

IRAN'S FOREIGN POLICY
TOWARDS ITS ALLIES:
AXIS OF RESISTANCE

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ABSTRACT
IRAN'S FOREIGN POLICY
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This study aims to examine the Middle East policies of Iran after the Islamic revolution against the western imperialism within the framework of the concept of resistance. In this framework, from prehistoric ages till today, the roots of resistance both in the world and in the Middle East politics will be analysed, and the stages through which this concept has gone in the political history of the region will be identified. Also, the Iranian Islamic revolution, which took place in 1979, will be dealt with within the Islamic resistance movement. In addition, it will be examined how the concept of resistance in the foreign policies of Iran has turned into "axis of resistance" as a result of the combination of the concept of resistance with the policies of revolutionary export. In this study, it is argued that trying to explain the increasing influence of Iran in the Middle East in recent times by means of "sectarian expansionism", the Shiite crescent" and "the geopolitical ambitions of Iran" will not be sufficient. Additionally, another goal is to reveal the effect of the resistance axis discourse on Syria as well as on HAMAS and Hezbollah, which are included in this axis and which Iran wants be protected from the regional influence of the western imperialist policies. Another aspect of the study aims to make a final analysis of the resistance axis in the political history of the region.

Keywords: Resistance axis, imperialism, Israel, US, the Middle East.

ÖZET
İRAN'IN MÜTTEFİKLERİNE DOĞRU DIŞ POLİTİKASI:
DİRENİŞ EKSENİ

Candan, Mehmet
Yüksek Lisans Uluslararası İlişkiler
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Bu çalışma, İslam Devrimi sonrası İran'ın Ortadoğu politikalarının batı emperyalizmine karşı “direniş” kavramı çerçevesinde incelenmesini amaçlamaktadır. Bu çerçevede; ilk çağlardan günümüze değin, gerek dünya gerekse Ortadoğu siyasetinde direnişin kökenleri analiz edilerek bu kavramın bölge siyasi tarihinde geçirdiği evreler saptanacaktır. Yine 1979 tarihinde gerçekleşen İran İslam Devriminin, İslami direniş hareketi bağlamında ele alınması düşünülmektedir. Aynı doğrultuda İran dış politikasında direniş kavramının, devrim ihracı politikaları ile birleşmesi sonucunda nasıl “direniş eksenini” söylemine dönüştüğü irdelenecektir. Bu çalışmada, son dönemlerde Ortadoğu'da artan İran etkisini açıklamada “mezhepsel yayılmacılık”, “Şii Hilali” ve “İran'ın jeopolitik ihtirasları” bağlamında ele alınmasının yetersiz kaldığı savunulmaktadır. Ayrıca “direniş eksenini” söyleminin, bu eksene dâhil olan ve batılı emperyalist politikaların bölgesel etkisinden korunmasını hedefleyen Suriye gibi ülkeler ile HAMAS ve Hizbullah gibi gruplar üzerindeki etkisinin araştırılması amaçlanmaktadır. Yine bu çalışmada, bölge siyasi tarihinin direniş eksenini bağlamında son bir tahlilinin yapılması hedeflenmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Direniş eksenini, Emperyalizm, İsrail, Amerika, Ortadoğu



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMAL: Afwaj el-Muqawama el-Lubnaniyya

DAESH: el-Dawlah el-Islamiyah el-Iraq al-Sham (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant)

HAMAS: the Movement of Islamic Resistance (Harakah el-Muqawamah el-Islamiyyah)

IRGC: Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps

PLO: Palestine Liberation Organization

PPLF: Palestinian People's Liberation Front

UN: United Nations

UNDOF: United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

US: United States

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the 20th century, the Middle East¹ was faced with imperialist attacks as a continuation of the attacks in the previous century, from such Western countries as England and France and the US. As a result of these attacks and with the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, France and England shared the land in the Levant and Mesopotamia² that once belonged to the Ottoman Empire between them, divided it into pieces and created small states which formally seemed independent but became integrated in some way with imperialist countries.³ The motive behind all this was their self-interests and prejudices. During the middle of this century, Palestinian lands were occupied, based on the Nationalist ideas stemming from racial superiority which was attached to the same imperialist policies. Then Israeli state was officially declared. The idea behind the establishment of this new Israeli state was that this state would act as “an outpost against the barbarity” coming from Asia and “a castle for Western Civilization”. Consequently, the first Zionists used the word colonialism not as a disguise but as a means of pride.⁴

¹ The use of the concept of the Middle East, which is a Western-based subjective conceptualization, has been established in all languages. The Middle East refers not only to a specific geographical region but also to a different culture, civilization, social structure and relations. In the narrow sense, the Middle East region, which includes Turkey, Iran, Mesopotamia, Arabian Peninsula, Eastern Mediterranean and Egypt, constitutes a junction point where civilizations developed in historical terms, Semitic religions have spread to the world, intercontinental trade routes have passed, different cultures have met and other places have passed. See Dursun, D. Ortadoğu'nun Ekonomik Sosyal ve Siyasi Yapı Özellikleri, [Economic Social and Political Structure of the Middle East], Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları Dergisi, 2005, Vol. 50, p. 1232.

² That is, the territories of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan and Iraq today. Retrieved March 10, 2016, from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com>

³ Emre, A. 2014, Sömürgecilik ve Oryantalizmin Doğuşu, [Colonialism and Birth of Orientalism], Hece Dergisi Batı Medeniyeti sayısı Vol. TAE/2014, p. 345.

⁴ Gelvin, L. J. 2016, Modern Ortadoğu Tarihi 1453-1915, [The History of Modern Middle East 1453-1915], İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, p. 215, 259.



Map I: The Middle East in the narrow sense⁵

Exposed to imperialist attacks in this century, one of the Middle Eastern Nations which was relatively large, resistant end in the pre-capitalist stage was also Iran.⁶ Pushed to the status of a semi-colony at the beginning of the 20th century,⁷ Iran was divided into areas of influence by England and Russia. A significant part of the revenue of Iran from oil and agriculture was exploited by British oil companies, resulting from the heavy concessions going on from the pre-20th century on.⁸ Policy of defensive developmentalism that were started in this country for reform⁹ did not satisfy the great majority of the Iranian Nation, and the resistance activities of the majority of the people against imperialism ended up in an Islamic revolution of people in the last quarter of the same century. 1979 Islamic revolution emerged mainly as a reaction to the foreign influence in Iran, to the rapprochement between Pahlavi and US, the bad economic conditions, the westernization of Iran and the compulsion for its modernization.¹⁰ At this date, the forerunners of the revolution in Iran not only overthrew the shah they described as a puppet of the west with

⁵ The Map Retrieved January 28, 2017, from <https://www.google.com.tr/maps/place/Orta+Doğu>

⁶ Emre, 1982

⁷ Gelvin, 2016

⁸ Erkan, S. 2010, İran'a Yabancı Müdahaleleri (1907-1921), [Foreign Interventions to Iran (1907-1921)], Akademik Ortadoğu, Vol.5, No. 1, p. 92-116. Retrieved March 10,2016 from <http://www.akademikortadogu.com>

⁹ Gelvin, 2016

¹⁰ Gündoğan, Ü. 2016, İran ve Ortadoğu, [Iran and Middle East], İstanbul: Liberte Yayın Grubu, p. 431.

the participation of the great majority of the people but also set themselves such short-term and long-term goals as to save their region from imperialist attacks and to free Jerusalem. After the shah regime was torn down, the process led by reverends was directed towards American imperialism, which was a strong symbol for the Iranians who hadn't forgotten the previous interference of Britain and US. In that period, the Iranian Islamic revolution seems to have shattered the foundations of American policies in the Persian Gulf, as the ousted Iranian shah, Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, was the strongest ally of the US in the oil-rich Persian Gulf; he had bought American weapons worth billions of dollars for US to protect the interests of his country in the US and to discourage Soviet adventurism. With the onset of the revolution, Iran was taken hold of by a regime that refused to set up relations with the US, accused Israel and had sworn to do away with American influence in the region. In the decade after 1979, American efforts to recover its restore its previous position in the Middle East came to nothing and its relations with the new powers changed for the worse, let alone for the better.¹¹ For this reason, the US sought to obstruct Iranian Islamic Revolution, which was achieved through resistance, threatening it with a military attack on the basis that it produced nuclear weapons, yet it took a geopolitical blow upon failing to obtain the exact result that desired.¹² This revolution has been described as an Islamic resistance movement by a large number of historians who study the Middle East.¹³

14 15 16

On the other hand, from 1991, when the Soviet Union disintegrated and the Cold War came to an end, the only superpower in the world, US, became one of the most important actors in the Middle East, with the waning influence of Britain and France both in the world and in the region after the second half of the 20th century. For this, it can be said that US made it a primary priority in its foreign policy to make war with some Middle Eastern countries that it identified as a threat in this period. Indeed, according to the viewpoint of imperialist hegemon powers, revolutions tend to be seen in terms of the changing foreign policy styles and priorities of states, such that these now constitute a

¹¹ Cleveland, L. W. 2008, *The History of Modern Middle East*, İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, p. 468.

¹² Müftüoğlu, A. 2016, *Putlarını Kıramayan Kabileler*, [Tribes that do not break Their Icons], İstanbul: Mahya Yayınları, p. 176, 177.

¹³ Cleveland, 2008, p. 467-480.

¹⁴ Gelvin, 2016, p. 357-361.

¹⁵ Tripp, C. 2013, *The Power and the People - Paths of Resistance in the Middle East*- New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 78-82.

¹⁶ Lewis, B. 1995, *The Middle East – A Brief History of the Last 2,000 Years*- New York: Touchstone Press, p. 357-380.

'revisionist', 'dissatisfied' or unbalancing factor in the international system and must be suitably tamed: revolutions are a breakdown in an otherwise orderly world.¹⁷ Accordingly, Iran, as well as some other states, was described by US as an element of threat directed towards the stability in the Middle East during the administration President George H. Walker Bush. The US called these countries “rogue states”, which produced mass destruction weapons, triggered violence and supported terrorism.¹⁸

On the other hand, American attack on Afghanistan and Iraq on the grounds of “war against terrorism” which George W. Bush administration launched after the 7/11 attacks on the twin towers in US was regarded as a containment policy around Iran.¹⁹ In a speech he delivered to American Nation in 2002, Bush the son declared Iran, Iraq and South Korea as “evil axis”²⁰ charging them with supporting terrorism and developing mass destruction weapons. Although Syria wasn't included in this list at first, Washington signalled that, unlike the case during the Clinton administration, it would pursue a policy of exclusion for Syria in this new period.²¹ The ideological foundation of preventive attack developed by the “new conservative staff” of the US and at the same time aiming at ensuring the security of Israel in the area²² was laid down by theories, such as the “End of History” by Francis Fukuyama²³, in “Clash of Civilizations” by Samuel Huntington.²⁴

The ground offensive launched by the US against Iraq within the framework of preventive war after the 7/11 attack on Twin Towers was perceived as an imminent and open threat mainly by Iran and its allies, Syria, Hezbollah and HAMAS and set the allies on alert.²⁵ It is already known that Iran, which defied global imperialist system with the people's revolution it achieved in 1979, set such goals for itself as supporting other movements of resistance in the region and in the world and providing assistance to them when required

¹⁷ Halliday, F. 1990, 'The sixth great power': on the study of revolution and international relations, Review of international studies, Vol: 16, p. 207-221.

¹⁸ Dilek, A. K. 2012, The Middle East Policy of US after the Cold War, International Journal of Human Resource Studies, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 99.

¹⁹ Altunışık, M. B. 2009, Ortadoğu ve ABD: Yeni Bir Döneme Girilirken, [Middle East and US], Ortadoğu Etütleri, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 69-81.

²⁰ Heywood, A. 2013, Universal Policy, İstanbul: Liberte Yayınları, p. 79.

²¹ Heywood, 2013. In May 2002, the State Department Undersecretary John Bolton added Syria, Cuba and Libya to the list of axis of evil.

²² Altunışık, 2009, p. 75.

²³ Fukuyama, F. 1989, End of History? The National Interest, p. 1-18.

²⁴ Huntington, S. 1993, The Clash of Civilizations? Foreign Affairs, Vol. 72, No. 3, p. 22-49.

²⁵ Dursunoğlu, A. 2008, “Yeni Ortadoğu” ve İran ABD Soğuk Savaşı., [“New Middle East” and Iranian US Cold War], Umran Dergisi.

and also integrated these goals into its Constitution.²⁶ The political and philosophical infrastructure of these goals was based by Iran on such values as equality, mercy and justice inspired by Eastern religions against the Western policies of exploitation, invasion and expansion guided by the principles of imperialism, materialism, rationalism and nationalism.²⁷ On the other hand, the most obvious area in which Iran has put these goals in practice was the direct support it provided for the Islamist movements of resistance going on in Palestine and Lebanon against Israeli invasion, which was patronized by the West. The uninterrupted continuation of these aids, also defined as an extension of the export policy of the revolution, since the revolution has caused the Islamist resistance movements in the area to achieve stability. For this reason, Iran-centered resistance moments came to be called “axis of resistance”²⁸ from 2000 on.

The resistance axis which revolutionist Iran struggled to establish against Western imperialist attacks also caused Iran to be increasingly criticized in that area for starting to generate aggressive and expansionist policies in the area. Among them were the facts that Islamic revolution deviated from its purpose and that the religious men who played a leading role in realizing the Revolution started to establish a new aristocratic and oppressive system in their country and in the area. However, another common point of criticism was that Iran tended to be selective of organizations or countries according to their sects while providing assistance for resistance. On the other hand, because of its insistence on resistance, Iran has had to deal with various embargoes imposed in the form of cultural and political attacks by certain imperialist countries such as the US.

It is necessary to go down to the roots of Islamic resistance phenomenon through an extensive study of literature in order to understand the philosophy behind the resistance in the Middle East and to benefit from the historical and political experience of Islamic resistance movements. Today, Syrian government and Iraq, as well as Iran and certain Islamist groups in such countries as Yemen, Bahrain and Nigeria in addition to various resistance movements including Hezbollah and HAMAS, are considered be within the

²⁶ Islamic Republic of Iran’s Constitution Article 154: “Consequently, while it completely abstains from any kind of intervention in the internal affairs of other nations, it supports the struggles of the oppressed for their rights against the oppressors anywhere in the world.” Retrieved March 22, 2016, from <http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/ir/ir001en.pdf>

²⁷ Crooke, A. 2009, Resistance: The Essence of the Islamic Revolution, New York: Pluto press, p. 21.

²⁸ International Crisis Group, 2010, Dumps of war: Israel and axis of resistance Middle East. Report No. 97 – Retrieved June 22, 2016, from <http://www.crisisgroup.org>

resistance axis. In this study, the purpose is to make an extensive analysis of the reasons for and the results of resistance axis, which is composed of Iran, Syria, Hezbollah and HAMAS, excluding the Islamic movements in Iraq, Yemen and Africa.²⁹ The purpose of this study is to make a comprehensive contribution to the literature of international relations by examining the concept of resistance politically, theologically and ideologically in an objective way. This will be achieved through the examination of primary sources and basic research in order to look into the arguments related to Islamic resistance on which the outlines of our study are based. It must also be noted that Turkish, Arabic, Persian and English resources are utilized in the study, in which qualitative research methods are used. Besides, it should be worth remembering that the interviews as to the subject of the study and the notes taken from related conferences have shed light on the study from different angles.

²⁹ Sinkaya, B. 2016, Ortadoğu'da Bölgesel bir Güç Olarak İran, [Iran as a Regional Power in the Middle East], Ortadoğu Analiz Dergisi, Vol. 8, No. 73, Retrieved June 25, 2016, from <http://www.orsam.org.tr>

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

When we hear the word resistance, it has a clear meaning to all of us. We accept this concept as a word that produces the same effects for everybody in all its clarity and don't think it over at all. However, the concept of resistance in political theory is a considerable subject which occupies the agenda of communities and around which political movements are shaped. Certain thinkers such as Michel Foucault stress that it wouldn't be possible to talk about administrative relations where there is no resistance.³⁰ Although the concept of resistance has different meanings both in the class struggle in the Marxist theory and right of resistance in radical democracies³¹ and within the context of oppression and justice in the theological administrations and in some monarchies, it's possible to find a common ground for this concept in all these disciplines. Because people who refuse this power and have the power of resistance against this power might emerge; if there is a power in a place that uses administrative bodies by despotic, authoritarian or military methods.

For this reason, this chapter is reserved primarily for the conceptual limits of the concept of resistance and for the political roots of resistance in the Middle East. At the same time, efforts will be made to reveal how the concept of resistance, which has started to undertake a global meaning in the World,³² is reshaped in political theory. Following that, we aims, in general, to focus on the activities of resistance in the Middle East that have come under cultural, imperialist and physical attacks from the West for several centuries. We

³⁰ Couzens, H. D. 2005, *Critical Resistance: From Post structuralism to Post-Critique*. The MIT Press, p. 82.

³¹ Özdemir, G. Y. 2016 October, 12, *Direnış ve Örgütlenmenin 5N 1K'sı*, [5N 1K of Resistance and Organizing], *Birgün Gazetesi Pazar Eki*. Retrieved June 24, 2016, from <http://www.birgun.net>

³² Tripp, 2013, p. 319.

specifically aim to discuss the activities of resistance in Palestine and Lebanon, which has been exposed to Israeli invasion, as the title of our thesis is directly related to this subject.

2.1. The Meanings of Resistance

The word resistance is defined in the dictionary as refusal to accept something new or different, efforts made to stop or to fight against someone or something, the ability to prevent something from having an effect, a secret organization in a conquered or nearly conquered country fighting against enemy forces.³³ The word resistance is used in different literature fairly widely. For example, in medicine, when a part of the body becomes ill or disturbed, cells attack that part and defend it. This attempt is also called resistance. Also in theology, when a human being doesn't yield into the limitless desires and wishes of the self as a result of obeying the requirements of the soul, that person resists the desires of his or her self. In the field of politics, resistance is defined as anti-hegemonic social attitudes, behaviour and actions, through which a more equal sharing and a weaker classification between social categories are attempted against a dominant economic power and its collaborators.³⁴ Based on this definition in a general sense, when those in lower classes in a community or in international relations, for example this weak and the poor, pose a threat to those in the upper classes, existing proper holders or the wealthy, it is called resistance.

In this context, resistance emerges passively or through open riots, rebellions which also involve armed violence and revolt against any illegitimate invasion, exploitation, and attacks from power holders on either its own people or the people of other countries, or even on their lands.³⁵ Resistance activity demonstrates itself through individual or social activities in legal or illegal ways, openly or secretly, in the form of criticism against colonialism, opposition to it or in the form of armed resistance. In such cases, we see resistance as a form of revolution or people's rebellion against dominant powers, demonstrations, mass strikes and boycotts. As examples of active resistance, it can give

³³ Webster Dictionary. Retrieved May 18, 2016, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resistance>

³⁴ Vinthegan, S. 2007, Understanding resistance, exploring, definitions, perspectives, forms and implications, Sweden, Retrieved May 18, 2016, from <http://www.resistancestudies.org>

³⁵ Çetinkaya Y. D. 2014, "Tevekkül" Ülkesinden Direniş Havzasına-Ortadoğu, Direniş, Devrim, Emperyalizm, [From Resignation Country to Resistance Basin-Middle East, Resistance, Revolution and Imperialism], İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, p. 8-64.

the resistance in Iran in 1978 and 1979 in the form of demonstrations, occupying city squares against global colonialists and local poverty, as well as the resistance realized in Tunisia, Egypt and Bahrain in 2011.

In passive resistance, however, the target is to create a social sensitivity and exposure of the injustice and oppression of the local government through the discourse or boycotts and by making our ironies or by avoiding collaboration with the system.³⁶ This side of passive resistance became famous with Mahatma Gandhi, who advocated complete independence of India from British colonialism. While defending his country's independence against imperialism and its local collaborators, Gandhi kept away from all kinds of violence and never urged his adherents, who he organized in the form of civil disobedience, to resort to armed struggle. Advocating the preservation of moral values during the resistance, the importance of simple and plain living, encouraging local production and preventing the consumption of foreign products, Gandhi decisively revealed his attitude which dictated to stay away from physical conflict of any kind in all his activities.³⁷

The political organization of humans was in tribes in early periods, later in the form of city-states, feudalism, empires and finally nation states. The main element that defines politics to settle the problems that might arise from human relations is the separation of friends from foes, which is achieved by communities on the basis of unity, race, language, religion, geography and interests. This separation is achieved in general on the basis of morals, justice and oppression.³⁸ When the political rulers in one place exert pressure and violence on their own subjects or on another community in another place which can be defined as oppression, the phenomenon of resistance emerges naturally for justice to become a reality there.

2.2. The Foundation of Resistance in the Western Politics

It is possible to see the concept of resistance in many parts of the world under various definitions and in every period throughout history. For instance, the mentality of resistance was a phenomenon that existed alongside Greek philosophy, and this

³⁶ Vinthegan, 2007

³⁷ Reza, Ö. F. 2014, *Gandi ve Direniş*, [Gandi and Resistance], İstanbul: Tutku Yayınevi, p. 10-76.

³⁸ Güler, İ. 2010. *Direniş Teolojisi*, [Resistance Theology], İstanbul: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, p. 9.

phenomenon was seen as a right within the framework of the right for resistance from the French Revolution onwards. In this context, the resistance in the west was a phenomenon which had taken its roots from the definition of citizenship in civil war law (*statis*)³⁹ of Solon in 5th century B.C. and which changed into an active model of the consciousness of citizenship from the 19th century onwards.⁴⁰ Solon (640-560), who was the lawmaker of Athenian Polis and the founder of a democratic life in the sixth century B.C., led to the establishment of democracy in the city with the three reforms he made in the Constitution. These laws were, in order of issuance, cancellation of debts, the elimination of victimization rising from these debts and the grant of the right to the people to apply to the court without any preconditions.⁴¹ With these laws, Solon aimed to remove the conflict going on between the classes in the city and to put an end to the civil war and to the injustice between the poor and noble classes, since class conflicts occurred from time to time for economic and political reasons, and these conflicts sometimes caused civil wars to break out. However, Solon sought the settlement of these conflicts not in the elimination of classes but in bringing the conflict under control, as opposition to new ideas was the basic element in the culture of life in Athens, and the conflicts between classes should continue with a competitive view under the control of laws without going to extremes.⁴² Solon invited all the citizens to be active and partial for the purpose of a common good in order to overcome the depressing situation, into which the city fell in terms of internal conflicts and crises. In such cases, citizens are supposed to take risks, stand abreast of dangers and act heroically. The acts that could be punished in ordinary situations are praised in times of crisis (*crisis*) and disputes (*statis*).⁴³

In due course, the concepts of “crisis” and “statis”, which became an integral part of the political culture of Athens, maintained their influence in the Roman period and the Middle Ages. When we look particularly at the Roman period, we see that the concept of *statis*

³⁹ Erdem, E. 2016, *Krisis, Statis, Resistentiae: Yurttaşlık ve Direnişi Birlikte Düşünmek*, [Thinking Citizenship and Resistance Together], *Ayrıntı Dergi*, İki aylık Sosyalist Siyaset ve Kültür Dergisi, p. 65. *Statis*: This concept that derived from Latin has various meanings such as sovereign power, stability, state, conflict, faction, civil war, conflict, illness, infection. If this concept is used in the sense of civil war, illness or infection, it means state of crisis in state administration. This crisis reaches in balance with the resistance of the lower classes to the nobility.

⁴⁰ Balibar E. 2009, *Citizenship*, London: University of Minnesota Press, p. 131.

⁴¹ Aristoteles. *Athenian Constitution* (Harvard Loeb Classical Edition), ix, p. 33, Quoted from Erdem, 2016

⁴² Klavyas Andreas *The democratic Narcissus: The Agonism of the Ancients Compared to that of the Post Moderns*, Ashgate, 2009, England, p. 15-42.

⁴³ Erdem, 2016

was used to describe the political struggle which the oppressed people initiated against aristocracy. Over time, this struggle turned into the right for resistance and became the central point of political disputes. Then, it became a tool to make the concept of disobedience negative.⁴⁴ In this context, resistance is a legitimate right which people have in their hands to repair the corrupt authority when the secular authority breaks the laws of God and use the power in an unjust way. According to this view, the secular authority turns into a disobedient tyrant when it breaks divine laws. Therefore, it is a right and a duty to start resistance to restore the authority.⁴⁵

When we look at the case in the 16th century, however, we see that the right for resistance became a central theme in the theories of modern state and sovereignty. The thoughts of both absolute sovereignty and restrictive sovereignty put forth their own theological foundations, taking the right for resistance into account. In the 16th century France, known as a period when the church lost power against monarchy due to Catholic Protestant Wars, several thinkers, such as Francois Hotman, Theodore Berza and Philippe Mornay, set forth the first theory of resistance in the modern era. This school of thought, whose foundations were based on the Antique Greek philosophy we have tried to summarize above, advocated a mixed monarchy whose power was restricted by assemblies of people by representatives and which took its legitimacy only from the public in contrast to the absolute monarchy which based its legitimacy on God. In line with this, the thinkers of the period questioned whether the kingdom belonged to the dynasty or to the public, whether the monarch would be obeyed when he was unfair and what the exceptions were, under what conditions, in which way and who would have the right for resistance when the king turned into a tyrant.⁴⁶

These debates on resistance theory was continued in early modern times by famous thinkers such as John Locke, Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the theory of resistance in the West reached certain self-sufficiency. For instance, Locke explains in detail the theory of the right of resistance in his famous book “Two

⁴⁴ Erdem, 2016. Disobedience as a form of politics does not exist in the antiquity and medieval philosophy. All kinds of disobedience in these periods are an individual situation that requires punishment. Mass disobedience provokes rebellion. This has no legitimacy either. The discovery of disobedience as a political category in theory corresponds to the modern age.

