

THE IMPACT OF SEPTEMBER 11 ON IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER KHATAMI

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by
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To my family, nephews and nieces

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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This is to certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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AUTHOR DECLARATIONS

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

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ABSTRACT

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June 2005

THE IMPACT OF 11TH SEPTEMBER 2001 ON IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER KHATAMI

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the impact of 11th September 2001 terrorist attacks on Iranian Foreign Policy during the Khatami period. The thesis consists of three main chapters. In chapter one, I have firstly handled Iranian foreign policy from the time of Shah's reigning until the Khatami period, and secondly the power structure in Iran. In chapter two, first Khatami's foreign policy orientation, and second, Iranian foreign policy before 11th September 2001 are being discussed within the context of Khatami's various responses to different foreign policy issues. After looking at 11th September 2001 attacks, in the same part, repercussions of the attacks in World politics, new American foreign policy under George W. Bush, and Iran's immediate response to post-11th September 2001 order are being handled. In chapter three, I have discussed the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, Iran's relationship with the US and the EU, and Iran's nuclear energy problem as a component of Iran's present foreign policy.

The key goal of this thesis is to draw the general framework of Khatami's pragmatist foreign policy in the post-11th September 2001 world.

Key words:

September 11, Nuclear Energy, Terrorism and WMD, Khatami, Pragmatism

KISA ÖZET

MEHMET DURMUŞ

June 2005

11 EYLÜL'ÜN HATEMİ DÖNEMİ İRAN DIŞ POLİTİKASINA ETKİSİ

Bu tez, 11 Eylül Saldırılarının Hatemi Dönemi İran Dış Politikasına etkisini incelemektedir. Üç bölümden oluşan tezin birinci bölümünde, Rıza Pehlevi'den Muhammed Hatemi'ye kadar geçen süreçte İran'ın takip etmiş olduğu dış politika ve İran'da dış politikayı etkileyen güç odakları incelenmiştir. İkinci bölümde ise, Hatemi'nin dış politikası anlayışı ele alındıktan sonra, bu anlayış çerçevesinde 11 Eylül öncesi süreçteki İran dış politikası ve Hatemi'nin dış politika konusundaki farklı yaklaşımı anlatılmıştır. Aynı bölümde, 11 Eylül saldırılarına genel bir bakıştan sonra, bu saldırıların dünya politikasına getirileri, saldırı sonrası George W. Bush yönetimindeki yeni Amerikan dış politikası ve İran'ın 11 Eylül sonrası var olan yeni düzen karşısındaki ilk tepkileri incelenmiştir. Son bölümde ise, 11 Eylül sonrası İran'ın dış politikasını meşgul eden konular; Afganistan ve Irak'ın işgali, İran'ın ABD ve AB ile olan ikili ilişkiler ve en son olarak da nükleer enerji konusu işlenmiştir.

Bu tezin amacı İran dış politikasındaki, ağırlıklı olarak Hatemi dönemiyle başlayan pragmatizme yönelişi göstermek ve bu anlayış çerçevesinde, 11 Eylül sonrası İran dış politikasının genel görünümünü çizmektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

11 Eylül, Nükleer Enerji, Terörizm ve Kitle İmha Silahları, Hatemi, Pragmatizm

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIOC	Anglo Iranian Oil Company
AEOI	Atomic Energy Organization of Iran
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CNN	Cable News Network
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
D-8	Developing 8 Countries
DPIK	Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan
EU	European Union
GC	Council of Guardians
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HAMAS	Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah (Islamic Resistance Movement)
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICC	International Criminal Court
ILSA	Iran Libya Sanction Act
IMF	International Monetary Found
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
IRI	Islamic Republic of Iran
IRNA	Iranian News Agency
MKO	Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization
NCRI	National Council of Resistance of Iran
NPT	The Non-Proliferation Treaty
OIC	Organization of Islam Conference
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
Pbuh	Peace Be Upon Him
PIRI	Presidency of the Islamic Republic of Iran

PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
SNSC	Supreme National Security Council
SU	Soviet Union
TNRC	Tehran Nuclear Research Center
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNMOVIC	UN Monitoring Verification and Inspection Commission
US	United States
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization

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INTRODUCTION

Iran is an important country in the Middle East that has vast oil and natural gas resources and with approximately 70 million population, mostly composed of people under 25, at the juncture of geo-strategic locations. Iran has always been a very influential actor in the region throughout the history. It is a country that superpowers always seek to control, which has been more obvious in the 20th century. Throughout the 20th century, the United States, Germany, Russia and the UK fundamentally influenced Iran's domestic and foreign policy.

In chapter one, I have discussed Iranian foreign policy from the time of Shah's reining until the Khatami period. One would really need to have an opinion about the roots of Iran's foreign policy orientation before passing to analyze the current issues. In addition to this historical background, I will touch upon such significant events as Iran-Iraq War, Iran Revolution and the Gulf War. Understanding of these events is essential for the making of an accurate comparison of Iran's foreign policy before and after 11th September 2001. It is not possible, for instance, to think of writing a thesis about Iran without sufficiently understanding Khomeini Era and Iran Islamic Revolution. At the end of the chapter one, I will depict the power structure in Iran and make an evaluation about it.

Chapter two is about President Khatami and his foreign policy orientation. In this chapter, new Iranian foreign policy will be discussed with reference to détente, dialogue and diplomacy, and its reflections on bilateral relations. Scrutinizing the Iranian foreign policy under Khatami until 11th September 2001 is vital for understanding Iran's response to post-11th September 2001 era. In addition to these, I will examine 11th September 2001 terrorist attacks and its effect on world politics, US foreign policy under George W. Bush and Iran's immediate response to 11th September 2001.

In the last chapter, the impact of 11th September 2001 on Iranian foreign policy under Khatami will be considered with emphasis on Iran's responses to the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. After that, Iran's bilateral relations with the US and the EU will be discussed in the context of new international balances. Lastly, Iran's nuclear energy dispute and ongoing debate will be handled in the light of the latest events.

CHAPTER 1

IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY FROM THE TIME OF SHAH UNTIL KHATAMI

From "Pro-Western" to "Revolutionist" and then to "Pragmatist"

Middle Eastern geography has not got a long tradition of democratic culture. Dictators, monarchs and sheiks have been ruling the states of the region for a long time. Consequently, foreign policies of the corresponding states are being shaped by personal decisions of these rulers. Iran is not an exception in the region. As a result of its leaders' personal decisions, Iran sometimes walked on the mystical roads of the East, often found itself wandering around the "reason" borders of the West. In this chapter, I will particularly take up "Pahlavi," "Khomeini" and "Rafsanjani" periods and analyze "Iranian Revolution" "Iran-Iraq War" and Gulf War I. These periods and events are very crucial in order to understand the transformation of Iranian foreign policy orientation from pro-western to Islam, and then from Islam to pragmatism.

1.1 Reza Shah Pahlavi: "Pro-Western"

During the First World War, Iran was invaded by the UK and Russia owing to its geopolitical status. Ahmet Khan was seemingly ruling the country after that, but the real masters were Russia and Britain. Russia lost its influence on Iran after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. After the fall of Qacar

Khanate, Reza Khan is given the title "Shah," and in 1926 Pahlavi Khanate was established to maintain as a monarchy in Iran for some years.¹

Reza Shah had accorded great importance to improve its relations with the West, particularly with the US. Germany was another option to cooperate against occupying states. Close relations with Germany gave its outcomes on Iran's economical preferences. For example, Mr. Millspaugh, an US finance expert, and his aide had come to Iran for the purpose of improving economic conditions in the country; but they had to return back to their countries when their contracts expired. German finance expert Kurt Linden Blatt was appointed instead of Americans to deal with the economic problems in Iran.²

During the Second World War, Iran was invaded by Russia and the United Kingdom once more, though it had declared its neutrality during the war. Iran suffered three external invasions in thirty years and this was the most important incentive behind the Iranian effort to follow a more cautious foreign policy in the years coming. In 1941, Reza Pahlavi had been forced to leave the throne in favor of his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, thanks to his close relations with Germany.

1.2 Mohammad Reza Pahlavi

First years of the reign of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi were rather troublesome. Foreign powers were trying to penetrate into Iran by using different opposition groups like workers, scholars (ulama), landowners and

¹ Tayyar Arı, *Geçmişten Günümüze Ortadoğu: Siyaset Savaş ve Diplomasi*, İstanbul, Alfa Publication, 2004, p.197.

² Ayşegül Dora Güney, *İran'da Devrim*, İstanbul, Haziran Publication, 1979, p.35.

so on. While Soviets were supporting Tudeh Party for their interests, Americans were in support of all anti-communist movements in the country. United Kingdom was, however, giving support to landowners, tribal leaders and allegiances of monarchy.³ Shah was not quite experienced in government, but he had an authoritarian personality. In 1946, Soviets withdrew their forces from Iran and then, Autonomous Azerbaijan administration was terminated by the intervention of Iranian Army.

Increasing foreign influence on Iran economy was a source of trouble for some Iranian nationalists. Anglo-Iranian Oil Company had owned important privileges in Iranian oil and was acting as if an independent state in Iran. Inauguration of Mohammad Musaddeq to power as the Prime Minister was a decisive moment in the Iranian foreign policy. Iran was a loyal ally of the Western powers until 1951, when Musaddeq became the Prime Minister. Bazaar group wanted to increase its share in oil market and decided to support Musaddeq's idea of nationalization of Iranian oil. With this decision, Musaddeq and his supporters were aiming to restrict the "Anglo-Iranian Oil Company" which was behaving independently on its own in Iran. In addition to this, they wanted to take the shares that Iranian people deserved. As expected, United Kingdom showed great reaction to this nationalization decision since its share was roughly 40 % (lion share) in Iranian oil market.⁴ The United Kingdom was a "status quo" power as it was serving best to its

³ Ari, *op.cit.*, pp.251–252.

⁴ Ari, *op.cit.*, pp.256–263.

interests. In 1953, Musaddeq was deposed by a coup orchestrated by CIA and British Intelligence. General Zahedi was appointed in his place in order that he serves to normalize the relations with the West.⁵ Iran's efforts to achieve an independent foreign policy thus ended up with failure and Shah returned to power again.

After 1953 coup, the US and the United Kingdom preferred to use economic incentives, especially in forms of financial aids for military facilities, for the re-establishment of good relations with Iran. The United States, for instance, accorded Iran \$45 millions of financial aid, which was used to found Shah's secret service, known as SAVAK; and the United Kingdom strengthened its economic ties with Iran by the way of "Petroleum Consortium Agreement."⁶

Shah's efforts to cooperate with the US and the United Kingdom must be considered as a natural defense reflex. During the Cold War, Iran was by the Western Bloc under the threat of Soviet invasion. Therefore, Shah attached a great importance to pursue a foreign policy compatible with that of the United Kingdom and the United States. In 1955, a mutual security agreement named Baghdad Pact was signed between Iraq and Turkey to prevent Soviet infiltration into the Middle East. The same year, Iran, Pakistan and the United Kingdom joined this pact.⁷ Although Iran had good relations with the Western Bloc, Soviet Union was an important country that should not have

⁵ Güney, *op.cit.*, p.52.

⁶ Güney, *op.cit.*, p.54.

⁷ Serkan Taflıođlu, İnan, "Silahlı İslami Hareketler ve Barıř Süreci," *Avrasya Dosyası: İsrail Özel*, Vol. 5 No. 1, (Autumn 1999), p.47.

been totally ignored. Economic relations between Iran and the Soviet Union WERE necessary to keep the balance in international politics.⁸

In 1973, petroleum crisis broke out because of the Arab-Israeli war. During this crisis, Iran followed an interest-oriented policy and benefited from the circumstances for increasing its oil revenues. Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) had taken a decision to reduce the oil production, but Iran did not abide by the decision though it was a founding member of the Organization. On the contrary, Iran increased its daily production and exported relatively more oil to international markets – here it is important to note that Arab countries had also increased their oil production capacities in 1950's; when the National Front leader Musaddeq had nationalized Iranian oil. According to Shah, flow of green US dollars was more important than the condition of Muslim states. This seems to be a clear proof of Shah's pro-Western and pragmatic foreign policy orientation. After high increase in oil revenues, as a result of 1973 crisis, the US supplied Iran with weapons, technology and military equipment.⁹

In the same period, the relations between Iran and Israel were harmonious thanks to their economic interests. The two states were "de facto" allies, though Iran did not recognize Israel officially. They were conducting their trade via Switzerland.¹⁰ The trade volume and activity in between was noteworthy. For example, while Israeli products were on sale

⁸ Taflioğlu, *op.cit.*, p.47.

⁹ Türel Yılmaz, "Ortadoğu Güvenlik Sorunu ve Türkiye," p.119, (in) *Uluslar arası Güvenlik Sorunları ve Türkiye* (Eds. Refet Yinanç&Hakan Taşdemir), Ankara, Seçkin Yayıncılık, 2002.

¹⁰ Taflioğlu, *op.cit.*, p.47.

in Iranian markets, Iranian oil was flowing to Israel.¹¹ Iran-Israel relations were shaped according to pragmatic and interest-oriented calculations. All in all, Shah tried to strengthen its authority during the first decade of his administration. Then his primary goal was to be under the “protective umbrella” of Western bloc against Soviet expansionism. On the other side, Soviet Union was not totally ignored, as it was necessity to keep the balance in international politics.

1.3. Iran Revolution and Khomeini: “Neither East nor West”

It cannot be wrong if we say that all revolutions are contributions of authoritarian leaders to history. Iranian Islamic Revolution was a public movement against Shah’s pressure and cruel administration on Muslims, liberals, intellectuals, traders and humanists.¹² This movement was led Khomeini who, at the time, was in exile in France and in its success his contribution was undeniable.

Shah thus gave priority to economic development; rapid industrialization process was on the way in Iran. Many villagers migrated to cities for fine employment. The people who migrated to cities to have a better life were generally poor and illiterate. Khomeini made a successful revolution by making use of the support of these poor people and trade (bazaar) groups. Workers in the oil refineries, for instance, went on strike and traders contributed to revolution by providing funding.

¹¹ Mesut Hakkı Caşın, “İran’ın, İki Deniz Jeopolitiğine Dayalı Stratejik Değişim Arayışları,” *Avrasya Dosyası: İran Özel*, Vol. 5 No. 3, (Autumn 1999), p.292.

