing security to its regional allies, securing oil flows from the region and maintaining Israel's prominence in the region through imposing sanctions against trade and investment in Iran. However, its attempts failed to induce cooperation from Western countries to isolate Tehran.¹

By early 1995, the Iranian government managed to avoid a major debt crisis that destroyed the country's creditworthiness and affected the people's standards of living - a matter that caused exasperation toward the government's economic reforms - by succeeding in rescheduling what is worth \$ 10,000 million.² Moreover, Iran managed to counter the United States' embargo on oil exports, which was meant to cripple Iran's economy, by finding alternative markets for its oil, despite the American attempts to persuade European countries to join in boycotting trade with the Iranian government.³

In 1993, aware of the efficiency of using the boost in oil prices and acknowledging the vulnerabilities of the Iranian regime, Rafsanjani advocated liberalization and deregulation as the first steps toward reconstruction of the ailing economy.⁴ Naturally, as he advocated cautious privatization of the state's enterprises, the priority of promoting domestic agricultural production, and the centrality of producing social equity, Rafsanjani's calls were regarded as exaggerated fears and were considered manifestations of a severe

¹ Hinnebusch, op.cit., p. 61.

² Dean and others, op.cit., p. 408.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Outlining his policies for the second term of office, Rafsanjani vowed that his government would concentrate on economy rebuilding relinquishing the old policy of abroad adventures, promising gradual decrease of subsidies as not to disrupt the peoples' lives, Ibid, p. 408.

hardship that threatened of blustering Iran's independence that withstood many adversities in the past.¹

However, Iran's economy improved with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, when petroleum exports rose to \$18,400 million, and when Rafsanjani succeeded in exploiting the boost to implement economic reforms that led to the expansion of the private sector and industrial growth.² Nevertheless, alarmed by Iran's improving economy and its ability to reduce dependency on oil revenues, the United States prohibited the transition of advanced technology to Iran as plan to inhibit its scientific, economic and military advancement.³ Moreover, in 1993, the Iranians explicitly blamed the United States for the 30% fall, and of trying to undermine the Islamic regime by forcing it to reduce its budgetary expenditures of 1994/1995, causing reductions in social, agricultural, and energy subsidies.⁴

The United States continued to threaten the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic through freezing Iranian assets and through continuing to prevent Iran's admission to the World Trade Organization while opposing any gas pipelines projects that could pass through Iranian territory. Furthermore, the Americans endeavored to enhance the Israeli-Turkish alliance with Azerbaijan and pressured Russia and China to stop cooperation in the Iranian nuclear program.⁵ Hence, strategists consider Iran's latest inclination towards economic liberalization and reforms as a new pragmatic strategy aimed at restoring Iran's

¹ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 408.

² Ibid.

³ Fathi, op.cit., p.165.

⁴ In 1994, Rafsanjani declared that the Iranian economy was no longer dependant on oil exports, and that Iran's non-oil exports constituted one third of Iran's hard currency revenues in 1993/1994, estimating about \$ 5,000 m, Dean and others, op.cit., p. 408.

⁵ Fathi, op.cit., p,166.

regional importance that was diminished by the end of Iran's alliances with the West during the 1960s.¹

In the 1980s, Iran struggled to disentangle itself from Western influences and from dependency on hydrocarbon resources, a matter that forced it to adjust and behave non-ideologically in order to resist the "dual containment" policy during Clintons' administration in the 1990s.² Indeed, internal unrest evoked by economic problems represented a real threat to the Iranian government when during legislative elections of 1996, the Mayor of Tehran Gohar Hossein Karbaschi, and all of the allies of Rafsanjani encouraged the Iranians to support Rafsanjani's economic reforms, declaring that the economic problems represented the real threat to Iran.³

Fortunately, such accommodations succeeded when Bank *Markazi* (Central Bank) declared that the economy had improved due to the government's strategy of restoring financial credibility and due to its success in improving its relations with the European Union and Japan.⁴ Moreover, the Iranians managed to establish extensive links with Egypt, and improve their politico-economic partnership with Saudi Arabia.⁵

Approaching Iran's policy from a state-centric analysis, Ehteshami argues that the economy continued to play a crucial part in the political development of the Middle East in general and Tehran in particular.⁶ The conservatives' late conversion to realism, evident in

¹ Ehteshami, op.cit., p.288.

² Ibid, p.288.

³ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 409.

⁴ Despite the American legislation -which is known as the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) passed in August 1996 during Clinton presidency- of imposing penalties on non-American companies engaging in gas and oil investment with Iran, many European and Japanese companies continued their agreements with Iran, Ibid.

⁵ Ehteshami, op.cit., p. 291.

⁶ Ibid, p.293.

their consent to the realities of the social changes in the country, represents a tendency towards exploiting the hike in oil prices, and towards prioritization of economic needs, whose fulfillment would ensure the survivability of the theocratic regime.¹

The ongoing debate between the revolutionists and the internationalist is manifestation of the different perspectives each group exhibit regarding the relation between economic development and security.² The internationalists - or the reformists - acknowledge the interaction between the sustainability of the economic, national development, and security as an effective strategy, by which Iran can resist domestic and social challenges. On the other hand, the revolutionists believe that fighting Imperialism is a first step towards materializing national independence, relieving Iran of its political and economical burdens, and hence, inaugurate the Islamic ideology as a comprehensive security strategy capable of counteracting the challenges undermining Iran's existence.³

The Iranian conservatives never hide their admiration for the Chinese model that combines economic growth and openness towards foreign investment, while at the same time, applying political restrictiveness.⁴ By following the Chinese example, the Iranians can realize economic growth without causing the phase of political unrest usually involved in such change. The success of the economic liberalization is evident in the static revealing economic growth rising to 6% while inflation has been reduced to 16%. Moreover, in 2005,

¹ Fathi, op.cit., p. 86.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Tellier, op.cit., p. 13.

a British economic risk analysis agency gave Iran a BB in comparison to the B+ Iran was given in 2004.¹

Since oil is a major pillar for Tehran's plan of modernization and industrialization, the Iranians became dependent on using their hydrocarbon resources for purchasing weapons, the inflation, the unemployment rate and subsidies to political clients and resistance groups at home and abroad, a matter that affected their national-security strategy, rendering them more vulnerable to international economic pressures.² The Iranian ambition of becoming a newly industrialized country (NIC) had been dashed during the Iraq-Iran war in 1980 when the Mullahs had to submit to the constraints of the internationalist capital system. Yet, Iran's assets of hydrocarbon resources are sufficient to ascribe for it a prestigious international position in energy markets. Iran has the second largest amount of oil wells estimated at (125.8 billion barrels of oil, 10% of the world's exportation of oil, and 16% of the world gas reserves.³

Political duality of Tehran's economic policy manifests itself in the Iranian leader's speeches concerning economic reforms and development. Khatami's pragmatist Minister of Foreign Affairs claimed that there is no difference between the reformists' position and that of the conservatives' toward the United States.⁴ The legislative elections of 2004 marked the success of the neo-conservatives who endeavored to project a more enlightened vision of moderate elites that are willing to meet the new demands of the society.⁵ It seems that

¹ Tellier, op.cit., p. 13.

² Fathi, op.cit., p. 153.

³ Ibid.

⁴ During a statement in front of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the conservative Rafsanjani started his term by appointing his closest associates at the head of Iran's European embassies, hoping to ameliorate Iran's relations with Europe. Contradictorily, Rafsanjani, notwithstanding his anti-American speeches, favored an American oil company over Europeans by giving it access to oil markets, Tellier, op.cit., p.52.

⁵ Ibid.

the conservatives - and not the reformists - are leading the process for the secularization of the politics. In 2005, Rafsanjani described the Islamic state as secular explaining that *velayat-e faqih* is a secular institution and not a divine mandate.¹

Here, the paradox seems at its utmost. The Iranian neo-conservatives never relinquish the chance to seem secular when it comes to the management of the country's economy.² Without adopting liberal initiatives that reveal them as the representatives of the proletariat, the conservatives risk becoming the first victims of a social unrest. At such point, the West is badly needed to play the role of Iran's partner and help the leaders of Iran undergo the desired reforms. Nevertheless, the Iranian's leading way toward a new revolutionary economic model imitating the Chinese one seems undermined by their own doing.³ The ambition of pursuing national independence that started at the birth of the Islamic Republic in 1979, and which aimed at acquiring nuclear technology, undermines their desire for improved relations with the West, risking bringing Iran back to its isolation, and igniting political confrontation with the United States.⁴

Nevertheless, Iran is cognizant of the power of oil and the power of using it as a weapon or even a bargaining chip to counter any threats presaging its existence emanating from the United States. Tehran's latest menace of disrupting global oil market and causing unprecedented elevation in oil prices that far exceeds the current levels of \$60 per barrel, is instigated by the increased global demand from China and India and the occurrence of

¹ Rafsanjani was responding to questions in a meeting with Students News Agency in 2005, Tellier, op. cit., p.15.

² Ibid, p.19.

³ Ibid, p.23.

⁴ Cohen, Ariel, Phillips James, and Schirano, William, (2006), "Countering Iran's Oil Weapon," The Heritage Foundation, November 13.

natural disasters.¹ Such impotence tends to confirm the United States' continuous accusation of Iran as a rogue state sponsor of terrorism, thwarting The Middle East Peace Process and disrupting peace in Iraq.

On the other hand, some analysts contend that identifying Iran as the major future challenge facing the United States is less induced by its intimidation of regional peace but rather by being a second menace to the fragile U.S economy caused by the latest "Petrodollar" wars.² The growing tension between London and Tehran over the seizure of 15 British soldiers in the Arabian Gulf in March 2007, drove gasoline prices up to \$ 66.03 a barrel, promising more elevation before the summer driving season.³

Analysts contemplate Iran's future response to the prospect of an attack by the United States, or Israel in the case of Iran choking the oil passage through the Strait of Hormuz Canal, through which two-fifth of world traded oil is transported, and which accounts for 16 -17 million barrels of oil, and about 2 million barrels of oil products, including fuel oil, of which 90% is exported from Gulf producers.⁴ The prospect of a great shortage of oil supplies increases because both Venezuela and Nigeria, which are members of OPEC, are importing oil due to the technical problems they are having in their industrial refineries.⁵ Warning of catastrophic results if Iran is attacked, economists predict a fall in

¹ Natural disasters such as hurricane Katrina and political instability within oil-producing countries (Nigeria), violent insurgencies (Iraq), or a regional war (the 1973 Arab-Israeli war) could trigger an oil supply crisis, Cohen and Philips, op.cit.

² A *petrodollar* is a dollar earned by a country through the sale of oil, Gokay, Bulent, (2006). "Iraq, Iran and The End of the Petro Dollar, The Waning Influence of the US in the Asian Century," Le Grand Soir Info, August 28.

³ Mufson, Steven, (2007). "Stand Off In Iran Sends Oil to Six-Month High," the Washington Post, March 30.

⁴ <http://www.energybulletin.net/27909.html>. Energy Bulletin, March 28,

⁵ Mufson, op.cit.

US dollars, fall in American government bonds, stock markets, and a fall in industrial raw material.¹

The United States, which is in a very weak political and military position, has to weigh down its actions, as the consequences would be dire and far-reaching.² Regardless of the assumption that an attack would weaken Iran's nuclear program, the consequences on the global economy would be disastrous. However, while some analysts accentuate the oil bargaining chip by which Iran tries to persuade European countries and the United States from undertaking serious action against it, few contend that the use of its own oil as a bargaining chip has limited value.³

Iran is in urgent need for oil revenues for its development and for satisfying the needs of its population of 70 million people.⁴ Indeed, Iran gets 90% of its government revenues from oil.⁵ Its exports are of about 2.5 million-b.p.d. amount to 80% of its total exports. As oil provides some 40% of Iran's gross domestic product, using it against its own best wishes and cutting oil exports would set back the incipient recoveries in Europe and Japan and seriously slow the United States' economy as well.⁶

On the Asian front, the Iranians are endeavoring to construct a beneficial "arc of gas and oil" with the Russians, who by facilitating the constructing of a gas pipeline from Iran to Pakistan and India will be provided with the chance to control European markets while

¹ Robertson, Charles and Cliffe, Mark, (2007). "Attacking Iran, The Market Impact of a Surprise Israeli Attack on Its Nuclear Facilities," In Wholesale Banking, January 9.

² Penketh, Anne, (2007). "Military Action Against Iran Would Backfire on Israel", **The Independent**, March 12.

³ Francis, David R., (2006). "Why Iran Oil Cut off Could Be Suicidal?," **The Christian Science Monitor**, March 27.

⁴ Phillips, James, (2000). "The Real Reason for Opec' New Found Muscle," The Heritage Foundation, April 3.

⁵ Phillips, op.cit.

⁶ Francis, op.cit.

both India and Pakistan will benefit from the redirecting of Iranian gas into Asia.¹ Both countries will receive about 70 million cubic meters of gas, which also provide Pakistan with \$600 million out of transit fees, and would spare India what is worth \$300 million a year.²

In late October 2004, the Iranian Petroleum Minister, Bijan Zandaneh, declared his country's desire that China supersedes Japan and becomes the number one importer of Iranian oil and gas.³ In return, Chinese foreign Minister Li Zhoaxing revealed that Beijing would oppose Iran's referral to the Security Council regarding its nuclear activities. Success was apparent in the mega deal worth of \$100 billions over allowing the export of 10 million tons of natural gas annually from Tehran to Beijing and for 25 years.⁴ This deal, which was called the "Deal of the Century", is likely to encourage Russia and India to follow suit, seeing that China is benefiting more from this strategic partnership. China gets 13.6% of its oil imports from Iran and lately concluded a \$16 billion agreement for developing the 48 trillion cubic feet North Pars gas field, and recently, another agreement was signed worth of \$3.6 billion for the development of the South Pars gas field.⁵

Hence, considering oil and gas as major elements of Iran's national power, Iran seems strong enough to withstand economic sanctions imposed by the United States, Europeans, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as Tehran has other strategic and economic alliances with China and Russia. Regardless of the domestic and economic hardship Tehran faces, the Islamic Republic would still be capable of riding off

¹ Glover, Peter C. (2007). "Facing Economic Squeeze, Iran Plays Asian Energy Game," **World Politics Watch**, February 7.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Bezlova, op.cit.

⁵ Ibid.

all the restrictions by disrupting oil flow from the Gulf especially from the Strait of Hormuz.

Relatively high oil prices in recent years have enabled Iran to amass nearly \$60 billion in foreign exchange reserves.¹ However, with the conservative victory their insistence is on pursuing nuclear enrichment program, to which a large proportion of the economy is devoted; in addition, the development of weapons of mass destruction remain a contentious issue subject to negotiations with leading Western nations and of these nations imposing new crippling sanctions.² The United States' latest determination to gain international consensus on the imposition of economic sanctions against Iran threatens of thwarting any Iranian ambitions of technological and industrial independence.³ The next table reveals how oil and gas revenues contributed to the growth of the Iranian budget, which improved during the last decade, stimulating a growth in expenditure on social, economic services as growth in commercial and defense expenditures, yet not easing economic hardships such as high unemployment and inflation.⁴

¹ Central Intelligence Agency, (2007). The World Fact book: Iran, <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ir.html#Econ>

² Ibid.

³ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 439.

⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, (2007). The World Fact Book: Iran, op.cit.

Table 6. Iranian Budget.

(000 million riyals, year ending 20 March 2003)*

Revenue	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
Oil and Gas Revenues	128,205	103,134	149,031
Non-oil revenue	61,784	77,842	100,965
Tax revenue	33,298	41,682	52,940
Taxes on income, profits and capital gains	19,585	22,988	28,041
Domestic taxes on goods and services	5,766	6,853	8,489
Taxes on international trade, transactions	7,948	11,841	16,410
Non-tax revenues	12,004	13,422	15,036
Other non-oil revenues	16,481	22,717	32,988
Total.....	189,989	180,975	249,995

Figures refer to the consolidated accounts of the central Government, comprising the General Budget, the operations of the Social Security Organization and special (extra budgetary) revenue and expenditure.

‡excluding lending minus repayments (“000 million riyals):21,710 in 2000/01; 30,953 in 2001/02; 65,372 in 2002/03. Source: IMF, *Islamic Republic of Iran, Statistical Appendix* (September 2003)

Table 7. Iranian Social and Defense Expenditure.

(000 million riyals, year ending 20 March 2003)*

Expenditure‡	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
Current expenditure	88,068	112,551	148,749
General services	9,947	13,118	18,695
National defense	17,314	20,683	21,248
Social services	40,160	46,254	65,920
Education	21,640	24,139	34,402
Health and nutrition	4,358	5,099	7,267
Social security and welfare	11,132	13,093	18,660
Housing	484	589	839
Economic services	2,590	3,641	5,189
Fuel and energy	12	13	19
Transport and communications	377	739	1,053
Agriculture	1,140	1,449	2,065
Water resources	17	21	30
Industry	174	179	255
Commerce	300	517	737
Other current expenditure	18,057	28,855	37,697
Capital expenditure	30,115	25,488	56,305
Total	118,183	138,039	205,054

Figures refer to the consolidated accounts of the central Government, comprising the General Budget, the operations of the Social Security Organization and special (Extra budgetary) revenue and expenditure.

‡excluding lending minus repayments (“000 million riyals):21,710 in 2000/01; 30,953 in 2001/02; 65,372 in 2002/03. Source: IMF, *Islamic Republic of Iran, Statistical Appendix*, (September 2003)

3.1.1.4. Industry.

Though the concept of power as an influence is not totally dependent on the resources at a state's disposal, the state's ability to counter negative sanctions is dependent on the size and skills of its population and their capability to contribute to production and economic growth.¹ Technology is a nation's capacity to convert the natural resources of a state into actual power by being capable of producing needed goods and services.² Failing to process natural resources efficiently reduces a state's power by making it a weak raw-material exporting state, unlike those powerful countries that have both developed technologies and the much-needed raw materials.³

Iran's economy, once one of the most advanced in the Middle East, was crippled by the 1979 Islamic revolution, the Iran–Iraq war, and the attendant economic mismanagement.⁴ After the revolution in 1979, no clear strategy was adopted by the Iranian government regarding the development of its industrial sector partly due to lack of needed spare parts and raw materials and partly because Iran was engaged in the war with Iraq during which all manufacturing plants were busy producing much needed goods for the war.⁵ The Iraqi bombing of Iran's petrochemical plants hastened the decline of the industrial sector and steel plants in Abadan, Ahvaz, and Bandar-e Khomeini in 1980 and 1981, and as the war continued, further disruption was brought to the ailing industry.⁶ However, the war had its positive outcomes as well. It also stimulated the growth of many

¹ Brown, Carl, (1984). **International Politics and the Middle East: Old Rules Dangerous Game**, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p.82.

² Malhotra, op.cit., p. 60.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Heritage Foundation, (2007). Index of Economic freedom, Iran, <http://www.heritage.org/research/features/index/country.cfm?id=Iran>

⁵ Dean and others, op.cit, p. 423.

⁶ The Library of Congress Country Studies, (2007). CIA World Fact book: Iran Manufacturing and Industrial Development, http://www.photius.com/countries/iran/economy/iran_economy_manufacturing_and_in-271.html.

small factories, which produced much needed import-substitution goods and materials for the military.¹

During the First Development Plan period starting in 1989, and after a decade of neglect and stagnation, a revival phase was stimulated by the availability of productive capacities in the manufacturing sector.² This phase was encouraged by the increase in foreign exchange earned by the imported inputs. Those factors led to a significant increase in the capacity utilization of the industrial sector.³ However, the industrial sector suffered from excessive regulations, prices control, markets and structural deficiencies.⁴ The rise of petroleum prices during the Second Gulf War in 1991 brought improvement to the industry, which enabled president Rafsanjani to introduce reforms that dismantled the ailing economy of Iran.⁵

Regardless of on going debate about the privatization of the private sector, in 1991 there was a need to undergo reform of the state-owned Iranian industry.⁶ However any attempts in the 1990's to execute privatization to the Iranian economy which was 43.1% free, remained incomplete until 1995, when a new strategic plan that emphasized restructuring, and mobilizing domestic expertise and manufacturing capacity through encouraging foreign investment and through developing exports was executed.⁷

The trend toward prioritization of industrial independence began in 1991 with a series of projects that included building power plants in Tehran that were awarded to

¹ http://www.countriesquest.com/middle_east/iran/economy/manufacturing.htm, Manufacturing, Economy.

² Mardukhi, Bayazid, (1995). Industrial, Productivity in Iran. <http://www.irvl.net/IRAN11.HTM>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 408.

⁶ Ibid, pp. 423-424.

⁷ Ibid.

Germany and to another Canadian-European consortium.¹ More was to be built in Guilan, Arak, and Neka, and other projects were undertaken related to hydroelectricity and dam building.² By early 2003 Iran had installed a generating capacity of about 36,795 MW of which about 80% is generated by natural gas and the remainder by hydroelectric or oil.³ During the 1990's, Iran endeavored to minimize its economic dependence on oil and gas for exports by developing industry, communication, transportation and energy infrastructures, including the nuclear power.⁴

Iran's industrial sector produces important manufactured products such as petrochemicals, steel, carpets, textiles, cement, processed foods (including refined sugar), copper wire, aluminum, electronics, refrigerators, footwear, appliances, paints, plastics, automobiles, machinery, railroad cars, leather, furniture, cigarettes, utensils, glass, paper, and handicrafts.⁵ Manufacturing contributed 16% of the GDP and employed 18% of the labor force.⁶ Textile mills, which were reported to be working at 56% capacity in 1995, kept developing until production reached 24m.sq m. in 2002.⁷

Most of all, Iran is known throughout the world for its hand-woven carpets that are one of Iran's most important export industries contributing to rural incomes.⁸ Iran's rich carpet-weaving tradition dates from pre-Islamic times, and it remains an important industry that substantially contributes to rural incomes.⁹ Other important manufactures include The

¹ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 425.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, p. 426.

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Iran, Economy of Iran.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ http://www.countriesquest.com/middle_east/iran/economy/manufacturing.htm, Manufacturing, Economy.

⁷ Dean and others, op.cit., P. 424.

⁸ <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-32211/Iran> , Iran Manufacturing, Encyclopedia Britannica.

⁹ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 434.

“Samand” the national car of Iran, with a total production of 350,000 cars per year.¹ By 2001- 2002, IKCO and its partnership with Daimler Chrysler of Germany and Peugeot Citroen of France produced 330,676 cars and promised to increase production up to 500,000 cars in 2 years, which they did in 2003-2004.² Other non-oil products which contributed to the state’s revenues included carpets, ceramics, copperware and brassware, glass, leather goods, textiles, and woodwork.³

In the early 21st century, the Iranian service sector contributed the largest percentage of the GDP, followed by industry (mining and manufacturing) and agriculture.⁴ About 45% of the government's budget came from oil and natural gas revenues, and 31% came from taxes and fees.⁵ Encouraged by high oil revenues in 1999, gas exports, as well as the reduction of the external debt, the new elected “*Majlis*” of 2000 was determined to undergo the long awaited for reforms.⁶ In 2000 - 2001, oil and gas revenues were estimated about 128,205,000 million riyals, reaching 149,031.m. in 2002/03, enhancing the Iranian expenditure on social services, agriculture, industry and national defense in particular.⁷ In 2006, the United Nations classified Iran’s economy as “semi developed” as the GDP was estimated at \$195 billion (\$610 billion at purchasing power parity (PPP), or \$2,790 per capita (\$8,900 at PPP).⁸ The following is the trend chart of the Iranian GDP at market

¹ Dean and others, p. 424.

² Ibid, p. 434.

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Iran, Economy of Iran.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 442.

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Iran, Wikipedia, Economy of Iran.

⁸ Ibid.

prices estimated by the IMF, with figures in millions of Iranian Riyal. For purchasing power parity comparisons, the US Dollar is exchanged at only 3,149.33 Iranian Riyals.¹

Table 8. Iranian Gross Domestic Product 1985-2005.

Year	Gross Domestic	US Dollar Exchange	Inflation
1980	6,621,700	70.61 Iranian Riyals	2.10
1985	16,555,801	207.29 Iranian Riyals	4.40
1990	34,505,630	415.60 Iranian Riyals	11
1995	185,927,978	2,046.80 Iranian Riyals Riyals	43
2000	580,473,336	6,019.01 Iranian Riyals	100
2005	1,768,665,370	9,005.01 Iranian Riyals	194

Iran Economy, Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Iran.

3.1.1.5. Military Capabilities.

*"We will never allow any other power, whether from this area or from outside, especially America, to become the gendarme of the oil-rich and prosperous region of the world."*²

Military preparedness is one of the major elements upon which national power is built.³ Moreover, military power is the apparatus by which the state becomes competent for pursuing its foreign policy promising rewards through economic incentives and threatening punishments through the propaganda machinery.⁴ Since political realists consider military security as the dominant goal of a state, military force is considered the most efficient and

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Iran, Wikipedia, Economy of Iran.

² A comment by Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, in Sokolski, Henry, (1994). "The Bomb in Iran is Future," The Middle East Quarterly, June 1994. Vol. 1, No. 2.

³ Morgenthau, (1973), op.cit., p. 121.

⁴ Hinnebusch, op.cit., p. 17.

usable instrument by which a state can threaten and wield power.¹ Morgenthau contends that in the case of a threat of physical violence, armed strength and military capabilities become the most determining factor influencing the potentiality or the threat of any political power of a nation.²

Military power is one of the tangible components of state power, whose measurement affords some degree of certainty, especially when compared to other states' military capabilities, regardless of the fact that its strength depends on the efficiency of bringing the different divisions within the military to function in harmony and effectiveness in times of war.³ With the end of the war with Iraq, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and, thus, the demise of Soviet power, Iran's military efficiency was severely undermined.⁴ The war with Iraq proved disastrous for both countries, stalling economic development and disrupting oil exports. Iran's costs were estimated at 1 million casualties, and \$350 billion.⁵

Dualism, which marked the Iranian foreign relations, continued to mark its military development.⁶ The division between the "regular" army and Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was a permanent source of internal problems as well as a major factor contributing to Iran's defeat in the War with Iraq.⁷ Regardless of the numbers of its army, Iran's forces were deficient during the early 1990s, equipped with less than one-third to one half the tanks they had in 1987, with far less modern equipment than even the forces of

¹Viotti and Kauppi, op.cit., p. 310.

²Morgenthau, op. cit., p. 29.

³Holsti, op. cit., p. 177.

⁴Fathi, op. cit., p. 145.