⁴⁵ Laudani, R. 2013, *Disobedience in Western Political Thought: A Genealogy*, London: Cambridge University Press, p. 9-31.

⁴⁶ Erdem, 2016

Treatises of Government”.⁴⁷ According to Locke, (1632–1704) people have an innate desire to live and that they have a natural right to self-defense. For Locke, when someone tries to put you under their power and use force without the moral authority to do so, such a person is putting themselves in a state of war with you, and you have the right to resist and destroy this person. Even a government exists this sort of thing happens, and if you do not have time to appeal to the government for help you can resist the aggressor. When a government does not hold up its fiduciary responsibilities and when that same government uses force without authority and there is no common judge with authority to whom to appeal because either there is no judge that exists, (such as in the state of nature) or because there is no time to appeal to one, the people may justifiably resist.⁴⁸ Locke's ideas, espousing freedom of property rights in particular, have inspired American Revolution between 1765 and 1783 and the idea of classical liberalism.

Such questioning, which was made particularly both in France and in England at the very beginning of the modern era, also laid down the foundations of the social democracy following the French Revolution. As a result, the system of monarchy which takes its power from the public dependent on the laws and on the government by the public and which is determined by the public has been well established in France. Accordingly, not only enthroning the king but also dethroning him is dependent on the rule of the public, supreme power.⁴⁹ In addition to the king, the people's councils and the lower councils are in charge of administration, and their tasks are at least as sacred as the king's duty. So the King gets his power from the public. The tyranny arises when the king's orders conflict with the orders of God. In such cases, the right of resistance against the king must be given to the parliament, which represents the people, not the whole nation. If individuals start resistance against tyrant, a worse situation occurs than tyranny. Thousands of tyrants appear to suppress a tyrant. In order to prevent such a lack of control, the public established the parliament of representatives, which served as a bridge between the

⁴⁷ Franklin, J. H. 1978, John Locke and the Theory of Sovereignty: Mixed Monarchy and the Right of Resistance in the Political Thought of the English Revolution, US: Cambridge University Press, p. 1-13.

⁴⁸ Reinisch, P. 2014. Locke's Theory of Justified Resistance an Explanation and Defense, New York: A Dissertation Submitted to the University at Albany, p. 173.

⁴⁹ Erdem, 2016

sovereignty and themselves, and the right for resistance is used through these representatives so as to elect the king or overthrow him from the throne.⁵⁰

In summary, the right for resistance in the West has been the most prominent assurance of the fact that sovereignty belongs to citizens in the final analysis. This right, which exercises supervision on the king, through the parliament of representatives and a people's council, also contains, in its essence, a form of government consisting of a mixture of monarchic, aristocratic and democratic elements. Consequently, the right for resistance against governmental pressure or tyranny is under guarantee by laws in the West. In this way, the possibility of pressure and suppression that might come from the rulers in the form of tyranny has been eliminated by means of constitutional contracts based on the right for resistance, and the power of the people as regards the right for resistance is reflected as a democratic willpower in the government.

However, the same Western World, which reached governmental maturity in terms of human rights and equal citizenship during the Enlightenment era, embarked on adopting an aggressive attitude of colonialism towards the rest of the world through the capitalist bourgeoisie, which it created in itself. Such concepts as human rights, democracy and priority of the law which is created out of its own values are used more often as tools of internal balance which it developed to conserve its own unity.⁵¹ The facts that the modernity which emerged in the west has turned into a capitalist style and that Western-patented capitalism has become a globally dominant economic and political system have caused the already existing perception of resistance in all nations to be questioned and defined in a new way. Thus, this concept has been transformed. In the following chapters, we will discuss this issue under the title of “transformation of resistance in a global age”.

2.3. The Foundations of Resistance in the Middle East Politics

It is possible to find the trace of resistance in the history of Islam and in holy texts in the Middle East, which has been home to a heritage of civilization as old and deep-rooted as the human history itself. For example, the thing that will be resisted has two dimensions in

⁵⁰ Erdem, 2016

⁵¹ Güler, 2010, p. 27.

Qur'an. One of them is expressed as internal, resistance to the desires and wishes of the self of the person, "suffi" dimension.⁵² The other is described as external, which is an active uprising and resistance against the oppression of the ruling elite class at the time oppresses their public, the political dimension.⁵³ Let alone the internal dimension of the issue. From the political view of Islam, resistance against the government oppressing any public under the leadership of a leader and with the principle of shura⁵⁴ is one of the fundamental principles of Islam according to several Islamic scholars, such as Ayatollah Khomeini⁵⁵, since it is against Islam⁵⁶ to cooperate with an oppressive government in any way. In the same way, it is not permissible in Islam to make propaganda on behalf of an oppressive government and to be part of such a government.⁵⁷ In this context, resistance means not stepping back in the face of the government and not surrendering to the oppressive acts of these governments on movements of resistance.⁵⁸

In this sense, the revolutionary uprising by Abraham the prophet against Nimrod, by Moses the prophet against the pharaoh, by Muhammad the prophet against such oppressive status quo holders as Ebu Cehl, Velid bin Mugire and Ebu Leheb, find their meanings in the concept of resistance. They all acted unjustly on the Earth and caused anarchy. If we should relate the issue with the movement of Muhammad the prophet in Mecca from 610 A.D. on, we see that such messages as equality, justice, mercy, and civilization, which Kabe spread symbolically as the home of Allah, were also laid aside. Instead, such activities as usury, money lending for interest, selling daughters as slaves in return for debt and turning the services of worship carried out around Kabe into personal interests under the supervision of prominent people of the city and status quo holders became

⁵² Surah Yusuf, [12:53] - Al-Qur'an al-Kareem "and I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil, except those upon which my Lord has mercy..." Retrieved December 08, 2016, from <https://qur'an.com/12/53>

⁵³ Surah Qasas, [28:5] - Al-Qur'an al-Kareem "And We wanted to confer favour upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors." Retrieved December 08, 2016, from <https://quran.com/12/53>

⁵⁴ Shura Principle: Information, consultation. To consult with the community in the process of action and decision-making while they are together.

⁵⁵ Humeyni, İ, Velayeti Fakih-İslam Devleti, [Wilayat el-Faqih-Islamic Government], İmam Humeyni'nin Eserlerini Tanzim ve Yayınlama Müessesesi Uluslararası İlişkiler Bürosu, p. 38.

⁵⁶ Asifi, M. M. 2012, Kimin İktidarı? Gücün mü? Hakkın mı? Ehli Sünnet ve Şia'da Devlet Teorisi, [Whose Power? Force or Right? State Theory in Ahl al-Sunnah and Shia], İstanbul: Önsöz Yayıncılık, p. 295.

⁵⁷ Humeyni, İ, Velayeti Fakih-İslam Devleti, [Wilayat el-Faqih-Islamic Government] İmam Humeyni'nin Eserlerini Tanzim ve Yayınlama Müessesesi Uluslararası İlişkiler Bürosu, p. 38.

⁵⁸ Asifi, 2012

widespread, and in this way, the ruling class became accustomed to adding fortunes to their fortunes.

For these reasons, according to Islamic belief, Allah interfered with the course of time in order to change the state of that society through the last prophet Muhammad, who was chosen from among the members of that society by starting an Islamic movement, and struggling against status quo holders of the time. This struggle is known as Mecca Period and as a dimension of struggle in the history of Islam. In many of his speeches, the Leader for Iranian Islamic revolution Ayatollah Khamenei describes this moment of struggle, which has a content of objection and revolution conducted by Muhammad the prophet in Mecca, in the context of Islamic resistance movements.⁵⁹ During the period of struggle in Mecca for 13 years, Muhammad and his followers never resorted to resistance with guns or with any kind of violence despite the pressure and oppression they faced and didn't carry out any acts of assassination towards their enemies. In this sense, the ultimate physical target of resistance is to grant slaves their freedom, to ensure human rights, to eliminate corruption, money lending for interest and abuse of religion and to struggle until equality is also obtained for women's rights. In other words, the target is to help the society to “attain economy”⁶⁰, “balance”⁶¹, “fairness”⁶² and “justice”⁶³ by making the movement of resistance succeed. As the revolutionary uprising emerging out of resistance must be demonstrated with a demand for a just government against oppressive authorities that act on the earth unjustly and cause anarchy. The resistance to such kind of authorities, which is a binding duty in Islam, is associated with the Islamic principle of "order what is good

⁵⁹ Leaders speech to government officials on Mab-ath October 10, 2015 Retrieved March 20, 2016 from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/1763/Leader-s-Speech-to-Government-Officials-on-Mab-ath>. Also see: Leaders Address to Government officials and ambassadors: August 07,2007 Retrieved April 22, 2016, from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/1355/Leader-s-Address-to-Government-Officials-and-Ambassadors-of-Islamic>

⁶⁰ Economical, restrained, just and correct principles of behaviour. Surah Hadid, [57:25] - Al-Qur'an al-Kareem

⁶¹ Being in the middle of the road, not being overworked and lacking. Surah Baqarah, [2:153] - Al-Qur'an al-Kareem

⁶² To be honest and fair in behalf of rights and law, Surah Rahman, [55:8] - Al-Qur'an al-Kareem

⁶³ Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.” Surah Nahl, [16:90] - Al-Qur'an al-Kareem Retrieved December 08, 2016, from <https://quran.com>

and discourage from evil."⁶⁴ The spiritual purpose aimed at here is that Allah will be pleased in this way.⁶⁵

It's again possible to regard the emigration of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D as an activity of resistance, since the emigration of Muhammad and his followers, who were forced to abandon the city where they were born because of their beliefs, signifies an important stronghold Islam gained in the struggle for survival, a reaction to the conversion of Muslims and resistance to oppression.⁶⁶ In this way, during the establishment of a state which Muhammad the prophet formed in Medina, based on the contract of common living⁶⁷, all the wars such as Bedr, Uhud and Hendek, were defensive in nature and movements of resistance to the attempts made to eliminate the newly-founded state of justice. Besides, Muhammad took precautions with Mute and Tebuk military expeditions against the dangers that could come from the Roman Empire while he was alive. Therefore, in Islamic culture and civilization, not aggression⁶⁸ but the activity of resistance in the form of self-defense against the attacks became legitimate with Muhammad the prophet.⁶⁹ In summary, it can be said that all these activities are emerged both against the unlimited desires of the individual's self and against the unjust and oppressive activities and against international attempts to exercise oppression and hegemony.

After the death of Muhammad, the culture of resistance survived as a dominant culture in the political life in the Arabian Peninsula for some more time. For example, the second caliph Omar received the answer from one of the friends of Muhammad that "I will correct you with my sword" upon asking in a sermon "what they would do if he deviated from what was right". In response to this reply, the prayer of Omar, who said that "Lo, my Lord! Thank you for the fact that if I act ignorant of you, if I deviate from your justice, I

⁶⁴ "And let there be , [arising] from you a nation inviting to , [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful." Surah Al-i Imran, [3: 104] - Al-Qur'an al-Kareem

⁶⁵ "Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing , [to Him]." Surah Fajr, [89: 28]- - Al-Qur'an al-Kareem

⁶⁶ Demircan, A. 2015, Nebevi Direniş: Hicret, [Prophetic Resistance], İstanbul: Beyan Yayınları, p. 8.

⁶⁷ See Constitution of Medina

⁶⁸ "Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly." Surah Mumtahinah, [60: 8], Al-Qur'an al-Kareem Retrieved December 08, 2016, from <https://quran.com>

⁶⁹ Eliaçık, İ. 2015, Kuran'da Öz Savunma (Savaş) Ayetleri Haritası, Retrieved May 20, 2016, from <http://www.ihsaneliacik.com>

have a group of friends who would correct me with their swords”⁷⁰ is considered an expression of the fact that this culture was then still continuing.

However, abandoning the principle of shura in Islam with the Umayyad sovereign Muaviye I and changing the institution of caliphate into a reign can be said to have caused the mentality of resistance to shatter in time. In this regard, the concept of destiny was shifted from its original meaning with Muaviye I, and it was replaced with the belief that one should be submissive to the evils that befall on him or her with the acceptance that it is "the ordinance from Allah". The belief in destiny filled with this meaning was turned into one of the main principles of faith. The most eminent purpose here in modifying the meaning of destiny to such a degree that it became a matter of faith was to prevent the public from questioning the administrative deeds conducted by administrators during the Umayyad period. According to this mentality, which was made legitimate and widespread, whatever befell on people was through the will and predestination of Allah. Again, within this mentality, whatever Muslims suffered at the hands of the Umayyad rulers was because of the ordinance predetermined by Allah. All unfavourable events that a person might experience were because of the fact that destiny worked its own way, and the rulers weren't to blame for all this. For this reason, to rebel against the Umayyad sovereigns was to rebel against the ordinance of Allah and consequently to Allah. Besides, not to accept the destiny was to rebel against the Umayyad sovereigns, as Allah wouldn't have allowed them to become rulers if he hadn't wished. Accordingly, if everything came true in accordance with the ordinance and will of Allah, then it would be required to obey those who gave orders under any circumstance.⁷¹

However, unlike this approach, which the Umayyad rulers made people adopt, the issue of faith in destiny is used in Qur'an, the basic source of Islam, with the meaning of norm and it isn't included in the principles of faith either.⁷² This concept of destiny is never used in Qur'an with the meaning of judgment and creation, which forces and condemns the human being who has the willpower. The Umayyad conception pulled apart this word from its Qur'anic meaning and turned it into how it was used in pre-Islamic period of ignorance by

⁷⁰ Nedvi, A. 1985, *Asr-ı Saadet. (Hayatussahabe)*, [Era of Bliss], İstanbul: Şamil Yayınları, p. 257.

⁷¹ Merdin, S. 2013, *İtikadi Sapma: Kadere İmanın İman Esaslarına Dâhil Edilmesi*, [Deviation of Beliefs: Incorporation of the Belief of Faith into the Fundamentals of Faith], Retrieved May 19, 2016, from, <http://www.saadettinmerdin.com>

⁷² Merdin, 2013

loading it with such meanings as good fortune and chance.⁷³ As a matter of fact, the famous Islamic thinker Muhammad Iqbal from Pakistan defines destiny as a historical walking of Allah with man, a life and an eternal power which knows no obstacles⁷⁴ and remarks that this humiliating interpretation of destiny as fatalism was introduced into Islamic religious faith by the Umayyad, and therefore this concept was distorted.

With this historical break, the resistance culture and its consciousness were blocked in such empires as the Umayyad, Abbasid, Seljuki and Ottoman, which were founded on the basis of Islam in the east. However, the adherents of the Shi'ite⁷⁵, Harici and Mutezile, who kept resistance alive in their own societies even under pressure, can be regarded as an exception. In this way, even when they came about with a demand for justice, the activities attempting to be considered within any act of resistance were declared to be deviant acts, as in the first Age and in the Middle Ages in western civilization on the grounds that they were separatist and rebellious, and those involved in these activities were punished. For this reason, the mentality of resistance, which is actually in the essence of the religion of Islam, was abandoned in this geographical region until the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and such concepts as obedience and resignation came to be accepted as cultural characteristics and as an essence independent from relations of power.⁷⁶

2.4. Reshaping of Resistance in a Global Age

While the social mobility that the West experienced during the 17th and 18th centuries caused the culture of democracy based on the consciousness of citizenship to become established, it was assumed that the societies in the Middle East lived attached to the culture of obedience and resignation, at a safe distance from the concept of resistance at that time. However, the Egypt expedition, which the French Emperor Napoleon started

⁷³ İslamoğlu, M. 2012, Hasan el-Basri'nin Kader Risalesi ve Şerhi, [Hasan Al-Basri's Fatal Epistle and Gloss], İstanbul: Düşün Yayıncılık, p. 107.

⁷⁴ Kaplan, İ. 2003. Muhammed İkbali'nin İslahat Projesinde İnsanın Kaderi Problemi, [Muhammad Iqbal's Fate of Man in the Rehabilitation Project], Kelam Araştırmaları., Retrieved May 22, 2016, from, <http://dergipark.ulakbim.gov.tr>

⁷⁵ After the death of Prophet Muhammad, the messages of 4th Kaliph Ali and Abu Zer that were the first Muslim companions of Prophet Muhammad, which were related that the behaviours of managers were improper to Islam and to resist against exploiters who distorted Islam by using Religious Terminology, were provided to handle these till today by being interiorised by Shi'ites because of the fact that he handling of resistance culture adventures of Shi'ites which have been inherited especially by Shi'ites since the beginning.

⁷⁶ Çetinkaya, 2014, p. 8.

just after the French Revolution in 1798 in order to block the trade routes of the British leading to India and to influence the Egyptian people culturally, is regarded as a turning point in the introduction of the imperialist ideas of the West into the Middle East. As a significant consequence of this period, the Ottoman Empire started to become integrated into the capitalist world economy from the mid-19th century on. In line with this, at the turn of the 20th century, the rise of both the global economy and locus of power in the area led to serious consequences socially, politically and economically. Besides, with the concept of modern state becoming widespread, nationalism and ethnic problems simultaneously emerged, which forced the culture of obedience and resignation prevailing in a great majority of the Middle East into a turbulent process.

Accordingly, the facts the Ottoman Empire became weak and got into a process of disintegration on the one hand and that the industrial capitalism, which developed alongside modernity and nationalistic trends stemming from the French Revolution in the West, became so widespread as to surround Eastern societies forced the nations in the Middle East to take various precautions against this new situation. The ruling class in the Middle East, who realized that international balance of power turned in favor of the west, embarked on developing military and economic reforms and thus establishing policy of defensive developmentalism. However, forceful enforcement of the modern institutions by Western states to the nations in the Middle East either through direct colonization, occupation or the establishment of sovereignty led the culture of resistance to gain more grounds in the Middle East.⁷⁷ During this period, the first modern political and social organizations appeared in the region, and these organizations turned into resistance movements in time. These resistance movements in turn made themselves legitimate, sometimes through such secular ideologies as parties, unions or organizations in the modern sense, sometimes through an Islamic discourse. For example, even though they didn't achieve the expected results, the movements of constitutionalism taking place in Turkey and Iran at the beginning of the 20th century had the idea of preventing the damage incurred by colonial states through civil attempts. The contribution of religious groups, parties and unions was not negligible in these activities. Again in the 1920s, the underlying reason for the struggle to make Egypt independent with a secular party, Wafd,⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Gelvin, 2016, p. 81-84,355-372.

⁷⁸ The party was founded in Egypt in 1919 and played a decisive role in Egyptian politics in 1923-52.

was the tension between British soldiers and the local people. At this date, the resistance movements and religious groups and el-Azhar University intersect horizontally.⁷⁹

On the other hand, during the riots emerging in the Middle East together with the imperialist activities of the West in the 19th century, political Islam started to appear on the agenda as an ideological tool. The religious discourse and references encountered in the activities in previous periods led to political Islam to appear on the agenda as a modern ideology because the colonialist Western mentality developing out of modernity started to be perceived as a form of attack on the Islamic civilization and on Islamic lands in the east. In the essence of this perception was the search for an ideological basis for the process of the riot by people who were pushed by imperialism into dire straits economically as a result of the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The “bread riots” started by global neoliberal enforcements in Egypt in 1977 and the Arab riots spreading to the whole region as a result of Muhammad Buazzizi, a Tunisian street vendor burning himself at the end of 2010 are prime examples of such a process. The common point in these, riots in which the desired results couldn't be achieved, was just an attempt at uprising and resistance to the fact that the majority of the local people fell into the grip of material misery and poverty because of the kings or rulers of the countries guiding the tools of exploitation of global capitalism.

In the 20th century Middle East, the harshest dimension in which resistance was widely used emerged in cases in which imperialism tried to carry its attacks to the stage of occupation of the land. For example, the long struggle put on stage by the local people of the region for the independence of Algeria, which was occupied by the French in 1830, and the resulting independence of Algeria in 1962 are labelled in literature as Algerian resistance against French occupation. Also in 1915, the Allies sought to occupy the capital of the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul, as an extension of imperialist attacks and to capture the control of the Dardanelles strait. The defensive War waged by the Ottoman Empire against the British imperialism, among whose aims were to open a safe route for the provision of food and military supplies and to weaken Central Powers by capturing Istanbul is known as a total resistance against occupation in the consideration of the worldwide Muslim Community. Similarly, armed activities organized by Omar Mukhtar in the region of Africa in 1923 against the colonization policies of fascists who came to

⁷⁹ Çetinkaya, 2014, p. 38-46.

power in Italy in 1922 are known in Libyan history as the resistance movement of Omar Mukhtar. Likewise, the occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979 and the occupation of Iraq by US in 1991 and 2003 were faced with resistance from the local people.

However, the most problematic and harshest of all resistance activities is the resistance the people of the region displayed against the occupation of the Palestinian land by Israeli Zionists with the help and support of the West, which is still continuing and is likely to remain on the world agenda for a long time. In this sense, though the essence of the issue is made up of the resistance activities which Palestinian people initiated in the 1930s, the word “resistance” came into widespread use with the formation of HAMAS founded in 1987, one of the Islamic movements in Palestine as a movement of resistance against Israel. In this direction, starting the process of establishment with the support of Ayatollah Khomeini in Lebanon in 1980s and finally completing the process in 1989, the activities of Hezbollah, attempting to resist against the expansionist policies of Israel like HAMAS, are described with the concept of resistance, and the usage of this word became widespread in this way. As a result, Palestinian resistance demonstrated against Israeli invasion in the 20th and 21st centuries became one of the principal issues on the agenda in the world and in the Middle East along with the vitality it breathed into the concept of resistance in the Middle East.

Iran, in turn, stood directly by the Palestinian resistance against the Israeli invasion under the pretext of “Islamic resistance” after the Islamic revolution in 1979 because the city of Jerusalem, which is considered holy by the people of Palestine and by three major religions, was faced with the invasion and oppression of Israel according to the revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini. For this reason, Khomeini declared the last Friday of Ramadan every year as the day of Jerusalem, starting with the first Ramadan just after the Islamic revolution in 1979. According to Ayatollah Khomeini, it is their duty to rush to the help of a community in any part of the world when that community asks for their help, providing that they can afford it. According to Khomeini, they are the defenders of not Iran but the Muslims who are oppressed all over the world. In this way, Lebanon resistance against Israeli invasion became well-established with the support it received from Iran Islamic Republic, and the first guerrilla resistance activities started. Iran, which

challenged the West, US and Israel with the revolution of 1979, widened the gap between themselves and their enemies with the resistance axis after the establishment of Lebanon Hezbollah. At this stage, Syria played a key role both in the support it provided to Iran during the Iraqi-Iranian War and in the resistance axis which was formed with the establishment of Lebanon Hezbollah against Israel. For this reason, we consider it proper to deal with this issue under a separate title below.

2.4.1. Palestinian and Lebanon Resistance against Israeli Invasion

In reaction to the gradual immigration of Zionist movement to the Palestinian land from the 1880s onwards, the activities of the uprising which Palestinian people started and are still continuing and which have turned into armed struggle from time to time took its place in history as the Palestinian resistance. Attempts at invasion started by Zionists spread to Lebanon, and therefore it caused a great majority of the people living in Lebanon to participate in this resistance. The facts that the invasion of Palestine has been continuing for almost 150 years and that organizations which contain the concept of resistance against the invasion in their names have been established have led to the association of resistance with the cause of Palestine. The most important characteristic that separates the Palestinian resistance from other resistance activities in the world is the fact that the Zionist mentality which emigrated from various parts of the world to the land belonging to the people of the region and settled there, showing no respect to the rights of the local people, has led to a chain of problems continuing for centuries. The direct support that Iran provided to some of that Palestinian resistance movement in line with its revolutionary ideology after the 1979 Revolution can be shown as another reason to focus on the Palestinian resistance. Disregarding the other resistance movements in Europe, US and other parts of the world because Iran is a country in the Middle East, compared with the West, it is aimed to make an extensive analysis of the activities in the Middle East and Palestine in general, but also especially the activities which Iran calls resistance.