¹² Oral Sander, *Siyasi Tarih*, Ankara, İmge Publications, 1989. pp.552, 553.

Iranian Revolution was a decisive event for both Iran and other regional states. It's really important to take a look at Khomeini's speech on 1st December to comprehend the new developments in Iran, and Iran's foreign policy orientation toward the Middle Eastern countries: "In this holy month, sacrifice your bloods to protect Islam and overthrow tyrants and parasites."¹³ This remark by Khomeini shows that Revolution was not only an Islamic movement, but it also paved the way for new political openings. Khomeini had shown the regional monarchies and kingdoms as the new targets waiting for a revolution to reach salvation like the one in Iran.

The referendum in March 1979 showed that overwhelming majority (about 99 percent) of the population voted for the Islamic Republic of Iran. An important aspect of the revolution was that it was a public movement and a stepping stone for the establishment of a Republic based on Islam. After this historical event, international balances, ally and enemy formations have changed in the world in its entirety. Iran denounced being a "*loyal slave*" of the Western world and decided to become "her own master." Islamic identity, which was forgotten and weakened by shah, became a dominant factor again and started to exert its effect in the socio-political arena.

After the Revolution, Iran's foreign policy was restructured with an understanding like "Neither East nor West." Khomeini condemned the United States, due to its close relations with Shah Regime, and accepted it as the most prominent enemy to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Afterwards Iranian

¹³ Sander, *op.cit.*, p.554.

leaders would call the US as "Great Satan," and the title "Small Satan" was to be used for the Soviet Union.¹⁴ The winds of change which came through revolution turned Iran to anti-Americanism and anti-Israelism specifically and anti-Western generally. A result of this perception There broke out the storming of Iranian students of the US Embassy in Tehran and taking of US diplomats hostage for 444 days. After this crisis, Iran's relations with the US have never been the same as before again.

The standpoints of other states towards Iran have also changed in the post-revolution years. It could not be expected that these states would remain indifferent to a formation which describes themselves as *parasites and tyrants*, and which also claims that their regimes had to be overthrown. Possibility of the exporting of the Revolution to other states in the region naturally disturbed them because their thrones were under threat as that of Shah. During the first years of revolution, they refrained from establishing close relations with Iran. Neighbor countries preferred to follow a "wait and see policy." In fact, Islamic Revolution pushed isolated Iran into an absolute isolation, since countries of the Middle East now came to perceive Iran as an "other." Iran's "Shiite and Persian" identity was a source of distinction; this identity was strengthened by the revolution. Iran found itself in an isolated environment both regionally and globally.

¹⁴ Andrew I. Killgore, "A Nightmare for the Future: What If Iran defeated Iraq?" *Washington Report*, (16 June 1986), p.2.

The United States was also affected by the historical change in Iran. Accordingly, the existence of anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism, the possibility of the emergence of similar revolutions in neighboring countries WERE interpreted as a decline of the US interests and prestige in the Middle East.¹⁵ At that time, there was a serious struggle for penetration into this region. The Soviet Union was trying to make use of this drastic change for increasing its influence over new Iran. The US was thus trying to mollify the effects of the revolution as soon as possible. It first wanted to replace Egypt with Iran as the new outpost for the West. An old ally had become an enemy with the export of revolution still posing a problem. It is important to note here that, during the revolutionary era, the fear of exporting of the revolution to other countries had become "paranoia" in the US.¹⁶ It therefore took some precautions and developed a new foreign policy orientation for the continuation of the US interests in the post-revolution Middle East. These precautions were:

- i) Containment of Iran in form of economical, political and military pressures.
- ii) Support to Iraq against Iran in eight-year war.
- iii) Imposing pressure over other states to exclude Iran from international politics and international markets.

¹⁵ Arı, *op.cit.*, pp 545-550.

¹⁶ Bülent Aras, "İran'ın Değişen Güvenlik Dengesi Çerçevesinde Orta Asya ve Kafkasya Cumhuriyetleri İlişkileri," *Avrasya Dosyası* Vol. 3, No. 3, (1996), p.168.

iv) Use of the United Nations for the realization of US policies (For instance: Resolution 457 and Resolution 461 after Hostage Crisis).

In short, Islamic identity and anti-Westernism were quite effective in the formation of new Iranian foreign policy. There was a special emphasis on the US (Great Satan), the Soviet Union (Small Satan) and Israel (Zionist Regime). They were indeed the reflection of Khomeini's private ideas. Khomeini had become the central decision making agency in Iran's foreign policy. He had also described himself as Vali-e-Faqih.¹⁷ That is to say, all power was in Khomeini's hands. Khomeini thus easily shaped the new Iranian foreign policy by using the advantage of his becoming the dominant power.

1.4 Iran-Iraq War

Iran's relations with Gulf countries and the US deteriorated after the Revolution and hostage crisis. In 1978, Egypt was excluded from Arab world and pushed into isolation after signing Camp David Agreement. Consequently, it was a good opportunity on the part of Iraq to take place of these two declining powers and to become the new rising star of the Middle East. Saddam Hussein had four goals in his attack against Iran. They were:

i) Restricting the effects of Islamic Revolution based on Shiite doctrine

¹⁷ In Shiite belief, some realities of Islam cannot be understood directly by ordinary people and their finding the true path depends on a person's guidance who is from the descendant of Ali. This guide is called Veliy-i Fakih (Supreme Leader). See. Oğuz & Çakır, *op.cit.*, pp.36-38., İlyas Üzüm, "İmametten Velayet-i Fakihe: Ana Hatlarıyla Şiiilik," *Aksiyon*, No. 533.

- ii) Taking back the lands that were given to Iran by Algeria Agreement
- iii) Obtaining control over Shatt al-Arab River
- iv) Bringing independence on Arabs who live in Khuzestan, which also had important oil fields.¹⁸

In the first months of the war, Iraq was partially successful against Iran, but the years coming, Iran entered "population factor" and stopped Iraqi expansion, thus Saddam Hussein's expectation of an easy victory within a short time went up in smoke.¹⁹ Syria was the only ally and supporter of Iran in this war. The conflict between Baath Parties of Iraq and Syria was an important factor for Syria's taking place on the side of Iran. Libya, Algeria and Palestinian Liberation Organization were also in support of Iran. Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia, however, supported Iraq owing to their strong enthusiasm for Arab nationalism, but later on they had the fear to fall into the same situation as Iran. In addition to them, South Yemen, Jordan and Egypt also supported Iraq.

During the first years of the war, though neutral, Soviets were trying to join Iran into Soviet bloc after the peaking of anti-Americanism in Iran, but at the same time, they wanted to uphold Iraq because it was candidate to become a super power in the Arab world and the Gulf region. Iran's support for Afghan mujahidin, pressure on Tudeh Party and Khomeini's increasing

¹⁸ Ari, *op.cit.*, pp, 559.

¹⁹ Ari, *op.cit.*, p. 560.

charisma on the eyes of millions of Muslims in Soviet Central Asia were other reasons for Soviets' upholding of Iraq.²⁰

The US had opted for neutrality at the beginning of the war, but it clandestinely continued to sell weapons to Iran until 1982, with the hope of recovering former relations, though the negative effects of the hostage crisis were still in memories. When Iran stopped Iraqi expansion, this time, the US policy changed to prevent the defeating of Iraq totally and the emergence of a Shiite weighted Islamic republic in Iraq. Later on, the US gave overt support to Saddam Hussein and started to deploy forces into Gulf countries.

Iran suffered heavy losses during the war because its weapon industry was heavily dependent on foreign powers. Iran was not, for instance, able to provide spare parts for its weapons; they were coming from the US. After the war, Iranian officials understood that their dependence on Western powers in terms of military equipments was really a great deficiency for the independence of Iran and its army.²¹ In addition, Iran suffered material and spiritual losses in the face of arms race. In consequence, Iranian foreign policy makers decided to close Middle East region to the influence of foreign powers and realized that a strong army was vital for the peace and the stability of the region.²²

²⁰ Arı, *op.cit.*, pp,565-566.

²¹ See, Deniz Altınbaş, "İran'ın Silahlanma Çabaları," *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol. 5 No. 3, (Autumn 1999), pp.250-269

²² Saideh Lotfian, "Iran's Middle East Policies Under President Khatami," *The Iranian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 4, (Winter 98-99), also see, Gökhan Çetinsaya, "İran ve Güvenlik Algılamaları" (in) Refet Yinanç&Hakan Taşdemir (eds), *Uluslararası Güvenlik Sorunları ve Türkiye*, Ankara, Seçkin Publications, 2002, pp.149-150.

Consequently, the duration of the war, lack of spare parts, heavy losses in terms of human life and material ownings forced Khomeini to accept the resolution 598 of the United Nations that invited both sides to a cease-fire. Later on, Imam Khomeini adapted an independent foreign policy orientation from both East and the West. His main aim was to protect newly established Islamic Republic and to encourage similar Islamic republics in the Middle East.

1.5 Hashemi Rafsanjani: "Transition Period"

After Khomeini's death in 1989, Rafsanjani became the president of Islamic Republic of Iran. Rafsanjani was an important figure and he was among the trustful advisors of Ayatollah Khomeini. He was co-founder of the Islamic Republican Party, and Majlis (Iranian Parliament) speaker from 1980 to 1989. Besides, during the Iran-Iraq War he was appointed as commander in chief and played an important role in the acceptance of the UN resolution 598, which put an end to war.²³

Rafsanjani era was a transition period from Khomeinism to Khatamism and a new period of reformism and pragmatism. Rafsanjani sought to ameliorate the relations with West and to reestablish Iran as a regional power.²⁴ Economic development and recovery from the war sufferings became primary matters of both domestic and foreign policy. But Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the collapse of the Soviet Union diverged Iran's attention and

²³ "Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani Ranks Among the Most Influential Politicians in Iran," *BBC News*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3034480.stm (Friday, 4 July, 2003, 09:05 GMT 10:05 UK).

²⁴ *Id.*

energy to the new tension in the Middle East and new formations on its northern border.

In August 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded its oil rich neighbor Kuwait and accused Kuwait of stealing Iraq's oil from border fields by use of different drilling methods. According to Iraqi claimants, Kuwait was also a province of Iraq during the Ottoman Empire. This invasion was a new source of disorder and instability in the region. Iran condemned this invasion like other countries and supported the United Nations resolution 660 that condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and resolution 661 which called for bringing the invasion and occupation of Kuwait by Iraq to an end and restoring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait.²⁵

Despite the use of all economic sanctions and other peaceful dispute settlement methods, Iraqi forces did not retreat, and then, coalition forces led by the US started a military operation and in a short time Saddam Hussein was ousted from Kuwait and forced to abide by the United Nations resolutions. At the end of the Gulf War, Saddam Hussein's Iraq lost its power and was now far from being a threat for Iran. This war had two important consequences for Iran:

- i) Iraq lost its power and it was far from being a regional rival for Iran
- ii) The US increased its military penetration in the Middle East and Gulf region.

²⁵ SC/RES/660, SC/RES/661.

Another important event was the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia emerged as new states and became members of international system as new actors on the northern border of Iran. Iran was not pleased with large-scale changes; Iranian foreign policy makers were supporting the continuation of the "status quo." "New-born three states" brought about a need for a new foreign and security policy and also for spending more energy and time to make region more secure and stable. These new states were independent, but Russia did not want to lose its influence over these states. Russian penetration was thus being felt in the successor states. As a result, Iran took the Russian concerns into account while reshaping its foreign policy. In post-Cold War era, Iran was at same distance to all states and when a conflict was to break out, Iran was in favor of acting as a mediator and conflict manager. Iran was thus trying to prevent expansion of US influence over newly independent states and at the same time, it was trying keep Russia in temper.²⁶

Rafsanjani wanted to establish good relations with the European Union as well. In 1992, Sadıq Serefkandi, Secretary-General of Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (DPIK), his two friends and a translator were killed in a restaurant named Mykonos in Berlin. In 1997 a German court announced its decision and charged some top officials like Ali Khamenei and president Rafsanjani for giving the order to kill Iranian dissidents. This statement

²⁶ Taflioğlu, *op.cit.*, pp.49. (in) E. Mesoud, "Misreading Iran, Current History," *A Journal of World Affairs*, New York, USA, (January 1998), p.38.

worsened Iran EU relations as a result of which both sides suspended their diplomatic relations.²⁷ Another tension stemmed from the “fatwa of death” issued against British author Salman Rushdi by Khomeini for his famous book, *Satanic Verses*.

In 1993, Iranian officials made some speeches indicating their willingness to reduce the tension in-between. For instance, the Chairman of the parliament Natiq Nuri, in his speech, stated that Iran ordered no one to kill Salman Rushdi. For the first time since the revolution, the intention to normalize the relations was voiced by such a senior Iranian official.²⁸ It proved that Iran wanted to re-structure economic and political bridges for eliminating isolation policy.

The demise of the Soviet Union and the emergence of an almost unipolar world system was followed by fatal conflicts in the Caucasus and Central Asia. In these conflicts, Iran played an active and constructive role for the settlement of disputes in a peaceful way. In the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (1992-94) between the Azerbaijan and Armenia, Iran declared its neutrality and emphasized its willingness to mediate. In this dispute, Iran was in favor of following an interest oriented policy rather than helping its Muslim Shiite brothers. Svante E. Cornell wrote, “Actually, given the militant Islamic rhetoric and policy of the country, Iran ought to have been the first country to rush to the support of the Azeris, fellow Shiite Muslims, in their

²⁷ Oğuz&Çakır, *op.cit.*, p.296.

²⁸ Oğuz&Çakır, *op.cit.*, p.297

confrontation with the Christian Armenians."²⁹ In 1993, Iran's efforts to achieve peace gave its fruit with the signing of Tehran Declaration between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In addition, Iran did not give any support to Islamic opposing groups in Tajik civil war and adapted a common policy with Russia.³⁰

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Iran and Turkey set out for rivalry in the backyard of Russia. While Turkey had linguistic, cultural and historical similarities with Turkic states, Iran had the advantage of geographical closeness to the region. The struggle for influence ended up with the formation of two different allies. First alliance was formed by Yerevan, Tehran and Moscow; the second group was, however, formed by Baku, Ankara and Washington. It's rather strange to see Iran in a group containing Christian states against another group whose two members were Muslims.