⁵http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran-Iraq_War#Aftermath, Wikipedia, Iran-Iraq War.

⁶Cordesman, Anthony, (1994). **Iran's Military Forces: 1988-1993**, Center for Strategic and International Studies, p. 4.

⁷Jane's Defense Weekly, (1990), June 30, pp. 1301-1302. As cited in Cordesman, (1994). **Iran's Military Forces:1989-1993**, op. cit., p. 8.

Iraq, much less that of those of Saudi Arabia, half the size of Iraq's, and had less than half the number of high-quality combat aircraft as Saudi Arabia's air force.¹ Though it had quantitatively competitive large surface ships, Iran's military power was irrelevant when considering the quality of the American and allied naval forces.²

During the 1980s, Iran continued to lack hard currency and access to world markets.³ From 1979 to 1983, it ordered \$5.4 billion worth of arms. From 1984 to 1988, it ordered \$10.5 of arms, yet, the shortage in Western arms, munitions and spare parts continued to cripple Iran's armor, air force, and navy.⁴ However, Iran's ability improved significantly as a result of the Second Gulf War in 1991 when Iran condemned the invasion of Kuwait owning credibility and hope of having access to arms markets, especially the Russian one.⁵ Iran, who has shifted away from Western armaments as a result of United States' sanctions, is attempting to rebuild its conventional military machine by cannibalizing its U.S weapons, and by buying hardware from the countries of the former Soviet Union and the international black market.⁶

Hence, revolutionary Iran has placed a strong emphasis on military self-reliance.⁷ Such disposition towards independence was enhanced by Tehran's sense of isolation and abandonment, and enticed by the apathetic international response to Iraq's use of chemical weapons, which has left deep wounds in the Iranian national psyche to this day.⁸ The early

¹ Sokolski, Henry, (1994). *The Bomb in Iran's Future*. Op.cit.

² Ibid.

³ Cordesman, (1994). *Iran's Military forces: 1988-1993*, op.cit., p. 22.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Eisenstadt, Michael, (2001). "The Armed Forces of the Islamic Forces of Iran," an Assessment, *Middle East Review International Affairs*, Vol. 5, No., March 1.

⁷ Eisenstadt, (2001), op.cit.

⁸ Ibid.

improvements in the overall organization of Iran's military forces began after Khomeini's death and were marked by the adoption of two major decisions.¹ The first was the abolition of the Ministry for the Revolutionary Guard in the fall of 1989, and the creation of a Ministry for Defense and Armed Forces logistics. The second was the transforming of the Supreme Defense Council into the Supreme Council for National Security in 1990-1991.²

The Iranian armed forces consist of three main components: 1) the regular military, 2) the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Forces (IRGC) with its paramilitary *Basij* militia,³ and 3) the Law Enforcement Forces (LEF) all of which fell under the command of the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i.⁴ Most importantly, Iran adopted a military reform plan for developing the national defense industries, for the acquisition of modern arms, and for unifying the regular forces and IRGC under one command that eliminated the notable differentiation in mission between those two security institutions, and which aimed at increasing the regular army's mobility by increasing its technological based maneuverability.⁵

At the beginning of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the IRGC was formed in order to maintain internal security, safeguard the ideological purity of the revolution, and counterbalance the regular military, which was considered a potential counterrevolutionary

¹ Cordesman, (1994), op.cit. p. 9.

² Ibid.

³ The **Basij** is a volunteer based Iranian paramilitary force that was founded by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in November of 1979. The Basij are currently subordinate to the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution, often known in the west as the "Revolutionary Guards". The official name of the body means: The Mobilized Resistance Force. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basij>

⁴ Eisenstadt, (2001), op.cit.

⁵ Jane's World Armies Profile, (2006). Iran, August 29.

http://www.janes.com/regional_news/africa_middle_east/news/jwar/jwar060829_1_n.shtml

force loyal to the deposed Shah.¹ On the other hand, the IRGC was confined to more traditional defense duties involving special capabilities such as smuggling and controlling Iran's missile forces or closing the Strait of Hormuz.² The land forces are about 100,000 or more of which are divided between regular army and Iranian Revolutionary Guards who are provided with deployed Scud and Scud B forces, chemical weapons, Shahab 3 in development as means of enhancing its capabilities.³ Other land forces are distributed as following: 2,000+ for air and 20,000+ for naval.⁴

Becoming a leading power in the Arabian Gulf region, was and still is the ultimate aim of the Islamic Revolution, which endeavored to keep the United States and its regional allies from dominating the Gulf region and the Central Asian republics by buying everything from tanks to nuclear technology to reach the goal of being the arbiter of Gulf security.⁵ Seeking military building-up, Iran struggled to renovate its military capability in a way to be capable of thwarting any air threats against it by Iraq, the GCC members, or the United States, while denying these same states, individually or in concert, naval control of the Arabian Gulf.⁶

In 1996, strategists regarded Iran's acquisition of the Chinese-made anti-ship cruise missiles (C802s) as a turning point in Iran's ability to threaten the regional interests of the United States, the Arab states of the Gulf, and as one part of Iran's campaign to revitalize its

¹ Eisenstadt, (2001), op.cit.

² Jane's World Armies Profile, (2006), Iran, op.cit,

³ Cordesman Anthony, (2007). "Iran: Hegemon or Weakling," Center for Strategic Studies, op.cit.

⁴ Sokolski, (1994), op.cit.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

military following its devastating eight-year war with Iraq from 1980 to 1988.¹ Iran's military capabilities, and the number and scope of Iran's military maneuvers, have contributed to the regional concern over fears about its military intentions.²

The race started before 1992 when Iran had conducted over 130 military exercises with its ground, air, naval and IRGC forces, concentrating on integrating the roles of its various military components and endeavoring to purchase variant missile delivery systems particularly from China and North Korea.³ The C802 anti-ship cruise missile came in variant productions; one could be launched from a missile boat at sea, while another could be launched from fixed missile sites on land, and still others launched from mobile land-based launchers. Such arrangements would complicate U.S forces' mission of destroying the missile launchers, and would deny the Americans the success of destroying anti ship missiles fired by the Iranians against the American navy or any potential adversaries.⁴

Despite its limitations, the Iranian naval forces are estimated to be about 16,000-20,000 seamen and the naval branch of IRGC consists of 18,000 seamen and 5,000 marines. Iran managed to keep its three Kilo-class submarines operational, but has larger obsolete surface ships that include three aging missile frigates and two aging gun corvettes⁵. Moreover, Iran has significant numbers of mine vessels, smaller patrol ships that are armored with anti-ship missiles, mine-laying helicopters and maritime patrol aircraft.⁶

¹ Twing, Shawn L., (1996). "Is Iran's Military Buildup Purely Defensive or Potentially Destabilizing?" **Washington Report on Middle East Affairs**, April.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Twing, op.cit.

⁵ Cordesman, (2007), op.cit.

⁶ Ibid.

By the end of the Iran-Iraq War, Iran became successful in producing its own version of the Chinese Type-83 artillery rockets (oghab), the longer range Iran 130 (Nazeat) and the Shahin 2.¹ Washington officials and nongovernmental analysts report that Tehran had also been active on the arms procurement front.² During the period 1989-95, Iran acquired 184 new battle tanks, eighty infantry fighting vehicles, 106 artillery pieces, fifty-seven combat aircraft, and twelve warships. The purchases have expanded its current arsenal to about 1,200 tanks, 1,000 armored personnel carriers, 2,000 artillery pieces, 265 aircraft, and twenty-eight warships.³ Other reports estimate Iran's land forces with the range of 1,600 to 1,750 battle tanks, 720 armored fighting vehicles, over 300 self-propelled artillery weapons and roughly 900 multiple rocket launchers during the period of 1988-1993.⁴

Some strategists speculate that Iranian land forces have limited capability for joint operations or for combined arms maneuverability. However, they acknowledge that the land forces are acquiring modern battlefield sensors, other targeting aids and C41/BM Systems.⁵ The following diagrams show the number of Iran's tanks when compared to regional powers before 2003, the time of the Invasion of Iraq. Iran ranks third after Turkey and Pakistan in number of battle tanks.⁶

¹ Cordesman, (1994), Iran's Military Forces:1988-1993, op.cit, p. 79.

² Gertz, Bill, (1996). "Iran's Regional Power House," Air force Magazine, **Journal of the Air Force Association**, Vol.79, No. 06.

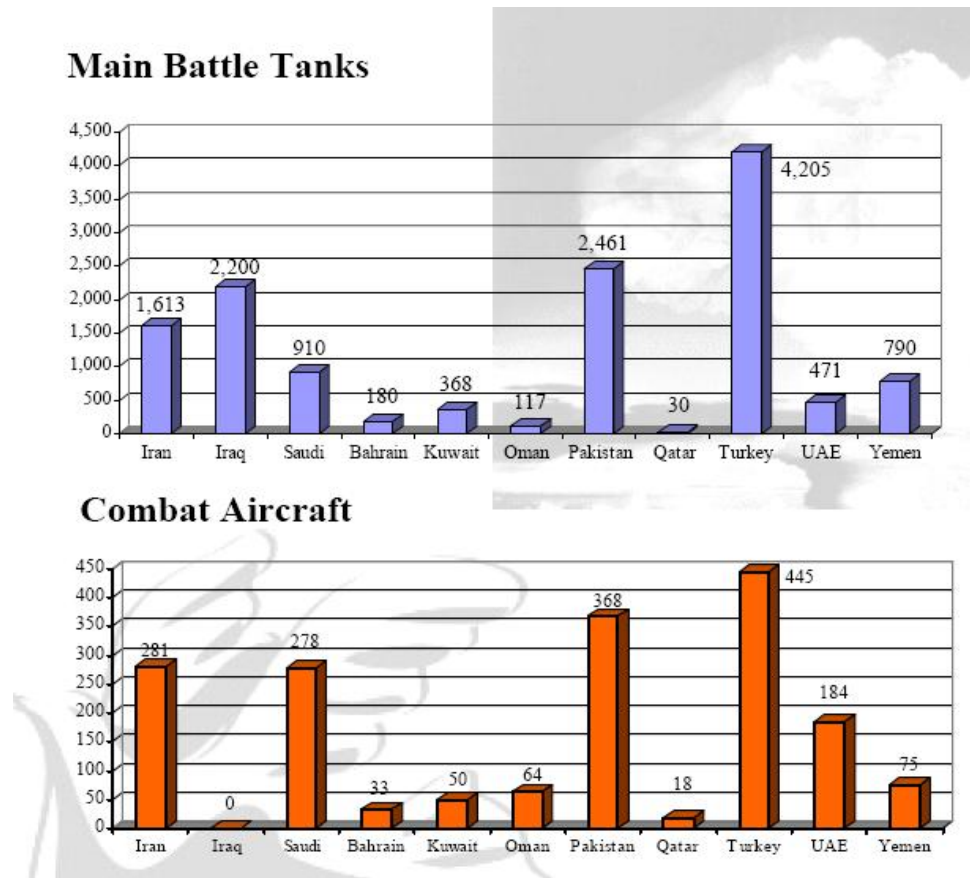
³ Ibid.

⁴ Cordesman, (2007), "Iran Hegemon or Weakling" op.cit.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Figure 2. Main Battle Tanks and Combat Aircraft in the Region.



Source: Cordesman, Anthony H. (2006). "Iran: "Hegemon" or "Weakling," Alreigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 28, p.6.

Considering much of Iran's military equipment as obsolete and obsolescent, strategists admit that Iran's attempts to obtain longer range missiles, and that are more accurate, are really meant for delivering weapons of mass destruction.¹ Such procedures would compensate for the deficiency encountered during its war with Iraq, at a time when Iran lacked the sufficient number of missiles needed to sustain frequent attacks by high explosives at the same time.² China and North Korea continue to be Iran's major suppliers of missiles and even of provide the Iranians with the technology to produce them

¹ Cordesman, (1994), "Iran's Military Forces: 1998-1993," op.cit, p. 80.

² Ibid.

domestically, at least in two rocket and missile assembly plants alongside much smaller design and refit facilities, indicating the possibility of developing cruise missiles, regardless of the continued U. S. diplomatic pressure on China.¹

The collapse of the former Soviet Union has prompted Tehran to obtain various types of weapons for the lowest possible prices from Soviet successor states. Russia became a strategic partner providing Tehran with its needed artillery and weaponry.² Iran and Russia have arms contracts dating back to the 1990s, when Iran received over one hundred T-72 tanks from Russia and even began indigenous manufacturing of tanks upon obtaining a Russian license. Iran was also equipped with artillery, anti-aircraft and air-defense systems, armored vehicles, Mi-17 helicopters and other military supplies.³

Iran is already the third largest importer of Russian arms after China and India with sales exceeding \$4 billion between 1992 and 2000, including three Kilo-class attack submarines, eight MiG-29 fighter-bombers, 10 Su-24 fighter-bombers, and hundreds of tanks and armored personnel carriers.⁴ Russian cooperation with Iran extends to the manufacturing of the Soviet-era SS-4 intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), and helped Iran develop its Shahab-3 IRBM, which has a range of 1,200 kilometers and is capable of hitting targets throughout the Middle East.⁵ Moreover, Iran is putting a lot of

¹ Iran concluded a deal in 1990 to purchase what is know as Scud C, which has a range of 500-600 kilometers with relatively high accuracy and reliability, Cordesman, (1994), "Iran's Military Forces: 1988-1993" op.cit., pp. 81-82-84.

²Wolfson, Ze'ev, (2001). "The 'Russian Factor in the Middle East Military Balance," **Jane's Defense Weekly**, November 28, Ariel Center for Policy Research, no. 133, p. 19.

³ Ibid.

⁴Cohen, Ariel, and Phillips, James A., (2001). "Countering Russian-Iranian Military," **Cooperation, Backgrounder** No.1425, the Heritage Foundation, April 5.

⁵ Ibid.

emphasis on increasing its size of the army aviation forces, and also on attack and transport helicopters that are manufactured domestically.¹

During his visit to Iran, in 2001, the former commander of the Russian Strategic Rocket Force, Sergeev, and his Iranian counterpart discussed a 10-year arms and military technology program worth over \$3 billion that would include training for Iranian military officers and engineers at Russian military academies, and Iran agreed to buy Osa and TOR-M1 surface-to-air missiles, which also have missile defense capabilities.² The Iranian army has active forces of some 345,000 personnel and an army reserve of some 350,000 personnel, yet, they lack efficient training, equipment, leadership cadres and the latest technology to make effective use of such reserves.³

Statistics from 2007 estimate Iran's active armed forces are 545,000 of which 220 thousands are 18-month conscripts with limited training.⁴ Consequently, given the limitation of Iran's conventional forces during the 1990s, Iran sought the procurement and development of weapons of mass destruction as a means of compensating for the decrease in its military effectiveness.⁵ Recently, Iran called for an overt military build-up and an increase in its capabilities, using the Israeli-Palestinian crisis as a valid excuse to justify a major expansion of Iran's military capacity.⁶

Iran, who has embarked on a major buildup of its military force and conventional power, is pursuing a policy of modernization of its military forces that includes selective purchases of new advanced weapons such as Chinese advanced cruise missiles and

¹ Jane's World Armies Profile (2006), op.cit.

² Cohen, and Phillips, op.cit.

³ Jane's World Armies profile, (2006), op.cit.

⁴ Cordesman, (2007), Iran : "Hegemon" or "Weakling" op.cit.

⁵ Jane's World Armies Profile, (2006), op.cit.

⁶ Jane's World Armies, (2000). "Iran Plans Military Expansion," November 30.

upgraded surface warships, including five new "Houdong" Chinese fast-attack craft.¹ Marking an unusual move to full professionalism in an elite unit, the army is organized into three army-level headquarters and ten regular divisions, along with independent groups, including an airborne brigade, Special Forces and coastal defenses². There is at least one logistics brigade. The 23rd Commando (Special Forces) Division, formed in 1993-1994, is said to have 5,000 trained personnel, all of whom are believed to be regulars³.

Despite its relatively small size, the Iranian air force has been improved by the acquisition of the with Soviet-made MiG-29 "Fulcrums" and Su-24 "Fencers" warplanes with the newly installed in-flight refueling providing them with greater range capability of delivering nuclear weapons.⁴ The operational readiness for the Russian PRC aircraft is 75%-80%. Iran has Some 260+ combat aircraft, of which 50% to 60% are operational especially the U.S. supplied types, with other 10-12 Su-25k's, 18-23 MIG-29A's and 20-25 Su-24Mk's that are exported versions of Russian fighters with limited avionics.⁵ When compared to regional powers like Pakistan and Turkey, Iran ranks third in the number of combat aircraft as the previous figures suggested.⁶

In addition to possessing some 200 to 300 Scuds and working on its own design of the Soviet Scud B and Scud C missile, Iran is developing short-range missiles of the Soviet Frog 7, which would enable the Iranians to reach and threaten many of the neighboring Gulf capitals.⁷ Also, Iran acquired surface-to-air missile defenses include 150IHawk surface-to-air missile launchers, 45 SA-5's and PRC-clone launchers, and 10 obsolescent

¹ Gertz, Bill, (1996). "Iran's Regional Power House," Journal of the Air Force, **Air Force Magazine online**, June Vol. 79, No.06.

² Jane's World Armies Profile, (2006), op. cit.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Gertz, op.cit.

⁵ Cordesman, (2007), "Iran: Hegemon or Weakling," op.cit.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Gertz, op.cit.

long range SA-5 launchers.¹ It has some operational FM-80 Crotales, 20-30 Rapiers, and 3-15 Tigercat shorter-range systems and it also has a large numbers of man portable surface-to-air missiles (some modern), as well as some and Anti-Aircraft (AA) guns.²

However, Tehran's intentions for modernization military expansion of its armed forces could be better apprehended, considering the large gap between the self-image and the aspirations of the regime, and the reality of Iran's military weakness,³ Iran's military buildup has been tempered somewhat by its economic woes, which include a U.S. embargo, a cash shortage because of low oil prices worldwide in 1980s, rapid population growth, and an external debt estimated at \$35 billion.⁴ The following diagram reveals the gap between what Iran intends to buy and between what it acquires because of the lack of proper suppliers and funds, a matter that explains Iran's intention of compensating the deficiency in its conventional weapons by developing its non-conventional capabilities.

Table 9. Iran: Major Weapons Desired and Acquired, 1989-2000.

	Quantity Desired	Quantity Acquired
Tank	1,000-1,500	526
IFVs	1,000-1,500	413
Artillery	200-300	108+
Combat Aircraft	100-200	72
Warships	10-15	13

Sources: Estimates are based on: United Nations, Register of Conventional Arms, 1992-1999; Brom and Shapir, The Middle East Military Balance, 1999-2000, pp. 182-183; International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance: 1999-2000, p. 125; and other sources.

¹ Cordesman, (2007), op.cit.

² Ibid.

³ Eisenstadt, (2001), op.cit.

⁴ Gertz, op.cit.

Hence, Iran continues to seek the acquisition of non-conventional weapons such as chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.¹ Iran has a significant chemical warfare capability, presented in chemical agents in bulk and weaponized form, and includes nerve, blister, choking, and blood agents.² Despite the fact that Iran has signed the Geneva Protocols of 1925 prohibiting the use of poisonous gas and the Convention of 1972 banning the use of biological weapons, it has chemical weapons plants at Damghan and Prachin. Strategists estimate production capability at 100 tons per year including nerve gases, mustard gas, dusty mustard gas, cyanogens chloride or one of the cyanides in 1993. Such information raised speculations at Tehran's ability to fire Scuds carrying chemical warheads, and its ability to conduct a chemical war near its borders.³ Production of biological weapons is considered another factor enhancing Iran's capability to deter and intimidate the West and regional neighbors by using them in unconventional warfare of terrorism.⁴

Strategists anticipate that Iran has probably deployed biological weapons, probably is researching such standard agents as anthrax and botulin toxin, and that it has shown interest in acquiring materials that could be used to produce various toxins, with which it could deliver via terrorist saboteurs, spray tanks mounted on aircraft or ships, or via missiles.⁵ Hence, Iran's interest of developing non-conventional weapons is the means by which the Islamic Republic realizes its independence in the military field and the means by which would enable it to be a bearer of revolutionary Islam and guardian of oppressed

¹ Eisenstadt, Michael, (1994). "Iran's Strategic Intentions and Capabilities," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, McNair Paper, No. 29.

² Ibid.

³ Cordesman, (1994), op.cit., p. 86.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Eisenstadt, (2001), op.cit.

Muslims everywhere, hence, establishing itself as a regional hegemon. Strategists consider the size, number and strength of the armed forces relevant both in time of war and peace, even in the age of space battles and technological warfare, as the country with the largest size of defense forces will always be in better position.¹ The following table indicates the military capabilities of Iran and reveals its superiority in military capabilities when compared to other Gulf states.

Table 10. Military Weapons of the Gulf States.

Country	Personnel	Tanks	APCs	Artillery	Aircraft	Warships
Iran	500,000	1,500	1,500	2,000	220	25
Iraq	400,000	2,000	2,000	1,950	200	2
S. Arabia	165,000	1,000	3,000	300	250	17
UAE	46,500	335	800	425	55	12
Oman	34,000	150	150	130	30	6
Kuwait	20,000	400	650	100	60	6
Qatar	12,000	44	200	50	14	7
Bahrain	7,400	180	250	50	24	7

Sources: Figures have been rounded off, and are derived from Brom and Shapir, *The Middle East Military Balance, 1999-2000*; International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance: 1999-2000*; and other sources.

Although external powers do encourage weaker states to engage in arms races through their support of rebellious communities, strategists contend that authoritarian states do use the threat of military confrontation to justify their military buildup under the pretext of countervailing internal concerns.² Iran's clerical leaders believe that the Islamic Republic plays a key role in world affairs as standard bearer of revolutionary Islam and guardian of oppressed Muslims everywhere. Accordingly, they believe that the fate of the worldwide

¹ Malhotra, op.cit., p.61.

² Halldiay, op.cit., p. 67.

Islamic community depends on Iran's ability to transform itself into a military power that can defend and advance the interests of that community.¹

Hence, Iran has sought to develop its own military industries in order to reduce its dependence on foreign arms suppliers, minimize the impact of future embargoes, and create the foundation for a modern military capable of dealing with a range of potential missions.² The following statistics reveal how Iran's military expenditure has increased from \$1441million after the end of the Iraq-Iran war in 1988 to reach \$ 7035 million in 2005 which constitutes what is 4.5 % of gross domestic product in 2004, revealing the increase from 3.4 % of gross domestic product in 1988.

Table 11. Iran's Military Expenditure from 1988-2005.

Iran (Islamic Republic of)																	
Military expenditure in million of riyals																	
1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
702500	811250	1010500	1235000	1481500	2255250	4022750	4457250	6499000	8539500	10623500	17757200	31112925	38309550	35362325	48290700	63684125	75954000
Military expenditure in constant (2003) US\$ m.																	
1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
1441	1360	1574	1642	1566	1967	2669	1976	2234	2502	2641	3676	5626	6225	5026	5894	6772	7035
Military expenditure as percentage of gross domestic product																	
1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
3.4	3.1	2.9	2.5	2.2	2.3	3.1	2.4	2.6	2.9	3.2	4.1	5.4	5.7	3.8	4.4	4.5	

Source: The SIPRI Military Expenditure Data Base, www.sipri.org

3.1.2. Intangible Elements of Iran's National Power.

A State's power consists of the estimation of tangible and intangible factors which are called capabilities and which enables the state to exert influence and achieve its goals.³ The

¹ Eisenstadt, (2001), op.cit.

² Ibid.

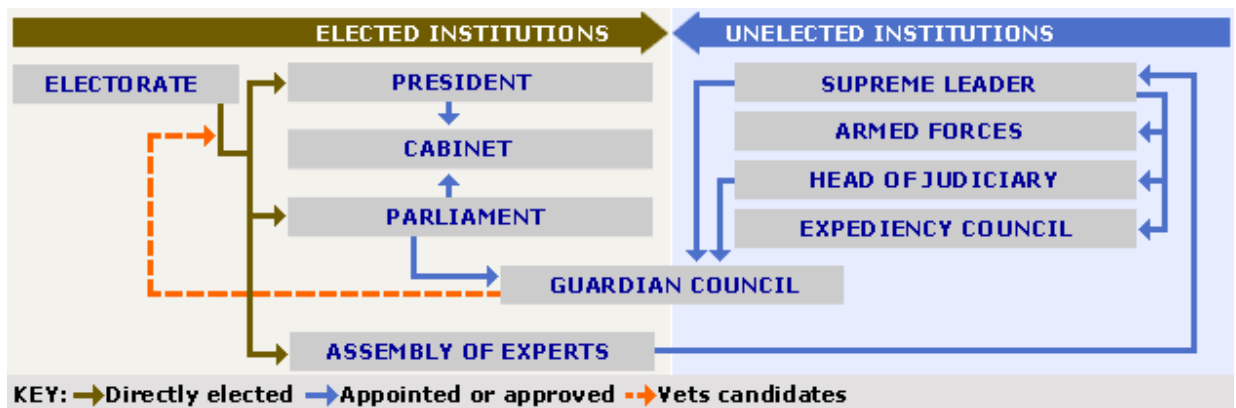
³ Holsti, op.cit., pp. 197-200.

political organization of the state is among the intangible power elements, which, similar to the other tangible elements, are imponderable and subject to change.¹ While geography and demography are considered among the immutable elements of power, the skill of the population and the efficiency of the governmental institutions are considered among the potential attributes of latent power, which the state possesses at any point of time².

3.1.2.1. Iran's Political System.

The political system of Iran with its ideological aspirations played a significant role in overcoming the points of weakness it encountered during the early stages of its establishment in 1979 through enhancing its structure of power by the usage of an emblem of ideological affinity under which all Islamic nations are united.³

Figure 3. The Political System of Iran.



Source, BBC News, in Depth, Iran Who holds the power.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/middle_east/03/iran_power/html/default.stm

¹ Greene, op.cit., p. 178.

² Brown and Ainley, op.cit., p.82.

³ Takeyh, op.cit., p. 19.