The decision of the Jews, who were forced to leave Palestine nearly 2,000 years ago and moved to various parts of the world, to establish a Jewish state in Palestine in the 20th century was the precursory of the fact that a new page had been opened in the world history, since Zionists, who accepted the decision to return back to the land, where they

lived before Christ, as a gift from God and embarked on invading it, depended on the references related to Judaism for the Israeli state they established in 1948 even though the event of relocation experienced thousands of years ago was seen as a sanction by God. This new state, which they established, was the sign that they would start a war with Muslim Arabs in the area on a religious basis and they would invade those lands. As a result, five great wars were fought between Arabs and Israel in the second half of the 20th century. The war which broke out because of the establishment of Israel in 1948 was followed by wars in 1956, 1967, 1973 end 1982. However, the roots of the conflict between the two sides in the form of the most dangerous and a never-ending disagreement in the world date back to 1880s, when the first pioneering Zionists started to settle in Palestine, and this agreement has always been accompanied by violence and resistance from the very beginning.⁸⁰

The Zionist mentality which means International Jewish political movement was put into effect officially at the end of the 19th century with the publication of the Jewish State by Hungarian journalist Theodor Herzl, the originator of the idea to create a homeland again for the Jews in Palestine. This book is at the same time the holy book of Zionism. In his book, Herzl attempted, in his own way, to bring a solution to the cause of Jews, which had been keeping the Christian world busy for centuries. Having witnessed the mass slaughter of the Jews in Hungary at the time, Hertz put forth the ideas that Jews must have a national state of their own and that the only possible land for this state was Palestine⁸¹ because Palestine was the land of their ancestors; a return to the promised land and the idea to be in Palestine the next year was a dream they head kept alive for centuries though in distress. However, before Herzl, this idea was expressed by Leo Pinsker, one of the pioneers of the political Zionist movement, in the way that Jews should determine their destiny and establish an independent Jewish state. Yet Herzl turned the components of the existing ideology into an international movement with his energy and determination.⁸²

According to Herzl, Jews would immigrate to Palestine as “the representatives of the western civilization” and take along with them "cleanliness, order and progressive

⁸⁰ Hirst, D. 2015, *Silah ve Zeytin Dalı: Ortadoğu’da Şiddetin Kökenleri*, [The Gun and the Olive Branch: The Roots of the Violence in the Middle East], İstanbul: Matbuat Yayın Grubu, p.164.

⁸¹ Hirst, 2015, p. 165.

⁸² Cleveland, 2008, p. 268.

traditions of the West".⁸³ However, one basic problem stood in the way because it was almost certain that the residents of that area would stand up to the newcomers as a result of the migration to a land where almost 700.000 people lived at the time. This resistance was likely to bring anti-Semitism with it. For this reason, a process of emigration cannot achieve its target unless it is under the patronage of a power. The only way to accomplish it is through the establishment of a state.⁸⁴ Physical and military power and violence is inevitable in the process of establishing and expanding the state; Zionists have to resort to armed conquest in order to obtain the lands they demand. Even if Jews don't have a military power of their own, they should find a supportive group from among the imperialist powers of the period and urge that power to do something about it.⁸⁵

Prompted by such an ideal, the migration movement started by Zionists first in 1882 was faced with resistance from the villagers in Palestine, but these resistance movements succumbed to the purchase of the land by the immigrant Jews in return for money. In a systematic way, Arab villagers reacted to this settlement of Jews at first, but later pressure and obvious hostility forced them to accept the situation or reconcile with it.⁸⁶ The Jewish immigrants who first took hold of employment, realizing that the principle of creating a workforce composed only of Jews started to become an important element the hostility felt by Christian Arabs, thus setting up their first armed organization in 1907. The Palestinian attempts at reconciliation were all rejected by Zionists, thinking that they would limit their purposes to be implemented, as the rule of Jewish majority could only be achieved by resisting against the demands of Arabs who constituted the majority in this land. This could only be realized with an Iron Wall formed by Jewish armed forces.⁸⁷

During this time, Zionists found Britain from among the imperialist powers of the period as a power to do something about their cause. Britain had put signature on the Sykes-Picot agreement (1916) and the Balfour Declaration (1917), which shaped the history of the Middle East in the 20th century. Britain declared in the Balfour Declaration that it would consider appropriate the establishment of a national homeland for Jews and that it would

⁸³ Herzl Press & Thomas Yoseloff. *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, New York, 1960, Sayı I, s. 343, Quoted from Hirst, 2015.

⁸⁴ Herzl, T. 1946, *The Jewish State*, London: Rita Searle, Quoted from Hirst, 2015.

⁸⁵ Hirst, 2015, p. 170-171.

⁸⁶ Mandel, N. 1965, *Turks, Arabs and Jewish Immigration into Palestine, 1882-1914* London: Oxford, p. 86, Quoted from Hirst, 2015.

⁸⁷ Hirst, 2015, p.195.

provide support of any kind in this regard.⁸⁸ It was by means of the support Britain provided that Zionist disregarded the grounds of the local people there and even their resistance, remaining firmly attached to the dream of a Jewish homeland. The Arab politicians of the period were pushed into the options of reconciliation or resistance because the Arabs, who were aware of the fact that it wouldn't be possible to establish a Jewish homeland without depriving non Jewish communities in Palestine of religious and civil rights, were also aware of the fact that resisting to this situation would mean fighting with the British.⁸⁹ In this respect, while the Arab countries surrounding the area opted for not being involved in any kind of conflict, Palestinian people preferred armed resistance.

Palestinian land went under British mandate following the First World War. Unlike Syria, which was under the French mandate at about the same date, Palestinians were struggling, under peculiar conditions, for the recovery of the land which was taken hold of by Zionists, because the Zionists that settled in the area had no intention of leaving the country, unlike the British or the French.⁹⁰ At this date, the resistance movement of Jerusalem mufti, Amin el Hussein, who led civil uprising in the struggle against Zionism, came to the fore. First starting service in the ottoman Army and spending years in Izmir during the World War I, el Hussein return back to Jerusalem following the war and was appointed to the position of vice governor of the British who came to the Palestinian region (1917). However three months after he took the office, he resigned, protesting the policy of the mandatory government of the British in the area. El Hussein participated in the resistance movements, which had just started among the people, and played an important role as a leader in the Palestinian political resistance movement until 1948, when the Israeli state was founded.⁹¹

The first armed resistance of the Arab people residing in Palestine was launched by Izzettin Qassam in 1935 to 1939, as by this time the number of immigrant Jews to the Palestine had reached almost 60,000 and the sale of land had also reached record levels according to the official figures. Sheikh Qassam was a student of Muhammad Abduh, a famous Egyptian scholar and had a religious and sophisticated familial background. Qassam made warnings to the villagers he organized around himself about the dangers of the Zionist invasion on

⁸⁸ Hirst, 2015, p.193.

⁸⁹ Porath, Y. 1974, *The Emergence of the Palestine-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929*, London: Frank Cass, Quoted from Hirst, 2015.

⁹⁰ Gelvin, 2016, p. 263

⁹¹ Retrieved October 10, 2016, from <http://www.islamansiklopedisi.info>

the one hand, and gave advice to act in a patriotic spirit, reminding Qur'anic verses which praise struggle and sacrifice on the other hand. Because he sacrificed his life for the cause he believed in, Sheikh Qassam, who was killed in an armed conflict he was involved in, managed to set Palestinian masses in motion. During the uprising Qassam started, 37 Englishmen, 69 Jewish people and around 1,000 Arabs were killed.⁹² Britain in turn had to occupy the Palestinian land again because of the tension escalating. Afterwards, the Jews, who ousted the British from this Palestinian land because of assassinations, managed to have a bill passed through the UN Security Council for a Jewish state to be established in divided Palestine on May 15th 1948.⁹³ In this process, the Zionists went on their way with the support they received from the US, another ally of theirs because the new realities of the world following the Second World War was that US emerged as a superpower. For this reason, the Zionists would carry out their attempts not under the patronage of Britain, which got into a rapid process of decline as an imperialist power, but under that of US.⁹⁴ The mandatory government of Britain came to an end in the area with the establishment of a Jewish State at this date.

After they declared the new Jewish state in 1948, the Zionists embarked on protecting it. In this regard, there were two alternatives facing them. One was to obtain consent of the Arab and Palestinian neighbours, and the other was to fight with them. The Zionist made a clear decision and chose to fight because Zionists had always had a Jewish Empire in their subconscious based on racial discrimination and apartheid. Therefore, the Zionists first attempted to kick Arabs out of their lands following the establishment of a Jewish state. For example, the residents in the village of Deir Yasir, with a population of 400, who were not involved in any resistance activities, were massacred by Zionists in 1948. During this massacre, no distinction was made even for pregnant women and children.⁹⁵ The military potential of Palestinians had already been destroyed by the British in 1930. After this massacre, the Zionists attempted to evacuate the remaining Palestinian residents through propaganda. The Zionists, who obtained 57% of the Palestinian land in the early 1949 through the division plan of the UN have captured 77% of this land today. Also, 900.000

⁹² Hirst, 2015, p. 246.

⁹³ This date is commemorated to as Nakba day (great catastrophe) in the history of Palestine.

⁹⁴ Eddy, W. 1954., F. D. R. Meets Ibn Saud. American Friends of the Middle East, New York, p. 36, Quoted from Hirst, 2015.

⁹⁵ Lapierre, D. 1972, Collins Larry, O Jerusalem Simon and Schuster, New York, p. 272, Quoted from Hirst, 2015.

of the 1.300.000 Arabs living in Palestine in those years were ousted from their homes. During this period, nearly 1 million acres of the Palestinian land was confiscated.⁹⁶

With the purpose of protecting the new Israeli state they had founded, the Zionists took precautions along the border in order to prevent the Palestinians forced out of their lands from coming back on the one hand and also made great efforts to encourage the Jews in Europe, US, Iraq and Egypt to immigrate to their homeland in order to increase the Jewish population of the country on the other hand. They conducted assassination and bombings in Jewish settlements under the disguise of anti-Semitism particularly in Iraq and Egypt so as to accelerate the transfer of the Jews there to Palestine.⁹⁷

Emerging victorious out of the Six-Day Wars with Arabs in 1967 and expanding to the Golan Heights on the one hand and the Sina Peninsula on the other hand, the Zionists targeted to capture all of Jerusalem. All the estates and records belonging to the municipality of Jerusalem were captured by Zionists, and all the government offices were taken over by the Israeli government. Meanwhile, the economy of Jerusalem became dominated by Jews, Arab banks were closed down, and their assets were seized, Israeli taxation system was imposed, Israeli currency started to become valid, sales of the goods produced in West Sharia in Jerusalem were prohibited and Jerusalem got completely into the hands of Jewish tradesmen. Yet, in terms of land ownership, a land of 5.000 acres, corresponding only to 18%, was owned by Jews. Therefore, Israel officially annexed Jerusalem with the war of October 1973 and set up 42 Jewish settlements.⁹⁸

All these developments led to the birth of Palestinian resistance organization, more comprehensive than Izzettin Qassam, and Yaser Arafat and his comrades became organized in the form of guerrilla tactics, forming the core of el Fetih by 1959. This core continued to function within their Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in line with the Egyptian leader Jamal Abdunnasır in 1965. These organizations became united so as to prevent Zionist invaders from maintaining their rule in holy Arab land, inspired in their actions by the Algerian Movement for Liberation, which resisted against the French

⁹⁶ Ciryis, S. 1968, The Arabs in Israel, Filistin Arařtırmaları Enstitüsü, Beyrut, p. 4, Quoted from Hirst,2015.

⁹⁷ Berger, E. Who Knows Better Must Say So, Filistin Arařtırmaları Enstitüsü. Beyrut, p.34, Quoted from Hirst, 2015.

⁹⁸ Katip, R. 1971, The Judaization of Jerusalem Amman, p. 13, Quoted from Hirst, 2015.

colonization. Causing loss of life in the guerrilla wars they were involved in, these movements became well-known to Arabs and also succeeded in making the Palestinian resistance known to the whole world.

The mission of el Fetih would be the establishment of the democratic state of Palestine. In other words, although it didn't accept a Zionist fait accompli in itself, el Fetih preferred to agree to the Jewish existence in Palestine and set out for the Palestine of the future with an image in which Christians, Muslims and Jews worshipped side by side and they would enjoy equal rights and peace and in which a progressive and democratic state would be established, with no sectarian discrimination.

In this way, the leader of PLO, Yasser Arafat, earned the Palestinian cause legitimacy in the UN with his efforts. In a speech he delivered in the general Assembly of UN in 1974, he stated that " I came here with an olive branch in one hand and with the gun of an independence warrior in the other" and culminated it with these words " don't permit the branch of the olive to drop".⁹⁹ Yet such calls brought about no change in the attitude of Israel.

The attitude of Israel towards calls for peace caused the actions of objectors, who advocated revolution till victory and constant struggle, to accelerate. Therefore, one of the components of Palestinian Liberation Organization, Palestinian People's Liberation Front (PPLF) was disturbed by this compromising attitude of el Fetih and completely rejected the Zionist presence in Palestine. PPLF managed to keep the Palestinian cause on the world agenda through suicidal acts in Palestine and by kidnapping activities in Berlin. While these developments made PLO, led by Arafat, legitimate as the autonomous Palestinian state, the other fighting organizations were classified as terrorist organizations. From the perspective of Israel, el Fetih is in no way different from the other organizations in that it's an obstacle ahead of Israeli expansionist policies.¹⁰⁰

One of the historic developments in terms of Arab Israeli clashes in the 1980s is the Camp David agreement, which Israel signed with Egypt (1978). Although he helped the Israeli

⁹⁹ Portrait: Yasser Arafat 10.12.2014. Retrieved May 19, 2016, from <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/portre/portre-yaser-arafat>

¹⁰⁰ Doyran, E. 2008, Bir Direniş Hareketi Olarak Hamas, [Hamas as a Resistance Movement], İstanbul: Elips Yayıncılık. p. 129-131.

expansionist policies to become legitimate, the Egyptian president, Anwar Sadat, who put signature on the agreement with Israel at the cost of drawing reaction from all Arab countries, incorporated his country into the countries of the global system. The autonomy which was envisioned with this agreement for the Palestinian state didn't stand for the right of sovereignty. Israel, which partly retreated from the Sina Peninsula following this agreement, passed the law through the parliament that they claimed Jerusalem as the only and undivided capital. On the other hand, it felt free to attack on West Sheria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Golan Heights.

From then on, in the Eastern Front, Israel envisioned Lebanon to be divided into five regional local states, which would be an example to the Arab world in the long run. Again in the Eastern Front, the target of Israel was the partition of Syria and then of Iraq, over which ethnic and religious minorities would be ruling, following the footsteps of Lebanon. The short-term target was to weaken these states militarily. Syria would be divided into several states on the basis of ethnicity and sects. As a result of this division, a Sunni state was to be established alongside Shi'ite-Alaouite state. Including those on the Golan Heights, the Druzes would establish a separate state in Northern Lebanon. Also Iraq was a candidate State to fit the targets of Israel, as it would be divided and internal conflicts would be prevailing there, though it is an oil-rich country. Such conflicts in and between Arab states would be to the interests of Israel in the short run, and the partition of Iraq as well as of Syria and Lebanon would accelerate Israel on its way to reaching the great target. Three or more states would be established around three major cities of Iraq, such as Basra, Bagdad and Musul; the Shi'ite region in the south would be separated from the Sunni region in the north, the majority of which are Kurdish. In short, the whole Arab peninsula was naturally a candidate for disintegration in accordance with the perspective of Israel in the 1980s, when it occupied Lebanon.¹⁰¹

In the same years, during the Israeli occupation, Israeli Secretary of Defense, Ariel Sharon, appeared on the world agenda with the slaughter he organized along with a group of Falangists¹⁰² in Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon in 16 September 1982. When a group of members of Israeli Parliament visited South Lebanon, one of the Falangist

¹⁰¹ Hirst, 2015, p. 590.

¹⁰² Name that given to pro-Israel extremist Christian militias in Beirut.

militants stated that “a dead Palestinian is dirtiness; the death of all Palestinians is the solution.” For this reason, the first Falangist group of 150 militants easily passed through the Israeli checkpoint, went into the Shatila camp and immediately embarked on massacre with firearms, axes and knives. They opened fire on everything that was moving in the narrow streets of the camp, broke into the homes and killed those who were in their homes to have dinner or to watch television. Some were even killed while asleep. Bulldozers were brought along to bury the victims, the houses which Israeli fighter planes failed to destroy were brought down, and it was calculated that all the Palestinians would flee from the terrorized surroundings because they had no place to live in.¹⁰³ All these events took place under the supervision of Israeli officers and commanders, and Israeli commanders ordered their soldiers not to intervene in the situation. Israeli soldiers, keeping the checkpoints at the camp under control, prevented the refugees from getting out of the camp, and the barrels of tanks were pointed to a group of 500 people who were approaching with a white flag in their hands, wanting to say that everybody was slaughtered. Meanwhile, a new Falangist group, composed of 200 militants, set out for Shatila. As soon as they got to the camp, they slaughtered a group of children and women and killed everybody in the house that first came on their way, pulling down the house with bulldozers. The eye-witnesses agree that the operation was planned very well and carried out cold-bloodedly. The death toll was 3000 or over.¹⁰⁴

Although Israel sometimes fell into dire straits economically during these periods, when expansionist policies continued uninterruptedly, it managed to get out of these dire straits with the financial aid of US. Although Israel sometimes fell into dire straits economically during these periods, when expansionist policies continued uninterruptedly, it managed to get out of these dire straits with the financial aid of US. The regular financial aid of 250 million dollars before the war in 1967, ranking on the top with the highest share of foreign aid it received from US, first rose to 1.5 billion dollars and then to 2.5 billion dollars.¹⁰⁵ What has enabled Israel to maintain their standard of living, its wars, its occupations and harsh obstinacy is the financial aid from the world notably from US. The support Israel received from US. is provided by the Jewish lobby in US. An organized form of the influence of Israel on Washington, the Jewish lobby is known to be the strongest ethnic

¹⁰³ Hirst, 2015, p. 614.

¹⁰⁴ Hirst, 2015, p. 615-616.

¹⁰⁵ Hirst, 2015, p. 641.

group of interest to have emerged in the American history. Because of the influence of this lobby, even if a Secretary of Foreign Affairs who doesn't think favourably about Israel is appointed to this post, he or she will have to overcome the bureaucratic relationship between Israel and US.¹⁰⁶

The other pedestals of institutional aid Israel receives from US are the Congress, the government and the media. The Congress members in US work under the influence of the Jewish lobby, and the Congress members who give speeches stating that the Jews have the right to expand in the homeland of Israel with no limits and that Arabs cannot be trusted in any way are rewarded by this lobby. Accordingly, it literally seems to be forbidden to make criticism about Israel even in private conversations within the Congress because such behaviour is considered incompatible with patriotism. The aids are provided at an increasing rate by means of the Congress. It is also because of this lobby that the American Administration shapes its policies of the Middle East in accordance with the interests of Israel. The main item on US agenda, which cannot get out of the influence of the lobby and the Congress, is to generate policies against Hezbollah, which is described as an aggressive element in the Middle East which launches attacks on Israel from Iran and Lebanon. The American media can hardly mention the Jewish lobby as this lobby is too important to talk about. International channels particularly CNN and MEMRI try to give a rational explanation for the extremities of Israel in the Middle East and automatically label those who attempt to criticize Israel lobby anti-Semitists, fascists, Nazis or militants.¹⁰⁷

In such a cyclical and political environment, starting with 1980s, armed resistance movements started to be set up under the common title of “Islamic resistance movements” independent from PLO and el Fetih. The best-known of them are HAMAS, which is based in Palestine and Hezbollah, which is organized in Lebanon. The reasons for the proliferation of such sort of organizations are natural reactions of the local people to long-standing social and economic difficulties emerging out of the Israeli attempts at occupying the region and to the inconsistent and fruitless actions of PLO in its relations with Israel. The best-known of these organizations is HAMAS; its patrons are Egypt-centered Ithvan-i Muslimin movement, and such countries as Turkey and Qatar, which support the resistance

¹⁰⁶ Findley, P. 1993, *Deliberate Deceptions: Facing the Facts about the US-Israeli Relationship*. New York: Laure Hill Books, p. 97-98.

¹⁰⁷ Hirst, 2015, p. 83

in Palestine and Iran. The political patrons of Hezbollah are Iran and Syria. The Opinion leader of these organizations was the famous Lebanese religious scholar Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fadlullah, and among their political leaders were Sheikh Ahmad Yasin, Abdulaziz Rantisi, Abbas al-Musawi and Hasan Nasrallah. Also here, we should mention Ayatollah Khomeini, who gave ideological and political support to this organization in the process of its establishment.

Regarded as one of the opinion leaders of the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance movements, Ayatollah Fadlullah describes the Islamic resistance movement which arose independently from the other movements in Palestine and Lebanon in 1980 as combative movements that take its ideological basis from Islam. Fadlullah argues that it is necessary to object to the philosophy which desires to act within a sectarian mentality on the basis of a certain group in order to create a common Islamic political infrastructure against Israeli invasion. He also states that the main issue in this struggle for the resistance fighters is to act not within the idea of a group or fraction but with a consciousness of community. In his speeches and sermons, he underlines the fact that dominant powers such as Israel and US seek to arouse hatred, discrimination and hostility between Muslims and to separate them from each other through various tools. To Fadlullah, because a generation afraid of all the meanings of resistance is growing up, Israel occupied their lands easily. Fadlullah notes that resistance should be demonstrated for human beings, rather than for a land and the Homeland, since a land or homeland in which the human being is servile, vile or slave would be of no importance. According to Fadlullah, resistance enables a person to act in a spirit of alertness that fills his or her existence and it should be consolidated not with empty slogans that numb the person himself and thus ruin the person but with practical realities.¹⁰⁸

Inviting the new generations to refuse to believe in Islam without relying on scholarly and logical evidence, Ayatollah Fadlullah emphasizes that Islam doesn't leave the human beings in masjids in a frozen way and that resistance against oppression and tyranny is a binding duty in Islam, just like salaah and fasting. Fadlullah advises that a consciousness should prevail as regards the limited resources against Israel and against the colonialist powers, patrons of Israel, and that action should be taken in this direction. He therefore

¹⁰⁸ Fadlullah, M. H. 2006, İslami Direniş, [Islamic Resistance], İstanbul: Çıra Yayınları, p. 11-33.

advises that resistance fighters should stand firmly on their feet all the time during this fight. Stressing that oppression, colonialism and Zionism are evil, Fadlullah remarks that saying Allahuakber in salaah is itself an action in life and also stresses that it is an action which makes all evils worthless and despicable. Stating that a relationship with Israel is a forbidden act, just like drinking alcohol, prostitution and theft, Fadlullah gives a fatwa, stating that suicidal actions are permissible in the armed struggle with Israel and doesn't consider it proper to act in disguise, because it's necessary not to accept the existence of Israel, which has forced the Palestinian people out of their homeland and helped others settle there, since the religion of Islam doesn't deem this occupation legitimate. Defending that resistance should be sustained both with arms and with ideas, Fadlullah expresses that the resistance activities of the Christian groups in this homeland contain Islamic values in their core and therefore should be evaluated with an Islamic framework. He also advises that religious, racial or sectarian discrimination should definitely be avoided. According to Fadlullah, such a consciousness stemming from the spirit of resistance started to bear fruit from the year 1982 and people began to understand that it was necessary to resist to a common enemy collectively.¹⁰⁹

The political movements, apart from el Fetih and PLO, that emerged in Palestine and Lebanon with the mentality of Islamic resistance against Israeli occupation in 1980s embarked on an uprising on the one hand and entered into a direct front war with Israel on the other hand. The uprising, which started in 1987 and recurred in the 2000s, is basically a war of Palestinians for liberation and this war was fought for 22% of the land, all of which historically belongs to them. However much the radically objecting fractions, such as HAMAS and Islamic Jihad, which participated in the uprising, desired to turn the issue into a struggle for existence, such as Algerian independence war, the groups that made up the main body of the uprising demonstrated an attitude towards waging the war for 22% of the land.¹¹⁰ Also these groups didn't recognize the talks which the leader of PLO, Yaser Arafat, made with Israel in 1993 and their results. The moment of resistance that managed to militarily prevented the expansionist policies of Israel from spreading towards the South

¹⁰⁹ Fadlullah, 2006, p. 33-64.

¹¹⁰ Hirst, 2015, p. 47-48.

was Hezbollah, which forced Israel to retreat from South Lebanon on 25 May 2000¹¹¹ and nullified the Israeli attempts to occupy Lebanon again with July 2006 wars.

In summary, the Palestinian-Israeli issue is composed of a series of problems arising out of a colonization and expansion project in essence. At the heart of this issue lies the process of depriving the people of their homeland, which dates back to the years of English mandate and which has been continuing since the establishment of Israel,¹¹² which conducted ground and air operations towards the Palestinian civilians in Gaza in July 2014. Israel showed the presence of HAMAS as a ground for its operations, killed more than 2,100 Palestinians, 530 children and 302 women,¹¹³ and left more than 10,000 Palestinians injured or wounded. These operations left Palestinians with no other option but to be wiped out or resist. Despite their political legitimacy, which both HAMAS and Hezbollah gained with the support of the people of the region, the facts that Israel classified these organizations in the category of terrorist organizations and that it continued its attacks in a disproportionate way indicate that this problem will prevail uninterruptedly. The tendency of the West to ignore the massacre Israel put into effect in Palestine while making assertive universal statements as regards human rights and democracy can only be explained through hypocrisy or by the fact that it displays everlasting biased behaviour towards Muslim Eastern communities.

2.5. Conclusion

In political theory, resistance has existed in any kind of administrative mentality and has the potential to contain the answers to the question words; “what?”, “when?”, “where?”, “how?”, “why?” and “who?” However, in a society or on the international arena, resistance emerges in the form of using such methods as actions through armed, unarmed, cultural, ideological or passive ways, demonstrations, statements, strikes, uprisings, riots and revolution against the tyrannical oppression, dictatorship, occupation or colonialist policies of the upper classes towards the lower classes- the rulers vs. the ruled, the oppressors vs. the oppressed. Resistance movements have the potential to yield positive or negative

¹¹¹ In Lebanon, this date is celebrated as the Day of Resistance and Freedom in memory of Israel's removal from Lebanon.