According to Rafsanjani, Russia could have been an opportunity for tackling the imposition of the containment policy by the United States. While Iran was improving its relations with Newly Independent States of the Central Asia and Caucasia, it also accepted Russia as a regional partner in the post-Cold War era. There was noteworthy cooperation between these states especially in military and nuclear energy fields. In 1995, Russia agreed

²⁹ Svante E. Cornell, "Iran and the Caucasus," *Middle East Policy Council Journal*, Vol. 5 No.4, (January 1998), http://www.mepec.org/public.asp/journal_vol5/9801_cornell.asp

³⁰ Atay Akdevelioğlu, "İran'ın Orta Asya, Afganistan ve Azerbaycan Politikası," *Stradigma*, No. 2, (November 2003), p.17.

to finish a reactor project, which was reported to worth about \$800 million.³¹ Iran-Russia cooperation was a threat for US interests in the Middle East; therefore, Clinton administration followed a dual containment policy against Iran and Iraq, for debilitating these states as it did to the Soviet Union.³² In March and May 1995, Clinton Administration concluded two acts that prohibited US companies and their subsidiary companies from making business with Iran. In August 1996, US Congress passed Iran Libya Sanction Act (ILSA) and it was signed by President Clinton. This was an act that imposed sanction on companies, irrespective of their nationality, and punished firms if their investment in the Iranian oil and gas sector was more than 20 million dollars.³³

Clinton administration tried to prevent large scale investments in Iranian energy sectors. Although US firms abided this act, European firms did not and this weakened the effect of containment policy. Consequently, Rafsanjani had to concentrate all his power and attention on the Gulf Crisis, collapse of the Soviet Union and post-Cold War realities, and the United States' containment policy. Rafsanjani era showed a period transition from authoritarian Iran of Khomeini to the reformist Iran of Khatami.

³¹ Pamul Kerr, "Iran, Russia Reach Nuclear Agreement," (April 2005), http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2005_04/Bushehr.asp

³² Tayyar Arı, Irak, *İran ve ABD: Önleyici Savaş, Petrol ve Hegemonya*, İstanbul, Alfa Publications, 2004, p. 262, Çağrı Erhan, "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası ABD'nin Güvenlik Algılamaları," p.76 (in) *Uluslararası Güvenlik Sorunları ve Türkiye* (Eds. Refet Yinanç&Hakan Taşdemir), Ankara, Seçkin Yayıncılık, 2002.

³³ Global Energy Sanctions Report by Energy Information Administration, July 2004, p.1 (www.eia.doe.gov.tr), Oğuz&Çakır, *op.cit.*, p.300.

and he can “declare war” or peace by himself. Intelligence service is also responsible to the supreme leader. He also appoints leaders and some members of important institutions like judiciary, television and radio stations, and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

President is the second highest authority of Iranian domestic and foreign affairs. People elect the president for a term of four years and Assembly of Experts must approve the candidates for the office before elections are held. President’s primary duty is to deal with economic issues, though he is the head of executive. President does not have absolute control over intelligence service and armed forces. His authority is under the shadow of Supreme Leader.

Assembly of Experts was founded as a consultation organ to draft the new constitution in 1979. In 1985, assembly of experts selected Ali Montezari as the successor of Khomeini, but Montezari was dismissed later by Khomeini. In 1989, the assembly chose Ali Khamenei as the new supreme leader. The members of the assembly meet once a year and are elected by the public for a term of eight years. They are also assigned to other offices as deputies and council members. Assembly of experts is responsible for controlling the Supreme Leader, but they often do not challenge the decisions of Supreme Leader.³⁴

Parliament (Majles) is composed of 290 members elected by public for four years. It is strictly controlled by the Council of Guardians. Many

³⁴ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iran/experts.htm> (20 May 2005).

reformist candidates were, for instance, vetoed by GC because of their inconvenience for Islamic values.³⁵ The council is a barrier in front of the legislative process because this council has returned many draft laws due to their incompatibility with Shariah. If the parliament does not make any change and insist on the first draft during the passing of laws, Expediency Council acts as a mediator and brings a solution to the problem.

Expediency Council was founded on 6 February 1988 to solve a problem between Parliament and Council of Guardians. It is composed of heads of the three branches of government, the clerical members of the Council of Guardians, and members appointed by the national religious leader for three-year terms. At the same time, this council acts as a consultation organ to Supreme Leader. In 1997, Khamenei appointed Rafsanjani as the head of the council.

Council of Guardians is composed of twelve members, six of whom are appointed by the parliament and the other six members by the Supreme Leader. Council controls conformity of the laws with Shariah.³⁶ That is to say, it has veto power over parliament. Moreover, they decide on whether parliamentary and presidential candidates are suitable or not.

The Judiciary branch of the republic of Iran is largely controlled by the Supreme Leader. Supreme Leader appoints the head of this agency. There are public courts for civil and criminal cases and revolutionary courts for

³⁵ Taha Akyol, "İran'a Dikkat," *Milliyet*, 24 May 2005. "İran'da Adaylar Eylemde", *Radikal*, 1 January 2004. (According to GC spokesman Muhammed Cahrumi, almost 2000 of 8200 candidates were vetoed before 2004 parliamentary elections.

³⁶ Deniz Yıldızhan, "İran'da Sancılı Değişim," *Özgür Politika*, 4 March 2001.

cases of national security, narcotic smuggling and acts that undermine the Islamic Republic. Decisions of revolutionary courts can not be appealed.

Iran is the only country in the world whose executive body has no control over the armed forces. It's largely controlled by hardliners. Supreme Leader is quite effective on Ministry of Intelligence and Security and Supreme National Security Council (SNSC). According to article 176 of Iranian constitution, the most prominent goal of the SNCS is to protect "territorial integrity," "national sovereignty" and to preserve "Islamic Revolution."³⁷ There are two different armies in Iran, one of whom is the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps founded by Khomeini and the Regular Army.

Consequently, there is a clear power struggle between the President (elected) and the Supreme Leader (appointed). It's really important to understand the consequences of the power struggle between elected and appointed officials in domestic and foreign policy issues. Supreme Leader and his appointed aide are quite effective in foreign policy making process.

³⁷ "Iranian Laws, Governments & Politics, Iran Chamber Society," http://www.iranchamber.com/government/articles/structure_of_power.php (14 April 2005)

CHAPTER 2

MOHAMMAD KHATAMI ERA

“Détente, Dialogue and Diplomacy”

2.1. Khatami as a Person

For a better knowledge of Khatami’s foreign policy understanding, it will be useful to give brief information about Khatami’s personality. Because, as mentioned before, “leaders” are the most important factors in the Middle East with regard to foreign policy formation.

In THE 1997 elections, Khatami secured 69 percent³⁸ of the total votes and won a landslide victory against his conservative rival Natiq Nuri, thereby becoming the fifth president of Islamic Republic of Iran. In the eyes of Iranians, Khatami was the symbol of “change,” “reform” and “new openings”³⁹ Khatami’s victory was an important gain for the reformists in their rivalry with conservatives in which the number of clerics amounted to 85 thousand.⁴⁰ This was the victory of the masses for more freedom and opportunity to change the status quo. Khatami became the strong voice of the silent majority. One might wonder the thing that made Khatami so popular and that provided him with such an extensive public support.

³⁸ “Election Watch,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 8, 1997.

³⁹ M. Turgut Demirtepe, “Tahran’da Değişim Sürecinde İktidar Mücadelesi,” *Avrasya Dosyası: İran Özel*, Vol. 5 No. 3, (Autumn 1999), pp.8-34.

⁴⁰ “Communal Identity and foreign Policy in the Middle East,” Conference Held at University of Maryland, College Park, 11 June 2003, p.23 (in) Gökhan Bacık, “The Problem of Transformation in Iranian Politics from the Revolution to Khatami: A Historical Perspective” (Unpublished thesis at Fatih University), p.65.

For all that, Khatami's religious background was quite strong. His father Ruhollah Khatami was a famous and respected religious leader. Furthermore, Khatami was a "Sayyid" being a descent of Prophet Mohammad (Pbuh).⁴¹ Thanks to his distinguished religious background, he easily took the support of educated and religious youth. His personal behaviors made him very popular on the eyes of the people as well. His having a smiling face while speaking with people made him a very sympathetic person for them;⁴² given the fact that Iranian people are not very often accustomed to smiling leaders.

Khatami is in fact a well-educated person. After receiving his religious education at the School Theology in Qom, he passed to Esfahan University. He was a modern and devout Muslim representing a model for the imitation of others. He can speak English and French fluently and he is sufficiently acquainted with Western philosophers and their ideas.⁴³ Khatami brought a "new vision" to Iranian people especially to the young and the women; therefore, these people voted for Khatami with the hope of having similar rights as the people of the developed world. In short, Khatami provided the people of Iran with "vision," "reform" and "ability to see the world differently."

⁴¹ The title of "Sayyid" is used for a descendant of the family of Muhammad. *Ana Britannica Genel Kültür Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul, Ana Publication, Vol. 27 p.370.

⁴² Kenneth R. Timmerman, "Iran's Moderates Are No Reformers," *The Brown Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. IX, Issue: 2, (Winter/Spring 2003) p.198.

⁴³ Bacık, *op.cit.*, p.68.

Khatami is a supporter of peace and individual freedoms. According to him, diplomacy and peaceful dispute resolution methods must always be given the priority before the use of force in the settlement of the conflicts. Khatami's main aim is to settle a democratic tradition in Iran and to establish peaceful regional and international environment based on the rule of law and accommodation. If we take a look at his speeches, we see that the words like "tolerance," "dialog among nations," "rule of law," "freedom of speech," "democracy" etc. are repeated very often.⁴⁴ In an article in *Civilization Journal*, Khatami says: "Iran is the meeting place for eastern side of individual's sensation and western side of intelligence, and eastern and western cultures."⁴⁵

Khatami is a good observer and takes up lessons from his experiences. He was in charge at *Keyhan Newspaper* worked as Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance. The experiences that gained during the hostage crisis of 1979, Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War I and economic embargo in 1995 have been very instrumental in the shaping of Khatami's foreign policy.

2.2 Khatami's Foreign Policy Orientation

Khatami has brought a new vision to Iranian foreign policy. He referred to the US as the "Great Nation" which was formerly called the "Great Satan" by his predecessors, especially Khomeini.⁴⁶ But it is not easy to believe

⁴⁴ Ramesh Seppehrad, "The Role of Women in Iran's New Popular Front," *The Journal of Brown Affairs*, Vol. IX, Issue: 2, (Winter/Spring 2003) p. 218.

⁴⁵ Seyyid Muhammed Hatemi, "Hissin Doğusu ve Aklın Batısının Buluşmasına Bir Davet," *Avrasya Dosyası: İran Özel*, Vol. 5 No. 3, (Autumn 1999), p.359.

⁴⁶ Demirtepe, *op.cit.*, P.15

seemingly “sudden changes” both in Iran and the Middle East. There are too many internal and regional barriers on the way to change. Iran’s political structure, for example, is not suitable for rapid change, as mentioned before.⁴⁷ It’s not possible to surpass the “conservative wall” though the leaders may be liberal and modern personalities, like Khatami. Veliy-i Faqih and Guardian Council are always above the heads of the reformists, like the “sword of Damocles.” They vetoed more than 700 law proposals and returned them back to parliament.⁴⁸ Let’s briefly look at Khatami’s foreign policy mentality:

To secure the “territorial integrity” and “national independence” of Iran is the first and foremost goal of Iranian foreign policy. Khatami paid much effort to keep away the military influence of foreign powers, especially that of the US out of the Middle East and the Gulf region. He wanted to maintain an independent foreign policy from the influence of all external powers. The fact that Iran experienced three recent invasions by external powers raised an “invasion syndrome” in its foreign policy in such a way that it is always suspicious of the US policies on the Gulf region and the Middle East.

Secondly, Iran supports the development of bilateral relations within the framework of mutual respect and trust. Khatami considers the OIC, GGC, D-8 and OPEC organizations as an opportunity to develop friendly relations with other states for bringing peace and stability to the region and overcoming US

⁴⁷Jalil Roshandel, “Iran's Foreign and Security Policies: How the Decision-making Process Evolved,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 31 No. 1, (March 2000), pp.219-229.

⁴⁸ Oğuz&Çakır, *op.cit.*, p.40

containment policy. Recently, Iran has become more active and played a constructive role both in the OIC and in the UN.⁴⁹ Iran's contributions to these organizations are seen as an effective way of expressing its real intentions to international community. Iran is also in favor of establishing friendly relations with such entities and states as the EU, Russia, China,⁵⁰ India,⁵¹ Japan, and African⁵² countries. It is expected that the more the type and the quality of relations enhances with different states, the more will be the options in foreign policymaking. Iran will thus be able to strip from the deadlock and difficulties via the application of multifarious foreign policy.

Next, Khatami pays due attention to Muslim's rights all around the world. He puts special emphasis on the need to defend the rights of Muslims especially in Palestine and Lebanon. In a meeting with President Jiang Zemin, he said that "Islamic Republic of Iran always defends the rights of the Palestinians and hopes that a just and fair peace will be established in Palestine."⁵³ He invited all Muslims to cooperation and solidarity to make the world more peaceful and safer. Even though Islamic world is far away from cooperating, recent developments are giving hope for the future.

Another tenet of the Iranian foreign policy is constant enmity against illegal Zionist regime. This tenet must not be seen in fact as the personal

⁴⁹Tehran Declaration on Dialogue Among Nations adopted by Islamic Symposium on Dialogue Among Civilizations, Tehran, (3-5 May 1999).

⁵⁰ Sullivan, *opcit.*, 185.

⁵¹ "Iran-India Relations Essential for Stability in the Region," *Pravda*, 15 December 2003, (12:02)

⁵² "Khatami Hopes Africa Will Take Strides Towards Progress," *PIRI News Archive*, 11 January 2005, <http://www.president.ir/eng/cronicnews/1383/8310/831022/index-e.htm#b2>

⁵³ *IRNA*, 22 January 2000. Article 152 of the Iranian constitution is also a legal fulcrum that recommends defending the rights of all Muslims against hegemonic superpowers.

decision of Iranian leaders. It seems now that whoever becomes the leader in Iran, no one will be able to change the current political status quo or produce alternative projects against Israel. Since Khatami is aware of this fact, he allows the continuation of this ongoing anti-Zionist policy. He always appeals to international organizations like the UN and the OIC to put pressure on Israel, and follows peaceful methods to defend the rights of Palestinian and Lebanese people.⁵⁴ Even though Iran is not at war with Israel, some groups like HAMAS, Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Hezbollah are receiving support from some wealthy conservatives in Iran. But, according to Khatami, peace will not settle in Palestine unless peaceful methods of conflict resolution are adopted.