Iran's political system is a combination of democratic elements and a modern, theocratic Islam.¹ The system combines a complex set of elected and unelected individuals and institutions that include the Supreme Leader, the Council of Guardians, the Expediency Council, the Parliament and security and parastatal forces, within which competition over continuity occurs.² The constitution of Iran states that the form of government is of an Islamic Republic and that "*Wali Faqih*" is the Supreme religious leader.³ The Supreme Leader controls a political system that comprises several intricately connected governing institutions.⁴ He is responsible for delineation and supervision of "*the general policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran*".⁵

The **Supreme Leader** is the **Commander-in-Chief** of the armed forces. He controls the military intelligence and security operations. He has sole power to declare war and peace. He is elected by **the Assembly of Experts**, which comprises 86 "virtuous and learned" clerics elected by adult suffrage for eight-year terms, as with the presidential and parliamentary elections.⁶ The clerical experts have the power to elect and dismiss the Supreme Leader on the basis of qualifications and popular esteem.⁷

The Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has the right to appoint and remove members of the Supreme Council for National Security. In addition, he elects the President of the State, the Assembly of Experts, the Head of the Judiciary, the President of the Television and Radio, the President of the Revolutionary Guards, the leader of the Joint

¹ BBC News, in Depth, (2006). "Iran Who holds the power?"

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/middle_east/03/iran_power/html/default.stm

² International Crisis Group Iran, (2005). "What does Ahmadi-Nejad's Victory Mean?" August 4, p.7.

³ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 445.

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran#Government_and_politics. Iran

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Armed Forces, as well as the heads of all internal security.¹ Such rights proclaim that the Supreme Leader is the highest authority making major and crucial decisions that decide the course of the domestic and the foreign policy of Iran through his appointees in different sectors of governmental ministries.

The *Council of Guardians* determines candidates' eligibility for presidency prior to running in order to ensure their allegiance to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution.² The Council of Guardians has certain criteria according to which it decides who is ineligible to be elected and it monitors the candidates' background and permits those whose ideas prove to be in conformity with those of *the Supreme leader* and *the Council of Guardians*. The President of the State, who acts as the chief executive, is elected for a term of four years by universal adult suffrage.³ The president appoints and supervises the *Council of Ministers*, who must be approved by the legislature, which constitutes a cabinet of twenty-one ministers, coordinates government decisions, and selects government policies to be placed before the legislature.⁴ Eight Vice-Presidents serve under the President, the Ministers, and the President heads meetings of the Council of Ministers and the Supreme Council for National Security.⁵

The legislative power is held by the *Majlis*, or the "*Islamic Consultative Assembly*" *Majles-e Shura-ye Eslami*, which is unicameral and has 290 members who are elected for four-year terms.⁶ The *Council for the Protection of the Constitution*, which consists of six

¹ Fathi, op.cit., p. 100.

² Wikipedia, Iran, op.cit.

³ Dean and others, op. cit., p.445.

⁴ Fathi, op.cit., p. 101.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 445.

lawyers, is appointed by *the High Council of the Judiciary* and are approved by *the Supreme Leader*.¹ The *Expediency Council* has the authority to mediate disputes between Parliament and the Council of Guardians, and serves as an advisory body to the Supreme Leader, making it one of the most powerful governing bodies in the country.² The Supreme Leader appoints the *Head of Iran's Judiciary*, who in turn appoints the *Head of the Supreme Court* and the *Chief Public Prosecutor*.³ There are several types of courts including public courts that deal with civil and criminal cases, and "revolutionary courts" which deal with certain categories of offenses, including crimes against national security.⁴

3.1.2.2. Iran's Ideological System of Beliefs.

It is necessary to mention here that the term ideology refers to the set of clear values, clearly political, which offer a programmatic direction towards producing a congruent picture of the political terrain.⁵ In this context, the desire to spread ideological values is meant to enhance the influence of the group of leaders using it.

Iran's first draft of the constitution was published on 18 June 1979 and was approved by a referendum on 2-3 December 1979.⁶ Article three, points 15 and 16 of the Iranian Constitution calls for:

“the expansion and strengthening of Islamic brotherhood and public cooperation among all the people; and framing the foreign policy of the country on the basis of Islamic criteria,

¹ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 445.

² Ibid.

³ Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia, “Iran,” op.cit.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Cottam, Richard W., (1977). **Foreign Policy Motivation: A General Theory and A case Study**, Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, p.40.

⁶ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 445.

fraternal commitment to all Muslims, and unsparing support to the mustad'afin of the world."¹

Departing from such point explains how ideas and beliefs are shaping the relationship between Iran and its neighbors. The Iranian revolution, which endeavored to spread radical transnational message of unity and solidarity between states and societies, has always been seen as a major threat to Muslim states. Iran's Islamic ideas and values were conceived in relation to its interests and the group of *Mullahs* who articulated them.

Understanding the Iranian politics seems burdensome because of the complications, which mark the Iranian process of decision making both at the domestic and international levels. Tehran's revolutionary leadership always made explicit demands to speak in the name of Islam, causing tension between it and its neighbors, especially when it called for an Islamic uprising in all the Muslim societies.² Yet, there was always a need to differentiate between what is declared and what is implicated when it comes to what the *Mullahs* preached, as the Iranian leaders restricted their calls for Islamic solidarity to certain cases that served their interests.

Astonishingly, the Islamic Revolution refrained from standing up for its Islamic inspirations of solidarity in countries like Nagorno-Karabakh, Kashmir, Chechnya and Sinjang, contradictorily trading silence for the interest of maintaining good relations with the concerned non-Muslim states.³ Apparently, the Iranian concept of Islamic unity appears to serve as a means of asserting Iran's hegemony over other states, their people, resources and territories.⁴

¹<http://www.iranonline.com/iran/iran-info/Government/constitution-1.html>, The Iranian Constitution.

² Halliday, *op.cit.*, p. 64-65.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

Taking the state as a major paradigm in the realistic analysis, strategists admit that states do engage with each other, but still, they have to legitimize themselves and justify their actions of co-operation or conflict to their populations.¹ In regard to Iran's foreign policy, certain religious terms are indoctrinated in people's conscience through speeches that often embody self images that justify the actions to their people as the term *velayat-e faqih* does.

The theory of *velayat-e faqih* is the centre of Ayatollah Khomeini's thought. The *Velayat-e Faqih* (guardianship of jurisprudence or Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists) is a concept in Shi'a Islam, which holds that Islam gives *faqih* or *fuqaha* (Islamic jurist or jurists) custodianship or guardianship over those in need of it. While this idea is accepted by Ulema among Ja'fari jurisprudence (*fiqh of Twelvers*), there is disagreement over how encompassing custodianship should be.²

The Shiites believe that Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali, and his heirs are his rightful successors; the last of these, Imam Muhammad, disappeared in 874 and is the hidden imam who will return to restore a reign of justice. For Khomeini, the *Mullah* (theologian) and the *faqih* (expert in divine law) are representatives of the hidden imam and of divine sovereignty, and they should guide the community of believers while waiting for the return of the hidden imam.³ This doctrine gives enormous powers to the mullahs and was, and still is, contested by many other ayatollahs.⁴

¹ Halliday, op.cit., p. 32.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guardianship_of_the_Islamic_Jurists

³ Leroi-Ponant, Alexandre, (2006). "Iran's New Power Balance," **Le Monde Diplomatique**, December.

⁴ Ibid.

Indeed, the Islamic regime of Iran is sustained by five core values that are embedded in the constitution:¹

The first core affirms the urgency of maintaining the Islamic Republic and its system of *velayat-e faqih*. Here, it is necessary to mention that, through focusing on small groups of individuals, their role in forging the foreign policy of the state can be clearly depicted.

Article two, number five describes the Islamic Republic as a system which believes in the

*“Continuous leadership (imamah) and perpetual guidance, and its fundamental role in ensuring the uninterrupted process of the revolution of Islam.”*²

The second core permits the aggressive expansion of Iran’s influence in the region in order to become a political, economical as well as military power, and which is stated in Article three no.11 and no.16.

11.all round strengthening of the foundations of national defense to the utmost degree by means of universal military training for the sake of safeguarding the independence, territorial integrity, and the Islamic order of the country;

*16. framing the foreign policy of the country on the basis of Islamic criteria, fraternal commitment to all Muslims, and unsparing support to the mustad'afin of the world.”*³

Exploiting the nationalistic inflamed feelings of the Iranians, the *Mullahs* sought to consolidate and legalize their nascent regime with enchanting anti-imperialist/anti-Zionist rhetoric.⁴

The third core calls for fighting imperialism represented by the American presence in the Gulf. The Iranians, who are wary of the American troops, consider such presence a serious threat to the integrity of their country and its regional predominance. Article 3 no. 5

¹ Timmerman, Kenneth R. (2005). *The Day After Iran Gets the Bomb*. In: Patrick Clawson and Henry Sokolski (Eds.), **Getting Ready For a Nuclear Iran**, Strategic Studies Institute. p.121.

² The Iranian Constitution, op.cit.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Hinnenbusch, op.cit., p. 11.

states that Islamic Republic has to redirect all sources to “*the complete elimination of imperialism and the prevention of foreign influence*”¹

The fourth core regards Israel as a regional competitor jeopardizing Iran’s regional influence. Consequently, the Iranians continue to oppose the peace process, fearing that its success would isolate Iran as Turkey, central Asia and the Arab world become Israel’s partners.² At the annual conference of *Iran's Jerusalem Day*, President Ahmadi-Nejad called for the elimination of Israel describing Israel and Zionism as the spearheads of the West against Islam. Ahmadi-Nejad warned the leaders of the Islamic world that they should be wary of *Fitna* (civil strife) saying,

‘If someone is under the pressure of hegemonic power [i.e. the West] and misunderstands something is wrong, or he is naïve, or he is an egotist and his hedonism leads him to recognize the Zionist regime – he should know that he will burn in the fire of the Islamic Ummah (nation.)’³

The Fifth core calls for the obtainment of nuclear weapons and WMD that will sustain the survivability of the unpopular regime, which is facing domestic and external concerns. The government suppressed domestic dissent by barring reformist members of the Parliament from participating in the Parliamentary elections of 2004. Moreover, the clerics had much to fear, with the advancement of technology and the proliferation of satellite radio and television broadcast from pro-democracy movements abroad, which could be supported by what Iran claims to be the United States and Israel.

¹ The Iranian Constitution, op.cit.

² Timmerman, op.cit. P. 123.

³ The Middle East Media Research, Mermi, (2006). Ahmadi-Nejad’s Speech, Iran, A Special Dispatch Series, No.1013.

Article 11 of the new Iranian Constitution upholds the responsibility of Islamic Republic in uniting the Islamic world in one community or nation, over which the Islamic Republic has the right to spread its dominance in order to bring the political and economical unity of the Islamic *Umma* (nation). Moreover, the Islamic Republic' belief in “*valayat-e faqih*” makes it willing to spread its influence to other Shiite communities in other countries through the exportation of the revolution and through inaugurating itself as the guardian of the security of Islam and the rights of all Muslims.¹

Ironically, the Islamic Republic which advocates in article 152: “*the rejection of all forms of domination, submission to it, the preservation of the independence of the country.... and the maintenance of mutually peaceful relations with all non-belligerent States*”² never refrains from interfering in other states' domestic affairs. Iran has merged its concept of security with that of the Islamic world, in a way permitting it a wide spectrum to envision what it represents as a threat to its integrity, and the mechanism of deterring it.³ By strengthening ties with the Shiite communities under the name of common Islamic identity, the Iranian leaders are provided with great maneuverability to exert influence and impose decisions that go to the extent of stirring troubles whenever they deem necessary.

The Iranian sense of distinction and superiority, as a Shiite nation with a great Persian history of social, economical and political advancement, contributed to their isolation from their Sunni neighbors. Such isolation urged them to adopt a policy of self-reliance that prevented them from establishing warm relations with Arab and other regional countries. Yet, through the support of resistance and terrorist groups, under the guise of

¹ Al Qalam, (2005), op.cit. p. 185.

² The Iranian Constitution, op.cit.

³ Fathi, op.cit., p.90.

supporting all *mustaz'afin* (the powerless and the oppressed) the clerics of Iran became a source of agitation, a matter that reinforced Iran's isolation in the regional as well as the international arena.¹

Under the name of ideological beliefs such as *toqya* (hiding political intention of the Shiite community) the Shiite clerics of Iran established well-organized secretive groups that were ready to undergo critical missions, both domestically and abroad.² The Shiite clerics were the mediators between these secretive groups, through whom the government was provided with appropriate channels to impose decisions and exert influence under the cover of Islam. Under the supervision of the Ayatollah's supreme authority, the autocratic regime made use of Iran's sense of isolation and unjust exploitation to maintain the survivability of their ideological regime.³

By the late 1990s, and after two decades of radical Islamic rule, a new movement evoked by the reformists, emerged within the Iranian society calling for more liberalization and diversification of the Iranian economy.⁴ While the Islamic regime of Iran struggled to maintain its survivability, a growing tension took place within the political administration. The old conservatives, who defended their interests through the Islamic system, had to consent to the pragmatists' calls for liberalization of economy.⁵ The neo-conservatives were forced to promote an economical environment that encouraged foreign investors to overcome their apprehension of the complexities and adversities of the Iranian power centers. Faced with the demand for change, Ahmadinejad with help of the *Pasdaran*

¹ Al Qalam, op.cit. pp.116-118.

² Fathi, op.cit., p. 58.

³ All Shiite look forward for the appearance of the absent Mahdi, and therefore, the establishment of international Islamic government that serves to maintain the Islamic governance. Ibid, p. 92.

⁴ Tellier, op.cit., p.11.

⁵ Ibid.

(IRGC) had to prove that they could project effective governance that redeems the corrupted image of the Islamic Republic in the eyes of the Iranian population.¹

Iranian politics has been characterized by continued wrangling between these elected and unelected institutions as a reformist president - and, at times, parliament - struggled against the conservative establishment. Nevertheless, with hardliners' regaining control of the parliament in 2004, and the presidency in 2005, conservatives now dominate all the organs of the government.²

The authoritarian regime of Tehran knew well that an increased external pressure accompanied by an internal social collapse could be the worst scenario facing it.³ Consequently, the Islamic Republic seemed more willing to trade its late modernizing efforts propagated by Khatami for a more traditional form of “authoritarianism” sponsored by the *Pasdaran*, which within the military apparatus, has the most sophisticated military weaponry.⁴ In 2003, the *Pasdaran* commander-in-chief Rahim Safavi wrote to the *Majlis* (parliament):

¹ The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) or *Pasdaran* was formed following the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in an effort to consolidate several paramilitary forces into a single force loyal to the new regime and to function as a counter to the influence and power of the regular military. Although the IRGC operates independently of the regular armed forces, it is often considered a military force in its own right due to its important role in Iranian defense. The IRGC consists of ground, naval, and aviation troops, which parallel the structure of the regular military, Global Security.org. “*Pasdaran*,” <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iran/pasdaran.htm>.

² BBC News, (2006), Iran, op.cit.

³ Tellier, op.cit., p. 17.

⁴ Ibid.

*The IRGC considers itself responsible for the defense of the Islamic Revolution, its achievements, and the ideology and values of Imam Khomeini. Our main mission is to stop those who wish to destroy and overthrow the Islamic Revolution.*¹

The *Pasdaran*'s realistic pursuit of interests mirrors the state's own realistic command of both domestic and foreign policy. The selection and recruitment of *Pasdaran* members reveals the ideological criteria according to which future conservative leaders are chosen.² Notwithstanding the ongoing competition between the United States and Europe over vital resources of the Middle East, Europe still manages to maintain its good relations with Tehran through disassociation between its political and economical relations with Islamic Republic.³ However, the European Union disagrees with the Iranians over vital security issues, such as the nuclear program, terrorism, the Middle East Peace Process and human rights.⁴

Regardless of Iran's notorious reputation as a state sponsor of terrorism and instability, Iran's foreign policy is considered highly pragmatic.⁵ Through avoidance of direct and major confrontation, Tehran's long goals aim at imposing its regional hegemony through following an expansionist policy that, if successful, would jeopardize the regional security.⁶ However, Iran's short goals include the development of its nation economically, scientifically and culturally in a way that ensures a prestigious position among powerful

¹ lazrak, jehan, (2006). "The Pasdaran Private Empires," **Le monde Diplomatique**, December.

² The Pasdaran were set up by decree on 5 May 1979 as a force loyal to Ayatollah Khomeini to counterbalance the power of the regular military. The mission of the Pasdaran army (100,000), navy (20,000) and air force is to safeguard national security and defend the revolution.
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iran/pasdaran.htm>.

³ Fathi, op.cit., p.247.

⁴ Khabiri, Kabek, (2004). "The Future of Iran-Europe Relations: the Challenges and the Opportunities," January 20, p.2.

⁵ Spencer, Claire, and Lou, Robert, (2006). "Iran, Its Neighbors and the Regional Crisis", Royal Institute for International Affairs.

⁶ Fathi, op.cit., p.247.

states.¹ In the long run, Tehran's major strategic goals include transforming Iran into a pan-Islamic center of power that maintains ideological, political and military leadership over the region.² However, considering United States and Israel as major actors undermining Tehran's regional ambitions, national sovereignty and the integrity of Iran's territories are top priorities that cannot be sustained without building the armed forces and developing its defense industry.³

3.1.2.3. The Quality of Foreign Policy: The Duality in the Iranian Security Strategy.

Departing from a specific meaning of strategy, one that is connected to military warfare, strategy can be described as "*the art or science of exploiting military force so as to attain given objects of policy.*"⁴ Yet, strategy is not used only in military conflict but also in all aspects of political, economical, and social life. The shift in political discussion to other areas such as the analysis of strategic maneuvers of deterrence, crisis management and manipulation of risk, gave the term strategy a broader concept that does not confine itself to the study of military warfare.⁵ Therefore, the general meaning of strategy, which defines strategy as "*the art or science of shaping the means so as to promote the ends in any field of conflict*", seems more appropriate to the analysis of the Iranian foreign policy regarding the management of domestic and international confrontation and regarding its strategy at times of imminent threats.

¹ Sazhin, Vladimir, (2006). "Iran Seeking Superpower Status," Global Affairs, vol. 4. No. 1. January-March

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, p. 156.

⁴ Bull, Heddley, (1983). Strategic Studies and Its Critics, in Klaus Knorr, (Ed.) **Power, Strategy and Security**, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p.68.

⁵ Ibid, p. 69.

In many cases the application of a certain strategy concerning security implies adopting different conflicting approaches that often leads to contradictory objectives that manifests itself in the duality of foreign policy. Iran's ideological and cultural motivation compels it to adopt a dualistic perspective towards its national security strategy. In many incidents, Iran's strategy seemed in constant and in evident contrast with its ideological ideals. Existing in the anarchical regional system, Iran seems determined to rely on self-help to maintain the survival of its regime. Still, as fear pushes Iran towards military preparedness, disregarding the advantages of regional social and economic cooperation, concern for the realization of its regional preponderance urges it to undermine the power advancement of surrounding neighbors.

The dualistic aspect of the Iranian foreign policy and strategic maneuver can be attributed to political factionalism, which according to analysts, led to a dramatic zig-zag policy. The division of power within the political system created rivalries between the different influential personalities, each of whom endeavored to maintain their interests and overriding that of the others. Such inconsistency had its print on the Iranian international affairs as states found difficulty in believing what the clerics preached and in identifying the real goals of the Iranians.¹

Unlike democratic societies where subjectivist ideas manifest themselves in the political processes that take into consideration the needs of their populations, an authoritarian regime like Iran has to endorse decisions that serve the interests of the elites

¹ Eisenstadt, Micheal, (2005). Deter and Contain: Dealing with a Nuclear Iran. In: Henry Sokolski and Patrick Clawson (Eds.), **Getting Ready for a Nuclear-Ready Iran**, Strategic Studies Institute.

(*Mullahs*), favoring them over those of the population.¹ From such a perspective, it seems appropriate to assume that different institutions within the Iranian political system are manifestations of the dynamics by which the *Mullahs* maintain their control and power. The Iranian political system projects the goals of the clerical elites more than it reflects the needs and goals of the Iranian populations. By using Islamic ideology and aspirations, and the exploitation on the national economy, the *Mullahs* can easily sustain control over their subjects and incarnate their interests in the larger national one because their authority and the survivability of their regime depend on it.²

3.1.2.3.1. The Duality of Foreign Policy: A Historical Background.

In authoritarian republics such as Iran, the president's dominance exerts great constraints over the dynamics of decision making by blocking key influential members in the government from acting effectively in the political process. Therefore, over concentration and personalization of power may hinder the rationality of the decision maker. Here, foreign policy becomes subject to factional political disputes.³

During the 1980s, Khomeini himself handled most of the Iranian foreign policy. This did not prevent different powerful clerics from seizing any available opportunities to advance their own interests. During the phase from 1979 to 1981, the clerics attempted to formalize an alternative Islamic foreign policy that is capable of converting the regional balance of power to its favor. Their policy of exporting the Islamic Revolution to the Arab countries was premised on consolidating alliances with radical groups in the adjacent states, mostly in Lebanon. At that time, names such as Ayatollah Montazeri, Hojjatoleslams

¹ Ehteshami, op.cit., P. 291.

² Ibid, p. 293.

³ Hinnebusch, op.cit., p. 17.

Mehdi Karrubi and Ali Akbar Mohtashemi emerged as major names of what was called the “*Iran Gate*” affair with Israel and the United States.¹

Notwithstanding the clerics’ enmity and antagonistic rhetoric toward the United States and Israel, a Lebanese newspaper exposed the deal of an arms sale in May 1986 to Iran in exchange for Israel’s release of Hezbollah militants. Ironically, the Israeli Ambassador to the United States claimed that the deal was meant to establish secret ties with the Iranian military. Not only Iran was an avowed enemy of the United States, but also the deal violated the American Government policy as well as the Arms Export Control Act.² Regardless of the Islamic Republic’s belligerent rhetoric, Israel considered Saddam’s regime and his nuclear plans as the most serious threat to Israel’s existence. Such a stance urged Israel Foreign Minister, Moshe Dayan to insist that American weapons be sent to help Iran before it collapse in front of a triumphant Saddam.³ During the Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988), Iran was isolated and exhausted. Yet, while Iran refrained from Islamization of its ties with Pakistan and Turkey - with whom it endeavored to maintain cordial ties - it continued to disrupt regional and international stability by sponsoring terrorist cells in France, Tunisia, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.⁴

¹ Ehteshami, op.cit., p. 292.

² First arms sale was in 1985 during Iraq-Iran war. Iran- Contra Affair, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran-Contra_Affair.

³ Takeyh, Ray, (2006). **The Hidden Iran, Paradox and power in the Islamic Republic**, New York: Times Books, Henry Holt and Company, p. 201.

⁴ In 1986, the French government tried to interrogate Wahid Gordji, an Iranian translator who enjoyed no diplomatic status in connection to a campaign of bombings, but the embassy refused to hand him to the French authority. In March 1987, Tunisia broke diplomatic ties with Iran for supporting Islamic fundamentalists opposing the government. In Kuwait, hezbo-el Da’wa was claimed responsible for a series of bombings and in Saudi Arabia, The Iranian pilgrimages’ riots and demonstrations in support of Khomeini caused the death of 402 people who had been trampled to death, Dean and others, op.cit., p.384.

In 1987, Baghdad accepted the 10 points of resolution 598 of the Security Council, which called for a cease-fire and the withdrawal of all forces to the internationally recognized borders in case Iran did the same. On the other hand, Iran refused the resolution in order to pursue a three point strategy aiming at defeating Iraq militarily, creating a rift between Baghdad and the Arab countries, and subverting the monarchies through using the Shiite populations in those regimes.¹

3.1.2.3.2. Duality of Iran's Foreign Policy During the Early 1990s.

The American intrusion in the Gulf, brought on by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, constrained the regional powers among them Iran. During this period, Tehran emerged a significant regional player. Still, manifestation of the contradictory Iranian foreign policy recurred during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. While Iran tried unsuccessfully to intercede by proposing an Islamic solution to the crisis, Tehran showed willingness to respect the international sanctions on Iraq but sent food and medicine to Iraq as a humanitarian gesture.² Here, Iran's pragmatism succeeded in ameliorating relations with Arab countries aimed at projecting a collective security strategy in the Gulf.

However, while Iran accused the multinational forces of trying to destroy Iraq's military and industrial forces, Iranian leaders did not hesitate to capture more than 100 Iraqi fighters when they landed without permission in the Iranian territory in January 1991.³ Moreover, Iran called for a peaceful solution to the Kuwaiti problem; nevertheless, Tehran did not hesitate exploiting the chaos in Baghdad to support Shiite rebellious movements in

¹ Ehteshami, op.cit., p. 298.

² Dean and others, op.cit., p. 388.

³ Ibid.

southern and central Iraq by providing them with human and material back up. Ironically, Iran prosecuted members of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) but continued to support the Western initiatives to establish safe havens for Iraqi Kurds.¹ While Tehran was seeking to improve its relationship with the Gulf countries, in June 1996 it was accused by the Gulf States of plotting to overthrow the government of Bahrain, a serious incident that led to the downgrade of Iran-Bahrain diplomatic relations.²

The split within the political administration in Iran began to materialize as Ayatollah Khomeini, a radical conservative, who opposed the Westernization of Iranian society and foreign investment, supported Rafsanjani pragmatic initiatives. This had its implications on the international front by distorting the perceptions of the Iranian foreign policy. Despite the constitutional reforms, which introduced the National Security Council (NSC) in 1989, the *Faqih* continued to play a crucial role in the implementation of the foreign policy decisions.³ Through his representatives in the (NSC), the *Faqih* managed to control the issuing of major decisions, and in many cases, provided justification for the president's foreign policy who was supposed to have full control of the National Security Council. Regardless of the *Faqih* (Khomeini), and the president (Rafsanjani) disaccords over the appointment of their allies in key governmental posts, both worked together to isolate their opponents at all fronts: regional, national and institutional.⁴

While all post Khomeini presidents advocated rapprochement with the West, factionalism within the political administration blocked the progress of such aspirations.

¹ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 388.

² Ibid, p. 390.

³ *Faqih* means “the Guardianship of the religious jurists” and is also an expert in Islamic jurisprudence Khomeini wrote about, and enacted, this principle that is central to the governance of the Islamic Republic of Iran, <http://www.google.jo/search?hl=ar&safe=active&oi=definer&q=define:velayat+i-faqih&defl=en>

⁴ Ehteshami, p.293.