¹¹² Doyran, 2008, p. 130.

¹¹³ El-Jazeera Chronology: 1915 to the present day: Palestine. Retrieved May 15, 2016, from <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/kronoloji/kronoloji-1915ten-gunumuze-filistin>

results. While it becomes possible to make a new start and to distribute justice evenly with the fruition of the resistance, nothing radical changes from the previous situation if the resistance doesn't achieve success.

In today's world, Western societies have identified resistance as a right of their citizens with the heritage they received from their history, starting with the French Revolution, and they based it on a democratic grounding. However, in a global age, the collapse of the empires in the Middle East as a result of attacks from the West has caused a mentality of resistance which exists in Western societies to emerge in the Eastern societies, which are better known for their culture of obedience. In an age when the West has turned into an imperialist power, economic, technological and cultural attacks from the West on the Eastern communities and exploiting their resources make these communities feel unjustly treated and uneasy. For this reason, movements of resistance emerged in such countries as Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Bahrain, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen both in the previous and in the present century, and some of these movements ended up in a revolution. On the other hand, the occupation of the Palestinian land by Israel under the custody of the West, the slaughter of thousands of people and depriving millions of people of their homeland have made resistance into the main item on the agenda. The mentality of resistance turns into a systematic form day by day as a consequence of the on-going attacks of the West on the East with colonialist and imperialist desires. Therefore, it is of importance to analyse, question and update the mentality of resistance once more, which is already present in their roots because the Middle East has become a victim of the attacks of the West in one way or another and because this has become an item on the agenda of the world.

CHAPTER 3

IRAN ISLAMIC REVOLUTION AS AN ISLAMIC MOVEMENT OF RESISTANCE

The 1979 Iran Islamic revolution has an important place among the resistance movements in the 20th century. Certain authors describe this revolution as the first great movement of uprising against global systems in an age in which no country could act independently either from the capitalist West or from the Socialist East Bloc countries.¹¹⁴ The Islamic revolution has drawn the attention of the academics and strategists asking how people could organize a revolution, the foundations of which are laid down by independence and rejection of all foreign hegemony, without relying on any foreign power and then manage to establish a government. Although more than 37 years has passed since the revolution achieved success, the answer to this question is still investigated by scientific and political circles. Foremost among the reasons that made this revolution successful come the fact that the resistance culture already existing in the roots of the society was upgraded and revealed. The Iranian society has obtained the culture of resistance it has from the main resources of the religion of Islam, that is, Qur'an and the life of Muhammad the prophet, who is considered the last prophet according to Islam. Besides, following the death of Muhammad the prophet, the sect of Shi'ite, which is one of the interpretations of Islam that holds the principles of objection, liberty and justice in the forefront, has become, under a leader, one of the most important elements to determine the resistance politics in Iran. In this section of study, it will be attempted to deal, within the framework of Islamic

¹¹⁴ Afary, J. & Anderson, K. B. 2015, Foucault ve İran Devrimi, [Foucault and Iran Revolution], İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniv. Yayınevi, p. 128.

resistance movement against Western imperialism in the Middle East, with the Islamic revolution achieved by Iranian people who stood up against the conception of colonialist modernity which the Iranian Shah Regime, one of the tools of the imperialist countries, struggled to impose on his country. It will be also presented a detailed analysis of the causes and effects of this revolution.

3.1. The Foundations of Resistance in Iranian Politics

The foundations of the concept of resistance, which is commonly used on the political agenda of Iran today and which directs Iranian politics, correspond to the political situation it had summarized above shortly under the title of “the foundations of the concept of resistance in politics in the Middle East.” In this context, the meanings loaded onto resistances date far back to the practices of resistance inspired by Qur’an of Muhammad the prophet. However, a historically turning point came up in terms of the Shi’ite Caferi beliefs of Islam, which Iran today accepts as its official sect, when Ali the fourth caliph, following the death of Muhammad, lost the struggle with Muaviye I for power, and afterwards the Umayyads turned the religion of Islam from caliphate to sultanate in the administrative sense. Shi’ism, which is defined in literature as the adherence to Ali, hasn’t diverged from the revolutionary characteristic of the religion of Islam although the Umayyads dictated their own sultanate in line with the conception of fatalism they distorted. In this way, the Shi’ites have chosen to stay in an opposing position, constantly questioning the activities of the administration, holding the principles of Ali the caliph regarding imamate and justice within administration in the foreground.

In this respect, the killing of her son in Hussein, the son of Ali and the grandson of Muhammad the prophet during the reign of Yezid, the son of the Umayyad sovereign, Muaviye I, took this historic turning point to a peak from the perspective of the Shi’ites. The killing of Hussein by those around the sultanate of the period led in Shi’ites to the perception that their own son was killed¹¹⁵ and this perception¹¹⁶ caused them to stand up against the rulers of the period, rather than obey them. Because of the fact that not the first

¹¹⁵ At the same time with Hussein, Muhammad and Hz. Ali have grandchild / son relation because of the connection of blood ties.

¹¹⁶ For the Imam Hussein was bloodthirstily murdered. They are equivalent to this event the murder of the Israelites to their own prophets.

father (Muhammad the prophet) but the first son (Hussein) was killed at a younger age, this event caused the religion to remain as the new religion of young revolutionaries who stood up against the patriarchal order.¹¹⁷ In political terms, this incident means the internalization of a constantly revolutionary uprising and of the consciousness of resistance for the Shi'ites. Accordingly, it's possible to describe Shi'ism as a mentality of constant objection to any domination, uprising, resistance and protest.

Shi'ites regarded the ideas of resistance and uprising against oppression as a complementary element of the ethical structure of the universe after the events in which Ali was killed in Kufe and Hussein was killed in Kerbela, following the death of Muhammad the prophet. According to Shi'ites, the first period Umayyads completely ignored the message of Muhammad the prophet in favor of the poor, the depressed, the weak and the abandoned, pursued sovereignty by following racist policies in moral bankruptcy, political oppression, the bias of tribalism and slaughtered the leaders of Islam who had reminded them of justice. The friend of Prophet Muhammad Abu Zerr Al-Gıfari, who was an advocate of imamate and social justice, was exiled to the Rebeze desert by the Caliph of the period and subjected to death.¹¹⁸ Shi'ites, who attributed the characteristic of a charismatic leadership to the prophet hood of Muhammad, conveyed this characteristic through imams down the history and in this way thought that the quest for justice would be completed. Nevertheless, Shi'ites feel that they are deprived of getting into the idea of gaining an absolute victory as a result of the resistance activities that are demonstrated against authorities, because they think that they didn't take proper care in order to protect their own Imam Hussein in the events leading to the killing of Hussein and thus always feel guilty. For this reason, the perception that they couldn't prevent their son from being slaughtered has always been a hindrance to the idea of gaining a victory. Because of this, we cannot exactly talk about the satisfaction of the Shi'ites. The Shi'ite asks the rulers who the successor of the prophet is and through which authority they have come to power. He or she believes that all the Shi'ite imams, except for the twelfth imam, were martyred and martyrdom has become structural for Shi'ite bravery. In the eyes of Shi'ites, the real hero is the dead hero. This is the reason why they attribute the concepts of innocence and subjection to oppression to their imams. In short, Shi'ites have to fight, for this is an order

¹¹⁷ Dabashi, H, 2015, *Şiizm-Bir Protesto Dini-*, [Shi'ism: A Religion of Protest], İstanbul: Yarın Yayınları, p. 9-39.

¹¹⁸ Şeriati, A. 1987, *Ebuzer El Gıfari*, [Abu Zerr Al-Gıfari], İstanbul: Tebliğ Yayınları, p. 180-183.

from their slaughtered fathers, Ali the caliph and the other imams. They cannot achieve victory, for they killed their own child, Hussein.¹¹⁹

3.1.1. To whom is Resistance Shown?

It's possible to say that Iranian revolutionary ideology defines the boundaries of the philosophy of resistance in Iranian politics. The ideas and lives of such men of religion as Ayatollah Khomeini, Ayatollah Murtaza Mutahhari, Ayatollah Muhammad H. Behešti and Ayatollah Mahmut Talagani and such intellectuals as Ali Sheriati and Mustafa Chamran played an important role in the formation of the revolutionary ideology in Iran. For example, in the Revolutionary perspective of Ali Sheriati, it is necessary to search for the origins of the issue of resistance in the course of the human history. Ali Sheriati takes the issue of resistance back to the dispute between the children of Adam, considered the first human being, Abel and Cain, and he puts the story of Abel and Cain, which is mentioned in Qur'an, in the foundation of his philosophy. Ali Sheriati regards Abel and Cain not only as the two sons of Adam and the dispute between them as a dispute of two brothers but also as the name of the first class which would fight all the time throughout history. According to Ali Sheriati, the history of mankind starts with the fight between the two human beings, the sons of Adam and with one killing the other as a result of this fight. Therefore, history is the history of the contradiction and dialectics which this fight created. To understand the history of humanity is possible through tracing this contradiction because the fight between Abel and Cain is a concrete fight. The fight between Abel and Cain is an indicator of the dialectics which is a law of history and the fight of the two fronts, two ways of thinking. When Adam is mentioned, the purpose is the human being, the species of human being in general. When we mention the history of human beings, the purpose is Abel and Cain. Abel is the symbol of the man in the period in which members of the society are indulged in material blessings, characterized by their participation in the resources of production on the whole- husbandry, whereas Cain is the man of class wars, deprivation, utilization, exploitation and enslavement of people, domination, condemnation, the beginning of cruelty, spiritual and religious deviation, monopolization and private property. Consequently, Ali Sheriati considers Abel and Cain the beginning of

¹¹⁹ Şeriati, 1987, p. 107-109.

human history and sees the struggle of all prophets and of the oppressed as activities of resistance against oppression.¹²⁰

Quoting the statement attributed to Muhammad that “after me, you will fight with Nakisin (the Cemel Community), Kasitin (the followers of Muaviye) and Marikin (externalists)”,¹²¹ Ali Sheriati tries to explain the sections of the community to be resisted against. According to Ali Sheriati, the community identified as Kasitin represents what is untrue in face of what is true and just either openly or secretly, and this section of the community should be resisted against because they would spread oppression and malice as in pre-Islamic period in order to restore the previous system of government if they take hold of the judgment and the sultanate. This section longs for the customs of ignorance which existed before Islam. Therefore, just as Muhammad resisted to Abu Sufiyan, Ali the fourth Caliph resisted to Muaviye. While Muhammad and Ali represented what was just and right, Abu Sufiyan and his son represented what was unjust and untrue. Although Abu Sufiyan eventually accepted Islam and his son Muaviye claim that he was subject to the deeds and remarks of Muhammad, this doesn't change the situation because Kasitin continues old hostilities in the holiest setting (under the disguise of a friend and for the sake of defending the highest values. Thus, “kasit” is an opponent of Islam. If he becomes an idol worshipper, he fights with Muhammad under the flag of Abu Sufiyan in Bedr. If he becomes a Muslim, he fights with Ali under the flag of Muaviye in Siffin. Infidelity or Islam hasn't caused a change in the composition of their mentality because this section is subject to the religion of attributing a partner to Allah as they want the system of slavery to continue, object to the liberation of humans and desire an administration in line with their own ambitions although they seem to be under the cover of a Muslim.¹²² It is easy to fight with attributing a partner to Allah when the religion is self-evident, but it's rather difficult to fight with the disguised form of this attributing a partner to Allah in an environment in which the monotheist religion is present. In the period of Ali the Caliph, the religion of attributing a partner to Allah was concealed, and therefore resistance of Ali resulted in a defeat.¹²³ Moreover, one end of this defeat extended up to the beheading of Hussein by the

¹²⁰ Şeriati, A. 2006, İslam Bilim I-II , [Islam Science], İstanbul: Nehir Yayınları, p. 49-57.

¹²¹ Ebu Eyyub'el-Ensari: related “*The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) ordered Ali Bin-i Ebi Talib to fight the Nakisin, Kasitin and Marikin!*” (Transmitted from many sources, Fedailül-Hamse: 2/358-363) Mektubat, Nehc-ul Belaga Hutbe No:16, 26 Tebersi, A'glamu'l Vera bi A'glamu'l Huda, p. 33.

¹²² Şeriati, A. 2012, Ali, [Ali], Ankara: Fecr Yayınevi, p. 264.

¹²³ Şeriati, A. 2005, Dine Karşı Din, [Religion vs. Religion], İstanbul: İşaretYayıncılık, p. 32.

son of Muaviye in the Kərbela occurrence.¹²⁴ According to Sheriati, the friends who are called Nakisin and who stab their allies on their backs due to personal reasons or personal matters are also in the opposite camp. This section is the section that causes disputes despite the threat of danger of Kasitin, who focus on personal matters that prepare the grounding suitable for the enemy and who eliminate the strongest ideological and social figures of the justice front. Soon after the death of Muhammad, those who declared war against Ali in the Cemel occurrence can be given as an example to this section.¹²⁵ Known in history as the externalists, those in the Marikin front don't have the ability of diagnosis, discernment, reason, evaluation of issues, distinguishing between what's real and what's untrue. For this reason, these people should be resisted against. The people in the section are sincere, bold, in love with the religion, self-sacrificing but lacking in consciousness.¹²⁶

With the Iranian revolutionary ideology taking over the government after the Revolution achieved in 1979, the definition of resistance based on the Islamic jurisprudence and to whom will be resisted has become the official ideology in Iran. According to Caferi sect, which the Iranian Constitution accepts as the official sect, the concept of resistance corresponds to the Jihad for defense. According to Ayatollah Mutahhari, what is essential in the Jihad for defense is to defend life, chastity, land and liberty individually or collectively. Yet this defense is not only limited to the sacred concepts of a particular nation. It's also legitimate to indulge in a war for another nation elsewhere if the liberty of that nation is in danger. The case being so, it wouldn't be right to restrict the circle of defense to the trespassing of individual or national rights.¹²⁷ If these rights are more related to the humans' sacred values and liberty and they are in danger, it is a holy deed to prevent them, and Qu'ran considers this defense holy.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Şehidi, S. C. 1991, Hüseyin'in Kıyamı, [Hussein's Insurgency], İstanbul: Objektif Yayınları, p. 210.

¹²⁵ Şeriati, 2012, p. 270.

¹²⁶ Şeriati, 2012, p. 314.

¹²⁷ Mutahhari, M. 2016, İslam'da Cihad ve İnanç Özgürlüğü, [Jihad and Faith Freedom in Islam], İstanbul: Önsöz Yayıncılık, p. 41-42.

¹²⁸ And what is, [the matter] with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah and , [for] the oppressed among men, women, and children who say, "Our Lord, take us out of this city of oppressive people and appoint for us from Yourself a protector and appoint for us from Yourself a helper?" Surah Nisa, [4:75] - Al-Qur'an al-Kareem

In this regard, to whom will be resisted has been listed in items in the Iranian Constitution accepted after the Islamic revolution in December 1979. The second article of the Constitution of Iran is as follows:

“The Islamic Republic is an order which refuses to oppress or be oppressed in any way, to establish domination with force, to be subdued into any domination and which regards this as a principle of belief”. The Third Article of the Constitution declares that “the state has a range of responsibilities in order to reach the targeted objectives. Several of these responsibilities are to prevent attempts of foreigners to colonize and influence by completely eradicating exploitation, to eliminate the spirit of dictatorship, arbitrary administration and monopolization, adherence to the commitments of brotherhood with all Muslims and to Islamic boundaries and to build on the foundations of protecting all the oppressed in the world and to mobilize all the resources for these points to come true.¹²⁹ It is understood from this article that those who will be resisted against are generalized as those who exercise oppression, those who establish domination with force, those who attempt at exploitation and influence and those who act in a dictatorial and monopolist way.

3.1.2. Types of Resistance

As long as Shia culture exists, resistance doesn't have any definite time. Shia culture is the culture of objection. As long as cruelty and injustice exist, it is necessary to stand in a resistance position. But timing is arranged by Ahl al-Bayt Imams in case of common resistance because this state necessitates political attitude. For example, Prophet Muhammad didn't take up arms while he was resisting against Makah Polytheists by giving political conscious to Makah people for 13 years, but he didn't abstain from fighting in the battlefield during the Medina Islamic Government. Imam Hassan, son of Caliph Ali, chose inactive resistance methods with groups fighting for the elimination of justice because of lack of political and martial power while Caliph Ali resisted against the groups fighting for the elimination of justice and caliphate, betrayers and unconscious zealots in the battlefield. The other son of Caliph Ali, Imam Hussein, wanted to give a different

¹²⁹ İran İslam Cumhuriyeti Anayasası, [Islamic Republic of Iran Constitution], 1980, Translated by Hüseyin Hatemi, İstanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, Retrieved June 06, 2016, from <http://www.imam-khomeini.com/web1/turkish/showitem.aspx?cid=1736&h=22&f=23&pid=2048>

message to the Islamic history by displaying an armed resistance against the groups fighting for the elimination of justice and caliphate in the Karbala desert. Although Zayn-Al Abidin, the son of Imam Hussein, wasn't involved in a resistance movement because of his health problems, one of his loyal fans, Muhtar As-Sakafi, confirmed armed resistance in Kufe so that he could take revenge of Imam Hussein in Karbala. According to some authors, these resistance activities of Muhtar As-Sakafi are accepted as the beginning of the first resistance movements in Shia's history.¹³⁰

The period of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, (702-765) in which Ja'far al-Sadiq is one of the most famous Imams in Imamiye Shia, corresponds to early periods of Abbasi governments and freedom of thought was very common unlike what it was in the I Muaviye term. For this reason, Ja'far al-Sadiq didn't aim to change the government and caliphate authority though he didn't any good relations caliphs of that term. But failures, faults and mistakes of caliphs was announced to the world via Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq. In addition to this, though Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq represents the attitude of Ahl al-Bayt regarding resistance in theory, it is known in practice that his resistance embodied an ideological movement and revolution because Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq filled the gaps in scholarly terms in Islamic lands, expanding with conquests and he also struggled with the information pollution. In this sense, he made jurisprudence regarding the Islamic law, akaid, kalam, mysticism and philosophy. He refuted the ideas of externals and profanes, gave lectures to famous scholars, such as Abu Hanife and al-Sha'afi.¹³¹

Another famous Imam, Imam Reza (770-825), kept his resistance in the palace of Abbasid Caliph Al-Ma'mun in Khorasan. Caliph Al-Ma'mun, who chose Imam Reza as crown prince so that he could build up his potency by taking advantage of Reza's dignity in the eye of the people, couldn't achieve his aim when he encountered the Imam's inactive resistance and made an attempt on his life by the way of intoxicating because, according to Imam Reza, Caliphate is a right of Ahl al-Bayt and he himself is the inheritor of the last Prophet Muhammad. The reason why Imam Reza didn't choose armed resistance just like Imam Hussein resulted from the fact that he didn't want unnecessary conflict and dispute among believers because of the fact that the supporters were not mature and strong enough

¹³⁰ Fıġlalı, E. R. 1984, İmamiyye Şiası, [The Shia of Imamiyya], Ankara: Selçuk Yayınları, 1984, p. 129-141.

¹³¹ Mutahhari, M. 2007, Ehl-i Beyt İmamlarının Siyasi Tutumları, [The Politic Attitudes of Ahl al-Bayt Imams], İstanbul: Kevser Yayıncılık, p. 119-128.

to take up armed resistance.¹³² All these resistance symbols in Shia history reinforce the conclusions that resistance is fardh provision of Islam, a binding duty, and that the form and timing were in the will of Imams of that period.

3.1.3. Resistance and the Roots of Iran Islamic Revolution

The establishment of Iranian Revolution and Islamic Republican Regime (1979) came true as a result of a chain of events beginning after the majority of Iranian people started to come under the effect of Shia school of thought in 16th century. The most important feature of the Islamic revolution to distinguish it from other revolutionary uprisings of the 20th century is its deep roots related to the resistance culture which we tried to sum up above. For instance, while Russian and Chinese revolutions are radically refusing past albeit theoretical, the Islamic revolution is characterized by following the Islamic heritage left from Iran history and showing this heritage at the highest level.¹³³

In this sense, firstly, it is necessary to mention that Safavids took hold of power of the state in the name of Imami Shi'ism¹³⁴ in the Shi'ite revolutionary history in the Iranian lands for the first time (1501). Thus, the Shi'ite Ulama started to gain dominance on the public and the order of government for the first time.¹³⁵ However, it cannot be said that this state contributed to Iranian resistance culture and the revolution directly. That Shah Ismail, the first ruler of Safavids, had forced Iranian people to adopt the Shi'ite sect damaged Iranian resistance culture. The main reason for this was the Shi'ite Ulama in Iran during the accession of the Safavid dynasty to throne. Immediately afterwards, the inflow¹³⁶ of the Shi'ite Arabian Ulama from Bahrain, Al-Ahsa, Cebel-i Amil, located in South Syria, which are the traditional centres of Shi'ism, was enough to change the course of history. At first, these Ulama were loyal slaves of the Safavid state and obedient to the sultan, which was typical of Safavid Shia. This part of Ulama turned into a school of thought under the name of "Akhbariyye" in 1624. In this structure, reverends didn't have any claim for replacing the Imam. That Safavid dynasty had carried Shi'ism to its old status increased admirations.

¹³² Mutahhari, 2007

¹³³ Algar, H. 1988, İslam Devriminin Kökleri, [The Roots of Islamic Revolution], İstanbul: İşaret Yayıncılık, p. 17-18.

¹³⁴ Other common use: İthna ashara/twelve Imam Shi'ism

¹³⁵ Ahavi, Ş. 1990, İran'da Din ve Siyaset, [Religion and Politics in Iran] İstanbul: Yöneliş Yayınları, p. 31.

¹³⁶ Ahavi, 1990.

There was nobody except Prophet Muhammad and Twelve's to interpret Qur'an and Sunnah. There was no need for men of religion to state a free opinion on social events and legal issues, because holy texts were rather sufficient. To completely solve problems, the appearance of the 12th Hidden Imam should be waited for. The gate to jurisprudence was closed because the malignant people who could interpret Qur'an and Sunnah incorrectly might show up. Therefore, this school, which supported the Safavid Monarch, couldn't heavily move beyond being either guardians or dependents of the state.

Such attitudes of the Akhbari Ulama were strictly criticized by a revolutionary ideologist, Ali Shariati. As a matter of fact, according to Ali Shariati, people who tried to eliminate injustice and Imamet are not only composed of the obvious members of Polytheism and enemies of the Islamic state. To Shariati, it is necessary to resist against a person or groups trying to eliminate Imamet and the justice of the Caliph even if that person or those groups define themselves as supporters of Ali. These people are members of Kasitin knowingly or unknowingly. In accordance with the discourse of Shariati, "this group is not Ali's Shi'ites but Safavid Shi'ites". Shariati made a strong distinction between "Ali's Shi'ism" and Safevid Shi'ism". "Ali's Shi'ism represents the original Islam and is a movement of progress and revolution, with no discrimination between intellectuals and the people, in its progressive and dynamic phase. By turning Shi'ism into the religion of the state, the Safavids degraded it into an institution, transforming it into a means of political enslavement and keeping it from its original aim, the search for justice and sacred duties. The aberrant forms of worship were borrowed from Christianity in Safavid times, and the commemoration ceremonies of Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, turned into theatrical plays copied from the Christian mythology."¹³⁷

But over time, the legitimacy of monarchies started to be questioned by some Shi'ite scholars. In the meantime, some ideas showed up about the requirement for the interpreters of Islamic law (people who have free opinions) to solve possible inevitable disputes on the interpretation of Qur'an. On the insistence of Aga Muhammad Bakir Bihbihani for jurisprudence, this school which stipulated a wider role for interpreters and Ulama in

¹³⁷ Şeriati, A. 2011, *Ali Şiası Safevi Şiası*, [Red Shi'ism vs. Black Shi'ism], Ankara: Fecr Yayınları, p. 197-253.

society, named as “Usulilik”, emerged (1705-1803).¹³⁸ According to the Usuli school of thought, the dominance of the Imam is continuous, and interpreters of the Islamic law who maintain continuity are Sharia constructionists. Elderly men of religion, with their superior knowledge and capability of “deducing orders from rational evidence”, hold the key of the Ulama which leads to the right path. According to Shi’ite mentality, this subject is the most important provision of the Islamic belief after the principles of oneness of Allah and the belief in the prophecy of Muhammad (Wilayat).¹³⁹ So this school of thought firstly obtained its constitutional legitimacy against monarchy in 1906 and then carried out Iran Islamic Revolution by updating historical resistance culture in Iran. This school of thought first obtained its constitutional legitimacy against monarchy in 1906 and then realized the Iranian Islamic Revolution by updating the historical resistance culture in Iran. It is necessary here to remark that the Usuli School performs rehabilitation projects of this resistance without any salary from governments and free from governments so as to emphasize that Usuli School is a specific movement. And it can be said that they get their power from the donations by public, (humus)¹⁴⁰, support and respects from an important part of the public.