Lastly, Khatami tries to reintegrate Iran into the international system. Today, the United States' economical and geographical containment deprives Iran of attaining its real potential and deserved position in the world. Therefore, Iran is seeking for new friends in Asia, Europe and Africa to remove the effects of the US embargo on Iran. The US has constantly vetoed against Iran's all applications for WTO membership.⁵⁵ Khatami is aware that Iran's complete integration into the international system depends on normalization of its relations with the United States, though seems quite

⁵⁴ "Khatami Slams Israeli Strikes on Syrian Targets in Lebanon," *People's Daily Online*, 18 April 2001, (08:29 GMT+8)

⁵⁵ *Payvand*, 18 June 2004, <http://www.payvand.com/news/04/jul/1127.html> (25 June 2005)

difficult. Khatami's speech on CNN dating 1997 is also a clear sign of his intention to reduce the tension with the United States.⁵⁶

2.3 Khatami Period in Foreign Policy

As mentioned in previous chapters, states' foreign policy making are heavily dependent on their leaders in the Middle East. In Iran, there were three different types of leaders with their three different foreign policy approaches before Khatami. Firstly, during the Pahlavi era (1926-1979), Iran had good relations with the western world, especially the United States. Second, in 1979, Islamic Revolution occurred and Islamic Republic of Iran was founded. Foreign policy of IRI under Ayatollah Khomeini's (1989-1997) was a kind of "Neither West, nor East" approach and isolation thus became the fate of Iran. Rafsanjani era was a period of transition from Islamic to semi-modern Iran. We can describe that Khatami Era was like a window that opened for Modern Iran, even though the process seemed to take a long time.

In May 1997, Khatami's winning in presidential elections was considered as a victory on the reformist wing against clerics. There were two important problems facing Khatami, one of which was political pressure from clerics and the other was the isolation of Iran in international community, which was a policy pioneered by the USA. Owing to this fact, Khatami set out to use a new political language in which words like "freedom of speech, rule of law, democracy, human rights, diplomacy, dialogue among civilizations" were

⁵⁶ CNN, 7 January 1998.

pronounced frequently to cope with both internal and external problems. Khatami became a symbol of change at home and abroad. Patrick Clawson described him as Ayatollah Brejnev while Demirtepe named him Ayatollah Gorbachev.⁵⁷

But Khatami was always cautious in order not to become a target of the clerics and the conservative wing. His long time supporter Kharrazi was also an effective person in the formation of Iranian foreign policy. Kharrazi and Khomeini gave priority to normalize relations with the West generally and the US particularly. Khatami expressed his friendly intentions towards the United States by saying: "First of all, I pay my respect to the great people and nation of America. I hope to be able to speak with the people of The US and about The US in a close future."⁵⁸ As a response to this Iranian olive branch, the US Department added Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) to its list of foreign terrorist organizations.⁵⁹

In December 1997, the 8th Islamic Summit Conference was held in Tehran. In this conference Khatami stated: "Without a doubt, we will succeed in moving forward, only if we have the capacity to reap the benefits of positive, scientific and social accomplishments of Western civilization."⁶⁰ The participation of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey and Persian Gulf Arab states in the Summit was construed as a positive

⁵⁷ Demirtepe, *op.cit.*, pp.10,12.

⁵⁸ "President Khatami's Televised News Conference," Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian, 14 December 1997 (0643 GMT)

⁵⁹ "Sürgündeki Muhalefet: Halkın Mücahitleri Örgütü," www.bbcturkish.com, (27 July 2004)

⁶⁰ "Iran's Leaders Split on Attitude Toward West," *CNN*, 9 December 1997 (EST 1655 GMT).

development on the way of Iran's political maturity, a very important opportunity to win the confidence of Islamic states and to divest itself from a naming like pariah state. Furthermore, Kemal Kharrazi invited all Islamic countries to initiate a new period of friendly relations among themselves and to play an important role in international relations.⁶¹ Another call came from Khatami for the establishment of a pact that will enable Gulf States with self-protection without recourse to foreign powers, especially, the United States.⁶² Conference in Tehran was a very important development which met the Sunni Arab World with Shiite Iran. Iran expressed its respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of regional states, with the exception of three islands – Abu Musa, Greater and Lesser Tunbs – dispute with the United Arab Emirates (UAE).⁶³

Increasing foreign military existence in the Gulf threatens Iranian national interests. Today, S. Arabia, Iraq, Amman, the UAE, Iraq, Kuwait and Pakistan are in close cooperation with the US and thus "invasion paranoia" always remains vivid in the memory of Iranian officials. Iranian officials are aware of the narrowing circle around the country: Iran is besieged by Iraq, Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan in the north; by Afghanistan and Pakistan in the East; S. Arabia and by small Gulf countries in the West. Iran has been improving its naval force as a precaution. But according to explanations of Iranian officials, Iran's military presence is for defensive purposes only and

⁶¹ "Iran Welcomes Old Foes to Islamic Summit," 8 December 1997, *CNN* (EST 1854 GMT)

⁶² "Iran's Leaders Split on Attitude toward West," *CNN*, 9 December 1997 (EST 1655 GMT).

⁶³ Çetinsaya, *op.cit.*, p.145..

certainly not for aggressive aims.⁶⁴ Iran has installed 16.000 soldiers into Ebu Musa Island near "Strait of Hurmuz" which is an important location for geo-strategic and geo-economic purposes.⁶⁵ Strait of Hurmuz is an indispensable waterway for Iranian economic and military security. Supreme Leader's speech is also noteworthy: "Our armed forces do not pose threat to any country, but we are ready to give the necessary reaction if regional and international powers attempt to invade our country."⁶⁶

As a part of "step-by-step" and "open door" diplomacy, Khatami and Kharrazi tried to improve the relations with European countries. The relations were deteriorating since the Mykonos case and the fatwa against Salman Rushdi. President Khatami, in a speech given to reporters before the meeting of Iranian and British officials, mentioned "Salman Rushdie affair" as "completely finished."⁶⁷ This speech may be construed as a sign of Khatami's intentions to close Khomeini and revolutionary era in Iran's foreign policy orientation.

Iran's attitude against Israel has been quite clear and consistent after the Revolution. Iran never recognized Israel and sometimes sent alarming messages to the regional states because of their good relations with Israel.⁶⁸ Iran is one of the most important supporters of the Islamic organizations. Iran often provided these organizations with military equipments and

⁶⁴ Lotfian, *op.cit.*, p.430.

⁶⁵ Taflıođlu, *op.cit.*, p.41; Ahmet Davutođlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, İstanbul, Küre Publications, (16th Edition), 2004, p.326

⁶⁶ Lotfian, *op.cit.*, 430.

⁶⁷ "Rushdie's Relief Over Fatwa Move," *Wednesday*, 23 September, 1998 (18:13 GMT 19:13 UK)

⁶⁸ "Khatami's FM Denounces Peace Process Negotiations," *Reuters*, 26 July 2000.

technical assistance. For example, in Lebanon, Iranian government has been backing Hezbollah guerillas.⁶⁹ The Iranian foreign minister Kemal Kharrazi announced that "Iran is ready to support international and regional efforts to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and to stop the Zionist regime's aggression."⁷⁰ Iran and Syria are in cooperation for stopping the Zionist expansionism. Iran supports Syria for the return of the Golan Heights from Israel. Golan Heights belonged to Syria before their occupation by Israeli military forces. Iran's foreign policy is oriented to prevent further Israeli aggression and to re-conquer Kudus.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Humid Zeza Asafi had once said that "Islamic republic of Iran will never recognize Israel because we believe that it completely violated the legitimate rights of the Palestinians."⁷¹ Iran demands that Israeli forces immediately withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and Kudus. Iran endeavors to make use of the UN for application of international sanctions over Israel. In addition, Israel gives up its settlement policy in occupied Arab territories. Iran gives full support to Palestinians to establish a state and to liberate the Holy city from Israeli occupation. Another important issue is Israel's possession of nuclear weapons that distorts regional stability and peace.⁷² Today, anti-Israeli policy is a political reality of Iran, for all Iranian politicians' attitudes have been the same, but

⁶⁹ Gary C. Gambill & Ziad K. Abdelnour, "Hezbollah: Between Tehran and Damascus," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. 4 No. 2, (February 2002).

⁷⁰ Lotfian, *op.cit.*, p.36.

⁷¹ "Asafi: Iran will Never Recognize Israel," *Arabic News*, 14 February 2005.

⁷² "Iran Says US, Israel Are the Nuclear Threats," *Reuters*, 27 May 2005 (11:02 PM ET)

Khatami's method was different in that it was based on diplomacy and international law.

Collapse of the SU in 1991 created new challenges and opportunities for Iran. Newly independent three Caucasus states (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) and five Central Asian States (Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan) would be good partners to overcome the increasing burden of the containment policy of the US over Iran. Although Iran's geographical proximity to these states is an advantage for it, the US is always a source of danger against Iran.⁷³ The Cold War ended, but power struggle between the US and Russia still continues. In this context, Khatami is eager to establish close relations with Russia as a necessity of the balance of power politics.⁷⁴ Russia and Iran share the same concerns about increasing US penetration in the Caucasus and Central Asia. In the past, threat was coming from the Soviet Union to Iran, but it now comes from different sources like border disputes, military agreements with foreign powers, ethnic conflicts and refugees.⁷⁵ Preservation of the status quo in the Caucasus and Central Asia is thus necessary for regional stability; Iran has always supported existing governments in the region.

In the context of post-Cold War developments, Tehran, Moscow and Yerevan are new allies against Ankara, Washington and Baku. IT IS also

⁷³ Bülent Aras, "Amerika-Orta Asya İlişkileri ve İran'ın Konumu," *Avrasya Dosyası: İran Özel* Vol. 5, No. 3 (Autumn 1999), p.238-243.

⁷⁴ Subhash Kapila, "Iran in the Strategic Matrix of Russia, China and India: An Analysis," *South Asia Analysis Group (SAAG)*, Paper No. 1284, (9 March 2005).

⁷⁵ Çetinsaya, *op.cit.*, p.154.

possible to add Israel, Egypt and Jordan to the second bloc. But Iran's new pragmatic foreign policy orientation suggests that Iran should continue its relations with some countries that have close relations with the US. Iran thus gives great importance to improve its relations with Turkey⁷⁶, in spite of the latter's close relations with Israel and the United States. Khatami was in favor of focusing on mutual interests rather than conflicting issues. Following a common policy against Kurdish problem and terrorism, maintaining peace and security in the region, for example, stand as mutual interest points in front of Turkey and Iran.⁷⁷ Syria is also expected to move towards this Turco-Iranian rapprochement.⁷⁸

In THE 2001 elections, Iranians voted for Khatami again. Khatami's second term in office is a clear proof of increasing support for him at home and a sign of increasing international prestige. It seems that Khatami and his close colleague Kemal Kharrazi's victory was also a victory for Iranian foreign policy, which will be seen in the post-11th September 2001 world politics.

2.4 11th September 2001

2.4.1 The 11th September 2001 and World Politics

11th September 2001 is, and seems to be going to remain, a decisive date in world politics. The terrorist attacks on Twin Towers and Pentagon caused

⁷⁶ "Relations With Iran," *Turkish Press*, 2 June 2005 (www.turkishpress.com)

⁷⁷ Gajendra Singh, "Turkey and Iran Coming Closer," *Aljazeera*, 1 August 2004.

⁷⁸ Çetinsaya, *op.cit.*, p.154.

5000 human casualties and also a huge material casualty.⁷⁹ This historical event is particularly important for two reasons. Firstly, an international terrorist group headquartered in a third world country attacked a major power in the world, namely the United States, in its homeland.⁸⁰ These terrorist attacks were not similar to those occurred in the past. The world has come across with a new kind of terrorism that upgraded itself with the latest technological developments and equipped with modern weapons, as a result of which international terrorism emerged as a new type of threat to world peace.⁸¹ Secondly, these terrorist attacks gave the US an opportunity to implement some of its plans waiting for a suitable condition in the post-Cold War era. The US foreign policy makers turned their attention to the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, war on terrorism, which became the central elements of new US foreign policy.⁸²

The 9/11 attacks stimulated sovereign states to take measures against this new threat. The word "terrorism" does not have too much importance in the vocabulary of Westphalian state system.⁸³ The world is different now from the world of Cold War. Can we expect to solve these current problems by the use of old methods? The Security Council is a product of the balance

⁷⁹“Dış Basında Afganistan Harekatı, Başbakanlık” *Basın Yayın ve Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü*, Bulletin No.34, (12 October 2001).

⁸⁰*Hürriyet*, 12 August 2001.

⁸¹ Kim Centazzo, “The New Face of Terror in Al Qaida,” *The Washington Times*, 3 December 2004.

⁸² Andrew Cottey, “11th September 2001th 2001, A New Era in World Politics?” (in), Gökhan Bacık&Bülent Aras (eds), *11th September 2001 and World Politics*, İstanbul, Fatih University, 2004 p.31.

⁸³ Gökhan Bacık, “The Resistance of Westphalian System,” (in) Gökhan Bacık&Bülent Aras (eds), *11th September 2001 and World Politics*, İstanbul, Fatih University, 2004. pp.9-30.

of power structure in the 1950's, but today's world is rather different compared to that of past. The UN agenda is very often occupied by problems of Islamic states, but they are not duly represented in the Security Council.⁸⁴

The 9/11 attacks are a reaction to the US, which is seen as responsible for the unjust nature of the existing world system. Terrorists' targets were the Twin Towers, Pentagon and White House, which do not seem to be chosen accidentally. The Twin towers were the heart of world trade, Pentagon is the headquarter of US military operations and the White House is the center of the US administration. This attack was a reaction to all hegemonic aspects of the US.⁸⁵

It is really important to note here that, one must be careful while defining terrorism and its roots. Recently there is a general misunderstanding; in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, many media agencies set out to label all Muslims as terrorists. George Bush's using the word "crusade" in his speech after the attacks was a historical blunder as well.⁸⁶ This has been a serious obstacle for dialogue among civilizations, which also smeared butter on the bread of Huntington's famous "clash of civilizations" thesis. Huntington suggests that the next clash will occur between the West and other civilizations.⁸⁷ But later on, US officials rectified their blunder and emphasized that their war is not against Islam, but rather against terrorism. George W.