The conservatives publicly supported Rafsanjani economic reform policy, yet they continued to undermine any real attempt to normalize relations with the west. Contradictorily, the conservatives abhorred any attempt to resume the same policies adopted in the early 1980s. Actually, the motive behind their blockage of any reforms is the fear of losing their powerful control of Iran's influential decision centers.¹ The holding of Western hostages by Hezbollah militants undermined Rafsanjani's diplomatic initiatives, aimed at securing Iran's integration in the international community. In July 1994, Iran tried to sabotage the Middle East Process by attacking Jewish targets in London and Buenos Aires.²

3.1.2.3.3. Iran's Foreign Policy 1990-1997.

From the 1970s to the 1980s, Hinnebusch argues that external threats played major role in the consolidation and militarization of Middle Eastern states and rendered them more capable of confronting internal pressure and trading the state's interest over the integration of supra-state identity. Each state's power was a threat to the other and order could not be maintained without the balance of power. The imbalances of individual state's power gave the early-consolidated states of the non-Arab periphery the advantage over the weaker Arab states. High regional insecurity beside high oil revenues and an arms-build up, often helped larger states, such as Iraq, in shaking the balance and producing the two Gulf Wars in 1980 and 1991.³

¹ Ehteshami, op.cit. p. 294.

² In July 2002, an Iranian intelligence agent claimed that Iranian agents plotted the bombing by the packing of the Iranian government, Dean and others, op.cit., p. 389.

³ Hinnebusch, op.cit., p. 21.

Taking in mind the role in which the balance of power played in maintaining the system, Iran had to adjust to the systematic changes brought on by the end of the Cold War and the emergence of the United States as the only hegemon. Ehteshami identifies two schools of thought concerning Iran's reaction to the consequences of the systematic change, which the demise of Soviet power induced.¹ The first school acknowledged the positive impact on Iranian politics, which freed Iran from the implication of its submission to the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. During this period, Iran's growing independence pushed it towards creating a new regional order where it could be the major influential player. The possibility of extending its economical influence to Central Asian states through a pragmatic policy convinced Iran of its capability of confronting its regional competitors in the field of hydrocarbons.²

On the other hand, the second school upholds the negative implications of the demise of the Soviet Union. It depicts Iran as marginalized and no longer capable of benefiting from its role in the game of balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union. Proponents of this school emphasize the United States antagonistic intentions of diminishing Iran's influence in strategic pipeline politics.³ During this period, Iran's ideological and strategic ambitions were not relinquished completely. First priority was given to the revitalization of economic development.

Such matter explains Tehran's disposition towards moderation and realpolitik at that period. Iran's politics were oriented toward creating its regional groupings in the north by establishing the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) of the Caspian Sea, and

¹ Ehteshami, *op.cit.*, p. 304.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

establishing ties with the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) in the south. The ties Iran succeeded in building with China, North Korea, Russia, later, proved futile with the management of its nuclear program.¹

Still the duality marked the strategy by which Tehran handled its international affairs. In 1991, Rafsanjani made the first visit of an Iranian leader since 1975 to Turkey, during which he announced an agreement between Tehran and Ankara, opposing the establishment of a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq. Paradoxically, a year later, Iran was accused by the Turkish government of supporting the guerrillas of Kurdistan Workers Party, "*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*" (PKK). Moreover, Iran attempted to support the introduction of Islamic *Sharia* (the dynamic body of the Islamic religious law) in the Turkish by supporting the Islamic Welfare Party, an incident that led to the deterioration of the Turkish Iranian relations in 1997.² In 2001, the Iranians played a constructive role at the Bonn Conference aimed at creation of an Afghan Interim government. Yet, members of the Revolutionary Guards worked to undermine the same government Tehran was helping to come by arming and training the Afghani Shiites and supporting the warlord, Ismail Khan, in Herat.³

During the 1990s, Rafsanjani's and Khatami's prioritization of economic development and civil society's welfare should not be mistaken as a subordination of ideological discourse in politics. It is necessary to note that as Iran started to gain its vitality, a return to ideological discourse was assumed with the beginning of Ahmadi-Nejad ascendance to the rule. High oil revenues, besides Iran success in pipelines politics,

¹ Ehteshami, op.cit., p. 304.

² Dean and others, p. 391.

³ Eisenstadt, (2005). "Deter And Contain: Dealing With A Nuclear Iran," op.cit., p. 230.

rendered the resumption of Iran's old ambitions more beneficial. However, one can claim that Khatami's period succeeded in securing Iran a better political and economic relationship with the West. Later, the European countries seemed less willing to forgo opportunities to share in the construction of a 2,000-mile pipeline for the transportation of gas for the sake of satisfying the Americans' political goals.¹ The Americans had to consent to the economic interests when it was apparent that the French energy company *Total* was determined to conclude the \$2,000m contract that is shared with Gazprom of Russia and Malaysia. The United States feared provoking a "trade war" with the EU if the EU imposed sanctions on the company at a time the United States was facing difficulty in making Iraq comply to United Nations (UN) resolutions in 1997.² It seems that Tehran could figure out a new strategy for itself that thrived on the disagreement between the United States and its European allies over the management of Middle East Politics.

The Islamic Republic's neutrality and flexibility during the Second Gulf War won it renewed diplomatic relations with Jordan, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia.³ Most of all, the Iranians received Iraq's consent to the implementation of both Resolution 598 and the Algiers Treaty of 1975 concerning the borders dispute between the two countries. This move was motivated by its desire to eliminate the threat of a Western military presence through accepting Resolution 598. With the advancement of the Madrid Peace Process and the possibility of including Syria in the process, Iran's strategic importance was jeopardized. To counter such a measure, Iran claimed opposition to the process on the basis of religious grounds. Above all, the willingness of some of the GCC countries to establish

¹ The pipeline was meant to transport gas from Central Asia to Turkey passing through Iranian territories, Dean and others, op.cit., p.398.

² Ibid.

³ Ehteshami, op.cit., p. 302.

ties with Israel, threatened Iran of being left with no influence in the New World Order that emerged after the demise of the Soviet Union.¹

By late 1997, and thanks to Khatami's pragmatic policy, Iran was participating in UN meetings destined to find solutions to the civil war in Afghanistan.² However, Iran was accused by the Taliban leadership of igniting conflicts through its provision of military assistance to the government's adversaries.³ In September 1998, Iran was on the verge of a war with Afghanistan when the bodies of missing Iranian diplomats were found in Afghani lands. Iran always expressed its wishes for the establishment of an Afghani government that does not become subservient to foreign powers.

However in mid 1999, Tehran announced its willingness to resume relations with the United States because of its powerful stance, aiming at receiving oil concessions from Azerbaijani oil contracts and the lifting of economic sanctions. Later on, The Iranian Deputy Minister of Foreign affairs claimed that his speeches were misinterpreted and that he remained critical of United States foreign policy. Nevertheless, his words were considered as official as Albright announced the lifting of import sanctions against Iranian products and apologized for the U.S. role in the overthrow of Muhammed Musaddiq in 1953, and for her support for Iraq during the First Gulf War.⁴

¹ Ehteshami, op.cit., p. 302.

² Dean and others, op.cit., p. 391.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, p. 399.

3.1.2.4.1. Iran Regional Foreign Policy: Links to Resistance and Terrorist Groups.

Smith and Hocking argue that the application of a well-developed strategy necessitates the employment of the available capabilities in order to achieve influence or convert potential influence into an actual one. Here, two major questions are raised. The first question demands identifying the target, and the second aims at identifying the techniques needed for the mobilization of capabilities. In a state-centric image, governments are usually targeted for their influence on domestic and international politics alike. This does not eliminate the existence of other targeted groups, a matter that is decided by the actors and the group of issues involved.¹

Analysts of the 1990s period tend to praise the neutrality Iran displayed regarding the Second Gulf War not recognizing it as a strategy aimed at seeing its competitor, Iraq, weakened significantly.² The Iranians continued to display duality in their manipulation of foreign policy in the wake of the United States invasion of Iraq. While the government encouraged Shiite parties, among them the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq to cooperate and participate in the U.S. - backed Iraq government, Tehran continued supporting and arming groups that launched deadly attacks on coalition forces.³

The Iranians' preference for covert and indirect actions was exposed during the First Gulf War. In 1986, they used high-speed patrol boats to launch more than 100 attacks on commercial ships in the Gulf. Most of them were Kuwaiti or commercial ships that were transporting oil from Kuwait. When the Kuwaiti ships were registered under American and

¹ Hocking, Brian, and Smith, Michael, (1990). **World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations**, New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, pp. 202-203.

² Eisenstadt, (2005), "Deter and Contain Iran: op.cit., p. 228.

³ Ibid, p.230.

Soviet flags, the Iranians planted mines and continued to use the islands of Minou, Farsi and Bu Musa as bases for launching attacks by high-speed boats.¹ These incidents reveal the rational maneuverability by which the Iranians calculate their moves and by which they minimize the risk of igniting direct confrontation, preferring to cover their intentions by ambiguity and stealth.²

In the world of politics, policy makers are confronted by various ranges of resources and a number of techniques for achieving their goals. These tools vary from the use of diplomacy, the use of economics or the military, and the use of subversion.³ Tehran's preference for the use of subversion over the use of diplomacy is conditioned by its utility in achieving a certain set of objectives. The clerics would find difficulty legitimizing their diplomatic relations with the United States at the domestic level, since the entire regime's survival is based on ideologically antagonizing the United States and Israel. Through subversion, the Iranians can destabilize regimes, as they do in Lebanon, or change attitudes within societies as they do in Palestine and Sudan.⁴

In order to achieve objectives, defend interests or spread influence, Holsti claims that states may sponsor riots, infiltrate foreign organizations or sponsor groups of dissidents to conduct guerrilla warfare or subversion.⁵ Governments who have revolutionary objectives, such as Iran, may use the same strategy it used internally to gain influence abroad. The revolutionary government may use groups to dispense propaganda, organize

¹ Eisenstadt, (2005), "Deter and Contain Iran: op.cit., p. 225.

² Dean and others, op.cit., p. 384.

³ Brian, Hocking and Michael, Smith, (1990). **World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations**, New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, p. 204.

⁴ Donnelly, Thomas, (2005). "Strategy for a Nuclear Iran. In Henry Sokolski and Patrick Clawson (Eds.), **Getting Ready For A Nuclear Ready Iran**, p. 168.

⁵ Holsti, K.J., (1988). **International Politics: A Framework for Analysis**, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, International Inc. p.244, 248.

agitation, train foreign revolutionaries and direct subversion.¹ Since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the sponsoring of terrorists and resistant groups had been a focal point in Iran's foreign policy.² Apart from funding, training and providing weapons to Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Iran's links with terrorist groups extend to Al Qaeda. In 1991, Hassan Al Turabi held meetings in Sudan designed to bring Shiite and Sunni fundamentalists closer to work together. Later on, in 2000 senior members of Al Qaeda confirmed that Iranian officials facilitated Al Qaeda's passage through Iranian territories to undergo their mission of attacking the World Trade Center's Twin Towers in 9/11/2001.³

According to Holsti, the term subversion refers to any rebellious activity in a country, which is organized, supported or directed by a foreign power using for its own purposes the disaffected elements in a society.⁴ Usually the foreign power does not refer to subversion in its open display of propaganda. On the other hand, a power strategy implies *"the careful deliberation of the weighing ends against the means for their attainment."*⁵ Hence, Iran's preference for working through surrogate groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas exposes its cautious behavior regarding implementation of a power strategy, as not to let itself stumble into a quagmire, incase its policies failed.

Tehran's sensitivity to costs was magnified especially when its eight years of bloody war with Iraq ended without attaining victory, and its loss was culminated by Khomeini's death in 1989. This led the Iranian leaders to calculate the costs of pursuing

¹ Holsti, op.cit., p. 248.

² Donnelly, op.cit., p. 167.

³ Ibid, p. 168.

⁴ Holsti, op.cit., p.253.

⁵ Hocking and Smith, op.cit., p. 202.

radical ideologization of their domestic politics and to the exportation of the Islamic Revolution for the sake of establishing strong ties with groups that realize Iran's interest without being involved in costly adventures. Ever since Khomeini prioritized the realistic fulfillment of national interest over religion and the doctrine of the revolution, rational decision-making marked Iranian foreign policy and led to their restraint in exporting the revolution during the 1990s.¹

In March 1996, both the United States and Israel accused Iran of sponsoring the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas that was responsible for a series of suicide bombings in Israel.² In late April 1998, the US Department of State identified Iran as the most active state sponsor of terrorism, alleging that during the past year Iranian agents had perpetrated at least 13 assassinations and noting the continued support of the Iranian government for extremists groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas.³

3.1.2.4.2. Regional Foreign Policy: Influence in Afghanistan.

In the late 1990, Iran was on the verge of going to war with Afghanistan over the murder of nine of its diplomats at Mezar-e Sharif by the Taliban's militia. This incident was the culmination of series of violent attacks along the Iranian-Afghani border ignited by drug traffickers. Iran's major fear at the time was the establishment of an adversary Talibanized government in Pakistan if Musharraf's government was overthrown. Iran could not tolerate another radical Sunni regime with nuclear power alongside its borders.⁴

¹ Eisenstadt, (2005), op.cit. pp. 228-229.

² Dean and others, op.cit., p. 390.

³ Ibid, p.398.

⁴ Kemp, Geoffrey (2005a), "Iran and Iraq, The Shia Connection, Soft Power and the Nuclear Factor," United States Institute of Peace p.4.

In the aftermath of the deadly attacks on New York and Washington, DC, in September 2001, President Khatami condemned terrorism and showed willingness to cooperate with the international world in fighting it. While the reformist Khatami hoped that his cooperation would create an environment suitable for rapprochement with the West, the conservative Khamenei warned of any attempt by the United States to invade Afghanistan and the establishment of a base at Pakistan to fight Al Qaeda's fighters. However, Tehran officially declared its neutrality during the invasion of Afghanistan but continued to support anti-Taliban fighters and support the Northern Alliances. Moreover, it showed willingness to rescue any American pilots who happened to be shot down in Iranian territory.¹

Iran officially condemned the breakout of hostilities and air strikes in Afghanistan in late October 2001, which caused deaths among the civilians. Despite strong warning against any intrusions into the Iranian territories, which was in contrast to Tehran's reaction toward air sorties of US-led coalition forces during the Gulf War, the Iranians attempted to gain influence by supporting the United National Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan or the Northern Alliance and the Shiite Hizb-I Wahdat. By doing so, Iran gained a lot of maneuverability to exert influence over the future Afghani government.² Later on, Tehran provided useful intelligence to Washington on Al Qa'eda members and even played an effective role in the establishment of Hamid Karzai's transition government.³

¹ International Crisis Group, (2005). **Iran In Iraq, How Much Influence**, Middle East Report No. 38, p. 9.

² Dean and others, op.,cit., p. 401.

³ International Crisis Group, (2005). **Iran In Iraq, How Much Influence**, op.cit., p. 9.

Most governments have objectives and goals and frequently their perception of how to achieve their goals affect the choices they make when planning their strategies. Usually the strategy is composed of certain sets of actions, which can be defined as “*the things governments do to others in order to effect certain orientations, fulfill roles, or achieve and defend objectives.*”¹ With the American troops in Afghanistan, Tehran feared an American attack on its nuclear reactor in Bushehr. Its immediate response was to induce a new strategy that prospers on the differences between the Europeans and the Americans over the invasion.

The pragmatic government set to improve relations with the EU through persuading Ismail Khan, the previous governor of Herat, to support the government under Hamid Karzai.² In 2002, the EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs agreed to start negotiations with Iran over political and trade relations. During that period, there were continuous allegations of Iran harboring Al Qa’eda and Taliban fighters. Besides, Iran had previously allowed Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the Mujahidin commander responsible for the destruction of Kabul, to operate through his offices in North Tehran. In a conciliatory gesture toward the United States, the Iranians had to close his offices.³

Iran’s security strategy was premised on undergoing secretive intelligent operations and on supporting radical and terrorist attacks on adversary targets.⁴ Consequently, on 29 January 2002 and in his annual State of the Union, President Bush identified Iran in the “*axis of evil*”, along with Iraq and North Korea, for sponsoring terrorism and supporting

¹ Holsti, op.cit., p.140.

² Dean and others, op.cit., p. 401.

³ Moaveni, Azadeh, (2002). PriklyTehran, (Electronic Version). **Al-Aram Weekly Online**, 14-20 February, Issue No. 537.

⁴ Fathi, op.cit., p. 160.

radical groups in Lebanon and Palestine. The charges were affirmed when Israeli naval forces captured a freighter carrying some 50 metric tons of Iranian supplied weaponry destined for resistants in the Gaza strip. Besides charges of undermining American influence in Afghanistan, Iran was accused of arming Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad militants, encouraging Ismail Khan in western Afghanistan and allowing Al Qa'eda and Taliban fighters' free access and passage through its territory. Above all, Tehran was condemned for its attempt to acquire nuclear technology and weapons of mass destruction.¹ Iran attempted to diffuse the allegations by trying to prove that Al Qa'eda fugitives were only Arab sympathizers and not militant members of Al Qa'eda or the Taliban.²

3.1.2.4.3. Regional Foreign Policy: Manipulation in Iraq.

In the arena of international politics, leaders resort to different acts to achieve influence, to change or to sustain a behavior of others on whom the leaders are dependent to the materialization of their objectives. Such acts may take different forms ranging from display of military strength, providing aid, organizing a conference, or through sending arms and money to a liberation movement or resistance groups.³ Hence, Iran's immediate stance toward the U.S unilateral invasion of Iraq was to denounce the act as not complying with the international law and start immediate cooperation with liberation groups in Iraq. Regardless of Tehran's animosity toward Saddam's regime, the Iranians regarded the invasion as a first step towards spreading the American domination over the region and its rich oil resources.⁴ However, the clerics preferred to use diplomatic means to show their preference for the establishment of another regime in Iraq rather than that of Saddam

¹ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 401.

² Ibid.

³ Holsti, op.cit., p. 140.

⁴ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 403.

Hussein, through participation in a meeting of high-ranking delegates from the Iraqi Kurdish party (KDP). In August 2002, at a meeting in Washington DC, the Iranian leaders joined the United States in its negotiations with Iraqi opposition groups that involved Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir Al-Hakim's Iran-based SCIR Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution.¹

Later on, Iranian-U.S relation deteriorated when, in 2002, the United States accused Iran of a connection with Al-Qa'eda fighters responsible for launching bombing attacks on expatriates' compound in Riyadh. Though Iran denied involvement, it admitted that the attackers were previously held in Tehran's custody before; however, refusing to disclose their identities and arrange for their transfer.² Despite a warning issued to Tehran by the American administration warning of any interference in Iraqi affairs, many of the leaders of SCIRI, (the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq) and its armed militia the Badr Brigade, were interfering in Iraqi affairs. Through meddling in the Iraqi politics, the clerics found a way to escape the American encirclement by giving orders to Moqatada al Sadr's "Mahdi's army" militants to ignite trouble and keep the Americans busy while they develop their nuclear arsenal.³

Strategists consider influence as an aspect of power, and define influence as "*the means to an end*" used for "*achieving or defending other goals, which many include prestige, souls, raw materials, security or alliances.*"⁴ In such a situation, the state uses or

¹ Dean and others, op.cit., p. 403.

² U. S. Department of State, (2003). **Patterns of Global Terrorism**, Washington, DC: April 2004. Available at <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgrpt/2003/>.

³ Donnelly, op.cit., p.169.

⁴ Holsti, op.cit., p. 141.

mobilizes some of its resources as an instrument to persuade, reward, threaten or punish.¹ Therefore, Iran's exploitation of its connections to Iraqi Shiite oppositions can be interpreted as an instrument to exert influence. In such a manner, Iran's power can be converted into relationship and process that makes use of the resources to wield influence.²

To question how deep the Iranian influence perforated into Iraqi politics, the answer is quite a lot. Iran's influence on Iraqi politics is possible because of the history, geography, ethnic, religious, economics and paramilitary ties.³ Naturally, Iraq's new leaders maintain regular visits with Tehran during which they discuss substantive issues concerning security and energy issues. Not only Iran's intelligent operatives are diffused throughout the Iraqi security forces, but also, Iranian businessmen are investing heavily in the Shiite southern regions, and through them Iran is exploiting the paramilitary social and economic ties with the Iraqis to harden its grip on the Iraqi's fate.⁴

Holsti considers the use of relations of overt manipulation as one of many instruments by which states exert influence on other states. Such manipulation succeeds in relations between two states that share some kind of interdependence. Usually, mobilization of military capabilities is excluded. The state exerting the influence resorts to persuasion, offers of rewards and threats to withhold rewards.⁵ Hence, Iran's provision of financial support to Shiite-backed political groups helped them win the elections, which were held on January 30, 2005. Such a step provided the Iranians with the necessary back-up needed against any threats emanating from Shiite-Sunni civil war, the establishment of an

¹ Ibid.

² Holsti, p. 142.

³ Kemp, (2005b), op.cit., p. 2.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Holsti, op.cit., p. 154.

independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq, or the establishment of a rival Shiite clerical government that could be allied with the United States. Moreover, the future of Iraq and Iran became intertwined.¹ Iran intended to create significant problems for the United States and Iraqis in case the United States decided to resolve the issue of Iran's nuclear program by launching a pre-emptive unilateral attack against its nuclear facilities.²

In a report issued by the International Crisis Group on how much the Iranian government influences in Iraq, the group commented that the Iranian influence is so deep to the extent of transforming Iraq into Hell for the Americans. However, the Iranians are maintaining a strategy of “**managed chaos**” that protects Tehran's major interests, which could be summarized as the following:

- 1- **Preserving Iraq's territorial integrity:** Iran fears that disintegration of Iraq would trigger its ethnically and religiously mixed population to have the same demands or encourage cross-border alliance that would menace the central Iranian state. Iraqi Kurdish moves toward independence could entice the Iranian Kurds to unite in a common cause or embolden them to seek a better deal within Iran.
- 2- **Avoiding descent into chaos or civil war:** Promoting a Shiite-dominated non-threatening government that is strong enough to keep the country together but too weak to represent a threat to Iran. By supporting the Iraqi elections in 2005, the Iranians believed that the election would, lead to a Shiite dominated national assembly that could secure its interests regardless of how much supporting

¹ Kemp, (2005b), op.cit.p.3.

² Ibid.

democratic elections would cast light on the Islamic regime's deficiency in such a political matter.¹

- 3- **Maintaining ties and influence through a range of actors:** Iran is widely believed to have infiltrated the flow of Iranian pilgrims to the holy shrines in Iraq with intelligence officers, and paid Iraqi refugees returning home with salaries in order to build an Iranian pro sentiment. Moreover, the Iranians keep providing considerable charitable donations to improve holy sites, building mosques and providing lethal aid to subversive elements in Iraq in the form of weapons, houses, or money. Above all, unemployed youth are used as informants or sent to Iran where they are brainwashed and brought back to fight against the Americans.²
- 4- **Keeping the U.S preoccupied:** Tehran believes that the United States is intent on a regime change, or is using it as an excuse to press the Iranians to halt their nuclear program, and stopping support Hizbollah and Hamas. Tehran's strategy of "*managed chaos*" can force the Americans to withdraw or at least hinder their plan of a regime change in Iran. One senior Iranian official warned "*If Washington threatens Iran, we have 140,000 potential hostages in Iraq*"³
- 5- **Reverting Iraq's emergence as a competing democratic or moderate religious Shiite government:** a Shiite-run Iraq that is economically prosperous and democratic could be the envy of its neighbor. It could represent a more attractive model that accentuates the Iranians' discontent with clerical involvement in politics,

¹ International Crisis Group, (2005), "Iran in Iraq, How Much Influence?" op.cit., p. 10.

² Ibid, p. 13.

³ Ibid, p. 11.

which is hindering the development of a dynamic system, allowing representation that is more public and a separation of religion and politics.¹

The Iranian strategy in Iraq depends on the diversification of their choices of actors by whom they could maintain their influence. The Iranian politicians establish ties with diverse political parties ranging from the Shiite Islamist to the Kurdish and to violent groups. Despite some allegations of Tehran's involvement with radical Jihadists, serious ties could not be confirmed because any involvement with Jihadists would raise the possibility of direct encounter with Baath Loyalists. Moreover, the Iranians would find difficulty controlling the chaos such militants ignite. The insurgents counter interests could trigger Sunni-Shiite sectarian conflicts by their attacks on Shiite clerics' mosques and civilian crowds.²

In spite of their demands for the complete withdrawal of American troops from Iraq, the Iraqi Sunnis fear that an immediate departure of the American troops would allow Iran to intervene under the pretext of replacing the void and preventing or containing the chaos provoked by the American's departure.³ The first warning of Iranian interference in Iraqi affairs came in July 2004 when the Iraqi interim Defense Minister Hazem Sha'alan proclaimed that by supporting terrorism and bringing enemies into Iraq, Iran became the "first enemy of Iraq."⁴ On June 2, 2006 King Abdullah II, King of Jordan, implicitly lashed out at Iran accusing it of trying to spread its radical version of Islam across the Middle East saying: "It is clear that there are parties and states who seek to benefit from this state of

¹ International Crisis Group, (2005), "Iran in Iraq, How Much Influence?" op.cit.,p. 12.

² Ibid. 13.

³ Ibid, p. 23.

⁴Struck, Doug, (2004). "Official Warns of Iranian Infiltration" **The Washington Post**, July, cited in International Crisis Group, (2005), "Iran in Iraq, How Much Influence, op. cit., p.1.

affairs. Some seek to settle their problems at the expense of neighboring countries....Others want to ignite this situation and spread chaos and destruction in more than one place, to enhance their influence and control over the whole region,"¹

In late 2004, King Abdullah warned, as he had done long before, that Iran's influence is felt throughout the region and that it is aimed at imposing "a non-Arab Shiite crescent" that stretches from Iraq, into Syria, Lebanon and the Gulf altering the traditional balance of power between the Sunnis and posing new threats to the U.S. and its allies.² King Abdullah accused the Iranians of sending more than 1 million of its citizens across the Iraqi borders in order to vote, direct the election of 2005 and achieve a government that is pro-Iran.³

Similarly, serious accusations of Iranian manipulation was resounded by the Sunnis who warned that Iran is deepening its influence through intelligence operations, financial support and the use of propaganda that aims at convincing the Iraqis of the positive aspects of combining religion and politics.⁴ In an interview, a leader of the Sunni-based the Muslim Scholars Association claimed that *Etelaat* (the Iranian intelligence) set up an office in Basra and that money is entering the country via Iran. Furthermore, there were claims that Moqtada al-Sadr had visited Falluja in, a matter that proves his cooperation with the insurgency. To introduce evidence of Iranian infiltration in Iraq, the leader of the Muslim Scholars Association mentioned that at an Iranian book fair, significant book donations that contained propaganda materials were given to Iraqi universities in February 2004. Even though the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research was less concerned, he

¹ Halaby, Jamal (2006). "Jordan King Warns Against Destabilization," **the Washington Post**, July.