As for modern periods, although the world experienced the age of enlightenment in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries under the leadership of the West, we saw that the western world had overtly created a secular religious dispute in itself and popularised it against all the notions and beliefs (to Islam in Middle East) that were not in favor of them. In this period, positivist, secular and enlightened Western ideology interpreted Christianity in evangelical terms by severing God from mind (in other words, by replacing God with mind), thinking that it was for the benefit of humans and thus they started to establish such notions as individualism, rationalism, and nation state in place of justice, equality and mercy. In the establishment of this mentality, laypersons inserted violence into the centre of the religious experience and Western Christianity took possession of an aggressiveness, which never disappeared, as during the crusades.¹⁴¹ Due to this aggressiveness, such feeling as justice, equality and mercy, which naturally exist in man, were replaced by violence, a preoccupation with one’ self and greed for money. For this purpose, reason and

¹³⁸ Keddie, R. N, 2003, *Modern Iran Roots and Results of Revolution*, US: Yale University Press, p. 20.

¹³⁹ Ahavi, 1990, p. 37.

¹⁴⁰ See Humus System: is a system name which gives 1/5 of citizens’ incomes to religious scholars as a religious duty. It takes its legitimacy from the 41st Verse of Sura Enfal in Qur’an.

¹⁴¹ Armstrong, K. 2001, *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today’s World*, NY: Anchor B. p. 67.

scientific, which were the foundations of the new western philosophy, were turned into tools to make itself dominant on the environment, nature and others and to keep all these under control.

In this concept, Islamic world were passed through by British, French and Russian for beneficial and strategically regions with the efficiency of imperialism in the centre of world policy. France had come into Egypt in 1798, England had brought India under his control, and Russia had defeated Qajar dynasty time after time. In terms of civilisation categorically, Islam being named as other of West also occurred in this significant moment. In this period West featured itself as modern and secular unlike the cultures which qualified as traditional and religious. Thus Islam and Muslims had its back to the wall against imperialism. Islam and Muslims who were went on the defensive by imperial power and modernisation of Europa and had to be out of long continental conquests and had to face to fear of secularism.¹⁴²

At the end of this period, Iran started an adventure to follow a revolutionist way in accordance with resistance principals which were inherited itself from its history. In this concept Iran made effort to find new codes against cultural and physical attacks of West and started to establish resistance culture in the defense for West. Here in modern periods, according to Iran's revolutionist idea; resistance turned into a fact which explained a discussion about "inner person" and resulted from a dispute between Islam and West.¹⁴³ This understanding can be qualified as a rise of new civilisation understanding which is to be contrary to thesis of clash of civilizations written by Samuel Huntington. In this concept, resistance is a story what kind of travel Muslims set off to gain a new confidence and self-esteem, to arise a "solution" for the emotions happened as a result of being a victim of a destruction, to rediscover an "ego" which was not fell into contempt by being exposed to demonization and abasement, was not detracted from its history.¹⁴⁴

Therefore, resistance in Iran thought embodies to say "no" to this defective established order arising from western thoughts in world and an adventure of setting out again towards to search of essence of man in thought of Islam. In this sense resistance is not a

¹⁴² Dabashi, 2015, p. 261-264.

¹⁴³ Crooke, 2009, p. 21.

¹⁴⁴ Crooke, 2009, p. 22.

revolutionist violation, is a struggle at the heart of opinions and principles; sets assertive goals to change course of action of West, but not to eliminate Westerners by force of arms against modernity to that Iranian Islamists resisted or couldn't adopt.¹⁴⁵ From this point of view, we can say that the aim of the resistance consisted of placing again human who moves off his essence with the modern west thought and cannot dispose of commodification into the centre of society and insistence to make him into an obtained reference such as justice, equality, and respect.

At this point, when we approach towards the 20th century, we can show the foremost events, which forces Iranian people into resistance and revolution, to be the Shah Regime, insulting the public culture, incapable of fair distribution of income and Russian, American and British Imperialism which had good relations with the Shah Regimes, for Iranians were acquainted with the global assurances of Enlightening via barrels of the western imperialism like the rest of the world. The paradox which led to a modernisation dilemma in the 20th century Iran emerged in the form of being shaped as a nation state from outside. These events led to the birth of a partisan bourgeois class in Iran, a weaker working class and a peasantry. On the one hand, while the 20th century Western imperialism imposed a modernisation culture upon Iran, on the other hand, it didn't fail to exploit Iran's underground and aboveground treasures as well. This situation prompted Iranians to take part in some movements such as the Babi Movement in 19th century, the Constitutionalism Revolution in the early 20th century, the national liberty war led by Muhammad Musaddeq in the middle of 20th century and the Islamic Revolution¹⁴⁶ led by Ayatollah Khomeini at the end of 20th century.

In short, besides all these affairs in Iranian history, it can be said that the main reason which forced Iranians into the Revolution was the socio-economic problems of the people. In the 20th century, Iranian people achieved an important popular revolution by displaying resistance based on its traditions under the title of objection to socio-economic problems in life. The most important feature of the revolution was that it occurred as a result of its internal dynamics in line with the resistance culture coming from its history and without any foreign interference. Although the Liberalization movement led by Musaddeq didn't

¹⁴⁵ Crooke, 2009, p. 37.

¹⁴⁶ Dabashi, H. 2008, *İran: Ketlenmiş Halk*, [Iran: A People Interrupted], İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, p. 65.

succeed as a result of external interference, the Islamic Revolution, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, succeeded, which required studying the Iranian resistance culture closely once more, because, unlike the other revolutionary figures of modern periods, the fact that Khomeini was a representative of the procedural school from Ulama class and an interpreter of the Islamic Law placed this revolution in a specific position in Islam and in the history of the Middle east in terms of including so many “firsts.”

When we evaluate the Islamic movement of 20th century Iran within resistance, we see that the discourse of Ayatollah Khomeini concerning the rebellion movement starting in 1963 dwells on the concepts of *mustakbirin* (oppressors) and *mustaz’afin* (oppressed). Khomeini’s call for essential resistance of the oppressed against oppressors has a universal meaning. According to him, Shah Muhammad Pahlavi of that term is a poor puppet of the oppressors the world, US and Israel. Therefore, Shah should pay heed to Ulama, just like him, rather than to his masters, US and Israel.¹⁴⁷ Again for him, the American President is the most disgusting person in the eyes of Iranians just because of his injustice against Muslims. Qur’an became his enemy. The name of the American government was demolished in Iran and disgraced.¹⁴⁸

Ayatollah Khomeini stood out with his strong reaction against Shah. After this protestation, Khomeini was arrested, was sentenced to death penalty at first, the penalty was changed to exile with the mediation of Şeriatmedari (1964). After two years in exile in Bursa, and fourteen years in Nacef- Iraq, he went to France as a result of the Shah’s pressure on the Iraqi administration. After he stayed in France for nearly three months, he went back to Iran as the leader of the revolution and as an “Imam” after a period of seventeen years. A new constitution was accepted after the Referendum dated December 2nd-3rd, 1979 and the Iranian Islamic Republic was established. So “Wilayat- al-Faqih” theory of Khomeini was also put into effect.

The main thesis of Khomeini in his book “Wilayat- al-Faqih-i Hükümet-i Islami” is that Faqihs are appointed by Imams, Imams by Prophets, and Prophets by Allah. In the absence of Hidden Imam (Mahdi), as guardianship for him, a fair interpreter of the Islamic Law

¹⁴⁷ Moin, B. 2005, *Son Devrimci Ayetullah Humeyni*, [Khomeini: Life of Ayatollah], Ankara: Kesit Tanıtım Ltd. Şti., p. 106.

¹⁴⁸ Moin, 2005, p. 126.

takes the lead on a Faqih state and manages the state (society and ummah) until Mahdi comes.¹⁴⁹ Though this theory of Khomeini received strong criticism from the Sunni and Shi'ite worlds because of the politicization of Islam, torment and pressure on the opponents after revolution, inadequate reverends who were appointed, it is also praised as a huge innovation in the modern Islamic world.¹⁵⁰ So, the resistance movement originating in Iran's own lands came to a position of challenging modern times by finding a possibility of government again with the slogan of "neither east, nor west, Islamic Republic" under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini after the government of Caliph Ali approximately 1400 years ago.

3.2. Focusing after the Revolution

The dethronement of the Shah with the Iranian Revolution was a surprise for the American friends of Shah's, journalists, policy mentors and sociologists who were supposed to be experts in revolutions. This is a type of social revolution and an uprising of urbanised workers, unemployed and new middle classes against the dominant class bureaucrats and native capitalists of glossily westerner Iran with its cultural view.¹⁵¹ The most specific side of the revolution is undoubtedly the radical opposition shown by reverends who were educated in a scholastic religion.¹⁵² After the Shah's regime was brought down, protests by reverends were directed at all the political powers which were led by secular or non-Islamic elites or "American Imperialism", which was a strong symbol for Iranians who hadn't forgotten the reactions of the US in the past.¹⁵³ Thus, despite the freedom of religion, Iran-US relations suddenly slipped due to the theocratic revolution of Ayatollah Khomeini, which had triggered Islamic-revolutionary movements in the Muslim world.¹⁵⁴

Saddam Hussein, who took advantage of these affairs as an opportunity, attacked Iran on the excuse of disagreement on Shatt Al-Arab flume so that he could earn the oil region in

¹⁴⁹ Humeyni, İ. Velayeti Fakih -İslam Devleti, [Wilayat-el Faqih Islamic State], İmam Humeyni'nin Eserlerini Tanzim ve Yayınlama Müessesesi Uluslararası İlişkiler Bürosu, p. 38

¹⁵⁰ Eliaçık R. İ. (2011). İslam'ın Yenilikçileri , [The Reformists of Islam], 1.cilt, İstanbul: İnşa Yayınları, 2011, p. 465-466.

¹⁵¹ Skocpol, T. 1982, Rentier State and Shi'a İslam in the Iranian Revolution, Theory and Society, Vol. 11, No. 3, p. 265-83.

¹⁵²Üşür, S. 1992, İnan Devrimi, Din, Anti-emperyalizm ve Sol, [Islamic Revolution, Religion, Anti-Imperialism and Left], İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, p. 6.

¹⁵³ Skocpol, 1982.

¹⁵⁴ Lacoste, Y. 2007, Büyük Oyunu Anlamak, [Geopolitics], İstanbul: NTV yayınları, p. 280.

Khuzistan to Iraq.¹⁵⁵ But Iranians defended themselves much more heartily and bravely than Saddam Hussein's foresight, by regarding this issue as a matter of pride. Once the emanation of the Islamic revolution of Khomeini to the Middle East appeared as a threat, western powers, especially US and France, at the same time Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, gave financial and martial support to Saddam Hussein to avoid a huge defeat.¹⁵⁶

3.2.1. In what Sense the Concept “Resistance” was Used after the Revolution?

3.2.1.1. In the period of Ayatollah Khomeini

We can say that Iranians based the resistance term on the symbols and heritages remaining from historical and cultural values after the revolution like as the revolution. Indeed, Ayatollah Khomeini used ‘‘the Islamic Revolution’’ symbol for the gain as a result of the resistance and revolution movement which he started against Shah in his country. Shortly after the revolution, he brought the symbol of religion and patriotism into the forefront in the attacks towards his country made by Iraq to keep the resistance culture alive, brought the symbol of Quds, Al-Aqsa Mosque accepted as common value for all Muslims and the symbol of Palestine resisting against Israel into the forefront so that the Revolution could expand to all over the Middle East.

According to Ayatollah Khomeini, firstly, victory and Islamic Revolution won as a result of Iran people's resistance is not only Iranians' but also all Muslims' common value and must be protected. Secondly, after the revolution, he expressed a holy duty underlying the call of Ayatollah Khomeini for mobilization against the attacks of Iraqi armies under the leadership of Saddam Hussein in 1980. This battle was announced by Khomeini as the resistance of Iranian people against world imperialism, and the Karbala mutiny of Imam Hussein formed the main slogan of resistance. Protagonists of resistance included revolutionary guards and Basij powers¹⁵⁷ that were voluntary heroes of the oppressed. Last but not the least, the common terminological usage of resistance in the 20th century Islamic Literature is associated with Palestinians' struggle against Israeli occupation. Like

¹⁵⁵ Keddie, 2003, p. 251.

¹⁵⁶ Lacoste, 2007, p. 283.

¹⁵⁷ The official name is Basij Resistance Force. It is a militia organization established by Ayatollah Khomeini in the name of voluntary mobilization of the oppressed in November 1979. It is a subordinate of the IRGC and consists of volunteer armed young men working in to State during the war.

all Muslims, Iranians defined mutinies about freedom, independence and national defense of Palestinians as resistance as well.

Likewise, according to a fatwa by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1969, it is permissible for people to send their fits and grants to Palestinians as support for the Palestinian resistance.¹⁵⁸ Shortly after this revolution, the leader of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Yaser Arafat, came to Iran and met with Khomeini. In this meeting, Ayatollah Khomeini made this gnomic statement in Tehran, “Palestine is part of our security; today Iran, tomorrow Palestine.”¹⁵⁹ According to Imam Khomeini, Quds, accepted holy by three big religions, was faced with American-Israeli occupation and cruelty. For this reason, Khomeini announced the last Friday of Ramadan each year as “the World Quds Day” in the first Ramadan of 1979 after the Islamic Revolution. For him, if a group from anywhere in the world demands help from them, to run for help will be a duty for him. Again for him, they themselves are not defenders of Iran, but defenders of all the oppressed Muslims.¹⁶⁰ Khomeini is extremely anti-Israel, mainframe of his revolution was established on liberation of Palestine.¹⁶¹ Khomeini is extremely anti-Israel, and the mainframe of his revolution was established on the liberation of Palestine.¹⁶²

The revolutionary regime in Iran has been one of the most implacable enemies of Israel. It aims at the “eradication” of the state of Israel through the establishment of a Palestinian state by means of armed struggle. Extension of its fight with Israel to Lebanon was a factor in the Shi’ites’ resistance to the Israeli occupation forces in Lebanon; eventually the Israeli forces had to withdraw. Iran’s fight is against the expansionist attitude of Israel in all directions. The Iranian Revolution totally destroyed the Shah’s long-time alignment with Israel. Iran’s relations with no other country in the world, even with the US, were as quickly and drastically overturned as its relations with Israel were.

¹⁵⁸ İzzeti, E. 1993, Devrimci İslam ve İslam Devrimi, [Revolutionary Islam and the Islamic Revolution], İstanbul: Objektif Yayınları., p. 40-48.

¹⁵⁹ Ramazani, R. K. 1988, Revolutionary Iran-Challenge and Response in the Middle East. London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 151.

¹⁶⁰ İzzeti, 1993, p. 40-48.

¹⁶¹ Çelik, K. 1998, İmam Humeyni Açısından Filistin, [Palestine from Imam Khomeini's point of view], İstanbul: İhsan Yayınları. p. 9-20.

¹⁶² Çelik, p. 9-20.

This display of enmity towards Israel from the very outset reflected more than Ayatollah Khomeini's alleged anti-Semitism although he had made harsh remarks about Jews. For the Iranian revolutionary leader, the roots of the animosity lay elsewhere. He asked in a style of his own, "Is there anybody remaining who is unaware of our difference concerning the friendship between the deposed Shah and Israel? Have we not cursed for over 20 years now in our statements and sermons Israeli and American oppression in an explicit way and their followers in aggression and looting? The fact that Imam Khomeini explained this matter in this way helped his anti-Israel ideology to gain ground in the revolutionary culture by drawing attention to the close relations between Shah's policies and Israel.

Khomeini's view to struggle with the international system is within the range of the roles of relations with world of superpowers. The Khomeini view of the international system clashes with role the superpowers play in world affairs. In Khomeini's words, "The Iranian revolutionaries must settle our accounts with great and superpowers, and show them that we can take on the whole world ideologically, despite all the painful problems that face them." Such a conflict between the Islamic Republic and the superpowers, he believes, is inevitable; they have arrogated all the worldly power (*qudrat*) to themselves at the expense of the exploited, dispossessed masses of people everywhere. To Khomeini, the superpowers are "illegitimate players"; they dominate (*tahmil*) the international system. In addition to illustrating the scepticism of Khomeini's regime concerning the very idea of nonalignment, the preceding discussion should also clarify the doctrinal basis of Khomeini's characterization of the US as the "Great Satan" and the Soviet Union as the "Lesser Satan."¹⁶³

For this, Islamic Iran's vision of the world is polarized along several lines. The first division concerns power. According to Khomeini, as we emphasised above partly, the World is divided into two camps: those countries and peoples who have power and use it to dominate and exploit others-namely the "arrogant" or "oppressors" (*mustakbirin*); and those who lack power and are exploited and oppressed-namely the "downtrodden" or the oppressed (*mustaz'afin*). Translated in terms of the outside world, the oppressor-arrogant

¹⁶³ Ramazani, 1988, p. 151.

camp consists of the two superpowers and a few great powers. In the camp of the oppressed-downtrodden are the Muslim countries and most of the Third World.¹⁶⁴

The second division is along ideological lines. In this sense, the world, according to Khomeini, is also divided into two camps; those countries that follow the US capitalist line- namely the Western camp; and those that follow the Soviet Union's socialist line- namely the Eastern camp. In Khomeini's scheme of things, the so-called Non-Aligned countries have no place because he believed that their non-alignment is a sham. Only the Islamic Republic of Iran is truly independent.¹⁶⁵

A third line of division could be characterized as moral or spiritual. Khomeini believed that the world is divided into those who follow the "right path", the "path of God and belief", and those who follow the "corrupt path" the "path of Satan and disbelief." In his view, the right or divine path is that of Islam and the Qur'an. Here, too, the Islamic Republic stands out alone as the only country whose society and government is based on principles of Qur'an and is striving to follow the divine Islamic path. That is why Khomeini and his disciples have so often expressed Iran's struggles, whether with Iraq, the US, or others, as the fight between what he called "Haq and Batel"-truth and righteousness against falsehood.¹⁶⁶

Accordingly, it can be deduced that Iranians emplaced 'American imperialism' or Non-Islamist or all the political powers guided by secular elites to the counter side of resistance after revolution. But, at the same time, some countries ruled on Muslim people, such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, who gave financial and martial supports to Saddam Hussein in Iraqi war were also in the same counter-side. Ayatollah Khomeini did not target other nations whose people were Muslim, and he advised them to take Iranian Revolution and Iranian nation as an example. He anyhow wanted Muslim people not pay heed to unfavourable propagandas made by the opponents of Islam Republic, and he recommended them to cut directors capitulated to westerner powers without respecting the will of nation down to size, because, according to Khomeini, the reason for the misfortune of Muslims is

¹⁶⁴ Hunter T. S. 1992, Iran after Khomeini. Washington D.C: The Washington Papers, p. 37.

¹⁶⁵ Hunter, 1992

¹⁶⁶ Hunter, 1992

the countries dependent on the West and the East, and all of them are in an endeavour of deactivating Islam for the assurance of benefits of superpowers.¹⁶⁷

Another issue also to be answered here is whether there are elements of Iranian nationalism in resistance movement pre- and post-revolution or not. It is necessary to shortly indicate that Khomeini opposed nationalism that based on the superiority of a particular race, the cult of monarchy, excessive glorification of the country's pre-Islamic past, and the dilution of Iran's Islamic character. In his view, if nationalism means "loving one's homeland and its people and protect its frontiers", then it is acceptable. Thus Khomeini was not against nationalism in the sense of "patriotism," but rather as a political theory based on the parochial interests of a race or state which is thus a threat to Islamic universalism.¹⁶⁸

In fact, however, the Islamic forces opposed nationalism primarily because it was used to legitimize and expand the power and control of a state at their expense. By imitation, since the revolution, Iran's leaders have used Islam to legitimize and expand their power at the expense of other forces in the country. Nevertheless, although at different times various parts of the Iranian population have been attracted either to the nationalist or to the Islamic poles, the majority of Iranians have felt loyal both to Iran and Shi'a Islam. Even the advent of Islam, with its emphasis on the brotherhood of all Muslims and its admonition against racial pride, has not eliminated the influence of the Iranian element in Iran's national identity in the historical context.

3.2.1.2. In the Period of Leader Khamenei

Even though the current religious leader of Iran Islamic Republic, Leader Ali Sayyid Khamenei, wasn't politically effective until 2000s from 1989 in which he came to power, it can be said that he didn't make concessions to the resistance line of Imam Khomeini. Leader Khamenei has been a close ally of the then President, Hashemi Rafsanjani from 1989 till now and supported many of his executive policies. Leader Khamenei is on the radical wing of Iranian Islamic Republic but is a traditionalist who is in opposition to

¹⁶⁷ Humeyni, İ. 1991, *Son Mesaj-İmam Humeyni'nin Siyasi-İlahi Vasiyetnamesi*, [The Last Message], Tahran: Kültür Merkezi, p. 36.

¹⁶⁸ Hunter, 1992, p. 13.

Iranian society's westernization and who advocates there must be an obvious distance between Iran and the West. In order to hinder the "deterioration" of Iranian Muslims, he often makes speeches against Western investments in Iran and stresses taking necessary precautions against the cultural imperialism of western powers.

Although this approach of the Leader on those dates had an important effect on Iranian foreign policy, it was overshadowed by Rafsanjani's political instructions against foreign policy. Because the president is on key position in making political decisions as well defending his country's integration with the international system, he takes sides with development of Iran's relations with the external world; yet his cabinet and presidency council make it possible.¹⁶⁹

Although this, according to Leader Khamenei as a follower of Khomeini, because of his country's inconclusiveness of animosity with American governments, it is necessary for Iran to continue his struggle against "number one despot of the world."¹⁷⁰ Accordingly, in spite of the animosity with Iraq, he invited Iraq for a holy battle against American solidarities deploying in Saudi Arabia during the occupation of Kuwait by US in 1991.¹⁷¹ Accordingly in spite of animosity with Iraq, he called Iraq to holy battle against American solidarities deploying in Saudi Arabia during in Kuwait occupation by US in 1991.¹⁷²

Leader Khamenei strengthened his political authority in Iran policy even more after 2000s and increasingly maintained his radical attitude towards resistance. He still maintains the same attitude today. According to him, Iranian Islamic Revolution is a product of the resistance by Iranian people in person against US. To him, despite all U.S. support to the former regime, the Islamic movement culminated in victory, thanks to the strong resistance of the Iranian nation and the wise leadership of Imam Khomeini. Therefore, U.S. plots and machinations against the Iranian nation assumed wider proportions following the victory of the revolution.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Ehteshami, A. & Hinnebusch, R. A. 1997, Syria and Iran-Middle Powers in penetrated regional system, New York: Routledge, p. 32

¹⁷⁰ Moslem M. 2002, Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran, US Syracuse University Press, p. 2.

¹⁷¹ Afrasiabi, K. L. 1994, After Khomeini-New Directions in Iran's Foreign Policy, Oxford: Westview Press, p. 75.

¹⁷² Hunter, 1992, p. 129

¹⁷³ From the Speech of Student Day. Retrieved November 10, 2002, from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/152/Leader-s-Speech-on-Students-Day>

We can say that the concept of resistance became associated with Leader Khamenei in Iran's political history. Leader Khamenei has mostly used resistance in his speeches in the meaning of Iran revolution, the action of the public who made revolution, against sanctions from some foreign countries to the detriment of Iran, patient and constant Iranians' resistance against propagandas via embargo and media and Palestinian resistance against Israel occupation. So as to escalate the fight against economic sanctions which were to the detriment of Iran, he used the idiom "economy of resistance"¹⁷⁴ in his lots of speeches. In addition, Leader Khamenei used the concept of resistance with its historical perspective to keep the resistance culture of the public alive. Though he advised people to resist their own desires against sins in a personal sphere,¹⁷⁵ in social and political sphere, he reminded the wars in Badr and Khyber fought by Prophet Muhammad, political actions conducted by Imam Hussein and Reza as resistance actions, also gave examples from the book named Nahc-ul Balaga that involves speeches of Caliph Ali.¹⁷⁶ It is necessary to indicate that Leader described Friday sermons as a kind of resistance and used the concept of resistance mostly while addressing to Basijs, students, officials of the government, and in his speeches during the meetings for the Palestinian riot.