⁸⁴ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Küresel Bunalım: 11 Eylül Konuşmaları*, İstanbul, Küre Publications, 2002, pp.12-14.

⁸⁵ Abdülhamit Bilici, "İntikam Gölgesinde Strateji Savaşı," *Aksiyon*, No . 356, 29 September 2001.

⁸⁶ *Hürriyet*, 18 August 2001.

⁸⁷ Samuel P.Huntington, *Medeniyetler Çatışması*, Ankara, Vadi Publication, 2000 (3rd Edition) pp.22-50.

Bush said that "Ours is a war not against a religion, not against the Muslim faith. But ours is a war against individuals..."⁸⁸

In the immediate aftermath of the 11th September 2001 attacks, George W. Bush declared war against international terrorism with his famous remark "Either you are with us or with the terrorists."⁸⁹ He divided world into two parts as "good" and "evil."⁹⁰ Terrorism is a virtual enemy;⁹¹ It is up to the US to decide whether terrorism exists or not, while George W. Bush decided that Afghanistan is a safe haven for terrorist organizations. George W. Bush took the support of all states before launching a military operation against Afghanistan. Taleban was supporting Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda and giving them permission to organize terrorist activities in Afghanistan. International community accepted this war against terrorism as a "just war." During the initial phases of the US intervention in Afghanistan, even Russia and Iran gave overt support to US forces.⁹² After 9/11 attacks, Bush and Vladimir Putin became ally in the war against international terrorism.⁹³ Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism are also a threat for Russia, and Russia supported the new US campaign with the hope to rally support in its Chechen conflict.

⁸⁸ Press Conference by President Bush and President Havel of Czech Republic, Prague Castle, Prague, Czech Republic, 20 November 2002.

⁸⁹ Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the US People by George W. Bush, US Capitol Washington, D.C, 20 September 2001.

⁹⁰ "Living With The Megapower Implications of The War on Terrorism: Report of Part III, Religion and Ideology," The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Clatham House, 25 November 2002.

⁹¹ Ruhi Khan, "Can Terrorism be Beaten by Military Means?," *Global Policy Forum*, 15 February 2003.

⁹² Rahul Bedi, "India Joins anti-Taliban Coalition," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 15 March 2001.

⁹³ Mikhail Kochkin, "Russia and the US Post 11th September 2001: What Do the Russians Think," *Center for Defence Information*, Vol. 1 Issue:11, 5 November 2002.

THE 11th September 2001 case consequently has important effects on World politics, but some features remain the same. Human rights abuses, civil wars, economic inequality between the north and the south, aids, global warming, are still the problems of world politics.⁹⁴ But we can also talk about some important changes. Firstly, international terrorism emerged as a new threat for sovereign states and has become more dangerous and more destructive. International terrorism aims at mass deaths and more damages. States must unite to find permanent solutions to terrorism. But this is not to say that the US method of "use of force" is to be approved.

Secondly, the date 9/11 is accepted by US policy makers, especially hawks, for following an active and interventionist foreign policy and motivated them to leave the "reluctant sheriff" role.⁹⁵ "War on international terrorism," "struggle against WMD" and "emancipation of the people" of despotic regimes in the Middle East, are primary policy options of the US foreign policy makers. The US is aware of its military and economic power and cannot be compared to any other state in the world. The center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation's February 2004 report on military expenditure indicates that "The US military budget (420, 7) is 29 times more than the combined spending of the seven "rogue" states (Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria) who spent \$14.4 billion."⁹⁶ All in all,

⁹⁴ Cottey, *op.cit.*, p.31.

⁹⁵ Richard N. Haass, "From Reluctant to Resolute: US Foreign Policy after 11th September 2001," Chicago, Illinois, 26 June 2002. <http://www.state.gov/s/p/rem/11445.htm>

⁹⁶ "Last of the Big Time Spenders," *Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation*, February 2004, <http://64.177.207.201/static/budget/annual/fy05/world.htm>.

post-September world is being shaped by the US with the advantage of being the only superpower.

2.4.2 New US Foreign Policy under Bush Administration

THE 11th September 2001 attacks were unfortunate for the people of the US and also for other people. But we cannot say the same for the US policy makers. This was a great opportunity to re-define the US foreign policy parameters according to the changing US interests in the post-Cold War world. In the past, Soviet threat was a source of legitimacy for US military activities all around the world, but with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the US had to look for a new "enemy or threat" instead of the communist expansionism. In this context, after 11th September 2001 attacks, "terror threat" rhetoric was replaced with "Soviet threat."⁹⁷

New US foreign policy, name as the Bush Doctrine, is based on a more aggressive, interventionist and unilateralist understanding. According to Bush, as in the Cold-War years, world is divided into two parts as the "United States and allies" and "the terrorist and allies" (countries that supports terrorism). George W. Bush, in his speech to Congress on 26 September, invited other countries to make a choice between the US or terrorist organizations. When the issue is terrorism, supports of other states' were easily received as in the Afghanistan operation.

THE 11th September 2001 events brought new terms like "preventive war," "pre-emptive strike" and "axis of evil" to foreign policy literature and

⁹⁷ Arı, op.cit., Irak, "İran ve ABD: Önleyici Savaş,..."p.495.

these terms has kept world agenda busy for a long time. Fight against terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) became the primary aim of the US foreign policy to make the US and world safer.

After The US intervention in Afghanistan, George W. Bush said in his State of Union Speech in January 2002 "What we have found in Afghanistan confirms that, far from ending there, our war against terrorism is only in its beginning... These enemies view the entire world as a battlefield, and we must pursue them wherever they are... we must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological or nuclear weapons from threatening the US and the world."⁹⁸ This speech shows that it is not a limited or short-term fight against terrorism; it will not end with the capture of Osama bin Laden or fall of Taleban regime.

Declaring of war against terrorism is a vague announcement because terrorism is not a something "definite" to declare war or fight. This is like fighting with an invisible man. Who is the enemy? Where is the enemy? What are the limits of war against this invisible enemy? These questions will be answered by the Americans according to changing US foreign policy needs. Afghanistan and Iraq were accused of supporting Al-Qaeda terrorist organization and being in close cooperation with radical Islamic groups, and Iraq⁹⁹ was invaded for the sake of war on terrorism.

⁹⁸ The President's State of the Union Address, The US Capitol, Washington, D.C. 29 January 2002. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>

⁹⁹ "Zarqawi and Al-Qaeda Link," *BBC News*, 5 February 2003 (18:11 GMT)

US policy makers were using the words "terrorism" and "WMD" with the names of some countries like Iran, Iraq and N. Korea, and later names of these countries are recorded on the list of countries giving support to terrorist organizations and trying to acquire WMD. They have thus become targets for the United States.¹⁰⁰ The US administration insists that the US has all the rights to declare war on some states, members of the axis of evil, as a necessity of precaution without taking the approval of other states and the United Nations.¹⁰¹ The members of the "Axis of Evil" are Iraq, Iran and North Korea. Today Iraq is a defused country – not a threat for the US and its ally Israel – and is being re-designed for a better service for US interests in the Middle East.

After the US invasion of Iraq, Iran has been thought of as the next target.¹⁰² Iran's uranium enrichment program is a source of high tension between the US and Islamic Republic of Iran. The US attacked Iraq for it was claimed to have weapons of mass destruction, connections with Al-Qaeda. Another purpose of the intervention was to emancipate the enslaved Iraqi people. As the war still continues, US officials announced the absence of any nuclear weapons or WMD in Iraq.¹⁰³ But this explanation made so many anti-war groups and people within and outside of the United States angry. People are organizing anti-war demonstrations against US military interventions.

¹⁰⁰ "North Korea Warns US of Nuclear Disaster," *CNN*, 13 March 2002, (4:20 AM EST 0920 GMT).

¹⁰¹ Ari, op.cit., Irak, "İran ve ABD: Önleyici Savaş..."p.496.

¹⁰² Seymour M. Hersh, "The Coming Wars," *The New Yorker*, 24 January 2005.

¹⁰³ "Panel Finds US Intelligence Dead Wrong on Iraq," *Japan Today*, 1 April 2005 (10:51 JST)

There has been an increase in anti-Americanism (indeed anti-George Bush) sentiment all around the world as a reaction to interventionist US policies.¹⁰⁴

Iran is seen by the US foreign policy makers as an important block on the way of the transformation of the Middle East. The act of the transformation of the Middle East has started with the US military intervention in Afghanistan and still continues with the invasion of Iraq. Then, Libya was persuaded to cancel its nuclear program, and sanctions on Libya were lifted as a reward. US oil firms Occidental, Chevron, Texaco and Amerada Hess won the "lion share" from Libyan oil market.¹⁰⁵ The problematic states in the Middle East are being convinced one by one to change their anti-US stance.

In the aftermath of the assassination of the former premier Refiq Hariri, the US withdrew its ambassador from Damascus and called Syria to withdraw its forces from Lebanon.¹⁰⁶ The US and its Israel outpost moved together to ensure the withdrawal of Syrian forces. Syrian leader Bashar al-Asad understood the seriousness of the condition and declared fulfilling all commitments under the UN resolution 1559.¹⁰⁷ All in all, Iran and Syria decided to enter a mutual defense pact against the military intervention of the United States. While the Syrian Prime Minister Naji al-Otari' was in

¹⁰⁴Engin İ. Erdem, "The Clash of Civilizations: Revisited After 11th September 2001," *Alternatives; Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1 No. 2, (Summer 2002).

¹⁰⁵"Libya Petrolünü ABD'li Arayacak," *Radikal*, 31 January 2005.

¹⁰⁶Richard Tomkins, "US Targets Syria," *The Washington Times*, 16 February 2005.

¹⁰⁷Walid Choucair, "Syria's Grip on Lebanon Still Going Strong," *The Daily Star*, 16 April 2005.

Tehran for a visit, in press conference Iranian Vice President Mohammed Reza Aref said "We are ready to help Syria for struggle against threats."¹⁰⁸

George W. Bush's neo-conservative aides, who were the most prominent actors behind the shaping post-11th September 2001 US foreign policy, were mostly pro-Israeli politicians. In shaping the US foreign policy they have taken into consideration the interests of Israel. The names and offices of the most known neo-conservatives are below: Paul Wolfowitz (Deputy Secretary of Defense), Douglas Feith (Under Secretary of Defense for Policy), Elliot Abrams (National Security Council), Lewis Libby (Dick Cheney's chief of staff), Eric Edelman (former US ambassador to Ankara) and Richard Perle (Defense Policy Board Advisory). This group came to power before 11th September 2001 and supported the invasion of Iraq.¹⁰⁹ Thus if the US controls Iraq's oil and water resources, this will mean that the US will distribute these resources for its best use and ally Israel. There is a positive correlation between US foreign policy and Israel interests.¹¹⁰

In addition, unilateralism became a dominant factor in the Bush doctrine. For instance, US hawks under Bush administration are willing to show America's power in international arena and use it unilaterally if necessary. As a proof, the US did not sign a number of important international agreements, Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Kyoto Agreement about global

¹⁰⁸ "İran ve Suriye'den Ortak Cephe," *Sabah*, 16 February 2005.

¹⁰⁹ Arı, *op.cit.*, *Irak, İran ve ABD: Önleyici Savaş*,...p.498. Also see, Engin İ. Erdem, "Power and Identity in Flux: US Foreign Policy toward the Middle East," *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 3 No. 4, (Winter 2004) p.146.

¹¹⁰ Arı, *op.cit.*, *Irak, İran ve ABD: Önleyici Savaş*,...p.498.

warming and International Criminal Court (ICC).¹¹¹ In addition to this, the Bush administration withdrew from Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty for the purpose of improving its national missile defense systems.

In the end, the US foreign policy was re-structured in a unilateralist and interventionist orientation. In the implementation of this policy, international terrorism served to the best interest of the US. In addition, pre-emptive war, fight against WMD and emancipation of enslaved people were among the major concerns of the US foreign policy.

2.4.3 Iran's Immediate Response to Post-11th September 2001 Order

In the aftermath of the 9/11, Iran was [from]-AMONG the first countries that condemned terrorist attacks. "I would like to express my deepest condolences again to the nation of America, and express my sorrow for the tragic event of 11th September 2001...The 11th September 2001 attack was the ugliest form of terrorism ever seen"¹¹² Khatami expressed his feelings in an interview with Amanpour in CNN: By this way, Iranian officials determined stance against terrorism and expressing condolences for the people of the US eased its the distance with the West.

Iran, indeed Khatami, used the 11th September 2001 attacks to show its changing mentality towards cooperation and peace, rather than turmoil and

¹¹¹ Cottey, *op.cit.*, p.42.

¹¹² "Iranian President Condemns 11th September 2001 Attacks," *CNN*, 12 November 2001, (5:42 PM EST 2242 GMT)

conflict. For a better understanding, let's look at Khatami's address at 56th session of UN's General Assembly:

"Terrorism is the common problem of today's world. It threatens peace, liberty, spirituality, knowledge, culture and global coexistence. A sustainable solution to this hideous and dangerous phenomenon requires vision, serious political will and active participation and cooperation of all members of the human society... Terrorism cannot be attributed to any religion or nationality; nor can it be eradicated through rage and violence. Terrorism is the chronic menace of our era, rooted in the mentality of violence, the logic of might and the practice of injustice and discrimination... We shall rise to the challenge of distributing peace, security and development among all nations on the basis of justice and come to believe that in today's interconnected world; we cannot live in islands of prosperity and progress while the rest of the world is increasingly caught in poverty, illiteracy, disease and insecurity."¹¹³

Khatami's offer for a clear-cut solution for terrorism is noteworthy. He invited state leaders to address into the roots of terrorism, rather than using temporary military solutions.¹¹⁴ According to him, perpetrators must be found and brought to justice and Islam must not be used as a pretext or as a point of motivation for terrifying acts.