² Wright, Robin, and Baker, Peter (2004). "Iraq, Jordan See Threat to Election from Iran," **the Washington Post**, December 8.

³ Ibid.

⁴ International Crisis Group, (2005), "Iran In Iraq, How Much Influence?" op.cit., p.2.

still admitted chiding the SCIRI for having presented books which dealt with religious issues and which were printed in Iran.¹

In its report on the Iranian influence in Iraq, the International Crisis Groups asserts that the available evidence does suggest that Iran has well exploited the power and security vacuum in Iraq to extend its influence across the border. As to how much Tehran was successful in spreading its influence and penetrating the hostile and skeptical Iraqi society is to be determined by the assessment of its connections to the major players in the Iraqi political arena. The Sunnis decry the Shiite ascendancy as threatening and fear that the rise of Shiite political power would undermine the Sunnis' interests. On the other hand, the Kurds seem happy with Iran's support for appropriate Kurdish political representation in Baghdad. Iran is using its soft power with the Kurds as to dissuade them to relinquish their independence claims.²

3.1.2.4.4. Regional Foreign Policy: Connection to Shiite Political Parties in Iraq.

In addition to funding infrastructure projects such as schools and clinics in the Southern Shiite populated areas of Iraq, Iran maintains connection to major Shiite parties such as Al Da'wa, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Those parties expressed strong support for the Iranian regime through their acceptance of *velayat-e faqih*.³ The Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq was founded in Iran in 1982 and its

¹ International Crisis Group, (2005), "Iran in Iraq, How Much Influence?" op.cit., p.3.

² Ibid, p. 10.

³ *Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists* (Persian: ولايت فقيه, *Velayat-e Faqih*) is a concept in Shi'a Islam which holds that Islam gives *faqih* or *fuqaha* (Islamic jurist or jurists) custodianship or guardianship over those in need of it. While this idea is accepted by Ulema among Ja'fari jurisprudence (fiqh of Twelvers) there is disagreement over how encompassing custodianship should be. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guardianship_of_the_Islamic_Jurists

military wing, the Badr Corps, fought along side the Iranians during the Iraq-Iran war. Endorsing their support for a democratic system that includes all the religious groups, including Sunni, Shiite and Christians, the SCIRI leader, Abd-Aziz al-Hakim, frequently denied allegations of working according to Iran interests. However, many Iraqis confirm that the SCIRI's 22 headquarters in the South are used as bases for Iranian intelligence, *Etelaat*. A tribal Sheikh said that he himself escaped an assassination attempt after he refused to assist the party in fighting U.S troops.¹

3.1.2.4.5. Iran's Regional Foreign Policy: Connection to Kurdish Groups.

The Iranian Kurdish relations could be described as ambivalent and unpredictable. The Iranians tend to manipulate the Kurds according to their interests, usually letting them down whenever the balance was in favor of the Iranian interest.² Despite the Kurds' frequent resort to Iranian assistance, the Kurds knew that they could never rely on Tehran to achieve autonomy and independence in northern Iraq. Notwithstanding the Iranians reluctance to support the Barazani revolt in 1975, their uprising in 1980 during the Iraq-Iran war, which was ended by the Iraqi counter insurgency and the use of chemical weapons, the Kurds continue to feel gratitude to the extent of declaring that they can not afford to make enemies with Tehran. Dr. Shawkat Bamarni, head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) said that Iran was the only country that helped them and opened its borders for the Kurdish refugees after Halabja was attacked with chemical weapons in 1988 and after their uprising in 1991.³

¹ International Crisis Group, "Iraq in Iran, How Much Influence?" op.cit., p. 13.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, p. 19.

Still, the Kurds understand very well the Iranian's motives behind their good will. Iran is skeptical of the Kurds' close ties with the Americans and their protection of the emerging Kurdish entity in the North. Notwithstanding being a part of alliance with Syria and Turkey in the 1990s aimed at preventing the establishment of a Kurdish regime, Iran is extending economic and political support as means of expanding its intelligence operatives as to monitor the Kurdish *Peshmerga*,¹ and the movements of the American troops. Moreover, Iran is strengthening its ties with Kurdish insurgents such as *Ansar al-Islam*,² especially after they were defeated by the joint U.S and Kurdish forces in March 2003.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) is using Ansar al-Islam as means of pressuring the U.S troops and pressuring the Iraqi government to prevent it from harboring opposition groups such as Mujahideen Khalq (MKO), and the KDP of Iran. Iran's encouragement to insurgent groups such as Ansar al-Islam is not motivated by political and ideological convergence, but is conducted as a part of its game to balance power in Iraq.³ However, Iran has to be wary of the backlash it could create while meddling in Iraqi affairs. Deeper engagement risks accentuating the cultural and religious differences that constitute the Persian-Arab divide⁴

¹ *Peshmerga* a term used by the Kurds to refer to Kurdish armed fighters, literally meaning those who face death, Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peshmerga>.

² *Ansar Al Islam* is a Kurdish Sunni Islamist group, promoting a radical interpretation of Islam and Jihad and which is composed of Kurds and Afghan Arabs who carried a series of bombings and assassinations

³ International Crisis Group, "Iran in Iraq, How Much Influence?" p. 21.

⁴ Ibid, p.19.

3.1.2.4.6. Regional Foreign Policy: Iran's Alliance With Syria and Resistant Groups in Lebanon.

Alliances vary in character, purpose, occasion, duration, and the relative position of those who make them. Moreover, alliances may occur during peacetime or times of war. They could be defensive or offensive in nature, have political or economic objectives, could be permanent or temporary, or could be bilateral or multilateral.¹ Alliances could be formed to satisfy internal objectives or to realize both partners' benefits. Usually, alliances are self-conscious acts and their major purpose is to enhance the security of the allies or advance their interests against the outer world.²

Iran's alliance with Syria, and with militant groups in Lebanon, plays important roles in its strategy toward the region, the United States and Israel alike. Regardless of the fact that Iran is an important regional power, Iran needs other actors outside of itself to ward off the American forces surrounding its land. Through its linkage to resistant militant groups such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Palestinian territories, Iran maintains great advantage over the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. Iranian officials nurtured Hezbollah by uniting various Shiite factions and providing them with money and training.³ As the Iranians found a way to play a role in the Israeli-Arab struggle and to maintain its self-image as the world's defender of Muslims, so did the Syrians who found

¹ Wight, Martin, (1978). **Power Politics**, edited by Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad, Leicester: Leicester University Press, p.122.

² Ibid.

³ Byman, Daniel L., (2006). "Syria and Iran: What is Behind the Enduring Alliance?" The Brookings Institution, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, July 19.

the sword which forced the Israelis to withdraw completely from Lebanon 15 years after invading it.¹

Acknowledging Hezbollah as a partner rather than a proxy, the clerics could engineer direct deadly attacks on the Americans and Israelis through directing Hezbollah militants toward certain actions or maneuvers.² Iran is the only regional beneficiary from the hostility between both Lebanon and Syria, on one hand, and Israel on the other. With continuous escalation between Arabs and Israel, Iraq cannot establish close ties with Israel as Iran continues to use Hizbollah to create more rifts between the different parties involved in the peace process.³

Martin Wight identifies threefold for the notion of natural alliance. For him, alliance may arise from community of doctrine or ideology. They may embody a common interest in relation to the balance of power, or they may enter into a class of association that is the result of changes in the balance of power.⁴ Accordingly, the Iranian-Syrian alliance is born out of convenience and not of ideological convergence, as the change in geopolitics has brought them into a strategic partnership. Although an ideological rift between Syria's Baathists and Iran's radical Islamists does exist, the two states are embracing each other, lessening the pressure they face from international powers.

The growing economic integration represented by the establishment of a joint banking system and the building of an Iranian oil and gas pipeline across Iraq to Syria revealed the two countries' commitment to mutual intentions of bucking any punitive

¹ Byman, *op.cit.*

² Kemp, (2005b), "Iran and Iraq: the Shia Connection, Soft power, and the Nuclear Factor," p. 11.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Wight, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

sanctions against them.¹ Moreover, analysts tend to link Hezbollah latest operation of July 2005 to Iranian decision making, claiming that Hezbollah's links to Iranian theocrats have emboldened them to conduct the kidnappings of 12 Israeli soldiers. In reality, Iran never launched a direct attack on the Americans and always used terrorism to attack American targets in Europe, Latin America and Asia.²

The relationship between Iran and Syria was deepened during the Iraq-Iran war in the 1980s, when Syria supported Iran against Iraq out of rivalry to Saddam's version of Baathism. Later on, the relationship prospered out of necessity, regardless of the divergence of national interests that both states uphold. Still, Syria and Iran have similar positions in the international system. Both states are "under siege" and surrounded by opposing regimes. Such isolation in the regional system reinforced the necessity of drawing alliance between the two states who felt vulnerable after the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. Through Hezbollah and its attacks against Israel, both states can exert influence, distracting major powers from allying against Syria and Iran, and above all, gain credits for supporting the Palestinian cause.³

Having a common goal of not being the next target after Iraq, the Syrians entered into a defense pact with the Iranians in 2004. Tehran provided \$100 million annually to Hezbollah, through which it gained the influence to orchestrate the abducting of two Israeli soldiers in summer 2006, which triggered a punishing retaliation through Israelis air strikes

¹ Brookes, Peter (2006). "Growing Iran-Syria Ties," The Heritage Foundation, March 13.

² Byman, Daniel L., (2006b). "Proxy Power: Understanding Iran's Use of Terrorism," The Brookings Institution, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, July 26.

³ Pan, Esther, (2006). "Syrian, Iran and the Mideast Conflict," Council on Foreign Relations, July 18.

against Lebanon, a matter that distracted the international community from imposing sanctions against Iran for its nuclear program.¹

On 14 February 2005, Hariri's assassination led to the collapse of the pro-Syrian Lebanese government and the withdrawal of Syria's military forces after thirty years of occupation, the isolation of Emile Lahoud, and the establishment of a new anti Syrian Lebanese parliament. Moreover, pressure had been set on Hezbollah to disarm and anxiety mounted as the realization of such a matter would diminish Iran's influence in both Lebanon and Syria. Through enticing an Israeli retaliation and destabilization of Lebanon, both Iran and Syrian can tighten their grip and regain influence in Lebanese affairs, and that of the region as a whole.² Literally, the destruction of Israel constitutes one of the pillars of the revolutionary regime's foreign policy, through which Tehran legitimizes its support for Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Ironically, Iran's support for the Palestinian cause never pushed them toward providing constant assistance to the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and its former chief, Yasser Arafat.³

Iran's influence in Lebanon is manifested through the duplicate institutions and branches of its ministries, which are established in the Shiite areas of Lebanon. Offices of Ministries of Intelligence, Education, Telecommunications, Health, Welfare and Culture and Islamic Guidance are spread all over the Shiite areas and the Iranian government funds the Al-Alam, an Arabic TV station which is used by Hezbollah members for propaganda and publicity issues. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei maintains that the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic and the second highest source of imitation maintain many offices in the

¹ Pan, op.cit.

² Ibid.

³ Kemp, (2005a), op.cit., p.11.

suburbs of Beirut and southern Lebanon that are used for the intelligence service, information gathering as well as political and security meetings.¹ Iran's regional power increases as it keeps boosting Hezbollah's popularity and providing economic support to public services and institutions. Even if the international community succeeds in disarming the militant group, it could transform itself into the largest party and win free and fair election.²

Tehran's policy toward the Gulf could be described as pragmatic, aimed at avoiding alienating its neighbors while it mischievously strengthens its alliance with the radical Syrian regime, with which it shares an antipathy toward Israel. Since the invasion of Iraq, the Iranians conducted high-profile visits and concluded a range of compacts and accords with the Syrians. However, the secular Syrian regime has nothing to do with the Islamic doctrine on which the Islamic Republic is built. Shared fears, as well as shared interests pushed the two parties towards a union of convenience. Iran's persistent animosity toward Israel coincided with Syria's struggle to recover the Golan Heights.

While Iran's stance toward Hezbollah is driven by its Islamist determinations, Syria's cold calculations envision Hezbollah as an efficient mechanism by which Syria can coerce the Israelis and force them to give back the territories captured during 1976.³ Concerning both states' animosity toward Israel, it is necessary to mention that the bond between Iran and Syria could be broken at anytime, assuming that Syria may accept an

¹ Khalaji, Mehdi, (2006). "Iran's Shadow Government in Lebanon," the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, July 19.

² Ibid.

³ Takeyh, op.cit., p. 71.

agreement with Israel, by which it trades recognition of Israel for the recovery of the Golan Heights.¹

On the other hand, Iran is stuck to its ideological hostility towards Israel because its one of the pillars upon which the Islamic Republic had been founded. Concerning Iraq, a division between Syria and Iran could end the shared antagonism they shared toward Iraq. The theocratic leaders of Iran shared the Syrian secular objections to the revisionist policy of Ba'athist regime in Iraq during the 1980s and the 1990s. However, while Iran prefers an empowerment of Shiite religious forces and the conventional political process as a means of securing its interests, the Syrians prefer the destabilization of Iraq through encouraging the Sunni insurgency to foment violence as to force the United States to recognize its influence and substantively engage it in the Arab-Israeli peace process. This Iranian-Syrian tie is fragile and could not last forever since Syria has to surrender to the realities and accept a compromise that realigns it with larger Arab Bloc.²

Paradoxically, Ahmadi-Nejad continues to criticize the American's interference in the region while Tehran continues meddling in the Arab regional affairs. In a letter directed to President Bush, Ahmadi-Nejad criticized its imperialistic involvement in the overthrow of the popular Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeg in the coup of 1953.³ Moreover, he criticized the American intervention in weaker states, while at the same time ignoring Iran's own strategy, which is based on fighting proxy wars in Lebanon. Through Hezbollah, Iran succeeded in orchestrating the bombing of the U.S embassy and the Marine troops in

¹ Ray Takeyh, op. cit., p. 71.

² Ibid, p.72.

³ News and Analysis.org, (2006). "Proxy War, Iran Imperial-Double Standard." http://www.newsandanalysis.org/_topicspages/20060715%20IranProxyWar.htm

Lebanon in the 1980s. Now, it continues to direct politics injudiciously and overtly in the Levant, while at the same time exhibiting a crucial involvement in Iraqi politics and in stirring a relentless war against the Sunnis in Iraq.¹

Iran has never had direct military confrontation with the Israelis, but the Iranian opposition to Israel and the Palestinian plight has always been used to earn popularity and approbation. Tehran's major mechanism for maintaining regional influence and power was to insist on hostility without ever involving itself in direct confrontation with Israel. Vehemently embracing the Palestinian cause, the Islamic Republic overcomes its isolation and interferes with the most important debates of Arab politics and identifies itself with the Syrian animosity toward Israel, Tehran overcame the secularity of the Syrian regime and found its way through the politics of the Levant. Through the establishment of Hezbollah after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the realistic and opportunistic leaders of Tehran provided themselves with an ensured influence in Lebanon and an influence beyond their borders at a limited cost.²

3.1.2.5.1. Iran's International Foreign Policy :Russia and Influence through economy.

Balance of power is one of the oldest concepts in international relations, a universal law of political behavior and of foreign policy, which characterizes the pattern of state actions in the international field. Malhotra defines it as "*a state of dynamic equilibrium.*"³ Through matching powers of some nations against those of other nations, chaos and upheaval are eliminated. The analogy of a pair of scales in equal balance can represent the condition of

¹ News and Analysis.org, (2006), "Proxy War, Iran Imperial-Double Standard," op.cit.

² Takeyah, op.cit., p. 200.

³ Malhotra, op.cit., p.90.

two states or two coalitions that are in balance if they are equally powerful. In a world where nations endeavor to maximize power, different nations group themselves in a manner that prevents other groups of nations to dominate because the power of the other rival groups balances it.¹

Approaching international politics from a realistic perspective, Wight contends that a systematic balance of power is founded on the application of the law of self preservation. The idea of balancing between competing units, groups or institutions is based on the mechanism of “*checks and balances*” by which powers tend to unite and balance themselves against the threat of a third power. The balance is evident whenever a dominant power tries to gain mastery of the international society and overturns the balance. Usually, the dominant state has smaller or weaker states that are incapable of maintaining their independence and dependent on the superpower. According to Wight, through their alliances with the dominant power, the weaker states restore the balance.²

The latest dynamics of regional and international politics played a crucial role in magnifying the Iranians’ confidence in their capability to stand independently free from the complications of being part of a system of balance of power. Evidently enough, Iran’s latest advancement in acquiring nuclear technology is considered a successful scientific accomplishment that will set Iran as an example of a rising industrial advanced power. In light of their favorable strategic influence, the Iranians began to think that they no longer

¹ Malhotra, op.cit., p.90.

² Wight, in Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad (Eds.) **Power Politics**, op.cit., p.169.

need to depend neither on the Russians or on the Europeans to reap any political or economic benefits.¹

With its slogan neither “*Neither East nor West*”, Tehran kept a distant from superpowers during the early phases of the Islamic Revolution. No matter, how far did the clerics go in their relentless persecution of the Communist *Tudeh* Party and Leftist forces in Iran, trade relations between the Iranians and the Russians continued to prosper, as Iran exhibited a different and realistic approach to Moscow that differed from its antagonistic approach to Washington. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the stability of the Russian frontier was one of Tehran’s many concerns, and they feared that following its impulse on exporting the revolution to the Central Asia would ignite unrest in the newly independent States.²

Iran’s ultimate pragmatism was displayed during the Chechnya conflict when it traded its ideology for the favor of improving trade and stability with the Russians. The Russians, who were suffering the consequences of dramatic contraction of their union and were in dire need for cash, appreciated the Iranians prudence regarding the Chechnya conflict and so began to satisfy the Iranians insatiable appetite for military equipment and hardware.³ In return, Tehran maintained a low profile in Central Asia, and the Iranians became Russia’s most important trade partners. Later, they were sold vast quantities of conventional arms, sophisticated aircraft and submarines. This partnership provided vital scientific, as well diplomatic support to Iran’s nuclear program. Hence, the convergence of

¹ Clawson, Patrick, (2006). “Iran’s motives and Strategies: The Role of Economy,” Washington Institute for Near East Policy, May 17.

² Takeyh, op.cit., p. 77.

³ Ibid.

interests renders any prospect of Russia joining the American's policy of sanctioning and deporting Tehran unlikely to succeed.¹

3.1.2.5.2. Iran's International Foreign Policy: Improving Relations with Europe, the Caspian States, Pakistan and India through Energy Concessions.

Morgenthau contends that alliances are born out of expediency and not out of principle.² According to him, alliances are founded on a community of interests that direct the states concerned toward a point of convergence and cooperation. Benefiting from the major rift that separated the United States and the Europeans over the occupation of Iraq, Iran set to exploit the disagreement to block the prospect of imposing any punitive measures against its nuclear activities. The Iranians direct response to any moves was to place great importance on the renewal of trade agreements, offering intelligence information on terrorist groups operating in Europe, and even dangling the carrots in front, making them believe there was hope of getting concessionary oil supply arrangements.³

Hence, the struggle to gain control over unexploited energy resources of the Caspian has been a source of both contention and cooperation among the contesting states. The Caspian pipeline politics could play a positive role in enhancing Iranian-European Union (EU) relations, as the control over Caspian Sea resources have been a source of rivalry and dispute between the littoral states. However, Russia and Iran have internationally recognized borders of the sea shelf while other countries that possess the hydrocarbon deposits lack the technology and financial capabilities needed for efficient

¹ Takeyh, op.cit., pp. 78-79.

² Morgenthau, Hans J. (1987), "Politics Among Nations, the Struggle For Power And Peace," New York: Alfred. A. Knopf, p. 188.

³ Timmerman, Kenneth R. (2005). The Day After Iran Gets The Bomb. In Henry Sokolski and Patrick Clawson, (Eds.), **Getting Ready For A Nuclear-Ready Iran**, op.cit., p. 95.

exploitation. Therefore, Russian and Western companies are the only ones capable of providing the needed technology for the exploitation.¹

Iran poses itself as the suitable route through which oil and gas exportation could pass to Western oil companies, who are always looking for the cheapest route to the European Markets. However, opposition between economic and political interests collides.² Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey look for a western route apart from the one passing through Russia, as the present pipeline is incapable of satisfying the increase in oil and gas demands. Since the United States opposes the project of establishing a pipeline that passes through the Iranian territories, the controversy over the pipeline becomes an issue of geopolitical influence rather than a contest for the oil business itself.³

During the 1970s energy crisis, the Europeans became more concerned about energy security, a matter that led them to adopt a strategy aiming at improving domestic production and reducing oil imports. A report issued by the European Commission in 2000 revealed concerns over the rise in energy supplies, and predicted that the rise would jump from 50 percent to 70 percent in 2030.⁴ In this context, the former Soviet Union countries become the potential countries capable of satisfying European demands while Iran becomes the key actor for proposed outlets of oil and gas from the Caspian region.⁵ In addition, Iran has the second largest gas reserves in the world and is a convenient passage to the European markets. Since pipelines had to go through Turkey, an agreement was signed in

¹ Moradi, Manouchehr, (2006). "Caspian Pipeline Politics and Iran-EU Relations," UNISCI Discussion Papers. P.174.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, p. 180.

⁵ Ibid.

2001 for the construction of a gas pipeline starting in Iran. Moreover, a previous agreement was signed in 1996 which guaranteed the delivery of natural gas over a period of 23 years.¹

The Europeans' perspective regarding oil and gas importation from Iran is complicated in the sense Europe needs to look for a secure supply with reasonable prices. Accordingly, Iran plays a minor role in supplying the European Union with gas and oil. Yet, Iran's geographic location as a connection between the Arabian Gulf, the Middle East and the Caspian Sea will guarantee that it will become a major actor in the future.² The major obstacles in the development of oil resources from the Caspian Sea is political instability that could be triggered by the disputes between Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Russia, as the political interests of the individual states will necessarily affect pipeline politics, through which oil and gas are transported to Europe. Yet, since Iran comes fourth worldwide in the production of oil and the second in natural gas production, it can play a major role in supplying the European Union provided it continues confidence-building measures that started in late 1990.³

Contrary to what is believed about Iran's encirclement, Tehran has a second Eastern, open Front. Through Baluchistan, Tehran could entice the democratic India into economic and energy alliance that ensures the safety of the Iranian borders. The energy trade scheme involves enticing both energy consuming countries through its vast gas reserves. India and Pakistan's reserves amount to only 23-23 Tcf and Tehran could emerge as a major supplier of gas for India, whose natural gas requirement fall short by 30 million

¹ Moradi, op.cit., p. 181.

² Muller, Friedemann, (2003). "Why Iran Is Key for Europe's Security of Energy Supply? Iran and Its Neighbors," Berlin, Swp, p. 68.

³ Moradi, op.cit, p. 184.

cubic meters per day. Tehran, who has the second largest natural gas reserves with an estimation of 812 trillion cubic feet, can squeeze its neighbors economically to the extent of splitting their alliance against Terrorism.¹

In 1993, Tehran attempted to construct an Iran-India pipeline, while in 1995 it signed an agreement with Pakistan to construct a pipeline that extends from the South Pars in the Arabian Gulf to Karachi. Despite the problematic relations between Tehran and Islamabad, after the demise of the Taliban both countries enjoyed improved ties.² However, the line, which has to pass through Baluchistan, jeopardized the entire project as Saddam Hussein used Baluchs during the Iraq-Iran war and their territory was used as a base for terrorist attacks in Afghanistan.

Although Iran's project has very long odds of succeeding, the United States went to undermine the project through communicating their concern to the Indian government regarding the prospect of any cooperation with Tehran. In return, the United States passed a sale of F-16s to Pakistan and promised to provide India with military weapons and defense systems. Therefore, failure to construct the pipeline will eliminate any regional investment, and consequently, smother Tehran's dream of mutual economic benefits in the region.³

3.1.2.6. Political Leadership.

Leadership, especially military leadership, is an important asset of any country, as a great leadership can direct both the state and the military, jolt a superior enemy, and turn defeat

¹ Hanson, Douglas, and Ibn Gaudi, Mohamed, (2005). Iran's Second Front, [www.milnet.com/mid-east-news/the Mideast-09.html](http://www.milnet.com/mid-east-news/the_Mideast-09.html).

² Takeyh, op.cit., p. 80.

³ Hanson and Ibn Gaudi, op.cit.

into victory.¹ Moreover, the quality of leadership has a great input on the manner by which national resources and other tangible resources of a nation's power are distributed, and is converted to satisfy both the military needs and the civilian programs.² Considering the quality of leadership from an individual level of analysis, strategists conclude that, "*the greatness or incompetence, wisdom or irrationality, effectiveness or impotence in leadership considerably affects the power that a country has.*"³ Moreover, leadership is a fundamental intangible element of national power around which nationalism, the morale of the people, and the morale of forces are revolved.⁴

The quality of leadership is essential, particularly when it comes to the question how many the people are willing to sacrifice their lives to fulfill the aspirations of their leader and his dreams of national development and grandiose. The unexpected victory of Ahmadi-Nejad in 2005 augmented the political fears of a setback to the pragmatic policy of Khatami in his consecutive terms in 1997 and 2001 regarding foreign relations with the United States, the European Union, the Gulf States and the North-South relations.⁵ Facing informal domestic constraints threatening the regime's legitimacy, the "*leadership dominant model*" is emphasized alongside its tools of "*translating the idiosyncratic personal values, styles-and pathologies-into foreign policy.*"⁶

Conspicuously, changing leadership became the best alternative for the Iranian regime to counteract the institutional and domestic constraints, as well as Iran's first cure to

¹ Malhotra, op.cit., p. 61.

² Ibid, p. 63.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, p. 61.

⁵ Mohammad Khatami's success represented popular desire for social change, while Ahmadi-Nejad's victory was enticed by deep need for an economic change. **The New York Times**, The Associated Press, (2005), "Hard-liner Rides Wave of Populism," June.