Just like Khomeini, Khamenei defined the element needed to resist against as "the superstitious side against Islamic Revolution". In his opinion, the superstitious side is composed of US, England, Israel and Zionists, tools and tyrants based on arrogance, formations, dependent media and clinging capitalists laying their hands on the entire world. Although there is not an absolute alliance among superstitious powers, they are all in the position of alliance against the right side. Whether Muslims or non-Muslims, defenders of what is right should be in a position of alliance against this side, whether in the Islamic world or anywhere else¹⁷⁷ To him, the US is spending a great deal of money in order to maintain its prestige and to manipulate the public opinion of the world. But today, there are massive demonstrations in different parts of the world against the domineering and arrogant attitude of the US, and Washington has suffered from a heavy blow to its image in

¹⁷⁴ From the speech of business community. Retrieved January 13, 2016, from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/1882/Leader-s-Speech-on-the-Economy-of-Resistance-in-Meeting-with>

¹⁷⁵ From the speech of government officials. Retrieved January 12, 2016, from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/989/Leader-s-Speech-to-Government-Officials>

¹⁷⁶ From the speech of members of sepah vali e amr. Retrieved January 12, 2016, from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/1269/Leader-s-Speech-to-Members-of-Sepah-e-Vali-e-Amr>

¹⁷⁷ Hamenei, A. A. S. 2012, İslami Birlik, [Islamic Unity], İstanbul: Feta Yayıncılık, p. 244.

the eyes of the world public. This is the outcome of the resistance of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps, striving and trusting in Almighty Allah.¹⁷⁸

He again chose the Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation as a symbol of resistance in parallel with Khomeini's perspective. To Khamenei, the fight which Palestinians carried on against Israel is the epitome of resistance, and he defined this resistance as the "very Islamic Resistance."¹⁷⁹ In his opinion, the common enemy through which all the Islamic World Islamic groups suffered from damage is Zionism. It is time to stand up against Zionism in alliance.¹⁸⁰

Ayatollah Khamenei placed the Palestine issue in the larger struggle of Islam and the US: the US aim was to suppress Islam in Palestine, the geographic heart of the Muslim world. If it could force Arabs to recognize Israel, Tel Aviv could concentrate on its new mission of fighting with the Islamic movements, the main threat to the US. A peace would also establish US hegemony, and Israel would achieve a big step in its Greater Israel project. The Islamic world, having oil and a fourth of the world's population had, however, no need to submit to this US dicta.¹⁸¹

Khamenei approached to resistance as the fight of not only Islamic countries' but also some other states' fight against Western and American imperialism. For example he has saluted Cuba's stance against US as resistance as well; the Leader went on to say during the meeting with Cuba Leader, Castro;

"As you have witnessed, the Islamic Revolution has always sided with Cuba in its conflict with the US, since we believe that your struggle is a just one. The secret of the resistance of our revolution against the pressure exerted on us by the global arrogance is the strong belief of our people, who adhere to Islam and its principles and values." "From an Islamic point of view, your resistance against U.S. bullying and domination is a merit. This is why you received that warm welcome when you visited Tehran University today. If leaders of

¹⁷⁸ From the speech of IDMO day. 2002, Retrieved January 07, 2016, from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/154/Leader-s-Statements-on-IRGC-Day>

¹⁷⁹ From the speech of International Conference in Support of Intifada, 2001. Retrieved January 12, 2016, from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/166/Leader-s-Speech-at-Intl-Conference-in-Support-of-Intifada>

¹⁸⁰ Hamenei, 2012, p. 80.

¹⁸¹ Ehteshami & Hinnebusch, 1997, p. 185.

many countries visit our universities, they will not receive such a warm welcome. This shows that our people are quite aware of the value of your just resistance against the US.”¹⁸²

Again just like Ayatollah Khomeini, in his speeches; Leader Khamenei emphasizes that his country reached to victory and pulled enemies back thanks to resistance of union of military and the public against Iraqi attack in 1980. The day when the Iraqi regime waged a full-scale war on Iran, their enemies assumed that there was no obstacle, or at least no major hindrance, to their military aggression. However, contrary to the assumptions of the enemies, the armed forces resisted the Iraqi aggressors like an indestructible barrier. According to Khamenei again, as long as the public manage to protect its own identity, it can show resistance against the enemy. To him, if nations preserve their identity and turn to their own abundant resources, they will be able to resist their enemies. They may go through some hardships and sufferings in the short term, which is the price that they should pay for their independence. But in the long run, they will be able to make up for their losses through their perseverance and strong will and determination.¹⁸³

Leader Khamenei described the defensive fight of Iraq, people after the US attack on Iraq as resistance as well. To him, when the US attacked Iraq to topple Saddam's regime, US forces faced Iraqi soldiers who were weaker than them and, therefore, achieved victory. However, they are now feeling helpless in the face of the strong will and brave resistance of Iraqi people, who are opposed to the domination of their country and natural resources by occupiers and who are determined to defend their national and religious identity. Thus, if nations possess the will and determination to resist, no outside power can dominate them.¹⁸⁴

According to Leader Khamenei, no one, including left and right groups in the west, could resist against US and Zionism except the Islamic Republic of Iran. This situation shows

¹⁸² From the meeting with Fidel Castro on 2001. Retrieved January 12, 2016, from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/165/Leader-s-Statements-in-a-Meeting-with-Castro>

¹⁸³ From the speech of during a visit to an army base on November 17, 2002. Retrieved January 12, 2016, from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/149/Leader-s-Speech-at-an-Army-Base>

¹⁸⁴ From the speech of during a visit to an IRGC Air Force base on July 20, 2003. Retrieved January 12, 2016, from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/121/Leader-s-Speech-at-IRGC-Air-Force-Base>

Iran's power of resistance.¹⁸⁵ To him, this resistance of Iran paved way to an "Islamic Awakening"¹⁸⁶ in various Islam states, especially after the Arab uprising, which started in Tunisia in 2011. On the other hand, Islamic resistance is sustained; Hezbollah resisted against Israel in the 33-day war in 2006 and Palestinians resisted in the 20-day war in Gaza in 2014 and managed to set the conditions for a ceasefire. In this sense, the Syrian government and Yemenis have also been maintaining resistance actions against Israel and these countries are also in the structure of "Resistance Camp"¹⁸⁷ with Iran. Iran has been supporting resistance states and groups whose names are mentioned against global arrogant powers and will maintain its support.¹⁸⁸

3.3. Conclusion

Iranians with government performed resistance movements against tobacco concession for British at the end of 19th century and petroleum concession for British and American companies in the middle of 20th century, but couldn't get result. Accordingly, with the oversight by CIA of their Prime Minister Muhammad Musaddeq who wanted to nationalize petroleum by being dismantled concessions (1953), Iran who damaged from West imperialism, tried to take revenge of these damages by making a qualified people revolution in the leadership of religion men in the last quarter of the same century. Iran's revolution leaders not only took down Shah- the puppet of West, but set many near and far goals such as recovery of attacks in the region, and liberating Quds. After Shah Regime once had been taken down, process led by clergymen fronted to all political powers which were directed by secular elites that are not Islamist or American imperialism which was a strong symbol for Iranians who didn't forget American responses. Hence, Imam Khomeini who triggered the wave of Islamic revolutionist movements in Muslim world, due to Islamic revolution, suddenly grew away from some gulf countries that had good relations with Iran-West and West.

¹⁸⁵ From the speech of Eid-ul Fitr Prayers. Retrieved January 12, 2016, from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/1938/Leader-s-Sermons-at-Eid-ul-Fitr-Prayers>

¹⁸⁶ From the speech of Islamic awakening. Retrieved January 12, 2016, from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/1726/Leader-s-Speech-to-Participants-of-International-Conference-on>

¹⁸⁷ From the speech of Islamic awakening. Retrieved January 12, 2016, from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/1772/Leader-s-Speech-at-Inauguration-of-Islamic-Awakening-and-Ulama>

¹⁸⁸ From the speech of National Day of Fighting against global arrogance. Retrieved January 12, 2016, from <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/1837/Leader-Meets-with-Students-on-National-Day-of-Fighting-Against>

The case being so, under the leadership of the US, the western world took a range of precautions to break the effects of the Iranian revolution on the region. These precautions started with the attempts to weaken Iran's power by forcing Iraq, which was an ally of the imperialist system, to declare a war on Iran and through economic embargos (imposed war). Although these affairs left Iran in the lurch, Iran didn't give up its revolutionary goals. Some started to comment that Iran diverged from the targets of the revolution because it turned towards a series of pragmatic (utilitarian) policies as a result of the economic embargos and isolations imposed by the states all over the world. However, it is necessary to note the most important element that enabled Iran to carry its gains from the revolution to the 21th century was thanks to the leaders of revolution who steadily kept the concept of Islamic resistance on the agenda. Indeed, according to Iranian revolutionaries, Iran today is still maintaining resistance in a way that Iran abides by the culture of Islamic resistance against imperialism of the West and regional attacks in a political sense.

CHAPTER 4

FROM “RESISTANCE” TO “AXIS”

Such as the notion of "axis of resistance" has begun to be widely used with the political developments of the 2000s, the root of this term extends to the first years after the revolution. The term resistance in Iran was used to characterize the Iranian Islamic Revolution against the Shah Regime in the 2000s, resistance against world tyrants in the Iraqi war, and mostly resistance of Palestinians and the Lebanese against Israeli occupation. In 2003, that US also counted Iran in “axis of evil” with Iraq, Syria, Libya, and North Korea caused Iran to turn the term resistance into “axis of resistance”. Yet, countries that played a part in the evil axis also had strategic relations with Iran. In this chapter, we will sum up why the events taking place in the field before and after the revolution are evaluated by Iran within resistance or resistance front.

4.1. The Effect of Islamic Revolution to Formation of Resistance

In the thought of Revolutionary Iran, the 1979 Islamic Revolution is the first fruit of the Islamic revolution against the Shah regime in particular and the West world in general and needs to be protected painstakingly, because, according to this thought, the fall of the Ottoman empire and the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 brought the abolition of Islam on the political plane, and Muslims were overwhelmed by the imperialist attacks of the West. Again according to this thought, the western world, that was based only on mind and scientific in place of all divine values, threatened not only eastern societies and Muslims but also all people in the world and deprived the world of its soul.

One of the most sonorous calls for resistance in the defenceless Islamic world against the ‘modernist attack’ after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the abolition of the Caliphate was made by a famous Egyptian Islamic thinker, Sayyid Qutb in 1960, but this process was disrupted as a result of Qutb’s execution. After all, the execution of Qutb by the Egyptian Government led to Islamic movements of awakening for Muslims around the world. Many of his books and booklets revealing his revolutionary thought, especially his famous book “Milestones along the Way” took hold of both Sunni and Shi’ite revolutionaries. Qutb, who mentioned the modern materialist mentality of the egoist Western society, inspired the thought of Islamic defense against destructive modern “jahiliyyah”¹⁸⁹ in the Middle East.¹⁹⁰

Thus, the calls of Sayyid Qutb had an effect on Iran, which is one of the countries that have traces of these western attacks in its composition. As a result, Iranian people performed an unprecedented revolution in the words of the great French Philosopher, Michel Foucault. Again in his own words, because of the fact that this revolution had the characteristic of an Islamic revolution, it became “the soul of the soulless world” matching the words of Karl Marks saying “religion is the soul of the soulless world” which precedes “the religion is the opium of people”¹⁹¹ because the vision regarding the political conversion in Iran is based entirely on the rejection of shah, his regime, everything he represents. According to Foucault’s reasoning, “the uprising in Iran results not from the traditional society failing to adapt to the process of emanation of modernisation in all directions, but from its rejection of modernisation society as archaism.”¹⁹² Foucault, who was in Iran during the revolution to make news, stressed in the news he reported that modernisation and corruption in Iran was one and the same. Islam, which represents a resistance against the modernisation current, according to Foucault’s opinion, earned a kind of political identity to Iranians, and this identity enabled Iranian people to turn their collectiveness into a terrific power.

There are three paradoxes which fascinated many people like Foucault after the revolution and inserted into the events occurring in Iran; firstly, an unarmed uprising rendered one of

¹⁸⁹ Kutup, S. 1980, Yoldaki İşaretler-İmanın İlkeleri-, [Milestones along the Way], İstanbul: Hicret Yayınları, p. 3-7.

¹⁹⁰ Crooke, 2009, p. 79-81.

¹⁹¹ Afary& Anderson, 2015, p. 316-327.

¹⁹² Şaibi, W. Iran Revolution and Foucault. Retrieved March 29, 2016, from <http://istiraki.blogspot.com.tr/2016/02/iran-devrimi-ve-foucault.html>

the most powerful armies of the world helpless; secondly, the protest movement didn't dissolve due to internal dissolutions or conflicts; thirdly, rather than overthrowing Shah, the absence of specific long-term targets is not its weak, but strong side. For this reason, the methods of Iranians to use religious institutions are praiseworthy because they displayed "a perfectly gathered common will."¹⁹³ From the expression "the absence of certain long-term goals" used by Foucault, it can be understood that an ambiguity existed before the revolution regarding what planned actions would be taken against possible negative conjectural developments after the revolution.

Indeed, a revolution does not end with the seizure of political power. The revolution is a process that begins with the collapse of the old regime, and continues through the institutionalization until its eventual consolidation, or its termination.¹⁹⁴ For the purpose of achieving the final goal of revolutions, which was an Islamic government, leaders of the revolution appealed to their own society and then to the oppressed of the entire world to protect acquisitions of this common will and this call took form in the concept of "resistance" against the attempts of the western hegemony. For this reason, Islamic revolution has to keep the resistance culture alive in order to sustain the ideological and universal values that embody it.

4.2. The Effect of Iran-Iraq War to Formation of Resistance

The attack by the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, on Iranian lands just after the Islamic revolution was perceived again by Iranian elites as an attack of the modern states of the world against the Islamic revolution. According to this point of view, Westerners provoked the Iraqi government against Iran for fear that the effect of the revolution would spread over the entire region via groups in the Iraqi government that were ideologically close to the Iranian revolution. As a result, Iranian people knew how to protect all acquisitions obtained from the revolution by resisting against all the global imperialism, in Iraq in particular.

¹⁹³ Saibi, 2016

¹⁹⁴ Sinkaya, B. 2016, *Revolutionary Guards in Iranian Politics*, London and New York: Routledge, p. 23.

Before the Iraqi war at the beginning of 1980, Imam Khomeini issued an instruction for the establishment of an organisation composed of 20 million people against internal and external threats to his country, notably an American threat, likely to be made and named this organisation Basij-a Mustaz'afin (voluntary mobilisation of the oppressed).¹⁹⁵ Imam Khomeini called the Basij for a public war against Iraqi army. The new war, which religious character and named "a sacred defense", was regarded as a battle between Ba'th Movement established in Iraq by Michel Eflaq and Islam. Thus, despite the disadvantageous conditions, Iranians re-established regiments and divisions and trained them anew, literally embarking on a public war. One year after the outbreak of the war, Iran's countermoves led by Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) and Basij started. The countervailing battle in the region was the war at which the Revolutionary Guards took back Khorramshahr on 16 November 1981. This success, which Iranians achieved, created a new condition, and Saddam Hussein demanded a ceasefire through mediation.¹⁹⁶

It is necessary also to give an account of the size of the supports that were given to fighting sides by the other states of the world. Iraq's efforts for war were aided financially and logistically by its regional friends in particular. The principal paymasters of Iraq are well-known; they were Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were also two of the major providers of logistic support, although their activities were shrouded in secrecy. For example, early in the war, the Saudis quietly built three ports in the Red Sea for the transshipment of the military equipment to Iraq, guns and ammunition.¹⁹⁷

Jordan and Egypt, located on the other side of the Gulf Countries, were also the countries which supported Iraq against Iran. While the King of Jordan, Hussein, tried to support Iraq with financial aids, Egypt supported Iraq logistically. Thus, because of the fact it was announced as a traitor, the Iraq-Egypt relations, disrupted as a result of the fact that it signed Camp David agreement with the Zionist enemy, got back again on the rails.¹⁹⁸

Superpowers of the period made efforts in favor of Iraq so that Iraq could win the war. The Soviet Union became one of the supporters of Iraqi Army, especially after Iran had

¹⁹⁵ Golkar, S. 2015, *Captive Society the Basij Milita and Social Control in Iran*, US: Colombia U. p. 11.

¹⁹⁶ İzzeti, 1993

¹⁹⁷ İzzeti, 1993

¹⁹⁸ Ramazani, 1988, p. 77-78.

rebuffed enemy powers in 1982. In spite of Iraq's negative relations with US that had been going on for years, the US was one of the main factors that supported Iraq in this war too. When evaluated in terms of imperialism, the US, which saw its final target as weakening the countries of the region, was the main factor which aimed to surround the Islamic revolution from the perspective of Iran, and it thus started a movement to overthrow Iran.¹⁹⁹ The Reagan administration of the period was opposed to the defeat of Iraq. For this reason, Iraq was taken by the US out of the list of the countries that helped terrorism, and diplomatic relations with Iraq were re-established.¹⁸⁹ However, Iraq complained about the US because of the fact that the US secretly sold weapons to Iran paradoxically so as to save their hostages in Lebanon. This weapon transaction between US and Iran was disclosed as Iran-contra scandal and occupied the world agenda on those dates.²⁰⁰ Other Western nations were generous in supporting the Iraqi war effort. France was Iraq's biggest arms supplier in the West. In addition to supplying a stream of tanks, artillery, missiles and aircraft, it presented Iraq with five Super Etendard aircraft which could take off from ships, which arrived in Iraq in October 1983.²⁰¹

Syria was the only supporter of Iran in this war. During the war, two major agreements marked the beginning of a formalized Syrian-Iranian axis. These agreements aimed to ease and increase petroleum trade between Syria and Iran. Western sources exposed that Syria daily purchased 20.000 barrels of petroleum from Iran as free of charge from then on. After all, while the official petroleum price of OPEC was 35 US dollars, it was disclosed that Iran supplied petroleum to Syria at 28 US dollars.²⁰² In April, 1982, Valayati signed 'a secret military agreement' with his Syrian counterpart. As a result of this agreement, Syria sent a substantial amount of ammunition and guns to Iran.²⁰³

To be brief, Iraqi attacks on Iran and the involvement of most of the world countries in this war on the side of Iraq caused the resistance spirit to become stronger in Iran. The economic and military alliance between Syria and Iran during the war laid down the base of today's axis of resistance. Immediately after the revolution these attacks directed to Iran prevented the revolutionary laws from being questioned within the country, and these laws

¹⁹⁹ İzzeti, 1993

²⁰⁰ Ramazani, 1988, p. 78.

²⁰¹ Ramazani, 1988, p. 80.

²⁰² Ramazani, 1988

²⁰³ Ramazani, 1988

turned into a more autocratic situation by justifying the war. However, people who achieved the revolution went to the front together with the army so as to defend their country. This movement helped the resistance culture to survive for long years.

4.3. The Effect of “Free Quds” Thought to Formation of Resistance

Although Quds is holy for all divine religions, the main issue for Revolutionary Iran has been the fact that it has been under Israeli occupation since 1948 because free Quds means also the freedom of the people of the world in that it is the common value for all people who live on the earth and believe in any of the divine religions. Iran’s revolutionary staffs has considered it a divine, religious duty to save Quds from occupation and to return it back to Palestine, and they have under oath at this issue. For this reason, the habitual support of Iran to Palestinian groups dates back to in 1960 before the revolution, when Ayatollah Khomeini gave a fatwa about the permissibility of grant, fitr and legal rights to be given to the Palestinian resistance, fighting against Israel. At that time, Iran formed committees to support the Palestinian Resistance and Fedayee activities in Iraq and Lebanon. At that time, leftist notions were dominant among Palestinian groups, Christians, Muslims and some elites in Lebanon. Iran took action to gather peoples and nations under an Islamic roof, which had a larger scale and worked with a number of activists, such as Muhammad Montazari and Mustafa Chamran for this purpose. In addition, Hashemi Rafsanjani gave financial aids to the Lebanese groups to gather the Palestinian revolution under a single roof.²⁰⁴

However, as leader of PLO, Yaser Arafat, acted on the side of Iraq in the direction of Arabian Nationalism in Iran-Iraq war, Iran fell out with PLO. Nevertheless, the frigidity in relations was only in official relations and did not affect Iran’s relations with the rest of the Palestinian resistance fractions. On the contrary, this signalled new formations to emerge. Simultaneously with the deportation of Palestinian resistance fractions out of Lebanon, Lebanese Islamic leaders asked for an urgent meeting with Imam Khomeini; the delegation was headed by Sayyid Abbas al-Musawi. Imam Khomeini underlined the importance of confronting the Zionist enemy and that they should begin from scratch. It can be said that

²⁰⁴ Rafsancani, H. 2006, *Hatıralar*, [Memories], İstanbul: Pınar Yayınları, p. 166, 266, 291, 368, 407.

Hezbollah was formed and emerged as a result of this meeting.²⁰⁵ Meanwhile, Imam Khomeini gave his orders to send Revolutionary Guards forces to Lebanon to support the first core of the Islamic resistance. Imam Khomeini describes this decision saying:

“If someone called us from the farthest spot of the world, saying, “Muslims, rush to our help”, it is our duty to help him if we can. We don’t claim that we can do this everywhere, we are defending the Muslim’s rights as much as possible, and this isn’t only true for Iranian Muslims but for all Muslims. He who hears someone calling: O Muslims and does not help is not a Muslim.”²⁰⁶ The elements that make the Palestinian resistance distinct from other resistance movements were the use of guerrilla tactics and martyrdom actions.²⁰⁷ It is our duty to help him if we can. We are not claiming that we can do this everywhere, we are defending the Muslim’s rights within the available capacity, and this does not apply on Iranian Muslims but all Muslims. The elements that make the Palestinian resistance distinct from other resistance movements were the use of guerrilla tactics and martyrdom actions²⁰⁸

In short, in the heart of all the supports given by Iran the Palestinian cause were the aims to put an end to the subversive policy against the first kiblah of Muslims and expansionist policies of the west-supported Israel and to strengthen the resistance front. Accordingly, as a solution to all the problems in the region, the belief that Israel would be forced to stop the occupation in Palestine both enabled the resistance culture to keep alive and made it into the basic philosophy of the revolution by Imam Khomeini.

4.4. Appearance of “Axis of resistance” (Mihver-i Muqavama) Discourse

Even though the term “Axis of Resistance” first came into widespread use through Al-Zahf Al-Akhdar, a Libyan newspaper, its roots date back to the early years of post-revolution because revolutionary Iran directly contacted with anti-Israel resistance groups in Lebanon and Palestine, PLO, Izzettin Qassam, HAMAS, AMAL, Hezbollah etc. in line with its ideological aims and its revolution export policies after the 1979 revolution, as partly

²⁰⁵ İzzeti, 1993

²⁰⁶ İzzeti, 1993

²⁰⁷ İzzeti, 1993

²⁰⁸ İzzeti, 1993

explained above. Moreover, Iran didn't refrain from making all kinds of collaborations with Syria, which developed policies suited to its revolutionary thought. Collaboration with the Syrian regime became stronger during Iraqi war as we explained briefly above. On the other hand, although relations of Iran with PLO were disrupted due to PLO's side in Iraqi war, there was no interruption with the other organisations and countries that were mentioned above, and mutual supports have increasingly continued until today. Iranian foreign policy, which experienced radical and pragmatic changes after the revolution, gave messages to the world for dialogue during the term of President Muhammad Khatami, known as moderate (thermidorian).²⁰⁹ However, after the September 11 attacks striking to twin tower, that US President George W. Bush had counted Iran in the "axis of evil" with several countries became "axis of resistance" of Iran more apparent.

The term "Axis of Resistance" was put on the agenda first by the Libyan daily newspaper Al-Zahf Al-Akhdar in response to the American president George W. Bush's claim that Iran, Iraq and North Korea formed an "axis of evil." In an article titled "Axis of Evil or Axis of Resistance," the paper wrote in 2002 that "the only common denominator among Iran, Iraq and North Korea is their resistance to US hegemony."²¹⁰ Another usage is at the Iranian newspaper Jomhuri-ye Eslami subsequently adopting the phrase in reference to the Shi'ite insurgency in Iraq, writing in 2004 that "if the line of Iraq's Shi'is needs to be linked, united and consolidated, this unity should be realized on the axis of resistance and struggle against the occupiers." In the writing penned in 2004, as long as occupation continued, Iraq Shi'ites' possible attempts to unite their powers with Iran would result in resistance axis against the occupationist powers.²¹¹

4.4.1. How Did "Axis of Resistance" Discourse Emerge?

Until the 2010s, when Arab awakening started, the terminological use of "Axis of Resistance" was not in Iranian elites' radar. However, it is necessary to note again that Leader Khamanei didn't let the term "resistance" be out of the agenda particularly in this

²⁰⁹ Hatemi, S. M. 1988, *Dalga Korkusu*, [Fear of Wave], İstanbul: Kelime Yayınları., p. 165.

²¹⁰ Şarkul Avsat, 2013 November, 5 "مخلفا توترا في العلاقات بين أميركا والعرب" محور المقاومة, ["Axis of resistance" ended up leaving the tension in relations between America and the Arabs] Retrieved 2016 February, 01, from

<http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=39&article=749116&issueno=12761#.VrBpJPmsXHU>

²¹¹ Şarkul Avsat, 2013 November, 5.

process. In 2004, the phrase “Shi’ite Crescent” used by the Jordan King, Abdullah, in order to explain the foreign policy of Iran remained insufficient in explaining “Axis of Resistance.”²¹² The International Crisis Group (ICG) described the standoff between Israel and an "Axis of Resistance" as "exceptionally quiet and uniquely dangerous"²¹³ in a report. Soon a Palestinian Politician, Said Saim, also shared this discourse, and the discourse started to gain in value increasingly and became regionally settled. In an interview of el-Alem TV, by referring to 500.000 Palestinian refugees in Syria, Saim emphasized that Syria was an Arabian country targeted by Zionists and Americans and Syria, Iran, Hezbollah and HAMAS constituted an axis of resistance against these pressures. In this way, the concept took on the meaning it has today.²¹⁴ After all, the threat that the stable relations Iran established with the regimes and organisations that were suitable for its own ideology after the revolution would be eliminated after the Arab awakening resulted in Ali Akbar, in charge of foreign affairs of the religious leader, clarifying the axis of resistance on January 6, 2012. Valayati stated that Syria was the golden ring in resistance against Israel by expressing that the resistance chain constituted by Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, new Iraq Government and HAMAS against Israel passed through the main road of Syria.²¹⁵ Taking this discourse one step ahead on October 6, 2012, the chairman of the National Security Council of Iran, Saeed Jalili, expressed that the incidences experienced in Syria were not domestic affairs but rather they were a war between axis of resistance and its enemies in the region and in the world. Jalili expressed that Iran would not tolerate this and never let this axis, in which Syria was at the heart of the issue, break to pieces in any way.²¹⁶

In addition, the spread of Arabian uprisings to Yemen under the guidance of the Houthi Ensarullah Movement caused Yemen as well to be counted in the axis of resistance because of the similarity between the discourse of Houthies and that of the Iranian revolution. On January 25, 2015, the representative of Quds Power of Revolutionary

²¹² Sinkaya, B. 2007, Şii Ekseni Tartışmaları ve İran. Avrasya Dosyası, Vol. 13, No. 3. Retrieved 2015 February, 01, from <https://www.academia.edu>

²¹³ International Crisis Group, 2010 August, 2, Drums of war: Israel and axis of resistance Middle East, Report No. 97 – 2. Retrieved June 22, 2016, from <http://www.crisisgroup.org>

²¹⁴ Korkmaz, Y. 2015, İran Suriye Bölgesel İttifakı, [Iran Syria Regional Alliance], İstanbul: Matbuat Yayınları, p. 172.