In short, Iranian foreign policy makers have been sharing the concerns with the US and have defined terrorism as the common problem of the entire world. They stressed their determined standing beside the Western world in its war against terrorism. They thus deserved the sympathy of international community. In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11, Iran followed a balance of power strategy. Iran paid much attention to be on the same line with the

¹¹³ Address by Seyed Mahommad Khatami President of the Republic of Iran before the 56th session of the UN's General Assembly, New York, 10 November 2001.

<http://www.dialoguecentre.org/PDF/Khatami's%20address%20to%20UN.pdf>

¹¹⁴ "Iranian President Condemns 11th September 2001 Attacks," *CNN*, 12 November 2001, (5:42 PM EST 2242 GMT)

Western world, and also, tried to prevent the increasing US influence in the Middle East. While doing this, Iran gave the sign of approaching to Russia, China and some European countries like France, Germany and Belgium before the Gulf War II. But after a short time, Iran will clearly fathom that new US foreign policy is not a war against terrorism and WMD, besides the US is willing to engage in regime changes in some countries in the Middle East.

CHAPTER 3

ISSUES IN IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE POST 9/11

PERIOD

“Pre-emptive War, Terrorism, Weapons of Mass Destruction”

In this part, I will try to examine the impact of 11th September 2001 on Iranian foreign policy. If we look at “Afghanistan War” and “Second Gulf Crisis” carried out under the new US foreign policy of Bush, we will see that Iranian response to these important developments was a reflection of the new Iranian foreign policy in the post-9/11 period. It is essential to note here that understanding Iran’s new foreign policy orientation goes with understanding the new US foreign policy over the Middle East.

3.1 Afghanistan War

Some conclusions have been drawn from the 11th September 2001 terrorist attacks and George Bush administration declared war against terrorism to protect civilization, freedom and humanity from terrorist formations, in other words, to protect the good from evil. International terrorism served as a good opportunity for implementing the new US policy, which was primarily based on “pre-emptive strike,” “unilateralism,” “war on terrorism,” “struggle against WMD,” under the mask of saving world from terrorism and preserving human dignity, security and freedom. Without any

doubt, all states supported the US against Taleban in Afghanistan and this operation was conducted through the permission of NATO resolutions.¹¹⁵

Iran was not determined before the military operation had started. This operation might have brought advantages as well as disadvantages. The Sunni Afghanistan under Taliban was always a problem for Iran because of its long border with Afghanistan, drug trafficking and hostile behaviors against Iran.¹¹⁶ From this perspective, the US military intervention was contributing to Iran's interests. On the other hand, a new enemy, the US, would replace an old one. This meant that the circle around Iran was narrowing day by day. The increasing US military bases in the Middle East, Central Asia and Far East have become sources of concern for Iran as well as Russia and China.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, Iran had to support the US operation for the day. Because it was illogical not to support an operation against terrorism, which was also supported by the entire world; Iran could otherwise be accused of being a state sponsoring terrorism. Neither hardliners nor reformists wanted to face an accusation like that. But in fact, they were not thoroughly supporter of the operation; they stated their

¹¹⁵ During this operation NATO was completely under the service of the United States. A short time later after the attacks, NATO decided for a collective military operation against Afghanistan in the context of Nato Agreement. Article 5 of the NATO says that "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North the US shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense..." But, this attack wasn't performed by a state; this was starting point of a new debate for the role of the NATO in the post-September world, rather service US interests. For more, see. Berdal Aral, [Soğuk Savaş Döneminin Ardından] "Nato'nun Konsept Değişimi Yeni Krizlere Aday," *Zaman*, 28 June 2004.

¹¹⁶ Hooshang Amirahmadi, "Standing Against Taleban Together; Afghanistan Crisis Calls for US-Iran Cooperation," *The Iranian*, 1 October 1998.

¹¹⁷ "US Military Bases and Empire (by the Eds.), *Monthly Review*, Vol. 53 No. 10, (March 2002)

discomfort about human right abuses and civilian deaths committed by Americans in Afghanistan during the war.

Iran's participation in the war increased its prestige in the eyes of the international community. R.K. Ramazani summarized the objectives of Iran's participation in the war as follows:

- Aiding the Northern Alliance until the Taliban's fall, as Iran had done for six years before the US military campaign.
- Support for the creation of interim government headed by Hamid Karzai
- At the Historic Bonn Conference, Iran persuaded the Northern Alliance to compromise with other Afghan ethnic groups on the future of Afghan government.
- Iran is the first country to establish an embassy in Kabul and sent Kharrazi to inauguration ceremony of the interim government.
- Encouraging Ismail Khan, a guest of Iran during the Taliban regime and an important Afghan warlord, to attend the inauguration to show his allegiance to the interim government
- Helping the reconstruction of Afghanistan according to the UN Development Program.¹¹⁸

After the defeat of Taleban, Afghanistan has had relative stability and order compared to previous regime. From a broader perspective, Iran had important gains in this regime change. First, Afghanistan became a stable country and order was (re)established even though there has been a pro-US government. Second, international community appreciated Iran because of its positive role in the fall of Taleban rule. Third, the EU and Iran established new bridges to struggle against refugee problem and drug trafficking in

¹¹⁸ R. K. Ramazani, "US Don't Turn Your Back on Iran," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 7 February 2002.

Afghanistan.¹¹⁹ Fourth, normalization of relations with Afghanistan was achieved as a part of détente policy and Iran will play an important role for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Fifth, but not least, Iran showed that it shares the same values with rest of the world against terrorism and it did its best even though some countries do not accept this reality.

3.2 Gulf War II

After the US intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq became the next target of US interventionism also known as “Bush Doctrine.” But this time, international community did not support US militarism against Iraq and “diplomacy” seemed a better alternative than the use of force.

But as we mentioned, US cowboys do not care whether the rest of the world supports their actions or not. Thanks to their huge military and economic power, they are able to act unilaterally without any external help and they do not need any justification for interventionist policies. The fall of the SU made the US only superpower; therefore, it seems that it is not possible to oppose to US military operations for now if the US once decides to realize its policies.

The second part of the new US foreign policy plan on the Middle East, was started by the name “Operation Iraqi Freedom” (OIF). The name of the operation gives some clues to other states and sends warnings to regional states; it is the same kind of threat that you will encounter if you continue to

¹¹⁹ Nawab Khan, “EU-Iran Relations in the Last Two Years,” *Payvand's Iran News...* 23 November 2003.

suppress your people and give assistance to terrorist groups. This operation was led by American-British cooperation; on the other hand, it is not able to take the support of many states. For example, France, Russia, China and Germany stated their concerns and condemned the invasion.¹²⁰ Iran was also among the countries that condemned Iraqi invasion. Iranian FM Kemal Kharrazi also condemned this “illegal war” and he emphasized Iran’s neutral stance in this war.¹²¹

The US tries to justify its war declaration on Iraq under the SC/RES 1441 but other states do not agree with the US and the UK. Especially Dr. Hans Blix, Executive Chairman, UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), accused the US administration of not giving enough time for broad investigations in Iraq and he expressed his disappointment because of the US breach of international law and the UN rules. He added that, Saddam’s using its WMD is not possible for now.¹²² In the end of the war, the US official reports also corrected Hans Blix, because they could not find any WMD or nuclear weapons. Charles A. Duelfer, the chief US weapons inspector in Iraq, also accepted the absence of any WMD in Iraq.¹²³

What is the importance of control over Iraq? Of course, all efforts are not just for WMD and emancipation of Iraqi people: The main aims of the US are as follows:

¹²⁰ Arı, *op.cit.*, *Irak, İran ve ABD: Önleyici Savaş*,...p.509.

¹²¹ *Id.*

¹²² Arı, *op.cit.*, *Irak, İran ve ABD: Önleyici Savaş*,...p.511.

¹²³ *Sabah*, 8 October 2004.

i) Iraq has vast oil and natural gas resources and it is important to control the flow of Iraqi oil to Western markets.¹²⁴

ii) Establishing a pro-western government in Iraq is vital to narrow the circle around Iran. This will force Iran to accept US terms.

iii) The US presence in the Middle East is to obtain the security of Israel and eliminate the countries in front of Palestinian-Israel peace process. Invasion of Iraq was supported by Jews sympathizers among neo-cons. No doubt, one of the main aims of this war is to serve Israel interests.¹²⁵

iv) Iraq would be a good model for the transformation of other problematic countries -such as Lebanon, Syria and Iran- to democratic ones. (So-called spread of democracy)¹²⁶

v) Prevention of the proliferation of the WMD and nuclear weapons in the Middle East. This war is important to show US sensitiveness on this issue.

3.3 Iranian Foreign Policy after 11th September 2001

Iran has always dealt with various regional conflicts and wars since the revolution. Maleki and Afrasiabi describe the pictures well with their words: "Iran's leaders are not strangers to foreign shocks. After all, their system has evolved through two Gulf Wars, the seismic effects of the Soviet Union's

¹²⁴ Thomas Friedman, *New York Times*, January 2003

¹²⁵ Steven Stalinsky & Eli Carmeli, "Syrian Government and Media on the War in Iraq," *Middle East Media Research Institute*, 22 April 2003.

¹²⁶ (See) Remarks by the President at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy, US Chamber of Commerce, Washington, D.C. (11:05 A.M. EST)

collapse, diplomatic alienation, and the US subjected to the strains of comprehensive sanctions."¹²⁷

Furthermore, we can connect the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq with previous developments. These events provided experience to struggle against change and newly emerged situations in the foreign policy of Iran. Today, Iran is really an important country at the hub of important energy resources and with its borders with fifteen countries – also with the US a non-spatial neighbor – all of which increase its geo-political, geo-economical and geo-cultural importance. Iran is candidate to become a core country being an important actor regionally and internationally. Iran is conscious of its increasing significance in the post-11th September 2001 period.

All Iranian politicians agree that security and cooperation in the gulf region is vital for Iranian interests.¹²⁸ Thus, Iran has been in the process of structuring several regional and international coalitions. For example, when some speeches were delivered about a plausible military operation, Iran, Syria and Iraq spoke with one voice. At international level, Khatami visited many countries including such diverse ones as Venezuela and seven African states consisting Nigeria, Senegal, Mali, Sierra Leone, Benin, Zimbabwe and Uganda. Khatami's efforts for establishing relations with various states show Iran's willingness to integrate itself into international system.

¹²⁷Kaveh Afrasiabi&Abbas Maleki, "Iran's Foreign Policy After 11th September 2001," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. IX, Issue 2, (Winter/Spring 2003) p.255.

¹²⁸ "Iran Gives Priority to Cooperation with Regional Countries: President," *People's Daily Online*, 12 June 2000, (09:51GMT+8)

In the eyes of the international community, Iran is a “peace loving” country despite the anti-Iranian lobby of Americans and Israelis. It is important to remember that Iran was invaded three times in the 20th century and today it is again under threat of invasion by the US, even though Iran has no claim for a territorial or expansionist aim. Today, Iranian foreign policy focuses on the protection of its territorial integrity and national sovereignty from US influence.

Iranian economy is really volatile and weak because of the dependence of its economy on the incomes coming from oil and oil products. Oil and oil products amount to approximately 80 percent of the total export volume of Iran.¹²⁹ Iran has not got enough capital, technology and qualified experts for using its huge oil fields; hence, it needs foreign assistance to search oil fields and transport this oil to world markets.¹³⁰ Today Iran’s daily oil production is less than that of before 1979. It means that although Iran does not want to be affected by foreign powers, it has to cooperate with foreign companies for the sake of economical development. This is vital to prevent economic containment of the US. If Iran wants to be a real economic actor in the world market, it has to play the game according to its rules. First steps of privatization, free market, attracting foreign investment are seen in Iranian economy, though it will take long time to reach a completely western type of economic understanding. Iranian policy makers are worried about the fact

¹²⁹ “Iran Budget Bill Looks to Break Dependence on Oil,” *The Daily Star*, 10 January 2005.

¹³⁰ Ken Koyama&Katsufumi Kamai, “Oil and Gas Development in Iran and Its Implications for Japan,” *The Institute of Energy Economics Japan*, 26 October 2000. pp.1-5

that an important part of their trade volume is with France, the UK, Italy, Germany and Japan. Relations with these countries are important to integrate Iran into international political and economic system, but Iran needs more friends. Khatami government tried to find new economic and political partners in the world. Today, these partners are generally anti-US states; they came together under the understanding of "my enemy's enemy is my friend." Iran has to have a strong economy for a strong standing in the international arena and needs international trade partners, foreign investment and liberal regulations for a strong economy.

National security and territorial integrity have been the centre of Iranian foreign policy, and this is valid after 11th September 2001 attacks. Iran is eager to become a regional power and besides an important international actor but she has still fear of invasion, imperialistic aims of foreign powers, etc. For instance, Iranian hardliners are against huge foreign investments in some sectors such as telecommunication and energy sectors.¹³¹ But, how it could be possible to increase daily oil production with old technology and lacking qualified persons and without great amount capital that is needed for the renewal of old structure. But Iran is at a threshold to decide whether Iran will turn her face to international values of global world or not. In this phase, Khatami appears and starts a new era for both Iranian economy and politics with a harmony of Iranian values and international system. According

¹³¹ For instance Turkcell and Tepe-Akfen-Vie (TAV) companies were accused by hardliners in the Iranian parliament of having business links to Israel. "Iran to Vote on Investment Veto," *BBC News*, 20 September 2004, (13:28 GMT 14:28 UK)

to him, Islam (Iran) is compatible with western values. The followers of Khatami, especially women and Iranian youth, think the same as Khatami does. Under this policy, today Iran wants to follow a policy of "zero problems with other states" that within the framework of mutual respect. Iran is ready to enhance its relations with even Israel, as long as Israel retreat from the occupied territories-West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and South Lebanon-and recognize the Palestinian state. Accordingly, Iranian people and decision makers are on the eve of deciding to be an important regional and international actor. Under the Khatami rule Iranian foreign policy has been moving along the "Pragmatist way."