⁶ Hinnenbusch, op.cit., p.11.

the social and economic illness.¹ Playing the economic card, Ahmadi-Nejad with his lofty phrases about economic justice, Islam, national indignity and the need to protect the nation against foreigners captured the hearts of the majority of Iranians, for whom economic hardship was the primary occupation.²

However, among the eight presidential candidates authorized by the Guardian Council, and all of whom were impressed by Khatami's landslide victories, and all of them advocated social and political reform, Ahmadi-Nejad was the least competitive.³ Ahmadi-Nejad, who was 31-years younger, a former Revolutionary Guard, a novice on the national stage, and a hard-line conservative much feared by the reformist movement, came from relative political obscurity to go head-to-head with a prominent national figure such as former president Rafsanjani.⁴ Later, president Rafsanjani, said in a statement on his Web site: "*My opponents used all means within the ruling establishment and facilities of the regime, in an organized and illegal way to intervene in elections...(and) damage my credibility*"⁵

A late decision by the Supreme Leader urged *Basij* members at polling stations to vote for Ahmadi-Nejad.⁶ Such allegations were confirmed by the other candidates who claimed that duplicate and false identity cards were used. Such incidents were motivated by

¹ Hinnenbusch, op.cit., p.11.

² International Crisis Group, (2005). "Iran, What Ahmadi-Nejad's Victory Mean?" Middle East Briefing No. 18, August 4, p.5.

³ Ibid, p. 2.

⁴ Global Security.org, (2005), Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iran/ahmadinejad.htm>.

⁵ **The New York Times**, The Associated Press, "Hard-liner rides wave of populism," op.cit.

⁶ The *Basij* is an Iranian paramilitary force that was founded by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in November of 1979. The Basij are currently subordinate to the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution often known in the west as the "Revolutionary Guards," The official name of the body means **The Mobilized Resistance Force**. Basij membership comprises mainly boys, old men, and those who recently finished their military service. Basij ranks that volunteers were drawn to launch "human wave" attacks against the Iraqis, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basij>.

the Islamic Revolutionary Guards and the Basij to encourage voting for Ahmadi-Nejad.¹ It seems that the Supreme Leader of Iran, and the various political and military Iranian institutions, found in Ahmadi-Nejad the perfect revolutionary model of a leader, who is capable of saving the Islamic Republic from the growing power of the reformists. Externally, the reformists' political discourses were marked by a pragmatic, conciliatory rapprochement with the West. Domestically, political discourses were distinguished by concentration on development and democratic modernization of economical and social aspects.²

Though Ahmadi-Nejad promised to solve Iran's domestic economic affairs through income redistribution that went so far as to the extent of promising to shut down the stock exchange, his influence over Iran's foreign policy was far prodigious, especially during the following nine months after his inauguration.³ Despite his failure to solve Iran's chronic economic problems, reduce inflation and unemployment, the *Mullahs* of Iran maintain silence regarding his truculent rhetoric about uranium enrichment rights because it provides the *Mullahs* with a good distraction to the disenchanted Iranians.⁴ Indeed, The military disasters of revolutionary Iran and its attempts to export revolution in the 1980s precipitated changes in leadership; the socialization of a revisionist state to a more pragmatic behavior; as much as, the need to maintain the survival of the Islamic regime,

¹ International Crisis Group, (2005), "Iran, What does Ahmadi-Nejad's Victory Mean?" Op.cit., p. 5.

² Al Jojary, Adel, (2006). **Ahmadi-Nejad, A Man Amidst the Storm**, Damsucus, Dar El-Ketab Al-Arabi, p.20.

³ Sadjadpour, Karim, (2006). "Iran's Political/Nuclear Ambitions, and U. S Policy Options," International Crisis Group, U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

⁴ Bremmer, Ian, (2007). "A Useful Distraction, Why the Iranian Mullahs Will Never Silence Ahmadi-Nejad." <http://www.slate.com/id/2164237>.

which was threatened by the growing tendency toward socialization and reform, during Rafsanjani and Khatami's governance.¹

During his election campaign, Ahmadinejad criticized Iran's previous nuclear negotiating team for being "*frightened*," a matter that rendered him a powerful symbol representing Iran's sovereignty and growing international clout.² However, wary of repeating the dilemmas of political, economic, and diplomatic isolation experienced during the war with Iraq in the eighties, the Supreme Leader has more than once publicly deprecated Ahmadinejad's fiery pronouncements.³

Nevertheless, Ahmadinejad, who came from humble origins as a blacksmith's son and became an engineer, and in 2003 the mayor of Tehran, continues to enjoy some backing, a result of his populist rhetoric, pious ways, humble lifestyle, and fiery nationalism.⁴ Considering bargaining strategies and diplomatic skills, as well as credibility among the intangible aspects of the great leader,⁵ Ahmadinejad - who is aware of the entrenchment and lack of support among the urban middle and upper classes - has concentrated on courting economically disenfranchised Iranians in smaller towns and far-off provinces, promising Islamic socialism by offering loans, debt-relief, and financial safety to poor Iranian families.⁶

Basically, Ahmadinejad's foreign, and domestic policy can be easily intercepted by considering his associates who are composed of religious extremists military and

¹ Hinnenbusch, op.cit., p. 20.

² Sadjadpour, Karim (2006), "Iran's Political/Nuclear Ambitions, and U. S Policy Options," International Crisis Group, U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Strategists consider the manipulation of public opinion was a measurement by which the leader of the state could avert legitimacy undermining especially during crisis. Dawisha, "Arab Regimes," pp. 266-274. In Raymond Hinnenbusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, op.cit., p.17.

³ Sadjadpour, op.cit.

⁴ **The New York Times**, The Associated Press, "Hard-liner rides wave of populism," op.cit.

⁵ Hinnenbusch, op.cit., p. 17.

⁶ **The New York Times**, (2005), "Hard-liner rides wave of populism," op.cit.

paramilitary groups, among which are the *Abadgaran*¹ the *IRGC* and the *Basij*.² Ahmadi-Nejad owes his ascent to the *Abadgaran* - a hard-line conservatives group formed prior to the 2003 Tehran municipal elections that was mainly concerned with the social and economic hardship of which the Iranians suffered.³ Though this group aimed at uniting urban experts who are independent of any political parties in order to address social problems, the young members of the *Abadgaran* proclaim their allegiance to Ayatollah Khomeini's principles, to stated redistributive economic policies, and to an anti-American doctrine.⁴

Ahamdi-Nejad calls for strengthening relations with regional neighbors, yet, unlike his predecessor, he is less willing to resume dialogue with the West, and continues to denounce the United Nations policies as unilateral and anti - Islamic, while calling for the abolition of the superpowers' right to veto and the right of the Muslim countries to join the International Security Council.⁵ Considering Ahmadi-Nejad's background, he is the most unqualified leader to improve relations with the West as he has left Iran only three times in his life - once to Iraq, once to Austria and once to Moscow, a matter that gives indication of the kind of dialogue, if there is any to be, with the Europeans concerning the nuclear program.⁶

In reality, the major beneficiaries of Ahmadi-Nejad's revolutionary character are the *Abadgaran* and the *IRCC*.⁷ The former, which had applied for the status of a political party in 2005, is seeking influence through the presidential position as to compensate for its

¹ *Etelaph-e Abadgaran*-e Iran means in Persian the Developers Coalition of Islamic Iran.

² International Crisis Group Iran, (2005), "What Does Ahmadi-Nejad's Victory Mean?" Op.cit.

³ Ibid, p. 8.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ El Jojary, op.cit., p. 40.

⁶ Tellier, op.cit., pp. 29-30.

⁷ International Crisis Group, Iran, (2005), "What Does Ahmadi-Nejad's Victory Mean ?" op.cit., p. 9.

failure to impact major policy decisions, such as halting the nuclear dialogue with European Union.¹ However, the *Abadgaran* succeeded in attaining budgetary increases for paramilitary forces, religious foundations, and for the *Guardian Council*, television and radio.² Ahmadi-Nejad's old links to the *IRGC* induced growing concern of the growing tendency for the militarization of politics with the hardliners, of gaining control of economic and political positions, and of the growing domestic influence of the *IRGC*, which like all members of the armed forces are barred from direct political involvement.³ Given this ideological background, Ahmadi-Nejad is the best person to play the "Mossadiq" (the Prime Minister of Iran from 1951-1953) of the nuclear program who uses Iran's rights for the enrichment of uranium as a substitute for the use of oil as insurance for Iran's independence and sovereignty over national resources.⁴

Hence, the unexpected victory of Ahmadi-Nejad came as to surprise the international observers who followed the Supreme Leader's last minute backing of his favorite Mohsen Qalibaf, of whom, support switched three days before the election because of serious concerns regarding Qalibaf overly modern emphasis on modernization, which seemed to enhance Rafsanjani's liberal program.⁵ No matter who the president is, whether Ahmadi-Nejad or Khatami, critical decisions on foreign policy, the nuclear program, and the main economic policies are already within the power of the Supreme Leader. Ayatollah Khamenei wanted Ahmadi-Nejad to be the next president, because he did not want an equal partner or rival, giving him the chance to consolidate his control over Iran's state

¹ International Crisis Group, Iran, (2005), "What Does Ahmadi-Nejad's Victory Mean ?" op.cit., p. 9.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, p. 10.

⁴ Tellier, op.cit., p.30.

⁵ Ibid, p. 26.

institutions: the Parliament, the judiciary, the army, radio and television, and now, the Presidency, which is the only holdout of Iran's reformists.¹

Hence, Ahmadi-Nejad's victory represents the victory of the Supreme Leader, the Islamic institutions and the *Pasdaran* that helped him ascend to the Presidency.² However, whether the Supreme Leader and other religious institutions are the real motivators shaping Iran's domestic as well as foreign policies, Ahmadi-Nejad remains the focal person through whom major responses and decisions regarding global, regional and domestic issues are executed. Through his interaction with the political process, whether from within or without, Iran's crucial decisions are announced and implemented.³

3.1.2.7. Nationalism.

*"U.S pressure has unified the people in wanting nuclear technology, even more because the US says we can't have it."*⁴

Morgenthau considers nationalism as the soul of the state in need of a national community to ensure its survival.⁵ Being a member of a nation that shares the same language, culture, common origin and race entitles the adoption of a certain behavior or a membership of the same qualities that represent the national character, whose preservation necessitates the acquirement of power.⁶ As national character is the soul of the state, political organization

¹ Global Security. org, (2005), Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad, op.cit.

² Tellier, op.cit. p. 26.

³ Ahmadi-Nejad is against World Trade Organization membership, if it would hurt Iran's economy and he is not keen on privatization because it would create unemployment. Analysts consider his win is non positive for the stock market and the investment community, because he stands for basically everything, Global Security.org., (2005), Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad, op.cit.

⁴ Perkovich, George, (2005). "For Tehran, Nuclear Program is a Matter of National Pride," **Yale Global**, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

⁵ Morgenthau, (1978), op.cit. p. 160.

⁶ Ibid.

is the body of the national community, which has the task of fulfilling among other national communities.¹

The basis for all of the Iranian efforts to gain economic and political independence stems from their environment, fears of external interference, and the search for the ultimate goal of freedom that marked the Iranian conscience with the “*arrogance of non submission*”.² Moreover, the call for “*Esteqlal, Azadi: Jomhuri Eslami*” (Independence, Freedom: Islamic Republic) and other revolutionary slogans such as “*Khoda Kafaye*” (Self-Sufficiency) represent the elite’s, as well as Iranian public’s sentiment regarding political and economic independence from external power.³

The Iranians share a unique sense of superiority over their neighbors that has survived through the changing history of Iran to maintain the Iranians’ belief of their illegibility for regional preeminence.⁴ Two disparate strands of Iran’s identity, Persian nationalism and Shiite Islam, marked Iran’s regional vision and led to a strong obsession with being the leader of the Middle East and the center of the Islamic universe. The Persian Empire dominated the political and cultural, giving rise to Shiites’ aspiration of converting their isolation and becoming influential through the making of a hegemon Iran.⁵ Hence, acquiring nuclear technology became the latest device by which the Iranians could affirm their distinction, development, and advancement as a Shiite nation with the greatest society in Southwest Asia.⁶

¹ Morgenthau, (1978), op.cit., p. 160.

² Ehteshami, Anoushiravan, (2006). The Foreign Policy of Iran. In Raymond Hinnenbusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, (Eds.), **The Foreign Policies of the Middle East States**, London: Lynee Rienner Publishers p. 285.

³ Ibid, p. 286.

⁴ Takeyh, op.cit., p. 61.

⁵ Ibid, P. 81.

⁶ Perkovich, (2005), “For Tehran, Nuclear Program is a Matter of National Pride,” op.cit.

To prevent its legitimacy from declining further, the Islamic Republic had to allow secular nationalism - with its deep ties to Shiism - to flourish and become active in politics as many of the Iranians, particularly the youth, are increasingly recognizing that religion, even in reformed form, is ill suited to the demands of modern statecraft.¹ Iran's ruling conservatives recognized the need for a winning political issue to rally domestic support for an otherwise unpopular government. Therefore, they used public discussion of the nuclear program, the United States, and Israel to overshadow the need for other important issues such as gasoline rationing.² Hence, fierce nationalism and accentuation of ethnocentrism became the new ways by which the Islamic regime maintained the survivability of all the political, military and social institutions created by the revolutionary regime.³

Naturally, the nuclear program was the perfect distraction, not to forget denouncing the social inequities, which is reminder of the Shah's reign and is even worse now, through which Ahmadi-Nejad started to downplay the looming hazards of foreign interference evoked by Rafsanjani's desire to open up the Iranian economy and embrace a liberal model that presages brutal upheaval.⁴ The resurgence of revolutionary themes in Iran was enhanced by Ahmadi-Nejad's exploitation of the Iranians' nostalgia, frustrations and fears, which were aroused by the fall of Baghdad and Kabul, and which urged them to favor stability over being in the place of the Afghans or Iraqis.⁵ Iranians see Japan as a model for

¹ Amirahmadi, Hooshang, (1996). **From Political Islam to Secular Nationalism**, New Jersey: Rutgers University.

² Bremmer, Ian, (2007). "A Useful Distraction, Why the Iranian Mullahs Will Never Silence Ahmadi-Nejad," April 16.

³ Tellier, op.cit., p. 6.

⁴ Ibid, p.28.

⁵ Ibid.

their future: "We want what Japan has," a leading Tehran professor insists. "If Japan can have the fuel cycle and stay happily in the NPT, why can't we?"¹

Ahmadi-Nejad's new policy is based on a national populism whose components are authoritarian development and political Islamization that guarantees public consensus to the same policies of increased large-scale public development - behind which the *Pasdaran* stands - and provides a combination of political romanticism, technical rationality, fanaticism, development and collective yield.²

Conclusion.

Iran's elements of national power, displayed in its geopolitical importance, demographic superiority and the attributes bestowed by the possession of important natural resources such as gas and oil, are some of the many factors rendering Iran a regional, if not, an international key player. However, confronted by serious domestic instability, provoked by wide-spread regime corruption that threatens the theocratic regime from within, the *Mullahs* of Iran depend on the manipulation of Islamic emblems to sustain the legitimacy of their political institutions. Evoking nostalgic superiority, the *Mullahs* of Iran use the nuclear program and their right for technological development as a means of distracting the Iranians from rising public discontent. On the international front, favorable systematic changes created by the disintegration of the previous Soviet Union, the fall of both the Taliban and Saddam regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, the American debacle in Iraq, not to forget the growing global demand for energy, provided Tehran with the opportunities as well the means to rebuild and renovate its battered military capabilities. Unquestionably,

¹ Perkovich, (2005), "For Tehran, Nuclear Program is a Matter of National Pride," op.cit.

² Tellier, op.cit., p 29.

the newfound alliances between Iran, Syria and resistant groups in Lebanon and Palestine, granted Tehran the much needed influence to confront any threats emanating from the United States and its allies.

Chapter Four

Iran's Nuclear Program.

"Our people feel great pride because our young Iranian scientists can produce nuclear fuel, the most important part of the fuel cycle, despite all of the sanctions and pressure from the West."¹

Iran's nuclear program and the development of nuclear technology has become a matter of national pride that is cultivated by the Iranian perception of the United States and Israel as major antagonists endeavoring to obstruct Iranian industrialization.² Regardless of increased international suspicion regarding the real intentions behind Tehran's pursuit of nuclear capabilities, Iran continues its defiance stressing the importance of achieving the Islamic nuclear bomb under the pretext of defending Islam against its avowed enemies.³ Tehran's evident determination to acquire nuclear-weapons program raises the question whether such technology would prove more efficient as a deterring tool against Bush's grand strategy of preemption, or as tool of enhancing Iran's dominance and prestige.⁴

4.1. Nuclear Power as Deterrence.

Nuclear capabilities are considered one of the important elements of national power that enhances the amount of influence of those who possess it, as the prestige which accompanies the actual act of controlling nuclear weaponry amplifies the state's

¹Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Hassan Rohani commenting in George Perkovich, (2005), "For Tehran, Nuclear Program is a Matter of National Pride," op. cit.

² Ibid.

³ Chubin, Shahram, (1994). "Iran's National Security Policy: Capabilities Intentions & Impact," Washington, DC: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, p.1.

⁴ Layne, Cristopher, (2006). "Iran, the Logic of Deterrence," **The American Conservative**, April.

confidence, and hence, its diplomatic style.¹ Morgenthau sees that a nation that is equipped with nuclear power can assert its dominance over other nations through subjectivating them to comply with its own will². The essence of a nuclear security strategy is based on the core logic of deterrence whose success is judged by the reality that no nuclear war has occurred up to present time.³ Since the threat “*of all out nuclear violence implies the threat of total destruction ... as mutual destruction cancels each other out,*” the acquisition of nuclear capabilities enhanced the assumption that states would use nuclear power only as a rational instrument of foreign policy for deterrence.⁴

A strategy of deterrence aims at preventing an adversary from changing the status quo to his favor, through the “*persuasion of one’s opponent that the costs and/or risks of a given course of action he might take outweigh its benefits.*”⁵ Since the policy of balance of power is based “*on common sense and obvious reasoning,*”⁶ the logic behind the theory is based on the assumption that the military capabilities of any combination of powers should be sufficiently balanced to prevent what appears to be a worthless full-scale conflict.⁷ Strategists consider the number and size of missiles and the performance characteristics of military hardware as tools for practicing deterrence.⁸ The magnitude of destructiveness

¹ Holsti, op.cit., p. 200.

² Morgenthau, (1973), op.cit., p. 29.

³ Steinbruner, John, (1983). *Beyond Rational Deterrence: The Struggle For New Conceptions*. In Klaus Knorr, (Ed.), **Power, Strategy, and Security**, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 102.

⁴ Morgenthau, (1978), op.cit., p. 30.

⁵ George, Alexander L. and Smoke, Richard, (1974). **Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice**, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 5-11.

⁶ Green, T. H. and Grose, T.H. (Eds). (1829). **Of the Balance of Power**, in *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, Vol.I, London: Longmans, p.352. Mentioned in Wight, Martin, (1978), **Power Politics**, by Bull, Hedley and Holbraad, (Eds.), 1978, Carsten Leischester: Leischester University Press, p. 169.

⁷ George and Smoke, **Deterrence in American Foreign policy**, op.cit., p. 14.

⁸ Sullivan, Micheal P., (1990). **Power in Contemporary International Politics**, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, p. 158.

implied by the use of nuclear force renders it as an effective yet unusable instrument of foreign policy, as its usage consequently invites “*one’s own destruction.*”¹

Since power is considered an influence, bargaining patterns between nations are part of the rules of the game when power parity can either prevent a war or otherwise ignite it.² The major problem facing decision makers and strategists regarding nuclear capability is the rationality behind the use of such dangerous technology and the urgent need to know how much the system is stable with the use of nuclear power as deterrence.³ However, due to its cataclysmic ability, the international community, mainly the U.S. and Israel, have been alarmed by the increased tendency toward nuclear proliferation, especially in the Middle East, which represents the crossroads of intersecting elements such as terrorism, geopolitical ambition and policies of preemption.⁴

4.2. The Rationale Behind Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

“Nuclear Catastrophe was hanging by a thread...and we weren’t counting days or hours but minutes!”⁵

The rationale behind the interest in non-proliferation and nuclear arms control lies in the great devastation that nuclear weapons can cause to human life and modern civilizations.⁶ A nuclear accident can be provoked by misinterpreted indications that might promote the

¹ Morgenthau, (1973), op.cit., 19 p. 30.

² Sullivan, op.cit., p. 79.

³ Joynt, Carey B., and Corbett, Percy E., (1978). **Theory and Reality in World Politics**, London: The Macmillan Press LTD., p. 91.

⁴ Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, **Learn About Nuclear Weapons and Be Informed About Their Threat** <http://www.wagingpeace.org/menu/issues/nuclear-weapons/index.htm>.

⁵ Soviet General and Army Chief of Operations, Anatoly Gribkov, The Cuban Missile Crisis, <http://library.thinkquest.org/11046/days/index.html>

⁶ Kaplan, Morton A., (1970). The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: Its Rationale, Prospects, and Possible Impact on International Law. In Morton A. Kaplan and Aldine Publishers Company (Eds.), **Great Issues of International Politics**, Chicago, Illinois, Aldine: Aldine Publishing Company, p. 157.

hasty decision of undertaking a preemptive strike.¹ The Cuban missile crisis of 1962 is an example of the most dangerous moments of the Cold War when the resolution of the crisis - either war or peace - appeared to hang in the balance between the two Superpowers, the United States and the Previous Soviet Union.² The tension escalated and came close to a nuclear war on the 27th of October 1962, when the United States demonstrated its willingness to use nuclear weapons to defend its vital interests.³

*“The NPT is a landmark international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.”*⁴ Hence, taking into consideration the hazards indicative of owning nuclear capability, one major problem associated with the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is connected to the enforcement of its provisions, which allow each signatory state to withdraw on a three months notice under the excuse of jeopardizing national interests of the state concerned.⁵

The treaty entered into force in 1970, while it was opened for signature in 1968. The treaty does not affect the rights of the parties to continue research, development, and peaceful use of nuclear energy provided that peaceful applications of nuclear energy are to

¹On two occasions, radar blips were recorded indicating enemy action, and deployment of Strategic Air Command of American forces was averted because no major international crisis existed to fortify the evidence of a possible Russian attack, Kaplan, op.cit., p. 158.

²National Security Archives, Washington University, **The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: The 40th anniversary**, National Security Archives, Washington University, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/, for more details on the Cuban missile Crisis read Hershberg, Jim, (1995).The Cold War International History Project Bulletin, issue 5. http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/moment.htm. Also, The Cuban Missile Crisis, Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_Missile_Crisis

³ Ibid.

⁴ <http://www.un.org/Depts/dda/WMD/treaty/>, UN Disarmament.

⁵Ibid, p. 173.

be made available to other parties.¹ In March 2002, total numbers of parties reached 188 among them Iran; however, two states, India and Pakistan are two of the eight confirmed nuclear powers who have openly tested nuclear weapons. One presumed nuclear power Israel neither signed nor ratified the treaty.²

Iran is a signatory state of the NPT but in 2006 was referred to the United Nations Security Council because of its clandestine nuclear activity, especially after it began to ignore the limitations on nuclear activities imposed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).³ History reveals that the United States and its allies are the driving force behind the birth of Iran's nuclear program in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁴ The program was halted during the 1980s after the rise of the Islamic Revolution, due to its allies' refusal to cooperate and fulfill their agreements signed with Iran. The program was resumed in 1995, when Iran signed a contract with Russia to resume work on the partially-complete Bushehr installing into the existing Bushehr I building a 915MWe VVER-1000 pressurized water reactor, with completion expected in 2007.⁵ In 1996, the United States failed to block the People's Republic of China from selling Tehran a conversion plant and the gas needed to test the uranium enrichment process.⁶

On 2002, undeclared nuclear facilities under construction were identified through satellite photographs, sending alarms worldwide that later were confirmed by the revelation of Iran's success in enriching uranium and separating plutonium in the absence of IAEA

¹ Kaplan, Morton A. (1970). *The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: Its Rationale, Prospects, and Possible Impact on International Law*. In Morton A. Kaplan and Aldine Publishers Company (Eds.), **Great Issues of International Politics**, Chicago: Illinois: Aldine Publishing Company, p. 156.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty, Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, op.cit.

³ The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, (2006). **Iran's Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions**, Abu Dhabi, p. xi.

⁴ Sahimi, Mohammad, (2003). "Iran's Nuclear Program, Part I: Its History," Payvand's Iran News, January 10.

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran's_nuclear_program, Wikipedia, Nuclear Program of Iran.

⁶ Ibid.

safeguards.¹ The United Nations played a role in the preventive stage of the nuclear program by calling on Iran to stop its nuclear activity and comply to the NPT norms and threatening punitive measures that would enforce the Security Council's credibility as the upholder of international peace and security.²

Iran's declared intentions justify the necessity of developing nuclear technology under the pretext of rising domestic energy consumption and Iran's desire to reserve such energy to obtain foreign currency. However, the latest aversion to Tehran's attempts to explore fuel cycle, safety, and waste management technology that include sensitive fissile material production capabilities has elevated the international community's qualms about the inarticulate schemes of the Iranian Mullahs. The size of the nuclear program and the kind of technology involved convinced the International community that the Iranian nuclear program is designed for purposes other than the acclaimed domestic usage. Iran has pursued three different methods of uranium enrichment and has experimented with plutonium enrichment, indicating unwavering accrual in nuclear weapons-relevant technology³.

The chain of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East was triggered by Israel's development of intermediate-range ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads, Iran and Syria and Iraq followed suit convinced of the validity of its procurement as an essential deterrent.⁴ Bordering two nuclear-armed states, Pakistan and Russia, and having an ideological conflict with the nuclear-armed Israel, Iran's motivation for the acquisition

¹ The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, (2006). **Iran's Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions**, Abu Dhabi, p.3.

² Perkovich, George, and Manzanero, Silvia, (2005). Iran Gets the Bomb-Then What? In Henry Sokolski and Patrick Clawson (Eds.) *Getting Ready for a Nuclear-Ready Iran*, October, pp. 192-193.

³ Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, *Iran's Nuclear Program, Recent Developments*, Navy Department Navy, <http://www.history.navy.mil/library/online/iran's%20nuclear%20program.htm>.