²¹⁵ Goodarzi, J. August, 2013, Iran and Syria at the Crossroads: The fall of the Tehran-Damascus Axis Wilson Center Viewpoints No: 35, p. 1.

²¹⁶ Goodarzi, August, 2013

Guards of the Leader, Hucetul Islam Ali Şirazi, redefined the chain of axis resistance in a way to include Yemen. Şirazi expressed that Hezbollah shaped Lebanon in just the same way as the famous Basij militants of Iran shaped Iran and that similar powers were formed in Syria and Iraq and a similar movement started to be seen in the Ensarullah Movement in Yemen again.²¹⁷ These statements give us the conclusion that Iran would actively interfere with close combats in the states and groups which Iran is an ally of, and that, with this aim, it started to use the discourse of the axis of resistance to keep an entire defense line alive, especially after Arab uprisings in Middle East.

4.5. Conclusion

It can be said that the axis of resistance discourse emerged as a result of the desire of Iran to encounter the wars declared on the revolution or the wars likely to be declared as well as the possible conspiracy attempts on the outer defensive line. As a matter of fact, immediately after the 1979 Revolution, because the possibility that Iraqi army would even occupy Tehran after seizing Khorramshahr as a result of the attacks by Iraq with many of its allies came about. Such a result signalled a danger that both a nation and the Islamic revolution would be eliminated. Though there was no winner of the Iran–Iraq war, Iran, which was left alone in the region after the revolution, was always in search of alliance and wanted to establish an order of substitution by setting some faraway goals, like Palestine and Lebanon. If stated briefly, Iran was in steady relations with the regimes and organisations that were suitable for Iran’s ideology after the revolution. Therefore, the hypothesis that these relations would be ruined following the Arab awakening resulted in the existing and steady resistance culture being described as the axis of resistance. Therefore, it would be inadequate to explain this issue with denominational alliances or Iran’s expansionist desires in the region. The issue is real-political, a kind of attempt for Iran to get out of the loneliness that appeared after the revolution. As Iran was always in a cooperation and coordination with its chosen allies in this attempt, it caused this cooperation to be described as the axis of resistance in the course of time.

²¹⁷ Saless, S. S. Does Iran Really Control Yemen, Retrieved 2016 February, 01, from <http://www.almonitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/02/iran-yemen-houthis-axis-of-resistance.html>

CHAPTER 5

AXIS OF RESISTANCE IN FOREIGN POLICY OF IRAN

For much of modern history; revolutions have been a major factor, along with war, in the formation of world politics. Whatever their particular national or internal origins, all revolutions produce an ideology that also considers itself as related to the international sphere. All modern expressions of revolutions spatially imply a ‘world revolution’ and temporally imply that they be ‘permanent’ until their objective is reached. Revolutionary states have distinctive foreign policies because of the different goals they pursue and the methods they use. It is not possible for the revolution itself to think of locally. All revolutionary states, almost without exception, have sought to promote revolution in other states. These thoughts of the revolutionary countries have been explained in the literature by the concept of “revolutionary internationalism”.²¹⁸ To this concept, revolutions legitimate themselves in terms of an appeal to general, abstract principles that are not specific to a particular country or nation. These principles may be reason, freedom, independence, proletarian power, the dignity of peoples, or true Islam. Secondly, there is the view that their oppressors or enemies are constituted internationally.

After the revolution, Iranian Islamic Republic set off on a quest of alliance with several organisations and states both to export its revolution ideology²¹⁹ revealed with an anti-imperialist discourse, to support Palestinian and Lebanon people exposed to Israel attacks

²¹⁸ Halliday, F. 1999, *Revolution and World Politics*. London: McMillian Press Ltd., p. 56-161.

²¹⁹ Export of revolution: the active promotion of revolution in other countries by a revolutionary regime. Halliday, F, 1999

and to get rid of isolation and loneliness after the revolution. In this context, Syria, which Iran found close to itself, was counted in axis of evil in 2002 within the framework of the Bush doctrine. Hezbollah, in whose establishment Iran had a direct role and which was located in Lebanon and some organisations which were located in Palestine, like HAMAS, were added to the list of terrorist world organisations by imperialist states. On the other hand, the attempts of Saudi Arabia, which was worried about the effects of revolution to spread to regional states and to leap to itself, at suppressing the resistance movements in the leadership of Houthies in Yemen, caused Houthies to be mentioned in Iran's axis of resistance.

After all, the spread of the Arab uprisings, starting in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011, to Syria became a turning point in terms of the political history of the regional states. Such activities of imperialist countries, like the US and Israel, which supported the uprising in Syria, are perceived as an attempt to dismember Syria, which was the golden hoop of Palestinian and Lebanese resistance chain, and to break the backbone of the axis of resistance. In this sense, the armed uprisings occurring in Syria turned into a power struggle in a short time. Both the direct interference of Iran and its interference with this war through Hezbollah by taking side with Syria changed the destiny and the course of the war. Although Iran was in opposition with its ally, HAMAS, on Syrian policy, it didn't cut its aids for the purpose of separating the Palestinian cause from its strategic attempts and desired it to stay in the axis of resistance. All these activities that Iran performed in its foreign policy by using sectarian arguments, started to be interpreted by some regional and imperialist states as activities of spreading on an imperialistic base, resulting from the ancient Persian culture and boosting its influence in region. For this reason, in this chapter, we aim to analyse the reasons for the formation of axis of resistance that has dominated the Iranian foreign policy and its causes and effects which the axis of resistance has spread in the regional and global conjuncture.

5.1. Relations with Syria

To understand why Syria and Iran are close today, one must understand the history of Syrian-Iranian relations. Syria was the only country to welcome the Iranian Revolution that toppled Shah Reza Pahlavi in February 1979. President Hafez Assad sent a cable of warm

congratulations to Iran's new 76-year old leader Ayatollah al-Khomeini, who returned to Iran on 1 February 1979, and dispatched his information minister Ahmad Iskandar Ahmad to Tehran, with a Qur'an gift to the revolution's leader. In August 1979, then foreign minister Abd al-Halim Khaddam went to Tehran and said that the Iranian Revolution was "the most important event in our contemporary history". He proudly added that Syria had supported it "prior to its outbreak, during it, and after its triumph."²²⁰ because Syria supported the revolutionary leaders, such as Mustafa Chamran, Ibrahim Yazdi, Sadiq Kutbzade, who had fought against Shah in 1970s and also stationed in Lebanon before the revolution. This relation was firstly established by Musa Sadr, who organised the Shi'ism movement by going to Lebanon in the early 1970s.²²¹ Thus, Syria was one of the first countries that recognised the new regime after the revolution in Iran. Consequently, it is necessary to examine pre-revolution and post-revolution Iran-Syria relations more closely in order to better understand why Syria is today in Iranian axis of resistance.

Under these circumstances, it was natural that the Syrian Baas supported the emerging movement of Ayatollah Rouhullah Khomeini. The old adage: "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" proved true once again.²²² This was particularly true of Khomeini's movement which needed the support of a state as strong and important as Syria. Hafız Assad for his part had other considerations closer to home: domestic, Lebanese and regional interests.²²³

In such a regional concept, it is possible to say that Syria was stuck in a difficult situation in the end of 1970s, because in these dates intimacy of Egypt-Israel wherreted regional position of Syria, concussions on Syria's bilateral relations with PLO and Jordan occurred. Because Syria's had a wish of steady Arabian resistance side to be constituted.²²⁴ On the other hand Syria's alliance which was tried to create with far Arab countries such as South Yemen, Algeria and Libya could not be a solution due to the fact that strategically balances in Middle East chucked Syria away. Assad tried the reverse this trend by initiating, in October 1978, reconciliation with the rival Ba'th regime in Baghdad. But, by June 1979,

²²⁰ Mobayad, S. 2006, July, 12. Syria's One True Friend-Iran. Asia Times. Retrieved March 17, 2016, from http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/HG12Ak01.html

²²¹ Sinkaya, B. 2011, İnan-Suriye İlişkileri ve Suriye'de Halk İsyanı, [Iran-Syria Relations and the Popular Unrest in Syria], Orsam, Vol. 3, No. 33, Retrieved 2016 March, 17, from <https://www.academia.edu/>

²²² Alpher, J. 1980, "The Khomeini International" US Washington Quarterly, III, p. 58-63.

²²³ Olmert, Y. 1990, Iranian-Syrian Relations: Between Islam and Realpolitik, Israel: Tel Aviv University, p. 172.

²²⁴ Olmert, 1990

the two countries were again hostile to each other and Syria's regional standing suffered another major blow.²²⁵ The new Islamic Republic in Iran was anti-Western, anti-Egypt, anti-Iraq and anti-Israel and, generally-speaking, posed a challenge to conservative Arab regimes. An alliance with it, therefore, presented Syria with a realistic change to tilt the regional balance power in its favour. Besides, Iran was bound to exercise considerable influence over Lebanon's Shi'ites, Damascus' most trustworthy allies in Lebanon. Good relations between Syria and Iran could, therefore, ensure Damascus the on-going support of Lebanon Shi'ites. Syrian support for the new regime in Tehran, therefore, turned into an alliance.²²⁶

5.1.1. Iran-Syria Relations after the Revolution

According to Ruhullah Ramazani, who is one of the competent names in Iranian foreign policy, the alignment between Syria and Iran developed after the emergence of the Iranian revolution as a result of five major factors. First, as we mentioned above, the hostile relations between the Shah's regime and Syria provided a strong impetus for the post-revolutionary development of the Syrian-Iranian axis.

Second, the hostility between Saddam Hussein and Hafiz Assad helped to lead the building of a Damascus-Tehran axis. The fall of the Shah from power and Sadat from Arab grace because of signing Camp David treatment in 1978 had opened up new opportunities for the assertion of Iraqi Leaderships in the gulf area. Egypt's separate peace with Israel had intensified the Syrian strategic stake in Lebanon. When Israel annexed the Golan Heights Hafiz Assad seemed to have only one friend: Khomeini. Assad warmly welcomed the Iranian Revolution from the outset, and revolutionary Iran dispatched "volunteers" to support Syria against Israel.²²⁷

Third, the Khomeini's Iran and the Assad's Syria needed each other for both external and internal reasons. By taking the Americans Hostage after revolution, Iran had brought down on itself international economic sanctions. Left-out of the Egyptian-initiated peace process, Syria nevertheless could not easily make common cause with other Arab states that were

²²⁵ Olmert, 1990

²²⁶ Olmert, 1990

²²⁷ Ramazani, 1988, p. 166-168.

also angry with Egypt. Internally Iran faced chaotic revolutionary politics and Kurdish, Baluchi and other ethnic unrest and insurgency. On the other hand, the Ihvan-i Muslimin who had haunted Assad for a long time nearly killed him in July 1980. The Syrian suspected the Iraqis in the assassination attempt, just as the Iraqis had suspected the Syrians in the coup plot against Saddam Hussein about a year earlier. In addition to Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and even some factions of the PLO were suspected of supporting the anti-Assad Ihvan-i Muslimin.²²⁸

Fourth, although their resentment against Israel and the US was due to different reasons, Iran and Syria could join hands in their common struggle against both Zionism and imperialism. This “twin evil” of Khomeini’s ideological crusade furnished a perfect language for interaction and axis between Damascus and Tehran. Fifth, and finally, the Iraqi invasion of Iran provided opportunity to transform the growing rapprochement between Damascus and Tehran into a formal alliance. Between 12 and 16 March 1982 Syrian and Iranian officials in Tehran signed a ten-year economic agreement a closely related oil agreement, and (probably) a secret arms accord.²²⁹ After these agreements were signed, Syria closed its border with Iraq, on 8 April, and, more critically, shut off Iraqi oil exports through the Trans-Syrian oil pipeline, 10 April. In return, the Syrians received not only some discounted oil, and some free oil, from Iran, but also an amount of oil in excess of what they could use, which the Syrians refined at Homs and Banias for foreign export and mixed with their own heavier, sulphur-laden oil to sweeten it.²³⁰ Ali Akbar Valayati the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the term commented these economical agreements signed mutually as a tool to popularize by strengthening the political relations in struggle for imperialism mentioned by Valayati here means to corresponding to US, Israel, Iraq and briefly Syria-Iran alliance and Syria-Iran objectors in Lebanon.

Besides, that Israel had occupied a part of Lebanon in 1982 led to turn Syria-Iran brotherhood into almost an alliance. Syria, who had military in Lebanon but abstained from close combat with Israel, provided a group of Iranian revolutionary guards to enter Lebanon so as to support and educate Shi’ite militants fighting against Israel in the south

²²⁸ Ramazani, 1988

²²⁹ Ramazani, 1988

²³⁰ Ramazani, 1988

of Lebanon. Revolutionary guards assisted here to establish Hezbollah movement in the axis of Iran Revolution. After this date, Syria maintained being an important route and connection point for Iran's relations with other resistance organisations and transportation of logistic support to Hezbollah.²³¹ However both these two countries have different sources of anti-Israel. Syria's involvement in Lebanon and the Palestinian issue were an inevitable consequence of its pan-Arabism, regional ambitions, and conflict with Israel. After the 1979 revolution Iran became a key sponsor of resistance movements in the region, which placed the Islamic Republic at the centre of the Arab-Israeli conflict. For the Islamic Republic of Iran, being part of the struggle against Israel became part of its very *raison d'être*.²³²

However it is possible to observe some tensions at the Iran-Syria relations due to ideological differentiates. Throughout the 1980s, competition for influence in Lebanon was one of the sources of tension in Syrian-Iranian relations. For most of 1980s, Syria used Iran to counter Israeli and Western influence. However, it was uneasy about Iranian influence in Lebanon, partly because Syria has long considered Lebanon to be part of Greater Syria or, failing that, under Syrian influence.²³³ However, when Iran, with the establishment of Hezbollah, seemed to emerge as a rival, Syria moved swiftly to undermine Iran's influence. Thus when the Iran-Iraq War ended in August 1988, leaving Iran weakened, Syria moved to curtail Iran's influence. It supported AMAL against Hezbollah, which was supported by Iran, in the intra-Shia infighting, which broke out in Lebanon during 1988-1990, triggered by AMAL's attacks on Hezbollah in South Lebanon.²³⁴

Regional changes, triggered by Iraq's defeat and the Soviet demise in 1991, generated new disagreements between Syria and Iran again, notably regarding Arab-Israeli peace-making. Unlike Iran's ideologically determined and uncompromising approach toward the Palestinian issue, since 1991 Syria's position has become steadily more pragmatic. Syria's

²³¹ Sinkaya, 2011

²³² Heydarian, R. J. 2010 July, 19, "Iran-Turkey-Syria: an Alliance of Convenience" *Foreign Policy in Focus*, Retrieved March 15, 2016, from <http://fpif.org/iran-turkey-syria-an-alliance-of-convenience/>

²³³ Hunter, T. S. 2010, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era*. Oxford: an Imprint of ABC-CLIO LLC, 2010, p. 207, 208

²³⁴ Sasan, F. 2008, *The US and Iran: Sanctions, Wars and the Policy of Dual Containment*, London and New York: Routledge. p. 108

main goal has been to regain its lost territory. Consequently, it has been open to discussion with Israel in various contexts. Thus Syria participated in the Madrid Peace Conference in October 1992, and it has since been open to negotiations with Israel, even if meant forsaking Palestinian as Egypt had done.²³⁵ This Syrian attitude was criticized by Iran's vice president in 1991.²³⁶ Therefore, most likely, if Israel returned the Golan Heights and resolved a few other territorial issues, Syria would relinquish its links to Iran. This view is supported by Bashar Assad's comment when asked why Syria had relations with Iran and North Korea: "Well, I have no choice. I have to have some friends."²³⁷

Because of these differences, between 1988 and 1997, Syrian- Iranian relations remained strained. By 1997, the dissipation of hopes for Middle East peace generated by the Madrid Conference and the Oslo process, plus the Turkish-Israeli strategic partnership, which had undermined Syria's position, led Syria again to turn to Iran, thus leading to Hafez Assad's second visit to Iran in 1997, followed by Khatami's visit to Syria in 1999.²³⁸

One of the terms in which benefits and policies of Syria and Iran had become different was also seen after US intervention in Iraq in 2003. While Iran recognised new Iraq government and improved relations with them, Syria, opposing to intervention, supported Ba'th and Sunni movements quite a while. Although Iran wanted to be established an 'Islamic' regime under the control of Shi'ites in Iraq, Syria took a line in favor of a secular potency including Ba'th supporters as well.²³⁹ However, again after 2003, that Syrian – West relations had started to break down restored Iran-Syria axis. It is possible to show as the basic reason of these disrupted relations that US President J. W. Bush included Syria with Iran in "axis of evil" in 2003. On one hand that Syria had supported resistance in Iraq, on the other hand protected resisters in Palestine, maintained his military existence despite of Israel's regression in Lebanon caused a tension between Syria and West states. At last, Syria was held responsible for being murdered of Refik el-Hariri – the old Prime Minister of Lebanon in Beirut on February, 2015 and was forced to retreat from Lebanon. Upon breakdown of his relations with Western world, Syria tried eastwardly to strengthen his

²³⁵ Hunter, 2010, p. 208.

²³⁶ Hunter, 2010

²³⁷ Tabaar, M. 2006, August, 26 "Analysis: Breaking the Syria-Iran Alliance", BBC News.

²³⁸ Xinhua News Agency (2004 October, 6) "Syrian President in Tehran on Unexpected Visit", 1 August 1997, "Khatami Due in Syria on Thursday", IRNA.

²³⁹ Bhalla, R. 2010, October, 14 "Syria, Hezbollah and Iran: An Alliance in Flux." Retrieved March 03, 2016, from https://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20101013_syria_hezbollah_iran_alliance_flux

relations with India, China and Russia.²⁴⁰ Syria took the greatest support from Iran in this process. The while crisis came out towards to top, Syria Prime Minister Naci el- Itri showed that axis between Damascus and Tehran had been still strong standing by going Tehran. Iran, denying the accusations about Syrian government, supported to Syrian government by expressing that they were in solidarity with Syria.²⁴¹

After Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who latched on a radical discourse in Foreign Policy in 2005 had come into power, Iran and Syria got much closer. Assad was the first president who visited Ahmadinejad and referred importance of Syria-Iran relations by saying that “common threads towards Iran and Syria necessitates for both two states to act together more than ever”. At his visit to Damascus on Jan 2006, Ahmadinejad got together with representatives of HAMAS, Islamic Jihad, and other Palestinian “resistance” organizations as well as Assad, Hasan Nasrallah- the leader of Hezbollah and strengthened the “axis of resistance”. The “axis of resistance” which Iran had played first chair attracted all the attentions since HAMAS had won the Palestine elections in 2006 and Israel had been unsuccessful at martial intervention against Hezbollah on July 2006. In the same period in Iraq, establishment of government under the control of Shi’ites and under the thumb of Iran worried regional rivals of Iran. This formation, which Iran and Syria named as resistance side, was named as axis of Shi’ite by the rival of leader states. Rise of Iran-Syria axis threatened status quo-sided powers in region, benefits of West in region and security of Israel. For this reason, objector of Iran-Syria axis- namely status-quoist conservative Arab regimes, US/West and Israel diverged into the search of weakening of “axis of resistance” so as to stop the rise of this axis. Three policies shine out in this searching; blockade of Iran, blockade of Hezbollah and removing Syria from this axis by following engagement policy with Syria.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Mobayad, 2006, July, 12

²⁴¹ Sinkaya 2011

²⁴² Sinkaya 2011

5.1.2. Iran Syria Relations Following the Arab Riots

The “convenience marriage”²⁴³, made between Iran and Syria was replaced by “destiny companionship” with the leap of the Arab riots, which started in Tunisia in late 2010s, to Syria. This leap turned into a civil war a short while ago and then into a war of substitution, in which a large number of international actors participated. In this regard, the official spokesman of the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated, before the riot started in Syria, that the transformation in the Arab world should come over to Syria as well and that Syrians really wanted to stand up against the Syrian regime, which didn't want peace with Israel. ²⁴⁴ 2 days after the statement, Netanyahu pledged that the Iran-Syria terror axis, which equips HAMAS with weapons, would be split up.²⁴⁵ In the first week after the riots started, US made a call to Bashar Assad to step down. On 25 March 2011, the American Defense Secretary Robert Gates demanded Syria to implement the Egyptian model, the Army not to open fire on the demonstrators and the president to step down.²⁴⁶ In a statement on March 31st, American Senators John McCain and Joe Lieberman made a

²⁴³ Sinkaya 2011

²⁴⁴ After the Arab riots starting in 2011, Syrian land became the scene of the rioting attempts to change the regime. The Syrian people initially gave its support for to the regime, which they call “mafiaocracy” to change. This administration held diverse sects together, sometimes with force, sometimes with their own consent and distributed economic benefits without neglecting its people much, protecting the people who weren't involved in political activities. A common feature of these riots was that they didn't have a leader, were composed of fragmentary groups, and weren't able to unite within them. However, it can be suggested that the Ihvan movement, which played an important role at the beginning of the Syrian riots, had a sectarian nature, and this cannot be explained by the Alawi character of the regime; on the contrary, it had the purpose of establishing a theocratic state based on the ideology of the ideology of Sunni Islam. Therefore, the riot could be easily manipulated by imperialist powers, and Syria served as a scene for global and regional wars as well as for shooting wars. Thus the majority of the Syrian people struggled for the regime to survive, which they were opposed in the beginning, but they had to pay for this support in the form of dying, being deprived of their homes, being tortured, being kidnapped, being raped, staying hungry and being eliminated. For detail see: Karabat Ayşe, *Suriye Savaşları*, Timaş Yayınları 2013 İst., Taştekin Fehim, *Suriye-Yıkıl Git, Diren Kall!*- İletişim Yayınları,2015 İst., Cleveland William, *Modern Ortadoğu Tarihi*, Agora Kitaplığı, 2008 İst.

²⁴⁵ Dursunoğlu, A & Eren, İ. 2014, *Suriye'de Vekalet Savaşı*, [Proxy War in Syria], İstanbul: Önsöz Yay. 2014

²⁴⁶ 2011, March, 17, *السوري الايراني: سنكسر محور الارهاب - السوري الايراني*, [Netanyahu: We will break the Root of the Iran-Syria Terror Axis], 7. Day Newspaper, Retrieved 2016 March, 26, from <http://www.youm7.com/story/2011/3/17/السوري-سنكسر-محور-الارهاب-السوري-الايراني:نتنياهو>

call to the American Administration to support the Syrian opposition against Bashar Assad.²⁴⁷

In short, following the transformations experienced in Tunisia and Egypt, the opponents as well as the Western World made efforts for winds of change to head towards Syria because a change in administration in Syria has been on the agenda of US and its allies because of its relations with Iran, Hezbollah and HAMAS.²⁴⁸ Accordingly, from this perspective, the end of the Assad regime would be the greatest gain of US. The regime is a bloody-handed dictatorship which is the only Arab ally of Iran, the supporter of Hezbollah, HAMAS and the other Palestinian “terrorist” organizations and a threat to the peace and integrity of the land in Lebanon. What's more, because American military intervention in Iraq caused the death of many American soldiers unnecessarily, the same experience shouldn't be repeated in Syria. Instead, the people should fight to topple the regime with their own resources, and US should shorten the life of the regime through effective diplomacy and economic sanctions. Only by making such a decisive effort and displaying such a stance can a strong administration based on democratic principles be established in Syria. ²⁴⁹

US aiming to topple the Assad administration with the support of certain countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, France and England set up the “Groups of Friends of Syrian’s People” bypassing the resolutions of the Arab League and the United Nations. Thinking of taking the issue to the point of military intervention on the grounds that Assad used chemical gas against his people, President Obama stepped back by presenting the resolution of active intervention to the approval of the Senate because of such reasons as the uncertainty as regards whether chemical gas was used by the opposition or by the Assad regime and due to the increasing concern that groups similar to el-Qaeda are becoming more efficient in the field. Russia, which protected Syria in the international field throughout the crisis and which kept transferring weapons to Syria within the framework of bilateral military agreements, became directly involved in the war in

²⁴⁷ 2011 March, 30. Arabic rt. غيتس يتعين على سورية الاقتداء بالنموذج المصري [Gates: Syria Must Follow Egyptian Model] Retrieved 2016 March, 26, from <https://arabic.rt.com/news/66204المصري بالنموذج الاقتداء سورية على يتعين غيتس/>

²⁴⁸ Ilaf News, 2011 March, 31, Senator Mc.Cain and Liberman call for Obama to support Syrian opposition, Retrieved March 26, 2016 from <http://elaph.com/Web/news/2011/3/643032.html> ماكين وليبرمن ان اوباما بدعم المعارضة السور يطالب

²⁴⁹ Abrams, E. 2011 October. American Options in Syria, Policy. Innovation. Memorandum No.9. Retrieved March 25, 2016, from <http://www.cfr.org/syria/american-options-syria/p26226>

coordination with Iran in a way to change to the rules of the game in August 2015. As a consequence, Russia's active intervention helped Bashar Assad to return from rope despite the upset balance against Assad since 2012.