3.4 Bilateral Relations

3.4.1 Iran-EU Relations

Iran and Europe have ups and downs in their relations since the Revolution. We can say that ups were dominant during Khomeini era. According to Moshaver: "There was an overall atmosphere of what might be called as Cold Peace with strains revolving around Tehran for militant Shiite groups' involvement in hostage crisis and in assassination of Iranian dissidents in Europe"¹³² At the time of Shah, the European Union preferred to keep at a distance from Iran for its trans-Atlantic solidarity with the United States. Besides, the European Union was disturbed by increasing Iranian

¹³² Ziba Moshaver, "Revolution, Theocratic Leadership and Iran's Foreign Policy: Implications for Iran-EU Relations," *The Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (Winter 2003), p.292.

influence over the Gulf countries and Iran's supporting the militant Shiites in Lebanon.

After Khomeini's death, relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the European Union seem to be on the path of stabilization. Iran is really an indispensable country and ally for the European Union because of union's increasing dependence on Middle East oil. Today, 40 percent of its total oil import is provided by Middle East countries.¹³³ For Europeans, Iran is an indispensable source of oil and natural gas in a strategic location with its own strong interests in adjacent areas, for guaranteeing future energy demand of the European Union. On the other side, the European Union could be accepted as a good trade, diplomatic and political partner for Iran to overcome the US containment policy. Germany, Italy, France and the United Kingdom's remarkable trade volume with Iran is a hopeful development for the future of relations, though all disagreements have not been solved yet.

Differences of opinion on some important issues, rule of law, human rights, environmental protection and unilateral use of force, have increased the gap between the US and the European Union; hence, European countries did not abide by US sanctions and followed a separate economic policy from that of the United States.¹³⁴ The European Union preferred to follow a "Critical Dialogue" policy after its announcement at the December 1992

¹³³ "EU Strategy in the Middle East: News Analysis," *People's Daily Online*, 26 October 2004.

¹³⁴ Moshaver, *op.cit.*, p.294.

Edinburgh Council of Ministers.¹³⁵ The main purpose of this policy was to impede hardliners' becoming more dominant in domestic and foreign policy mechanism. From the perspective of Europeans, containment policy of the US would slow down partial reform movements of Hashemi Rafsanjani. Even though Critical Dialogue was suspended after Berlin court announced its verdict about Mykonos case, relations were recovered and re-established by the administration of President Khatami.¹³⁶

After Khatami's landslide victory in 1997 against hardliners, the European Union supported the new Iranian leader for a continuation of critical dialogue in order to transform theocratic regime to a liberal and democratic one that is in line with the EU policy. In 1998, current critical dialogue was extended to new areas and became the "Comprehensive Dialogue" that encourages exchange of views on global issues (terrorism, human rights), regional issues (Iraq, the Gulf, Central Asia and Middle East Peace) and areas of cooperation (drugs, refugees, energy, trade and etc).¹³⁷ In 1999, Khatami visited Italy and France. Presidents of Greece and Austria visited Iran the same year. Foreign Ministers and other ministers also paid numerous visits.¹³⁸

The 11th September 2001 attacks and aggressive foreign policy by the US obliged Iran to follow a cautious balance of power policy between the European Union and the United States. During the Afghanistan War, Iran

¹³⁵ Moshaver, *op.cit.*, p.294.

¹³⁶ Nawab Khan, "EU-Iran Relations in the Last Two Year," *Payvand*, 23 November 2003.

¹³⁷ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: EU Relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, Brussels 7.2.2001 COM (2001) 71 Final, p.2.

¹³⁸ *Id.*, Iran-EU to resume Trade, Cooperation Talks Mid-December: Official, *Payvand's Iran's News*, 29 November 2004.

chose to be in line with European States and also United States. Even though US influence will increase after the fall of Sunni leadership of Taleban, Iran's stability would increase and the Sunni challenge against Shiites could be removed. In addition, the Saudi Arabia and Pakistan would lose power and influence in this strategic location because Taleban was not able to maintain its rule without the backing by the Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. US takeover brought in Afghanistan, at least to Iranian border, a partial stability. When the Taleban in power, Afghanistan was a heroin and drug production center. Drug trafficking through Iran from Afghanistan and beyond has a direct impact not only on Iran but also on Europe and carries a heavy burden in the fight against the traffic.¹³⁹ The EU looks forward to enhancing its co-operation with Iran to ensure stability in Afghanistan. Iran and the European Union could also go in cooperation to struggle against drug trafficking and to bring solutions to refugee problems.¹⁴⁰ Iran carries a heavy burden of a refugee population near its borders approximately 2.5 million of whom are Afghanis. In 2003, the European Commission decided to give financial (approximately 185 million Euros) and humanitarian aid for the refugees.

Khatami wants to improve economic ties with the European Union. He aims removing trade restrictions, modifying the economic structure, attracting foreign investment, planning regulations and enacting necessary regulations for the establishment of a stable and competitive economic

¹³⁹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: EU Relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, Brussel 7.2.2001 COM (2001) 71 Final, p.2.

¹⁴⁰ Relations with Iran, 13 May, 2002.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/iran/intro/gac.htm#i170602

structure compatible with global economic understanding. This economic policy coincides with the European Union trade interests; as a consequence, today the EU is Iran's main trading partner including export and import. The oil products are about 80 percent of the total import from Iran, and its exports to Iran are diversified with power generation plants, large machinery and electrical and mechanical appliances making-up about 45 percent of the total exports.¹⁴¹ Head of the Iran Trade Development Organization, Mojtaba Khosrowtaj said that: "The world's biggest trade bloc is Iran's most significant trade partner and accounts for up to 40 percent of Iran's import and export [...] the two sides have examined the grounds for mutual cooperation in such areas as energy, the campaign against narcotic drugs, asylum seekers, trade and investment"¹⁴²

The European Union is also seen as an indispensable ally in the Nuclear energy crisis (will be studied broadly in following pages) between the US and Iran. US policy makers and their European counterparts do not agree with each other to follow similar policies in the post-11th September 2001 world. Their approaches to events are different from each other. In recent times there have been divides between Washington and European countries on human rights, ways to fight terrorism, environmental issues, and war crimes and also use of force. Rosemary Hollis stated in his article: "Since 11th September 2001 and more particularly since the Trans-Atlantic divide over

¹⁴¹ http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/iran/intro/index.htm (24 May 2005).

¹⁴² "EU-Iran Economic Partnership," *Iran Daily (Economic Focus)*, 28 December 2004, p.6.

the Iraq war, relations between Europe and the US have come to overshadow Europe's dealing with their Middle East."¹⁴³

As a result, Iran and the European Union improve their relations day by day. Khatami's "dialogue and reform in domestic and foreign affairs" policy has accelerated this process. The European Union could be described in this context as a window that opens to entire world. Today, the US containment policy is not effective, thanks to Iran's developing relations with the European Union. On the other side, the European Union is also keen to deepen and widen the dialogue with Iran. Iran is source of energy and chance for new economic cooperation. Iran and the European Union will consolidate their relations unless extra-ordinary events happen.

3.4.2 Iran-US Relations

Iran-US relations have been in a dead end since the Iranian Revolution and hostage crisis. Although a little progress is seen from time to time, the relations between these states have never been the same as in the past. The vicious circle based on enmity has been fed from mutual distrust. For a better understanding, it will be better to have a glance at Iran's perception of the United States.

¹⁴³ Rosemary Hollis, "Europe, the US and the Middle East: Where do We Go From Here?," *The Middle East Center* at the University of Utah, 24 March 2004, p.1

Iranian people are still furious because of the US backed coup against Dr. Musaddeq in 1953. If the US had not overthrown Musaddeq, the Iranian people would not be governed by brutal and un-Islamic shah.¹⁴⁴ In addition, there is observable resentment among Iranians, because of the economic sanctions imposed by the United States. As a result of these sanctions, Iran lost its connection with an important part of the world and Iranians have become poorer.

The US generally uses international organizations like International Monetary Found (IMF), the United Nations (UN) and World Trade Organization (WTO) for maximizing its interests. The flow of money from these organizations to Iran is stopped by the US intervention. Although Iran has applied many times for WTO membership, she could not overcome the US veto barrier yet.

The United States' influence on other states prevents the flow of foreign investment in Iran, especially in oil sector. Iran is not able to make huge investment in oil sector. As a result, its daily oil production capacity is under the level before the Iranian Revolution. Iran is highly dependent to foreign capital and assistance for increasing its production capacity. Again, the US is the most important obstacle in front of this effort. The Clinton Administration brought into force the ILSA act, because they were against the investments in Iranian oil and natural gas sectors. Some US companies were sanctioned

¹⁴⁴ Paul Sullivan, "US-Iran Relations since 9-11: A Monologue of Civilizations, *Alternative, Turkish Journal of International Relations*," Vol. 1 No. 2, (Summer 2002), p.183.

because of their breaching of the ILSA act; in addition to this, some Chinese companies are recently sanctioned by the United States.¹⁴⁵ Iranian people are bored of the US containment policy and America's existence as an enemy in everywhere. Iran's relations with India, Russia, Japan, China, the Gulf countries and the European Union disturb US officials and these bilateral relations are perceived as "holes" on US embargo on Iran. For instance the European Union and Russia have close relations with Iran. As a result of relations with different countries, this helps to widen the node on the neck of Iran.

The United State's increasing intervention into the Middle East and regional conflicts is a source of unrest for Iranians. For example, when Iran was at war with Iraq, the Gulf countries were encouraged by the US to help Iraq. The US openly supported Iraq and increased its military power in the Gulf countries. In this war, Iran lost 1 million people and its material cost is 900 billion dollars.¹⁴⁶ According to general belief in Iran, the US is the main source of conflict, instability, pain and the enmity in the Middle East. The same intervention perception is also seen after the 11th September 2001 attacks, in a broader perspective.

Another issue is the US interference in Iran's nuclear energy project. Iranians believe that acquiring nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is their natural right and no state can impede their accession to nuclear energy

¹⁴⁵ Sullivan, *op.cit.*, p.185.

¹⁴⁶ İzzetullah İzzeti, *İran ve Bölge Jeopolitiği*, İstanbul, Küre Publications, 2005 (1st Edition) p.97.

technology. According to the NPT Agreement, Iran can continue its uranium enrichment programs for civilian uses and there is no article in that treaty that prohibits uranium enrichment. Americans are not frank when the nuclear energy is the subject. Iranians are angry at the US because of “double standard” policy of the United States. Today Iran is encircled by nuclear states such as India, Pakistan, Russia and Israel.¹⁴⁷ While those states are using nuclear technology for military purposes, the US makes pressure only on Iran; although Iran has reiterated for many times that its nuclear energy programs are not related with nuclear weapons. Ironically, Israel is not under any obligation or under the threat of sanction despite the fact that Israel has approximately 75-200 nuclear warheads.¹⁴⁸

US-Iran relations are in a quagmire since 1979 and it does not look like to be normal in the short run. According to the US foreign policy after 11th September 2001, Iran’s name is mentioned on the “axis of evil” list and the US accused Iran of supporting terrorist organizations, stepping in Iraq, acquiring nuclear weapons and preventing the peace process between Palestine and Israel. This is a clear proof that the US has different plans for Iran rather than solving problems via diplomacy.

When Khatami came to power in 1997, he sent olive branch to the United States. His famous speech given to CNN was an opportunity to normalize relations but this short *détente* era did not bring the handshake to give an

¹⁴⁷ Scott MacLeod&Nahid Siamdoust, “Iran, Still Defiant: How Tehran Views the Nuclear Standoff with the West,” *TIME*, 6 December 2004.

¹⁴⁸ Mehmet Durmuş, “ABD,Nükleer Enerji ve Çifte Standart,” *Yeni Şafak*, 7 March 2005.

end to vicious circle. The power structures in the both countries opposed against any real opening up and warming of relations. On the Iranian side Supreme Leader, Guardian Council, and hardliners in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Intelligence and the ulama constitute that structure; on the United State side, neo-cons, Jewish lobbies and conservative anti-Iranians are against any improvement in relations.¹⁴⁹ Notwithstanding the negative events, some attempts are hopeful for the future of bilateral relations. In 1998, President Khatami made a speech and called for a "dialogue of civilizations." One year later as a response to Khatami's speech, Madeline Albright apologized for the Musaddeq case. The cultural, educational and sports exchanges helped to soften the huge wall of mistrust a little bit.¹⁵⁰

The 11th September 2001 is really an important event that shaped the new US foreign policy and shifted power balances. After this unfortunate attack, the US policy makers declared an infinite war against the "terrorism" that is the number one enemy of the US and emphasized their determination to end terrorism no matter wherever it is. The US has always associated "terrorism" with Iran. The name of Islamic Republic of Iran was shown on the list of "axis of evil" that is composed of Iran, Iraq, and the North Korea. After this explanation, Khatami attached a great importance to tell Iran's just fight against international terrorism. As proof of Iran's good faith, Iran gave Al-

¹⁴⁹ Sullivan, *op.cit.*, pp.188-189

¹⁵⁰ Sullivan, *op.cit.*, pp.188-189

Qaeda members arrested in Iran to the United States.¹⁵¹ In addition to this, Iran also supported the US military intervention to overthrow Taleban regime. In this war, Iranian interests overlapped with US interests.

Consequently, Iran is aware of the serious US threat against itself. It is thus looking for new allies and ways to broaden the US circle on his neck. As we will mention in the next part, today Iran-US relations are in a quagmire because of the debate on nuclear energy.

3.5 Nuclear Energy Issue

3.5.1 Nuclear History of Iran

In the 1950s, the US and Iran were trying to improve their deteriorated relations after Musaddeq's fall by a CIA coup in 1953. New government led by Zahedi re-established relations with the US. Iran started its first nuclear researches in 1957 with the help of America. These countries signed an agreement called "Atoms for Peace Agreement with Iran" that provided technical assistance, supply of enriched uranium and also calls for cooperation on nuclear research for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.¹⁵² Following this agreement, Iran became a member of IAEA in 1958.¹⁵³ First nuclear facility was built by Shah known as the Tehran Nuclear Research Center (TNRC) and run by Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI). US

¹⁵¹ Başbakanlık Basın Yayın ve Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü, (14 August 2002).

¹⁵² Muhammad Sahimi, "Iran's Nuclear Energy Programme Part V. From the US Offering Iran Uranium Enrichment Technology to Suggestions for Creating Catastrophic Industrial Failure," *Payvand's Irans News*, 22 December 2004. (<http://www.payvand.com/news/04/dec/1186.html>)

¹⁵³ IAEA, INFCIRC/2/Rev.60, 10 February 2005.

supplied a 5MW pool type water-moderated, research reactor to Iran. This reactors' highly enriched uranium need was provided by the US till 1979 Islamic Revolution.