⁴ Cordesman, Anthony, and Wagner, Abraham R., (1990). *The Lessons of War*, Vol. 1, London: Mansel, p. 536. In Al Shazly and Hinnebush, op.cit., p.84.

of similar power could be easily validated. However, Iran seems to have other intentions as it has always defended its eligibility to the right of becoming, at least, a regional if not a global power, by defending the right of its people to the access of a modern, advanced industry.¹

Taking into consideration the peace maintained during the Cold War that was based on a rough bipolar balance of power, the absence of stable mutual deterrence between several rivals especially Israel with its nuclear capabilities and rivals possessing biological and chemical weapons such as Iran, threatens to plunge the area into combustion.² The first strong indication of an active Iranian interest in possessing nuclear capabilities began during the time of the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in 1974.³ However, the first nuclear reactor given to Iran was given by the United States in 1967 - a five-megawatt trigger reactor and a research reactor, under the Eisenhower Atoms for Peace Program.⁴

Later, in the early 1970s, the Shah had sought the assistance of West Germany, France and South Africa to construct the infrastructure of nuclear power plants with 20 reactors equaling \$40 billion.⁵ At the time, Iran's population was 35 million and oil production was six million barrels a day. Of that six million, 10% less of that output was domestically consumed, and of 12 billion cubic meter only 20% of that was consumed domestically.⁶

Such numbers indicate that even in the early stages of the inception of the nuclear program, Iran had no urgent need for using nuclear power to generate electricity, and that

¹The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies, (2006). **Iran's Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions**, op.cit, p.11.

²El-Shazly and Hinnebusch, op.cit., p.84.

³ Cordesman, Anthony H and Al-Rodhan, Khalid R., (2006). "Iran's Weapons of Mass Destruction," significant CSIS issues series, Center for Strategic and International Studies.

⁴ Isenberg, David, (2005). "The Fuel Behind Iran's Nuclear Drive", Asia Times Online, August 24.

⁵ Takeyh, op.cit., p. 136.

⁶ Isenberg, op.cit.

it's foreign agenda and national interest were always the real motives behind its desire for the possession of nuclear power.¹ However, by the end of the Iraqi-Iranian war in 1988, the attestations that the Islamic Revolutionary Republic of Iran was seeking nuclear power were growing. Analysts consider the magnitude of Iran's defeat by Iraq in the eight-year war, in which it found itself incapable of counterpoising the technological help and benefits Iraq received from the United States as an acceptable rational shortcut behind its pursuit of deterrent capability.²

A clear focus on the nuclear infrastructure began during Rafsanjani's presidency in the early 1990s and was sustained by Khatami's reformist government.³ First official confirmation were declared on February 9, 2003, when the Iranian President Mohammad Khatami announced Iran's program for producing enriched uranium, the fuel for nuclear reactors and nuclear power plants (NPPs).⁴ Suspicions regarding the nature of the nuclear program were strongly justified by Iran's refusal of Russian proposals to provide nuclear fuel at much lower costs,⁵ by Iran's missile development of programs that were meant to be equipped with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) warheads,⁶ and by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) declaration that the pattern of Iranian nuclear activities could be connected to a nuclear weapons program.⁷

¹ Cordesman and Al-Rodhan, op.cit.

² The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies, (2006), **Iran's Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions**, op. cit., p.68.

³ Takeyh, op.cit., p. 137.

⁴ Sahimi, Muhammad (2005), "Forced to Fuel, Iran's Nuclear Energy Program" *Harvard International Review*, vol.26, No.4, winter.

⁵ Russia initially offered to deliver reactor fuel worth of \$30 million for Bushier over a 10-year period starting in 2001, taking the spent fuel rods back to Russia for reprocessing. **Washington Times**, (1995). "Russia to Supply Iran with Nuclear Fuel," August 24. See also, **Iran Brief**, (1995). "Russians Nuclear Deal Worries Germans," September 5.

⁶ The term stands for chemical, biological, radiological as well as nuclear material used for defense and attacks in wars, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CBRN>. CBRN.

⁷ Sahimi, op.cit.

The lesson learned by the Israeli attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor Osiraq on 7 June 1981, taught Iran and other proliferators the need to decrease vulnerability of their programs through the adoption of supplementary measures of protection and redundancy, which explains the rationale behind the spread of nuclear facilities at different sites in Iran.¹ In April 2006, President Ahmadinejad announced that Iran had succeeded in assembling 164 centrifuges and that it has succeeded in enriching uranium.² Intelligence reports claim that Iran is 2 years away from producing a nuclear bomb while others claim that it has five to ten years to do so.³

4.3. Iran's Position Regarding Its Nuclear Program.

Ahmadinejad, the President of Iran, who always defended his country's right for peaceful usage of the nuclear technology affirmed in a speech that his country would continue to seek the help of other countries declaring:

*"The Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to engage in serious partnership with private and public sectors of other countries in the implementation of uranium enrichment program in Iran."*⁴

Yet, at the same time, Ahmadinejad denies his country's intention for developing nuclear weapons by claiming, *"In accordance with our religious principles, pursuit of nuclear weapons is prohibited."*⁵

¹ Brom, Shlomo, (2005). Is The Begin Doctrine Still a Viable Option For Israel? In Henry Sokolski and Patrick Clawson (Eds.), **Getting Ready for a Nuclear Ready Iran**, Strategic Studies Institute, p.146.

² Takeyh, op.cit., p. 139.

³ **Independent**, 15 February 1998; see also **Independent** 30 November 1992, and 11 January 1995, **Military Balance** 1998, p. 75.

⁴ CNN.Com, (2005). Iran is Resolved to Pursue Nuclear Program, Sunday, September 18; Posted: 4:24 p.m. EDT (20:24 GMT), <http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/09/17/iran.president/index.html>

⁵ Ibid.

Similarly, at an Arab Gulf security conference in Bahrain, in December 2006, Iran's foreign minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, insisted that Iran was seeking only peaceful nuclear capacity indicating his country's capacity to confront all odds without the need for nuclear weapons. "*The time of nuclear weapons is over,*" Mr. Mottaki said. He added that if nuclear weapons served as an effective deterrent, they should have stopped the fall of the Soviet Union, and Israel would not have had to go to war in Lebanon against Hezbollah this 2006 past summer.¹ On another occasion, Hussein Moravian, deputy head of Iran's delegation to the IAEA, explained that Iran's current population growth would lead to the consumption of the country's entire oil production, eliminating Iran's oil production within a year.²

However, the argument does not seem to hold good, as Iran has displayed a desire for seeking nuclear energy since the early days of the Shah. Actually, it would be more plausible to spend money on developing the infrastructure that would allow efficient exploitation of its enormous gas reserves rather than on insisting on a nuclear program that would antagonize the whole international community.³ The latest declarations about Iran's need to nuclear technology affirm that Iran is pursuing nuclear program as an attempt to gain international prestige and distinction among the superpowers.⁴ On June 12, 2004, Former Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi announced that:

¹ **New York Times**, (2006). Arab Nations Plan to Start A Joint Nuclear Energy Program, December 11, cited in the International Institute For Strategic Studies, **Iran's Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions**, op.cit., p. 47.

² **Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung**, (2004), September 13, cited in The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies (2006), **Iran's Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions**, op.cit., p.67.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Timmerman, op.cit., p. 114.

*“Iran won’t accept any new (Safeguard) obligations. Iran has a high technical capability and has to be recognized by the international community as a member of the nuclear club. This is an irreversible path.”*¹

These protestations unmask Iran’s intent on defying all international rules and insisting on self-help to gain the nuclear technology by which it is provided with a legal cover for its other dubious experiments.

4.3.1. Iranian Public Opinion Regarding the Nuclear Program.

*“Why is it that our planes crash, our buildings collapse at the slightest tremor, our cars burst into flames, we don’t have even a half-standard football stadium in the entire country, but when it comes to nuclear energy, it’s a national issue?! . . . “Anyway, it smells of war. God help us. Our people have suffered a lot over these past 100 years.”*²

Despite the fact that the nuclear program has exposed the division within the clerical establishments as well as those within public opinion, most factions among the governmental institutions assent the need to sustain an active nuclear program that would provide Tehran with options to safeguard its national interests.³ However, in reality, Iran’s ruling elites are divided into three broad categories: those who favor pursuit of the nuclear project at all costs, those who wish to pursue it without sacrificing diplomatic interests, and those who argue for a suspension of activities to build trust and allow for a full fuel cycle down the road.⁴

¹ Timmerman, op.cit., p. 114.

² BBC News, (2006). An Iranian blogger, January 18, as cited in “Iranian Blogs Debate Nuclear Row,” January 31, www.rah-e-man.com

³ Takeyh, op.cit, p. 147.

⁴ Sadjadpour, Karim, (2006). “Iran’s Political/Nuclear Ambitions, and U. S Policy Options,” International Crisis Group, U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The primary supporters of the nuclear program are the hardliners who control the Revolutionary Guards, the Guardian Council and other clerics who have a strong influence on the shaping of foreign policy and the national security agenda.¹ Through asserting the primacy of the nation, its prestige and international influence, the hardliners, with the nuclear program as a tool, would easily legitimize their power more than a reformist would.² Likewise, the support for the nuclear program spread to students at Sharif University, one of the elite and prestigious scientific universities, and under the name of glorifying national independence.³ The Iranian students, who are considered as a reliable parameter of public opinion and who were always identified with progressive causes such as democratization and reform, are warning against surrendering their national rights to external pressures.⁴

Literally, the hardliners do not conceal their optimism that the international responses would soon accept Iran's new status as a nuclear country along side India and Pakistan.⁵ Conversely, a public poll by the ISPA⁶ conducted in January 2006 revealed that public support for the nuclear program dropped from 85% to 75% in case Iran was referred to the United Nations Security Council, to 64% in event of economic sanctions, and 56% if there were military action against Iran.⁷

The pragmatists, such as former President Rafsanjani, the current Head of the Expediency Council, and Hassan Rowhani, the former secretary for the Supreme National

¹ Takeyh, op.cit., p. 147.

² Tellier, op.cit., p. 52.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Takeyh, op.cit., p. 151.

⁵ Ibid, p. 156.

⁶ Iranian Students Polling Agency, ISPA, (2006). Iranian Students Polling Agency, February 6, available online, www.ispa.ir/en/MorePage.aspx?tName=ANews1&pType=ANInXML&Id=2.

⁷ Herzog, Micheal, and Clawson, Patrick, (2006). "Iranian Public Opinion on the Nuclear Program," Policy Watch, No. 1126.

Security Council, accentuate the importance of integrating Iran into the international political and economical systems, while at the same time, call for acquiring the nuclear capacity within the guidelines of the NPT.¹ Designating the Islamic Republic's lack of sufficient public support for the nuclear program, Hasan Rowhani commented that the Iranian government needed to go slow in the nuclear program in order to build sufficient public consensus - implying both that the regime needs public support and that it did not yet have it.²

Karim Sadjadpour, an analyst of Iran with the International Crisis Group who spent months doing interviews in Iran, reported in early 2004 that:

“Whereas few Iranians are opposed to the development of nuclear energy facility...most of the Iranians surveyed said they oppose the pursuit of a nuclear weapons program because it runs against their desire for ‘peace and tranquility.’”³

Recently, many Iranians began to voice concerns over the costs of the nuclear program, warning that it would incur a possible military strike against Iran, not to neglect the prospect of increasing the Iranians suffering by enforcement of severe economic sanctions that would accentuate Iran's political and social isolation.⁴

Public debate is on the rise and many valid questions are being asked about national priorities such as whether the nuclear program should be highly prioritized given Iran's abundance of oil, or whether the money should be spent on improving Iran's infrastructural

¹ Takeyh, op.cit., p. 151.

² Herzog and Clawson, op.cit.

³ Sadjadpour, Karim, (2004). “Iranians Don't Want to Go Nuclear,” **Washington Post**, February 3. In Michael Herzog, “Iranian Public Opinion On the Nuclear Program, A Potential Asset for the International Community,” op.cit.

⁴ Herzog, (2006), op.cit., p.11.

and finding solutions to the deteriorating economic problems.¹ One blogger bitterly commented on this issue saying:

“Thanks to our nuclear achievement, we have reached the top of an elevator that works in a reverse fashion from the roof and going down...The reason why in recent years we have suffered from high prices, unemployment, an ailing agricultural sector, press closures, freeze on freedom of expression, Peykan (locally manufactured cars), plane crashes, a stagnant cinema and film industry, and an almost zero-level cultural progress, is this: we were busy building the final stage of progress.”²

Proponents of this discourse include the former Presidents of Iran, Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, and Muhammad Khatami who asked President Ahmadi-Nejad for restraint and suspension of various nuclear activities saying, *“We have reached a sensitive point. There is a need for prudence on both sides.”³* So far Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader, and the only man within whose hands lies the decision regarding the nuclear program, has endorsed the pursuit of Iran’s program and the construction of an advanced nuclear infrastructure. However, he professed willingness to resolve the issue with the international community through negotiation.⁴ Yet, on 9 March 2006, a day after Iran’s referral to the UN Security Council, the Supreme Leader of Iran publicly stated:

¹ Herzog, (2006), op.cit., p. 11.

² BBC News, (2006). “Iranian Bloggers Criticize Nuclear Policy,” May 2, available online, see entry dated April 29.

³ Irna, January 11, in Takeyeh, op.cit., p. 152.

⁴ Ibid. p.154.

“We will resist and continue the path of progress. . . If we give in this time, then the Europeans will come up next with new excuses to deprive us from scientific achievements.”¹

Regardless of security and national interests implicated in the pursuit of nuclear power, the Iranian population has cultivated indifference to external pressure and a posture of defiance when it comes to regarding the nuclear program as a symbol of national pride and prestige.² The way Ahamdi-Nejad is exploiting the issue reveals that Iran has no intentions of reversing its course or halting its program, considering the wide benefits earned to the various governmental and military institutions by the magnifying of subjects such as national prestige, independence and the need for deterrence against the greater-powers hypocrisy and imperialism.

4.4.The Implications of the Iranian Nuclear Program on Both International and Regional Arenas.

The drama over the Iranian nuclear program escalated after the IAEA discovery in 2002 that Iran is seeking dual-use nuclear technology, and reached its climax with Ahmadi-Nejad becoming the president of Iran in 2005.³ The IAEA confirmed that Iran has acquired the technology to fabricate centrifuges, needed for uranium enrichment, and that it is constructing both pilot and industrial-scale plants to operate these centrifuges, indicating the dual-use nature of those plants that will be not only capable of producing fuel for nuclear power stations, but also the kind of uranium needed for the core of a nuclear

¹ Deutsche Press-Agentur, (2006). “Iran’s Supreme Leader Orders Resistance in Nuclear Dispute,” March 9, cited in Herzog, op.cit.

² Takeyh, op.cit., p. 155.

³ Perkovich, George, (2006). Iran’s Nuclear Program After the 2005 Elections. In The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, **Iran’s Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions**, op.cit., p. 37.

explosive device.¹ Strategists recommend banning arm transfer to Iran including all modern armor such as long-range attack aircraft, anti-ship, and surface-to-surface missiles, submarines, amphibious ships, as well as the transfer of the “dual-use” technology, since it will inevitably be put to military use.²

The geopolitical changes in the international arena, as well as in the Middle East since the early 1990s, which continued up the early of 2000, represented by the absence of balance of power due to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the war in Afghanistan, the fall of Saddam’s regime in Iraq and the hike in oil prices amplified the fears over the safety of the oil resources in the Gulf. Hence, Iran’s recapitulation of its nuclear program, at a time of enormous regional turmoil, drew attention to Tehran’s resurrected dreams of imposing hegemony and gaining prestigious position among the world’s superpowers.

4.4.1. The United States and the Iranian Nuclear Program.

Every U.S president, from the Second World War to the present, has stated as policy bedrock that Washington cannot allow the oil resources of the Gulf to fall into the hands of a hostile power.³ Iran’s declaration of its nuclear program intensified the political friction with the nuclear-armed United States, whose military has a global reach, capable of defending its client state, Israel, with whom Tehran is in acute religious and ideological conflict. Hence, Iran’s path to nuclear power seemed irreversible⁴ Moreover, with the Events of September 11, 2001, the United States major policy was:

¹ Simpson, John, (2006). Iran’s Nuclear Capability and Potential to Develop Atomic Weapons. In The Emirates Center For Strategic Studies and Research, **Iran’s Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions**, Abu Dhabi, p. 13.

² Cordesman, (1994), **Iran’s Military Forces: 1998-1993**, op.cit. p. 111.

³ **The National Security Strategy of the United states of America**, September 2002.

⁴ Simpson, op.cit., p. 11.

“To stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends”.¹

Hence, a policy of proactive counter –proliferation was adopted and, regardless of the cost indicated by preemption and regime change, the United States was resolved to launch unilateral “periodic wars.”² However, the American miscalculations in dealing with Iran during past years do not justify the fervor with which Tehran is pursuing a policy of confrontation with the world’s industrialized powers.³ The ongoing war in Iraq soon undermined the vigor with which the United States could pursue regime change in neighboring countries. The United States still had to declare its intentions of realizing its objectives in a diplomatic mode, while at the same time, reaffirming the same basic guidelines in the updated March 2006 version of the National Security Strategy. Iran was declared among the tyrannical regimes alongside North Korea, Cuba and others harboring and sponsoring terrorist activities abroad.⁴

The United States regards Iran’s acquisition of nuclear power as a direct threat to the stability of the Arabian Gulf and The Middle East, which are considered as a one broad political-military region, in the sense that the Arab-Israeli conflict and Israel’s relative military superiority affect the political dynamics in the region.⁵ The United States is alarmed by the impact of a nuclear Iran on groups that are considered hostile to the Arab -

¹ **The National Security Strategy of the United states of America**, September 2002.

² Noyce, James, (2006). Iran’s Nuclear Program: Impact on the Security of the GCC. In The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, **Iran’s Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions**, (pp.63-92) Abu Dhabi, p.70.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Sverre, Lodgaard, (2006). Bombing Iran: Is its Avoidable? In The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies, **Iran’s Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions**, (pp.113-140), Abu Dhabi.

⁵ Center for Defense Information, CDI, (2002). Iran, Israel and Nuclear Weapons in The Middle East, <http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/menukes.cfm>.

Israeli peace process and that are engaged in terrorist actions, especially Tehran's involvement in smuggling weapons to the Palestinian rejectionists.¹ Moreover, the region witnesses inter-Arab and regional rivalries that create an environment susceptible for further proliferation of Weapons Mass Destruction (WMD).²

Hence,³ the possibility of Iran's procurement of nuclear weapons would undermine the Israeli air force's superiority, which is the major pillar of its policy of deterrence, not to mention that the insecurity evoked by the achievement of nuclear weapons would inevitably encourage similar efforts by neighboring countries in a deadly blow to the entire NPT regime.³ Lately, the United States intention to establish a new ballistic missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic is meant to protect Europe and America from missiles launched from the Middle East, especially Iran.⁴ The general in charge of deploying a U.S. antiballistic missile shield in Europe, Lieutenant General Henry Obering said:

*"The consensus of most of the intelligence community is that Iran is going to have something before 2015 that could threaten the United States or parts of Europe with a long- range, intermediate or intercontinental ballistic missile capability."*⁵

Though the decision confronted great opposition from Germany and Russia who see in such a step as a plan of encirclement against Russia that would encourage an arms race, Obering

¹ International Crisis Group, (2003), Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program, Middle East Report, No. 18, October 27.

² Center for Defense Information, CDI, (2002). Iran, Israel and Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East, op.cit.

³ International Crisis Group, "Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program," op.cit.

⁴ O'Hanlon, Micheal E., (2007). "Europe Based Anti Missile System: Defense We Just Don't Need Yet," **The New York Times**, May 17.

⁵ International Crisis Group, (2003), "Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program," op.cit.

defended the plan as defensive aiming at deterring possible missile trajectories from Iran to Europe and from Iran to the United States.¹

Despite all the dangers evoked by the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran, disagreement between the superpowers represented by the United States, the EU, China and Russia, account for most of the failure to reach a solution to the Iranian nuclear program. The EU negotiations with the Iranians never addressed Iran's security concerns ignited by the United States presence in Iraq, and notwithstanding the Americans' assurances that they would not object to Iran's negotiations for World Trade Organization (WTO) membership and that they would provide the Iranians with spare parts for their civilian aircrafts.² Moreover, the latest development exhibited in Washington's willingness to engage in bilateral talks with Iran regarding security and stability in Iraq reveals the American weakness vis-a-vis Iran, and its failure to counter the spread of terrorism and sectarian violence in Iraq without the aid of the Mullahs of Tehran. A White House spokesman said that Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker will meet with the Iranians counterparts in Baghdad to urge Tehran to play "*a productive role in Iraq.*"³ In addition, Gordon D. Johndroe, the spokesman for the National Security Council declared:

*"The president authorized this channel because we must take every step possible to stabilize Iraq and reduce the risk to our troops, even as our military continue to act against hostile Iranian-backed activity in Iraq,"*⁴

¹ Dempsey, Judy, (2007). "U.S. Makes Its Patch for A Missile Shield in Europe," **International Herald Tribune**, March 17.

² Sverre, op.cit., p. 126.

³ Abramowitz, Michael, and Wright, Robin, (2007). "U.S., Iran Plan Talks on Pacifying Iraq," **Washington Post**, May 14.

⁴ Abramowitz, and Wright, op.cit.

In a posture exhibiting who is really in charge, Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, commented on the American-Iranian talks and said that the talks would serve to remind Washington of what he called its "*occupier's duty*" to provide security in Iraq .¹ Iranian newspapers hailed the U.S agreement to talk to Iran about Iraq as recognition of Iran's importance as a significant player in the Middle East, especially when it was declared that the talks would not include any discussion regarding Tehran's nuclear program.² Iranian hardliners cheered the agreement as a proof to the international community that the problems in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon and the Middle East cannot be solved without Iran. The Americans are at last obliged to recognize Iran as an effective player in the region.³

Lately, The United Nations' nuclear watchdog, The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) declared that Iran continues to ignore demands to suspend its uranium enrichment activity, and has instead expanded the program, a matter that could open the door for the IAEA to impose new sanctions against Iran, in addition to the sanctions imposed by the United Nations (UN) in March 2007.⁴ In response to the IAEA allegations that Iran is blocking IAEA efforts to probe suspicious nuclear activities, the U.S has meanwhile warned Iran to end its "*defiance*" of UN demands to halt sensitive nuclear work, threatening of considering the "*next steps*" with its allies.⁵ The US ambassador to the UN,

¹ BBC News, (2007). "US and Iran to Hold Talks On Iraq," May17.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6664619.stm.

² BBC News, (2007). Press Divided on US-Iran talks, May14.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/6653275.stm.

³ Ibid.

⁴ ABC News Online, (2007). "Iran Expanding Nuclear Program: IAEA," May 24.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200705/s1931593.htm>.

⁵ Ibid.

Zalmay Khalilzad, said that the Security Council should consider putting more pressure on Iran while adding, *"What we have done so far is not enough. More needs to be done."*¹

On Monday, 19 February 2007, the Financial Times talked to Mohamed El-Baradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency ahead of a crucial week in the dispute over Iran's nuclear program. Mr. El-Baradei made clear his doubts about both calls for more sanctions and the international community's emphasis on suspending enrichment. He said that it is far more important to dissuade Iran from pursuing enrichment on an industrial scale - a development that could be a mere six months away - since the country has already acquired considerable technical knowledge from enriching uranium in a *"research and development"* facility.² In an answer to a question regarding a peaceful solution to the Iranian nuclear dispute, Mr. Mohamed Elbaradei answered:

*"I know however for sure that even if you go for a year or two for retaliation and counter-retaliation and more sanctions it will get worse for everybody, Iran of course, but also all other parts of the international community, specifically, in the Middle East which simply cannot afford an additional escalation which would lead to militancy and increase terrorism"*³

¹ ABC News Online, (2007). "Iran Expanding Nuclear Program: IAEA," op.cit.

² Dombey, Daniel, (2007). Transcript of the Director General's Interview on Iran and DPRK" International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA.org, Financial Times, 19 February.

³ Dombey, op.cit.

4.4.2. The Europeans' Position Regarding the Iranian Nuclear Program.

The European Union (EU) is Iran's main trading partner concerning both imports and exports.¹ For the EU, preventing the emergence of a nuclear-ready Iran is of utmost importance since, if accession negotiations result in Turkish membership in the EU, then Iran would become the EU's neighbor.² The relationship between Iran and the European Union began to deteriorate after the EU demanded Iran freeze its fuel-cycle activities leading to a halt in negotiations on a bilateral trade agreement because of human rights violations.³ Consequently, Tehran backed out of its agreement labeling it as "unacceptable."⁴ The European Union began to play a proactive role in the prevention of nuclear proliferation in 2003, especially after the American invasion of Iraq, as an attempt to circumvent U.S' unilateral role in the Middle East and its disregard for the European interests in the region.⁵

In essence, the European Union's stance regarding the Iranian nuclear program does not differ from that of the United States,' but in the mechanism employed, as the Europeans prefer the use of diplomacy and negotiations over the use of military power.⁶ The EU's External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner told the German *Bild am Sonntag* newspaper that ultimately the European Union and the United States were striving for the same outcome in the discussions with and about Iran. However, he warned of underestimating the consequences of a military strike, not only on the region but also on

¹ European Commission, (2007).The EU's Relations with Iran, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/iran/intro/index.htm

² Posch,Walter, Esveev,Vladmir, and Clawson, Patrick (2006). **How Much Do the EU and Russia**, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, policy watch, No.1092, April 11.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Al-Rawi, Riyadh, (2006). **The Iranian Nuclear Program and its effect on The Middle East Region**, Damascus: Dar Al-Awael Publisher, P.234.

⁶ Ibid, pp.234-235.

relations between the Islamic world and the West.¹ Therefore, the EU-3, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, and the High Representative of the European Union, endeavored to find a political solution within the framework of the NPT by proposing a fuel supply for Iranian power reactors, in return for halting all fuel cycle activities, giving consent to Iranian-Russian cooperation with the EU assistance in constructing a buffer fuel store, that would maintain supplies for five years.² However, Iran defiantly deplored the offer considering it an insult to the Iranian nation.³ On the other hand, the Iranians continue to seek the European's recognition of regional importance beside the recognition of their right to uranium enrichment in exchange for the conclusion of trade agreements.⁴

4.4.3. Russia's Position Regarding the Iranian Nuclear Program.

Shortly after his election, Ahmadi-Nejad personally confirmed the success of the Iranian leadership's strategic line with Russia represented by the development of mutually beneficial and multidirectional cooperation with Russia. Aleksey Dedov, Russia's provisional Charge d'Affaires in Tehran, in an interview in the *Russian daily*, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, said:

" Cardinal changes in Russian-Iranian relations are not in view, Russian-Iranian relations reached a high level during the past several years, and are presently developing in the sphere of regional and international political collaboration, as well as in the areas of hi-tech, education, and culture.

¹ DW-World Deutsche, (2005). "EU Sticks to Diplomacy in Iran," Vol. 22, No.1.

² Lodgaard, op.cit., pp.124-125.

³ IAEA, (2005). Response of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Frame Work Agreement proposed by the EU-3/EU," printed in INFCIRC/651, August 8.

⁴ Al-Rawi, op.cit., p. 239.

Mrs. Dedov mentioned the nuclear reactor in Buser the telecommunications satellite "Zohre" (Venus,) as examples of the advanced technological cooperation between the two countries.¹

Evidently, Russia has somewhat influential position in the Middle East.² Furthermore, Iran has become an important trading partner for Russia, with the annual revenue from bilateral trade reaching \$2.2 billion.³ Iran is an important Russian customer for high-technology products, such as military equipment and the construction of nuclear reactors in Bushehr.⁴ Russia has always displayed willingness to sell Iran a vast quantity of conventional arms, including aircraft and submarines trading Iran's silence in the Chechnya issue for the diplomatic support in international organizations.⁵ Since Russia maintains the strongest economic ties to Iran among the current negotiating coalition - including the United States, the EU, and China - it will be the most likely to suffer from the repercussions of economic sanctions imposed on Tehran.

4.4.4. Turkey's Position Regarding the Iranian Nuclear Program.

Although Turkey, which is a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member, and is looking forward to joining the European Union, does not think of developing nuclear power, however, the change in the threat environment implicated by a nuclear-armed Iran would have repercussions on Ankara's defense and military policy.⁶ The Iranian nuclear

¹ Axis Information and Analysis, (2005). "The Future of the Iranian-Russian Relations," **Global Challenges Research**, Vol. 13, No.7.

² Posch, and Clawson, op.cit.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Takeyh, op.cit., p.78.

⁶ Eisenstadt, Micheal, (2005), "Iran's Nuclear Ambitions and U.S. Options," The Middle East Forum, March 16.

program would have dire implications on the attempts to stop nuclear proliferations.¹ First, it would create a rift between the United States and NATO over the potency of any resolutions against the program. Second, Turkey would speculate new counterbalancing measures; and third, the viability of the NPT would be questioned, as the tension between Arab countries and Iran would be escalated to the other Arab countries, a matter that widens the already existing fissures.²

Turkey and Iran share a 310-mile border, and both Turkey and its two Muslim neighbors have been at peace for centuries due to a delicate balance of military power between the two countries which would be upset if Iran succeeds in developing nuclear capability.³ The Turkish government, led by the moderately Islamic Justice and Development Party (AKP), has been working hard to improve relations with its neighbors. However, division among Turkish policy makers augmented especially after the increase in bilateral trade between Turkey and Iran had grown dramatically, shooting up from \$1 billion in 2000 to \$4 billion in 2005.⁴

Both the Turkish government and the military institutions oppose any American pressure in considering military strikes against Iran, articulating the dangers of inflaming the whole region. Hence, the security implication of the Iranian nuclear program would urge Turkey to reconsider its security strategies alliances, vulnerability, singularization, as well as coupling and decoupling, in case its territory was subject to nuclear retaliation by

¹Perkovich and Mazzerano, op.cit., p. 177.

²Ibid.

³**The Christian Science Monitor**, (2006). "Caught in the Fray: Turkey Enters Debate on Iran's Nuclear Program," February 2.

⁴Ibid.

Iran.¹ The Turkish government continues to oppose any possible operation on Iran by the U.S on the pretext that it will harm Turkey deeply because it will promote Kurdish nationalism, upset the regional balances and aggravate the Turks' belligerence towards U.S policies of preemption, especially to a neighboring Muslim country. Although Turkey has always displayed strong preference to multilateral approaches regarding the nuclear realm, and lately, it has begun to worry about the reliability of its NATO and U.S defense commitments, as it began to consider a strategy of deterrence that would circumvent its alliance arrangements that would cause a salient diminution of Turkish cooperation with the West.² The Turkish security elite lately have started to consider developing nuclear capabilities especially after witnessing the United States' failure to uphold the principles of nuclear non-proliferation regime by preventing North Korea from advancing its nuclear capabilities, not to forget NATO's no-credibility for acting under urgency as an effective deterrent against a nuclear Iran.³

4.4.5. The Arab Countries' Position Regarding the Iranian Nuclear Program.

One important question is raised concerning Iran's nuclear program, and that is, "what are the Arab countries reactions to the threat perceived in a nuclear Iran?" in a SPIEGEL ONLINE interview, Nobel Laureate Mohamed El-Baradei warned, "*With Iran now threatening America with new missiles, and the United States hunting down agents of the*

¹ Lesser, Ian O., (2005). Turkey, Iran, and Nuclear Risks. In Henry Sokolski and Patrick Clawson (Eds.), **Getting Ready For a Nuclear-Ready Iran**, Strategic Studies Institute. October, p. 100.

² Ibid, p. 89.

³ The NATO, which used to be the most trusted international organization by the Turks, has turned down Turkey's request in the days leading up to the US-led Coalition's war on Iraq to enact Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which would have paved the way to taking necessary measures envisaged in Article 5 (i.e., Alliance solidarity) against a possible Iraqi aggression. The same thing happened in 1991 in Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Kebaroglu, Mustafa, (2004). "Iran's Nuclear Program May Trigger Young Turks to Think Nuclear," Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

mullahs in Iraq, the conflict in the Middle East is again threatening to escalate. Mr. El Baradei commented, "*The Middle East is in the worst condition I have ever seen.*"¹

After the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988, the Arabs believed that the depleted Iranian political, military and economic power would keep Iran from contemplating any adverse actions regarding the Gulf states especially with the American presence ready to deter any ambitious adventures undertaken by either Iran or Iraq.² Analysts commented that that general Arab public opinion would welcome the Iranian nuclear program as a balancing act from a Muslim state against Israel and American nuclear weapons, misperceiving the threat of reversal of the pragmatic foreign policy adopted during Khatami's period.³

However, all Arab countries, among them Egypt and Saudi Arabia, oppose any preemptive attacks against Iran's nuclear facility as they recognize the dangers of inflaming the region.⁴ Muhammad Adel Salam, a senior nuclear expert at Cairo's Al-haram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, told Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) that Egypt and Saudi Arabia are concerned that a referral of Iran's nuclear case to the Security Council could worsen the current crisis and sharpen the confrontation. He attested:

"Both states, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, feel threatened by Iran's nuclear activities; they don't want to have another military crisis in the area so if the

¹ Mascolo, Georg, (2007). "El-Baradei Warns US and Iran Against an Unstoppable Chain Reaction" DER SPIEGEL. IAEA.org. February 9.

² Russell, Richard L., (2006). Arab Security Responses To A Nuclear-Ready Iran. In Henry Sokolski and Patrick Clawson (Eds.), **Getting Ready For A Nuclear-Ready Iran**, Strategic Studies Institute, p. 25.

³ Ibid, p. 28.

⁴ **Radio Free Europe**, (2007). "Iran: Arab Countries Voice Concern, Urge Caution Over Tehran's Nuclear Program."

international community goes for a Security Council option, they will join the consensus,"¹

The history of Gulf region has been characterized by repeated miscalculations and misinterpretation of the relative strengths between nationalism and the various ethnic forces with the boundaries of its countries.² The disastrous and reciprocate blunders of the First Gulf War (1980-1988) the Second Gulf War in 1991 and the Invasion of Iraq in 2003 are all examples of the misperceived ideological assumptions and their dire consequences on the security of the oil-rich strategic region.³ Recently the balance of power in the Gulf is undertaking a serious reordering, with Iraq itself no more a serious challenge to the Gulf countries but the challenge comes from the prospect of state failure, transnational terrorism, and inter-state threats emanating particularly from Iran.⁴ All GCC⁵ states, and most Gulf economic and political centers, are arrayed alongside the coastal line facing Iran.⁶ While Iran's nuclear program can be used as deterrence, Tehran's strategic objectives and regional ambitions loom in the horizon augmenting concerns about the regional stability of the Middle East.

The GCC countries were always vocal concerning their apprehension over a catastrophic environmental accident caused by the probability of an earthquake occurring at

¹ **Radio Free Europe**, (2007), op.cit.

² The Emirates Center For Strategic Studies, (2006), Iran's Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions, op.cit., p. 63.

³ During the First Gulf War, Khomeini expected Shia of Southern Iraq to welcome his troops entering the Faw, while Saddam Hussein bed on the Arab population of Iran's Khuzestan to support his attack on Iran. Both leaders discovered later that they miscalculated when both the Iranians and the Iraqis fought as real patriots with their own countries. Noyes, James, (2006). Iran's Nuclear Program: Impact on the Security of the GCC, op.cit., p. 63.

⁴ Knights, Micheal, (2005). "Gulf States Face New Security Challenges," Regional Security Issues, April 14, www.Janes. Com.

⁵ The Gulf Cooperation Council, founded in 1981, is the Consultative body of the Arab Gulf states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

⁶ Knights, op.cit.

the earthquake-prone area where the Russian-built nuclear reactor of Bushehr lies and which is only 150 miles across the Arabian Gulf from Kuwait.¹ A report by Tehran University's seismographic center, parts of which have been leaked, warned that Iran might not be suitable for maintaining nuclear power plants given its location in an active earthquake zone.² Such a mishap would affect GCC countries more than it would affect Iran causing great casualties reaching up to 200,000 people, not to neglect the environmental calamities of polluting the Gulf, where six water desalination plants provide the much-needed water to the dry Gulf countries.³

Analysts anticipate a nuclear power race in the oil rich countries as Arab leaders gathered in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, where they announced their intention of launching a joint nuclear energy development program.⁴ Prince Saud al-Faisal, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, declared to reporters, "*Nuclear technology is an important technology to have for generating power, and the Gulf States will need it equally.*" He added, "*It is not a threat. It is an announcement so that there will be no misinterpretation for what we are doing.*"⁵

The GCC countries appear to fear the threat within Islam itself more, represented by radicalization of Islamist groups and the spread of terrorism that are enhanced by the chaotic situation in Iraq.⁶ Acknowledging the domestic and foreign aspect of terrorism and Al Qa'eda, Nawaf Obaid, Managing Director of the Saudi National Security Assessment

¹ The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies, (2006), *Iran's Nuclear Activities: Issues and Implications*. In **Iran's Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions**, p. 5.

² Vick, Karl, (2006). "Everyday Iranians Nervous about Push for Atomic Power," **Washington Post**, March 8, Taheri, Amir (2006). "Iran Sleep walking into War?" **Arab News** (Saudi Arabia), March 11, Arab Gulf states are particularly concerned about the potential effects of an earthquake hitting the area of the Bushehr nuclear reactor, which is located on the shores of the Persian Gulf.

³ Ibid, p. 5.

⁴ **New York Times**, (2006). "Arab Nations Plan to Start A Joint Nuclear Energy Program," December 11.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Noyes, op.cit., p. 64.

Project in Riyadh, ranked what is happening in Iraq as second to the threat of Terrorism.¹ Iraq is among the Gulf countries which fear the implications of a nuclear Iran on its security agenda, and regardless of the kind of government that takes place in post-Saddam government era, Iraq will continue to view Iran as the largest and most formidable national security threat. Hence, Iraq would continue to covet American military patronage, at least in a small profile, but large enough to deter Iran's military ambitions against Iraq.²

Fears of a nuclear race in the Middle East were raised with Egypt's announcement of its intention to build nuclear power plants as what seems an attempt to restore the regional balance of power.³ Jamal Mubarak son of President Hussni Mubarak announced, "*We must take more advantage of new and renewable energy sources, including the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.*"⁴ Following suit, Electricity and Energy Minister Hassan Younes, confirmed in an interview with the state-owned Al-Ahram newspaper on Monday that Egypt would look for foreign investors to help fund the plan that would be operational within ten years of the project's launch with the aim of initial construction of 1,000-megawatt nuclear power plant at El-Dabaa, 100km west of Alexandria, at an estimated cost of US \$1.5 billion.⁵

¹ Bitterlemons-international edition (2006). Security Turnaround: an Interview with Nawaf Obaid, vol. 4, No.2, January 19, mentioned in Iran's Nuclear Program, op.cit., p. 65.

² Russell, op.cit., p. 30.

³ Moran, Dominic, (2006). "Egypt Goes Nuclear Amid Regional Tension," ISN, Center for Security Studies, CSS, ETH, Zurich, Switzerland, September 28.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Moran, op.cit.

Conclusion.

The discovery by the IAEA of Iran's success in fabricating centrifuges suitable for the enrichment of uranium through clandestine irregular non-state procurement and its success of building both pilot and industrial scale plants that are capable of enriching uranium suitable for the core of a nuclear explosive device reveals that the nuclear program is not meant for peaceful usages. Considering Iran's international geostrategic importance and its historical background, as an ancient civilization, leaders of Iran see that their country has all the eligibility to stand as a regional power capable of realizing their dream of imposing economic and military dominance. Taking in mind Iran's geographic and conventional military superiority to the GCC countries, an important question is raised regarding the need for such nuclear capability, which would provide Iran with the psychological power to intimidate its neighbors and realize its ideological and political aspiration of becoming a regional hegemon. Iran's direct and indirect assets represented by its regional, as well as international economic alliances with Russia, the European Union and China are sufficient enough to secure Tehran an outlet for evading severe punitive measurements against its nuclear program. Iran's defiant stance regarding its nuclear program and the insistence on pursuing uranium enrichment proves that Iran is exploiting the current political turmoil in the Middle East. Taking in mind the political interaction between the different situations, Iran is likely to escalate conflicts just to gain time, finish its nuclear bomb, and be able to withdraw from the NPT. The realization of such a project is a major concern for the Arab countries that fear the further nuclearization of Iran will increase sectarian violence, terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, not to forget, the catastrophic implications of any

natural mishap at the Buser reactor. In the end, a nuclear race would undermine the IAEA's efforts to control nuclear proliferation in the already turbulent region.

Conclusion.

The latest build-up and confrontation between the United States and Iran concerning its struggle for power raised many concerns regarding the fate of the turbulent and important region where vast oil reserves are buried. Iran's bold intrusion into the affairs of many Arab countries and its late stances as the instigator of the surge of tension in already vulnerable countries such as Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine, raised serious alarms concerning the repercussions of its acquirement of nuclear power. Unlike what some regard as the national right for technology and development, Iran's new alliances and manipulation of proxy wars, through dubious support for terrorists and resistant groups all around the region, sends serious daunting signals of the hidden intentions of the theocratic regime of Tehran.

The political structure of Iran, and its foreign policy, reveals that political forces within are rallying for the achievement of nuclear capability, sensing that it will enhance their military capability and their position of power. A nuclear-armed Iran will easily stand against any adversaries aiming at regime change, and will easily succeed in consolidating its influence in Iraq, while shortening the time needed to revive its old dreams of spreading Persian, cultural and ideological dominance, displacing the United States in the Arabian Gulf.

Iran's policy has always been directed towards three influential circles: the Arabian Gulf, the Arab East and Eurasia, however, the Arabian Gulf is the most important of all. Incongruously, Iran's foreign policy towards the area is defined in ideological terms, while its foreign policy towards other regions is considered pragmatic and oriented towards the realization of national interest. Founded on ideological doctrine, the *Mullahs* of Iran

sustain the survivability of their theocratic regime through the celebration of *valyat e-faqih* and through Ahmadi-Nejad, who masters playing the nationalistic cards to thwart any threats emanating from the social division between the conservatives and the reformists, and from the American presence surrounding his country from all sides.

The history of revolutionary Iran proved its ability to avoid major crises by bending to the wind and displaying a pragmatic foreign policy whenever it deemed it as one of its interests. However, Iran seems to be the one provoking the international community lately by refusing all kinds of incentives or assistance, emphasizing its self-dependence and national pride when it comes to the development of nuclear technology. Benefiting from high oil prices and favorable international alliances, as well as regional escalations in Iraq and Lebanon, the *Mullahs* of Tehran continue to provoke instability by encouraging terrorist groups, developing nuclear weapons, igniting proxy wars that distract the international community from addressing the urgencies of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. By using ideological leverages with Shiites in Iraq and Lebanon, Tehran exploits religious emblems as means of legitimizing its revolutionary aspirations on which the Islamic Republic is founded.

The latest military build-up, represented by Iran's adamant pursuit of non-conventional weapons and the means to deliver them, accompanied by the display of an engaged and active foreign policy reveals Tehran's intentions of intimidating its neighbors. The pursuit of the technical development of military defenses through the acquisition of non-conventional weapons, such as biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, and the means of delivering them by missiles, bombers and strike aircraft, far exceeds Iran's needs for the protection of national security. In fact, the buildup reveals the Iranians' design of

enlarging their choices of maneuverability by materializing an efficient apparatus needed for deterring expected adversaries, which is also needed for crippling any present or future resistance, by preventing it from advancing its interests. One manifestation of Tehran's determination to impose economic influence through force occurred in 2004, when it didn't hesitate to caution Qatar against over exploitation of gas resources in the North field and South Pars as both countries share control, threatening adverse actions in case of non compliance.¹

Tehran's latest testing of its improved version of the North Korea missile, the Shahab3, is an example of the success it reached in assuring independence of foreign technology, and weaponry, and in producing an improved version capable of evading radar and anti-missile missiles. Former Iranian Defense Minister Admiral Ali Shamkhani boasted of Iran's aptitude at producing missiles with the ease of producing candies.² Hossein Salami, head of the Revolutionary Guard's air force echoed his words, as he was trying to appease the regional concern of the Arab countries, bragging of the missiles' long-range and their capability to block oil exports from the vital Strait of Hormuz.³ Even the Revolutionary Guard's General Mohammad Rahim Dehghani introduced another technological innovation represented by a highly advanced flying boat that is capable of

¹ Knights, Micheal, (2005). "Gulf States face New Security Challenges," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, p.35.

² Middle East Media Research Institute, Memri, (2006). clip no. 1109, March 21, , Channel 2, Iranian TV, [Http://www.mermritv.org/transcript.asp?p1=1109](http://www.mermritv.org/transcript.asp?p1=1109) cited in the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies, (2006). Iran's Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions, op.cit., p.70.

³ Reuters, (2006). "Iran Fires Missile That Can Evade Radar: TV," **The New York Times**, March 31, cited in The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies, (2006), Iran's Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions, op.cit., p.71.

evading the detection of naval and aerial radar while being able to launch and carry all kinds of weapons.¹

Such reference to Iran's predilection of strategic and political importance presumes that the latest military buildup and the development of nuclear technology are meant to deter the United States. However, introducing itself as a holder of the obstructing third in the security of the oil, the region and Israel, exposes Iran's intention of imposing itself as a rival or partner to the United States, and even as competing to fill the vacuum left by the collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Union. By virtue of its elements of national power, especially the military ones, Iran is disposed to being a regional hegemon that uses nuclear power to compensate for the deficiency of some of its military capabilities brought on by the war with Iraq and the subsequent international sanctions. Exploiting the tendency to calculate and act opportunistically, the acquisition of nuclear power is meant to serve as a political tool to exert influence over other countries, while at the same time compelling the international community to recognize Iran's aggregating importance. Considering Iran's elements of national power, Iran is capable of becoming a regional hegemony, as the mere possession of national resources is good indicator of its power.

Evidently enough, the rise of the Islamic Republic as an influential key player jeopardizes the region's stability. Contrary to Tehran's frequently employed pragmatism in its foreign relations with its neighbors, Iran is likely to adopt a strategy of activism and coercion as the survival of its theocratic regime is menaced by the prospect of implementing sanctions for its nuclear program. The latest maneuvers conducted were part

¹Reuters, (2006), "Iran Fires Missile That Can Evade Radar: TV," **The New York Times**, March 31, in The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies, **Iran's Nuclear Program, Realities and Repercussions**, p.71.

of a showing off the might of the Iranian militant technology and its ability to disrupt, at the very least, regional stability when confronted with American and British forces. The enormous impotence which prevailed during its eight-year war with Iraq, and the incapacity to counter the technological help Iraq received from the United States is another motivation behind Iran's goal to develop missile-based deterrent technology that requires limited skilled manpower.

Iran's security strategy is based on a realistic pursuit of power whose major pillars are self-independence and deterrence of the adverse Western forces, resorting to threats of retaliation when circumstances are favorable, and adopting flexibility and willingness to bind to the wind when deterrence fails. Such rational calculations reveal that the Iranians understand well the different variables and master perfect manipulation of all the temporary alliances in accordance to the political realities of the current events.

Iran's latest assertive stance stems from its ability to exhaust the American troops in southern Iraq and Afghanistan through its support for resistance groups, while impertinently playing the economic and energy cards, widening the friction between the Americans, Europeans, Russia, and China regarding the punitive measures to be adopted against its nuclear program. The disintegration of the Soviet Union provided Tehran with much maneuverability to spread its influence in the Caspian states through longstanding economic and cultural exchange. Moreover, the elimination of the Taliban and Saddam regimes changed the balance of power and provided Iran with Godsent opportunities to enhance its power through the pursuit of nuclear power that serves as an efficient tool in compelling the international community to recognize Iran's growing preeminence.

Recommendations.

The Gulf countries represent the front against any Persian expansion emanating from Tehran through Iraq, hence, they play an important role in promoting regional security and peace, as any destabilization in these countries would have dire consequences on the global economy and international stability. Understanding that political unity is a more effective weapon that transcends military power, efforts should be directed towards consolidating the Gulf's unity and surpassing the political differences between them, as adverse forces could easily play on the differences by creating chaos and confusion. Therefore, members of the GCC should work promptly and seriously to consolidate their political and economic cooperation to counter any adverse attempts to reverse the regional balance of power in the oil-rich region, regardless of the kind of attempts or their sources. However, this does not indicate that the Gulf countries should stop strengthening their military defenses. On the contrary, the Gulf states should coordinate their military security strategies and build up a defense mechanism that, if joined together would stand against any irrational inclinations of Tehran to interfere in the region or impose its will through provoking chaos and interfering in the domestic affairs of the independent Arab States.

However, the success of maintaining peace in the Middle East necessitates that Arabs work together to adopt a strict strategy preventing Tehran from exploiting the political differences regarding major issues and regarding the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region. First, the Arab states should skillfully employ the stand off and the global fear from Iran's nuclear program and pressure both Tehran and Washington to change their policies toward the region. Most of all, the United States has to change its post 9/11 policy which has marginalized the leading Arab states, and turned a deaf ear to the

Arab's warnings of the dire consequences of a Washington unilateral, preemptive doctrine. Most of all Washington has to work seriously to force Israel to relinquish its military nuclear program and to make the Middle East free of nuclear arms, since Israel was the first country to bring the drive for nuclear arms, creating a chain of nuclear reaction. Second, Washington and Israel have to assimilate the reality that no peace will ever exist without authentically solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and stopping all dubious exploitation of the conflict under Islamic covers.

Sufficient energy supplies are the cornerstone for a sustainable economic development; hence, nuclear power can be very useful provided that security risks are strictly measured and circumvented. Some of the major benefits of civil usages of nuclear power are a solution to the growing energy demand, and its contribution to the reduction of CO₂, through lessening consumption of oil and coal in the world. Thus, it is very necessary for the Arab countries to strengthen their cooperation to acquire the know-how of nuclear technology, taking in mind that most of the Arab countries lack sufficient natural resources needed for a sustained national development. Gulf countries, which lack rivers and sufficient rains, can benefit from the usage of nuclear power in the distillation of sea water while other Arab countries can use it to produce much needed electricity. Access to nuclear technology can be attained under the inspection of the IAEA in compliance with nuclear non-proliferation obligations. A joint nuclear energy program can be easily and successfully established on the basis of sharing technical knowledge between those countries who possess the scientific knowledge and those countries who possess the financial ability to initiate such a project.

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الملخص

هذه الدراسة تتناول بالتحليل الدوافع الكامنة سواء الخفية أو المعلنة ذات التأثير في سياسة إيران الخارجية، خصوصاً سعي حكام طهران للحصول على القوة الحربية والنووية وذلك من منظور واقعي للعلاقات الخارجية. كما تتناول بالتحليل العوامل الإقليمية والدولية التي وفرت لإيران الفرص المواتية لبناء قواتها، والمتمثل في الزيادة المضطردة على الإنفاق العسكري في الفترة ما بين ١٩٩١ و ٢٠٠٦. تقوم الدراسة بتحليل الدوافع والأهداف الأيديولوجية، الأمنية، الإقتصادية والتي تعتبر المحرك الأساسي لسعي إيران للحصول على القوة و التي تكمن خلف إصرار طهران على تحدي العالم ومواصلة مساعيها لبناء قواتها وخاصة المشروع النووي، بالرغم من الكل الضغوطات والمحفزات الخارجية، وذلك في فترة تتصف بالاضطراب وانعدام الاستقرار الشديدين في المنطقة. كما تتناول الدراسة بالتحليل جملة من أهم التغييرات الإقليمية والدولية الحاصلة في الفترة من ١٩٩١- ٢٠٠٦ وذلك بالتركيز على الدولة وسعيها الواقعي لاكتساب القوة كمحور أساسي لإثبات أن جملة التغييرات المتمثلة في سقوط الاتحاد السوفييتي، حرب الخليج الثانية، سقوط نظام طالبان في أفغانستان، ومن ثم نظام صدام في العراق، ساعدت إلى إعادة تفعيل الدور الإيراني وتمكين إيران من بسط نفوذها السياسي والاقتصادي وتجديد ترسانتها العسكرية، مستغلة بذلك انشغال أمريكا والحلفاء بإيجاد حل للمعضلة الأمنية في كل من العراق وأفغانستان.

كما ساعد إيران الارتقاع المذهل في أسعار النفط وزيادة الطلب عليه من تقوية علاقاتها بجماعات المقاومة في كل من لبنان، فلسطين، و تعميق نفوذها في العراق وسوريا عن طريق بناء التحالفات الإيديولوجية والسياسية التي تمكنها من تطبيق استراتيجياتها وإنفاذ مخططاتها للسيطرة بطريقة غير مباشرة أو معلنة.

لقد استغلت طهران التباين في وجهات النظر الأوروبية والأمريكية حيال الإجراءات الواجب إتباعها تجاه برنامجها النووي إلى تكثيف تحالفها الاقتصادي مع كل من الصين، روسيا، والهند، ودول القوقاز، بطريقة مكنتها من التلاعب بالورقة الاقتصادية لتوثيق أو اصر التعاون الاقتصادي والعسكري ساعية بذلك إلى إعادة بناء قوتها العسكرية بشكل يمكنها من استعادة أمجاد إمبراطوريتها الفارسية وبسط الهيمنة ليس على منطقة الخليج العربي بحسب بل على المنطقة برمتها بطريقة تجبر المجتمع الدولي على الاعتراف بإيران كقوة كبرى نافذة.