During the Cold War, Iran was an indispensable ally and outpost of US interests in the Middle East against communist Russia. For this reason all Iran wanted was to establish a strong army and nuclear facilities and this was welcomed and supported by the US officials. In 1970, Iran signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and founded Atomic Energy Organization of Iran in 1973.¹⁵⁴

The Oil crisis of 1973 provided economic opportunity to Iran for being a nuclear power. The war between Israel and Arabs countries increased the oil prices, therefore Shah used the astronomic oil prices to acquire the nuclear energy technology. At that time, Iran's nuclear policies were being shaped according to US influence and interests. For example, Shah decided to build 20 nuclear reactors¹⁵⁵, each of them 20.000 megawatt, after a study by the influential Standford Research Institute was concluded that Iran would need, by the year 1990, an electrical capacity of about 20.000 megawatt. Building nuclear reactors and selling weapons were a good way for the US to recover the cost of oil that it was buying from Iran.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Arif Keskin, "İran'ın Nükleer Çabaları: Hedefler, Tartışmalar ve Sonuçlar," *Stratejik Analiz*, No. 59 (March 2005).

¹⁵⁵ Mustafa Kibaroğlu, "İran Nükleer Bir Güç mü Olmak İstiyor?," *Avrasya Dosyası:İran Özel*, Vol.5 No. 3 (Autumn 1999) p.73.

¹⁵⁶ Sahimi, *op.cit.*

European countries also played an important role and gave great help to Iran to get nuclear energy technology and assistance. Iran signed a contract with West Germany 'Kraftwerk Union', subsidiary of Siemens, for the construction of two 1200 megawatt nuclear plants at Busehr.¹⁵⁷ Shah of Iran saw these efforts essential for industrializing his country. The Buser I reactor was 85 percent complete and the second one was partially complete before Iran Revolution, but later, with the fall of Shah, construction of both reactors were halted.

France is another country that helped for the foundation of Nuclear Technology Center at Esfahan. Training of Iranian personnel was undertaken by French experts. Besides, Iran and France signed an agreement to install 900 megawatt nuclear reactor at Benderabbas. Furthermore, Shah bought 10 percent of Eurodiff that was the biggest uranium enrichment company of the world. Shah was thinking much more than just establishing nuclear reactors and he dreamed of nuclear enrichment. At that time, Nuclear Research Center was also constructed by Belgium.¹⁵⁸

Iran Revolution is a turning point for Iran in the context of nuclear relations with other states. Seven months before the Revolution, Iran-US Nuclear Energy Agreement was signed encouraging cooperation in the nuclear energy field. In a conference named "The US-Iran an Increasing Partnership" held in 1977, spokesman of the US State Department Sydney

¹⁵⁷ Rick Wayman "Iran's Nuclear Programme CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament), January 2005. (<http://www.cnduk.org/pages/binfo/iran.html>)

¹⁵⁸ Keskin, *op.cit.*

Sober said that: "*Iranian government has stated its desire to purchase eight nuclear reactors from the US to supply electric power..... We are, at this time, negotiating an agreement with Iran on the civilian uses of nuclear energy, which will open the way for the sale of the power reactors in question.*"¹⁵⁹ After the Revolution, point of views against Iran changed. All agreements were abolished because of the new regime's anti US and Western stance. It is highly important to note that Iranian officials also opposed the nuclear activities. Iran had vast oil and natural gas resources, necessary to provide the money for this kind of activities, which was accepted as waste of money and time and also against Islamic rules. Another important event was Iran-Iraq War, which reduced Iran's economic capacity for dealing with this kind of expensive activities. During this war, Iraq bombed Busehr nuclear plants for many times. An important lesson learned from Osiraq and Bushehr bombing directed Iran to structure their nuclear reactors in the different parts of the country as a precaution against any sudden strike.

After the war ended, Iran expressed its willingness again to have nuclear technology and energy. Iran's electricity shortage, increasing population and need for using nuclear technology as a deterrent factor motivated Iran to accelerate its nuclear activities. Rafsanjani government turned its face to Soviet Russia; Iranian finance minister Mohsen Nourbakhsh and Soviet minister for Railways Nikolay Konarev signed an economic cooperation

¹⁵⁹ *Sahimi, op.cit.*

protocol for completion of the Bushehr plant and two VVER 440 reactors.¹⁶⁰ In January of 1995, \$800 million contract was signed between Iran and Russia for the completion of Buser reactor and supplying fuel for plants on condition that Iran would sign extended IAEA safeguards protocol.¹⁶¹ The US was worried about Iran's nuclear efforts, especially after 11th September 2001. In August 2002, some exiled members of an opponent group named National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) claimed that Iran was secretly carrying out uranium enrichment operations at Natanz and Arak plants in Iran. This is the starting point of ongoing nuclear debate on uranium enrichment program of Iran.

3.5.2. Nuclear Energy Crisis from the Perspective of Iran, the US and the European Union

Iranian officials reiterating their nuclear research is only for peaceful purposes and they claim that Tehran has the right to use nuclear energy for civil purposes as a signatory state to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Nuclear energy is seen as an alternative energy source for meeting the increased demand of energy for developing Iranian industry and increasing population.¹⁶² Iran attaches great importance to the fact that its aim in acquiring nuclear technology is not to have nuclear weapons. Kharrazi said that: "IAEA could inspect wherever they wish, any time they want" to make

¹⁶⁰ Greg, J. Gerardi&Aharinejad Maryam, "An Assessment of Iranian Nuclear Facilities," *The Nonproliferation Review*, (Spring-Summer 1995), p.208.

¹⁶¹ Robin Gedye, "Iran's Nuclear History," *Telegraph*, 10 September 2003.

¹⁶²"Khatami Reiterates Iran's Right to Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy" *Peoples Daily Online*, 5 April 2005.

sure that Tehran's uranium enrichment is not for making nuclear weapons."¹⁶³

Iran has vast gas and oil reserves, but this does not mean that Iran's nuclear reactors are unnecessary. Some countries like Germany, Russia, Britain are really dependent on nuclear energy despite they are very rich of fossil energy resources. Oil is not a renewable national wealth for Iran also; nuclear energy is a way to assure meeting increasing energy demands.¹⁶⁴

Israel and the US are definitely against a nuclear Iran in the Middle East. Particularly, Iran's uranium enrichment efforts are seen as the clear proof of Iran's nuclear ambitions. Washington and Tel Aviv have accused Tehran of seeking to produce nuclear weapons.¹⁶⁵ But Iran's approach is totally different from the US and Israel. According to Iran, its all activities are legal, which are for civilian purposes, and IAEA inspectors strictly observe their nuclear activities. After 11th September 2001, as known, "weapons of mass destruction" has become an important issue in international community, especially in the US foreign policy agenda. It was the main reason for the Gulf War II. US foreign policy makers have begun to follow a more active policy and focus on "international terrorism" and "WMD" issues. As a result, the US began to reshape the Middle East region in the context of Greater

¹⁶³ "Iran's FM Reaffirms Right to Nuclear Development," *Aljazeera*, 14 February 2005

¹⁶⁴ Mohammad Sahimi, "Iran's Nuclear Program.Part II: Are Nuclear Reactors Necessary?," *Payvand's Iran News*... 10 March 2003.

¹⁶⁵ "Straw: Iran Nuclear Agreement a Milestone in Iran-EU relations," *Payvand's Iran News*..., 16 November 2004.

Middle East project for realizing its new foreign policy parameters. From the US view point Iran is a country that:

- i) Is a barrier on Palestinian-Israeli peace process,
- ii) Gives support to International terrorism
- iii) Tries to acquire nuclear weapons.

The main policy of the US is to see an Iran without nuclear technology; if not, military intervention is possible by the US. Indeed there is a psychological war between these countries. High tension because of nuclear dispute hassles both Iran and other countries. In this conflict, Iran follows a "fine tuning" policy. While Iran claims that nuclear energy is its national right, it also tries to normalize its relation with the US via the EU, Russia and China. Last two countries are important actors in this crisis, because they are permanent members of the Security Council of the UN. The US cannot secure the Security Council for implementing military or economic sanctions against Iran, as long as Iran has good relations with Russia and China.

On 12 September 2003, IAEA gave an ultimatum to Iran for providing all documents about their nuclear activities to convince the IAEA officials that their nuclear researches are exactly for peaceful uses.¹⁶⁶ Iran was under suspicion because of some reasons:

- i) Iran's insistence on uranium enrichment and nuclear waste technology

¹⁶⁶ Mohammad Sahimi, "Iran's nuclear Program. Part 1: It's History," *Payvand's Iran News*, 10 February 2003.

ii) Iran is not transparent about its nuclear activities as it gives insufficient information about its nuclear activities since 1992.

iii) Detection of the trace of enriched uranium in the Natanz samples that were taken by IAEA inspectors.¹⁶⁷

But Iran always emphasizes that its nuclear activities are for peaceful purposes and “uranium enrichment” program is vital for not being dependent on other countries for energy. It is important to note that enriched uranium can be used for producing nuclear weapons also. In other words, Iran can produce nuclear weapon if it wants. As mentioned, because of Iran’s nuclear energy ambitions Israel, the USA and EU countries are determined to prevent a nuclear Iran. A nuclear Iran in the Middle East will not serve to interests of the US and its outpost, Israel.

The European Union acts as a mediator in this ongoing debate between Iran and America. France, Germany and England have played an important role for the peaceful settlement of this nuclear dispute. The EU trio is acted like an invisible bridge between Iran and America. The EU convinced Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment and not to have military intentions. In reply to Iran’s goodwill, The EU guarantees Tehran’s access to nuclear technology.¹⁶⁸ The European Union does not support use of military forces against Iran, as it did in the case of Iraq. Their approach to Middle East region is quite different from that of the US. The European Union has

¹⁶⁷ Keskin, *op.cit.* pp.30-31.

¹⁶⁸ “Iran, EU-3 end nuclear negotiations in Geneva,” *IRNA*, 21 April 2005.

developing relations with Iran, particularly in economic, cultural and social fields. In this regard, The EU will try to convince Iran to quit its insistence on uranium enrichment and will struggle to keep the US far away from military intervention.

3.5.3 What Kind of Policy must be followed for the Interests of Iran?

All debates stem from the disagreement on whether Iran has any right to enrich uranium or not. As seen, Iran and the US cannot solve this problem without a mediator, the European Union. Absence of regular relations between Iran and the US for a long time makes it difficult to find a solution; in consequence, The European Union may act as a “problem solver” for its long-term interest in this context. Reaching a solution without a military operation will be the best for Iran, the US and the European Union, thanks to Khatami and Foreign Minister Kharrazi’s proficiency at “diplomacy game” in troublesome days of Iran. Their duty is really difficult because they need to be careful while taking decisions about nuclear issues. While managing nuclear crisis, they must protect themselves from the wrath of the US abroad, and, at the same time, they must please the conservative and nationalist groups at home keeping their esteem in its place.

CONCLUSION

The evolution of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy is totally based on a pragmatist and rationalist understanding. We see that Khatami has been implementing this policy duly despite the fact that hardliners restrict the authority of the president and the reformist wing. Last two decades of Iran passed with crisis, wars, and foreign and domestic problems. Nevertheless, Iran has kept its determined stance defending the compatibility of Islam and democracy. In this process, Khatami played a leading role in his support for human rights, democracy, and liberal economy at home and in improving relations with other countries within the context of mutual respect. Khatami attached great importance to normalize its relations with the rest of the world except a few countries. This has been succeeded partially but needs more time to be completed.

11th September 2001 is a milestone for the Iranian Foreign Policy and the World politics. For George Bush and his hawkish aides reshaped foreign policy parameters after 11th September 2001. "War on terrorism," "struggle against WMD" and "export of democracy" have become primary concerns of US policy makers. It is understood that the Middle East will be the heart of THE new interventionist US foreign policy. It is really important to note here that Iranian leaders foreign policy strategies highly depend on the new US foreign policy orientation.

Recently, Iran is in a more difficult situation than it was before 11th September 2001. US press over Iran and influence in the Middle East is increasing day by day. After the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the “danger bells” ring for Iran, if necessary precautions are not taken, Iran will be attacked by the US on the pretext of terrorism, nuclear weapons and etc... Khatami’s main duty has been to prevent Iran’s being the next target of interventionist Bush administration. Therefore, Khatami chose to be at the same side (of Western) powers against terrorism. This is a chance to remove distance between Western world and Iran. During the Afghanistan War, Iran established optimistic relations with EU countries and made valuable contributions to post-war reconstruction of Afghanistan. Also, Iran’s neutral stance during the Gulf War II proves that Iran is tired of “adventurous foreign” policy. In the aftermath of Iraqi invasion, Iran found new allies- Russia, China, the EU, Japan that are also disturbed by unilateralist and interventionist US policies.

In other words, Khatami is trying to re-integrate Iran into the international community. For tackling with the US containment policy, it looks for new doors in African, Far-East, Central Asian and Caucasus countries. Besides, its intense relations with Russia, China, Venezuela provides more rooms in foreign policy.

Lastly, nuclear crisis, stemming from Iran’s uranium enrichment program, is an ongoing conflict between the US and Iran. It affected Iran and all

countries in the region, as if Iran was at war with a state. Possibility of US intervention in Iran, though seems difficult, disturbs international markets and entire world. The EU efforts for the settlement of dispute by diplomacy reduce the tension partially and bring states together for meeting. But, the EU shares the same concerns about a nuclear Iran with the US. The EU and the US use "stick and carrot" policy against Iran. It's quite basic, either you leave nuclear enrichment program and win WTO membership and other economic advantages; or you will be forced to leave your nuclear program by military solutions. But, reaching an agreement seems to be the best for Iran, if it really wants to become integrated into the international system.

Iranian foreign policy makers are now in a more difficult position than ever. The impacts of 11th September 2001 attacks narrow the circle around Iran, day by day. Human rights, freedom of speech and hardliner's increasing pressures are the problematic issues at home; in addition, allegation for supporting terrorism, WMD, nuclear conflict and human rights are the other issues remaining to be solved. Khatami's office term expires in June. No doubt, the new president will have to carry a heavy burden of foreign and domestic policy affairs in the post-11th September 2001 world.

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