On the other hand, Iran which welcomed the public riots taking place in Egypt and Tunisia as Islamic reawakening, regarded as a plot on the resistance axis and stood by the Syrian administration and has been doing so ever since, because if the Assad regime should fall down, Iran will not only lose the most important ally in the region but also be deprived of its connection with Hezbollah, which is of great importance in its foreign policy and defense strategy. Therefore, unlike the other countries in which Arab revolutions have been so effective, Iran remained indifferent to the opposition movement in Syria and accordingly made every effort for the Syrian administration to sustain its stability.²⁵⁰ The leader Khamenei clearly expressed the attitude of Iran in the Syrian crisis in June 2011 with the following statement: "Our stance is obvious; wherever there is an Islamic, populist and anti- American movement, we will support it." Without mentioning Syria, he continues with the following statement: "If a movement is provoked by US or by Zionists anywhere in the world, we will not support that moment. If US or Zionists intervene anywhere in the world to topple the existing regime or to occupy that country, we will stand on the opposite side."²⁵¹

However, according to Iranian authorities, what holds Syria in the resistance front is not only the Assad administration but also the Syrian people themselves. Therefore, the fact that the Assad administration stood up against Zionism and claimed the Palestinian cause has led to the formation of strong ties with Syrian people, who share the same thoughts. Iran believes that the Assad administration will survive thanks to these ties. The weak, disorganized opposition allegedly supported by foreigners has reinforced the belief of Iranian authorities that Bashar Assad will survive this calamity.²⁵²

From the perspective of Iran, the Syrian opposition is composed of three different sectors. First, there is really a movement of the people who seek reforms, liberty and democracy.

²⁵⁰ Bigdeli, A. 2011 August, 09, "Iran's Irreversible Path in Syria", Iran Diplomacy, Retrieved April, 20, 2016 from <http://www.payvand.com/news/11/aug/1082.html>.

²⁵¹ Robin, P. 2011, August, 15 "Iran sees ally Syria surrounded by US, Arab "wolves", Reuters, Retrieved March 21, 2016, from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/15/us-syria-iran-idUSTRE77E1E320110815>

²⁵² Sinkaya, 2011.

The demands of the Syrian people for reforms, such as justice, liberty and free elections are justifiable and thus should be taken seriously by the administration. For this reason, Iran is pleased with the reform program of Bashar Assad.²⁵³ On the other hand, according to Iran, there are Selefi groups in the Syrian opposition supported by foreigners besides people's legitimate moment. It's claimed that the Selefis who have fought against the Assad administration for years and who have close relationships with famous Ihvan-i Muslimin have penetrated into the movement of people which really emerged with a demand for democracy and reform and aims to topple the administration of Bashar Assad. Receiving financial and logistic support from Saudi Arabia, Selefis took up arms, set up teams of death and started "terror" activities against security units.²⁵⁴ The third group is the anti-regime opposition which fights against the Assad administration with the help of foreign support. A Wikileaks file released in April 2011 revealed that the American Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been secretly supporting Syrian anti-regime opponents since 2006.²⁵⁵ These people who try to direct the real movement of the people with the foreign support took advantage of the turmoil in Syria and provoked foreign powers to intervene in the country. The legal ground of the support provided by Iran, which is charged with being an invader, is the defense agreement it made with Damascus.²⁵⁶

Also, the demonstrations of protest in Arab revolutions broke out almost simultaneously in January 2011, but the demonstrations in Syria started three months later. According to Iranian authorities, this shows that these demonstrations were a project carried out by foreign countries. the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Middle East and Persian Gulf general manager, Hussein Amirabdollahian, claimed that, because the demonstrations in Syria started primarily in the countryside and in the border areas in a dispersed way, the effect of foreign support is evident in these demonstrations, unlike the Arab Revolutions in which anti-regime protests intensified in capital cities and metropolitan areas.²⁵⁷ In parallel with this claim, the Beirut ambassador of Iran, Gazanfer Ruknabadi, argued that the

²⁵³ 2011 July, 7, "Iran says expects Syria to respond to public demands", Tehran Times, Retrieved March 22, 2016, from http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=243724

²⁵⁴ Hanizadeh, H. 2011 April, 9, "Syria in the throes of religious war", Retrieved 2016 March, 23, from <http://edition.presstv.ir/detail/fa/190923.html>

²⁵⁵ 2011 April, 18, "US secretly backed Syrian opposition groups", Reuters. Retrieved 2016 March, 23, from <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-syria-wikileaks-idUSTRE73HOE720110418>

²⁵⁶ Taştekin, F. 2015, Suriye-Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!-, [Syria- Break down, Resist and Stay!], İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015, p. 56.

²⁵⁷ Turkish IRIB, US trying to break Syria from Resistance Axis, Retrieved March 23, 2016, from <http://turkish.irib.ir>

demonstrators in Syria resorting to using guns are a clear indication that Syrian demonstrators are not revolutionaries but in fact the agents of foreign powers.²⁵⁸

Again from the perspective of Iran, by taking advantage of the crisis in Syria, Iran's international rivals aimed not only to put pressure on the Assad administration but also to put an end to the interests of Iran and Syria. Saudi Arabia, Gulf countries and Western countries, being instrumental in the riots, attempted to take Syria out of the resistance axis, led by Iran, and to set up a regime connected to their own. Consequently, according to Iranian authorities, the opposition movement in Syria supported by foreigners is nothing but a renewed attack on the resistance axis, so defending the administration of Assad is the most important element in keeping up the resistance axis for Iran.

Iran has also tried to provide the Assad administration with international support through diplomatic channels. Iranian leaders told their collocutors that the instability in Syria would make the whole region unstable and lead to the intervention of foreign powers in the region, demanding them to help Bashar Assad to carry out the reforms. The head of the Parliamentary National Security and Foreign Relations Commission, Alaaddin Burujerdi, demanded in a visit to Cairo on 16 August 2011 that the countries of the region should help Syria to settle its domestic problems and to support Syria against American or NATO intervention. The spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ramin Mihmanperest, drew attention to the collaboration between the countries of the region in order to ensure security and stability in Syria. Likewise, when he telephoned the Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan on August 22nd, 2011, Iranian president Ahmadinejad pointed out that the intervention of Western countries in the Affairs of the region made the situation more complicated and demanded closer cooperation to be established between the two countries for the solution of the regional problems. Allegedly, it is the influence of Iran that causes the Maliki Administration in Iraq to give support to the Bashar Assad administration. What's more, it was alleged that Iran had withdrawn the support it provided to HAMAS because HAMAS refused to support the Assad administration.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ Sinkaya, 2011

²⁵⁹ Sinkaya, 2011

Presenting its support to the Syrian administration in the escalating civil war on the other hand, Iran didn't neglect to present proposals of a diplomatic solution for the crisis to come to an end. In a comment he made in the Istanbul Embassy of Iran on December 28th about the scenario of Iran to take Syria out of the crisis in 2012, the spokesman of Iranian Foreign Affairs committee, Ramin Mehmanperest remarked that the armed conflict should be mutually terminated and a national dialogue in which all sides would be involved should be ensured. The spokesman demanded that a transitional government should be established with the participation of all sides, a lucid and fair election should be conducted under international supervision, relief aids should be transported to the areas where the crisis involving humans is prevailing and the media should be allowed to access to the realities in the field.²⁶⁰

Because of the support it has given to the Syrian Administration, the position of Iran has become upset in the Islamic world. While not leaving Syria alone on the one hand, Iran made attempts for the crisis to be solved through dialogue but wasn't taken seriously. Iranian authorities came together with certain figures of opposition, such as Heysem Menna, who objected to armed or foreign intervention in October 2011 and attempt at organizing a conference for the solution of the crisis but was rejected with the reply that we don't trust Iran.²⁶¹ Iran, failing in its attempts at a diplomatic solution to the Syrian crisis, chose to undertake a military role in Syria by June 2013 and give direct military support to the Syrian Army. This paramilitary situation was organised by the militia in the East connected in part to the leader Khamenei and in part to Ayatollah Sistani and by Hezbollah in the West. The number of the militia organized under Syrian National Defense Forces was estimated to be around 40,000 in 2015.²⁶² This military formation served as an important source of morale and motivation for the Syrian administration which lost around 100,000 soldiers during the Civil War.

The fact that some of this militia power was called back by Ayatollah Sistani when DAESH occupied Mosul in 2014 left the Syrian Army in a difficult situation. Also, at the

²⁶⁰ Taştekin, 2015, p. 227-228.

²⁶¹ Spencer, R. "Iranian officials meet with Syrian opposition", Daily Telegraph, 2011 Nov., 14 Retrieved March 22, 2016 from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/8889824/Iranian-officials-meet-with-Syrian-opposition.html>

²⁶² Orhan, O. "Shi'ite militias and Political Solution in Syria", Orsam, 2015 May, Vol. 7, p. 68. Retrieved 2016 March, 26, from http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Yazilar/Dosyalar/201562_11oytunorhan.pdf

end of 2015, Iran lost hundreds of its fighters, at least 9 of whom were generals.²⁶³ All this sacrifice which Iran made in favor of the Syrian administration led to the Russia-Iranian rapprochement because of the military aerial support which Russia gave to keep up the Syrian Administration due to its commitment towards the end of 2015. The regional cooperation between the two countries became more obvious with the Syrian problem. These two countries had already been in coordination concerning Syria for a long time. Therefore, Iran explicitly supported the Russian military operations in Syria that had started in September 2015. In addition, Iraq, Iran, Russia and Syria set up a Communication Centre in Baghdad to ensure the coordination in fight against terrorism. Also Russia paved the way for Iran to carry out diplomatic attempts in settling the Syrian crisis, and Iran which hadn't been invited to the negotiations before participated in the talks in Vienna for this purpose for the first time.²⁶⁴

To be brief, the Iran-Syria relationship, which started following the revolution in the form of a “convenience marriage,” turned into a unity of destiny when the Arab riots in 2011 caused the Civil War in Syria. Used to summarize the political battles in the Middle East for long, the saying that “Iran has always been a friend of Syria, but Syria hasn't always been a friend of Iran” gave rise to an alliance after the Arab riots leapt to Syria, because Iran which led the axis of resistance in this process, presented the Syrian Administration with all kinds of material, military, logistic and diplomatic support either directly or through Hezbollah. In this way, Syria, under the rule of Assad, who had managed to remain in power thanks to this remarkable support by Iran, came under Iranian influence. US which couldn't obtain the desired result of toppling the regime apart from weakening the Syrian Administration seems to be forced to give its regional superiority over to Russia, whereas Israel, which is an extension of the West into the Middle East watched the Syrian government melt day by day in delight. It can be expected in the following period that Syria will declare itself to be a part of the resistance axis if it can overcome the risk of being split up.

5.2. Relations with Hezbollah

²⁶³ 2015, December, 30. TRT haber, Retrieved March 26, 2016, from

<http://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/suriyede-3-yil-icerisinde-9-iranli-general-olduruldu-219361.html>

²⁶⁴ Sinkaya, B. “Iran-Russia Relations and Putin’s Visit to Tehran”, Orsam, 2015 October, 24, Retrieved March 26, 2016, from <http://www.orsam.org.tr/en/showArticle.aspx?ID=2917>

The political scientists who want to explain the Lebanon Hezbollah and Shi'ism attribute the revolutionary awakening movements in Lebanon either to the arrival of Musa Sadr, a charismatic man of religion, in Lebanon from Iraq in 1959 or to the occupation of Lebanon by Israel in 1978. However, the connections through the Shi'ite scholars and men of religion between Amil mountain (Syria), Iran and Necef (Iraq) are older than 500 years because the Shi'ite faith was introduced as "a deviant belief" with the Mongol invasion in the Middle East and the Shi'ites were faced with oppression and was torture in every age.²⁶⁵ Yet, despite the casualties and cruelty, the Madrasah tradition of Shi'ism managed to survive in small market towns and villages on Amil Mountain. These Madrasahs reached a peak in Amil in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The immigration of Shi'ites scholars to Iran, Iraq and Mecca started in this period. When the Safavid dynasty (1501-1772) started to impose the conversion from Sunni Islam to Shi'ism, the leaders of the Safavid dynasty turned to the Shi'ites in Amil Mountain to help establish theology expertise and new education institutions.²⁶⁶ In this way, a close association started between the Shi'ite scholars in Lebanon and Iran and the theology school in Necef that emerged towards the middle of the sixteenth century. This cooperation has been continuing even today.

Such organization of the Shi'ites in Lebanon occurred within the framework of the spread of the practical social measures in the second part of the twentieth century. While extensive social relief services led by such religious men Imam Seyyid Musa Sadr and Ayatollah Fadlullah helped meet the basic requirements which South Lebanon was deprived of, these organizations became instrumental in enhancing the awareness among the Shi'ites and creating "a culture of resistance". This heritage continues to be reflected even today in the broad social programs of Hezbollah. The Shi'ites organized around the social programs in South Lebanon turned into a military Shi'ites resistance movement due to the Civil War experienced in 1974, and the Israeli occupations in 1978 and 1982. Musa Sadr and his followers formed their own militia force, called AMAL, which was trained and provided for by PLO.²⁶⁷ The 1979 Iranian Islamic revolution influenced this formation in an exciting way and inspired them a great feeling of strength. In short, emerging with

²⁶⁵ Crooke, 2009, p. 180.

²⁶⁶ Hourani, A. 2006, *From Jabal Amil to Persia, Distant Relations*, London: Oxford, p. 52.

²⁶⁷ Crooke, 2009, p. 186.

the aim of defeating Israel after it occupied Lebanon again in 1982 and forcing it to retreat, the moment of Hezbollah was modified by the Iranian Islamic revolution, and it can be defined as an organization of Islamic resistance characterized by Shi'ism.

The idea that a result would be obtained by organizing local troops instead of providing direct military and logistic support in order to free the part of Lebanon occupied by Israel from occupation had become dominant in Iran, which regards the liberation of Palestine as a religious duty. At the same time, this idea shaped the foundations on which Hezbollah was set up. The Iranian ambassador of the period in Syria, Ayatollah Muhteshemi, summarizes the establishment process of Hezbollah in this way:

“After the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Ayatollah Khomeini changed his mind about sending large forces to Syria and Lebanon. I was really worried about Syria and Lebanon. I went to Tehran and met with Ayatollah Khomeini. As I was worried about Lebanon and enthusiastic about the idea of sending forces to Syria and Lebanon, I started talking about our responsibilities and what was going on in Lebanon. The imam cooled me down and said the forces we send to Syria and Lebanon would need huge logistical support. The only remaining way is to train the Shi'a men there, and so Hezbollah was born.”²⁶⁸ These remarks by Muhteshemi clearly reveal the role of Iran in the establishment process of Hezbollah.

Hezbollah has gone through a transformation phase into a mainstream political party in Lebanon as a result of the ending of the Civil War in Lebanon with the Taif agreement in 1991. The continuation of Israel's occupation policies in South Lebanon, the activities of the South Lebanon Army in favor of Israel and the failure in the Middle East peace talks pushed Hezbollah and therefore Iran forward as the greatest powers in the region. After Israel made a decision to withdraw its troops unilaterally from Lebanon, Hezbollah became one of the major groups challenging the presence of Israel in the region in the period between 1994 and 2000. The power that forced Israel to retreat from South Lebanon in

²⁶⁸ 2008 May, 18, The Making of Hezbollah, Es-harq-al Awsat, Retrieved 2016 March, 30, from <http://english.aawsat.com/2008/05/article55258890/the-making-of-hezbollah>,

2000 was tens of suicidal attempts.²⁶⁹ Additionally, it is recorded that Hezbollah carried out twenty-one operations before this retreat.²⁷⁰ Also in this period, as a result of Hezbollah opening cannon fire on northern Israel periodically, Israel reciprocated harshly and it caused the relationship between Iran and Lebanon to be strengthened further.²⁷¹

Some analysts have interpreted that the American invasion of Iraq in March 2003 had some implications in eliminating Iran and Syria from Lebanon for the purpose of remapping the Middle East. The incident lending support to this point of view is the law draft approved by the American Congress in June 2003 that demanded the domination of Syria over Lebanon to become accountable. With the draft becoming a law, the sanctions on Syria were increased in number and severity, and Syria was forced to withdraw its troops from Lebanon. Afterwards, the assassination of Rafiq Hariri, the president of Lebanon, in 2005 was associated directly with Hezbollah and Iran.²⁷² Under this pretext, the Duriads, Christians and Sunni Muslims in Lebanon were provoked to riot in order to eliminate the influence of Syria and Iran in Lebanon.

The attacks of Israel on Lebanon in July 2006 on the grounds that Hezbollah had killed five Israeli soldiers and kidnapped two was considered to be an attempt of Israel to stamp out Hezbollah in Lebanon,²⁷³ because, according some observers, Israel had been planning to attack Hezbollah before the incident of kidnapping.²⁷⁴ 6 days after the war started, the chairman of the Iranian Parliament Gholam Ali Haada Adel approved Hezbollah's resistance and stated that the blood of Imam Khomeini had been turning into flames in the nein of Hasan Nasrallah.²⁷⁵ Likewise, leader Khamenei encourage the resistance of Hezbollah, and in a letter he sent to Nasrallah two days after the war started wrote " You have a hard war ahead, but if you resist, you will triumph."²⁷⁶ The support Iran provided to Hezbollah during its war with Israel didn't remain just on a discursive basis. Israeli sources

²⁶⁹ Robert, P. 2005, *Dying to Win* New York: Random House p. 265-81.

²⁷⁰ 2006 June 1, "Hezbollah Attacks along Israel's Northern Border May 2000-June 2006", Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Retrieved April 4, 2016, from www.mfa.gov.il/

²⁷¹ Hunter, 2010, p. 212.

²⁷² Naseer, H. A. 2005 February, 22, "Remapping the Middle East: The Politics of Hariri's Assassination", Counterpunch, Retrieved April 05, 2016, from: <http://www.counterpunch.org/aruri02222005.html>.

²⁷³ Efraim, I. 2007, "How Israel Bungled the Second Lebanon War", Middle East Quarterly, Middle East Forum, Retrieved April 08, 2016, from <http://www.meforum.org/1686/how-israel-bungled-the-second-lebanon-war>

²⁷⁴ Naseer, 2005

²⁷⁵ Rubin, M. 2009, *The Enduring Iran-Syria-Hezbollah axis*. Middle East Forum, Retrieved April 08, 2016, from <http://www.meforum.org/2531/iran-syria-hezbollah-axis>

²⁷⁶ Rubin, 2009

claim that roughly 10,000 to 12,000 katyushya rockets which Hezbollah launched to Israel had been obtained directly from Iranian military stocks.²⁷⁷ Displaying resistance at the end of the war despite the insistent attacks of Israel, Hezbollah succeeded in forcing Israel into a ceasefire.

While several Arab countries accused Hezbollah and its protectors, Iran and Syria, of causing harm to Lebanon and inflicting pain on the people of Lebanon, Hasan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, became a hero for Arab peoples, and the Iranian prestige in Lebanon reached a peak.²⁷⁸ This prestige played an important role in the balances in the domestic politics of Lebanon, and Hezbollah as a political party obtained a stronger position in the Lebanese Parliament. Besides, this prestige helped Mahmud Ahmedinejad, the Iranian president, to become more powerful as regards his hard-line behaviour in the resistance policies in Palestine.²⁷⁹

Despite its close relations with Hezbollah, Iran never refrained from the unity of Lebanon and its territorial integrity. It gave all political groups in Lebanon messages of the friendship all the time. Although Hezbollah's allies failed to achieve the desired result in the elections for Lebanese parliament in 2009, Iran stated that the results of the elections were the will of the Lebanese people and that they should be respected. Such sort of approaches reveals that Iran has no intention to dominate over all of Lebanon by means of Hezbollah. When we examine the whole of the Iran-Hezbollah relations, it can be easily seen that Iran hasn't made any concessions in supporting Hezbollah, in whose establishment it had pioneered within the Liberty-for-Palestine principle of Imam Hussein.

5. 2 .1. Entrance of Hezbollah in the Syrian War

Just like that of Iran, the outlook of Hezbollah on the uprisings emerging in Arab countries during the process called "Arab Spring" has changed when it comes to its ally, the Syrian government. Supporting the people's riots in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Yemen and Bahrain, Iran didn't give any support to the riot which the opponents started in Syria. However, General Secretary of Hezbollah, Hasan Nasrallah, refuted the claims that Hezbollah sent

²⁷⁷ Rubin, 2009

²⁷⁸ Dan, M. & Sameh N. 2006 18, July "Hezbollah Winning over Arab Street", Christian Science Monitor, Retrieved April 08, 2016 from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0718/p01s03-wome.html>

²⁷⁹ Hunter, 2010, p. 208.

military support to the Syrian Administration as soon as the civil war broke out and added that they would declare it openly if they sent any support.²⁸⁰ Saying that the settlement of the crisis in Syria should be left to Syrian, Nasrallah expressed that they supported the other riots because of those regimes' struggle with Israel and whether there were any attempts at reforms within the regime. Again for Nasrallah, it is to the benefit of US and Israel to change administration in Syria, that is, topple the existing administration and to set up an equitable administration.²⁸¹ The emails of Hillary Clinton, American Secretary of Foreign Affairs, which were leaked through Wikileaks seemed to verify this view by Nasrallah. According to these correspondences, toppling the government in Syria would benefit Israel and would deal a blow to the resistance axis in the fight between Israel and Iran. The correspondence started with the statement that "the best aid to Israel, which is campaigning against the growing nuclear capacity of Iran, is to assist the Syrian people in toppling Assad and pointed out that the negotiations to limit the nuclear capacity of Iran didn't eliminate Israel's concern about security and wouldn't be able to stop Iran's program to develop nuclear weapons"²⁸²

When the war was not over, General Secretary of Hezbollah, Hasan Nasrallah, said in a speech that he delivered on 25 May 2013 that "Syria is the backbone of the resistance, its supporter; the resistance will not stand still if a blow is dealt to its backbone. We are not ignorant and stupid enough to wait motionlessly and just watch a plot devised on us." Thus, he openly declared that Hezbollah had joined in the Syrian war and that they would gain victory. Stressing in his speech that the integrity of Syria is of great significance to Lebanon and that el-Qaeda-connected group accusing others of being heretics didn't enter Syria secretly, Nasrallah pointed out that these groups pose a great danger in geographical terms and that their intervention in the Syrian war wouldn't mean a foreign intervention.²⁸³

The participation of Hezbollah in the war was mainly due to the involvement of its long-standing rival, Israel, in the Syrian affairs because Israel, which struck Syria under the pretext of "the guns being transported to Hezbollah" at the end of January 2013 and at the

²⁸⁰ Dursunoğlu & Eren, 2014, p. 353.

²⁸¹ Yakın Doğu Haber, 2016 March, 19, ABD: Suriye yönetiminin devrilmesi İsrail için bir nimettir, [Overthrowing the Syrian government is a blessing for Israel], Retrieved March 22, 2016, from http://www.ydh.com.tr/HD14516_abd--suriye-yonetiminin-devrilmesi-israil-icin-nimettir-.html

²⁸² Yakın Doğu Haber, 2016 March, 19

²⁸³ Dursunoğlu & Eren.2014, p. 351.

beginning of May 2013 joined in the game under the pretext of providing the armed groups in the field with aerial support.²⁸⁴ In addition, the fact that the Syrian army captured a military vehicle²⁸⁵ equipped with improved communication devices in a district of Kusayr, which was cleared of armed groups revealed that the support Israel gave to the opponents wasn't only restricted to an aerial umbrella. Therefore, Israel which seemed neutral to the Syrian crisis for some time and waited for an enemy to kneel down became directly involved in the proxy war in Syria with the air raids it conducted on critical targets.

For the same purpose, Israel, which led the way in some places on the Golan Heights for Syrian opponents with cannon fires had roughly 1000 wounded opposing fighters treated in its hospitals in 14 months, mainly members of el-Nusra²⁸⁶, until June 2014 The UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) shed light on the collaboration between Israel and opposing fighters Syria in its periodical reports.²⁸⁷ UNDOF shed light on the collaboration between Israel and opposing fighters Syria in its periodical reports.²⁸⁸ According to the report dated 10 June 2014 which contains the affairs between March 11th and May 28th, 2014, Israeli soldiers got into contact with the armed rebels on the Golan Heights fifty-nine times. During these contacts, the rebels passed across the cease-fire line and carried 89 wounded rebels to the territory under Israeli control. A report by UNDOF dated 12 June 2013 points out that Israeli support to the armed rebels had started earlier. According to the report, the Israeli official on the Golan Heights reported to UNDOF that 20 wounded militants were treated by Israel.²⁸⁹ As a matter of fact, The Israeli president, Netanyahu, expressed in person that they had assaulted Syria tens of times for the purpose of preventing Hezbollah from getting hold of the weapons which would upset the subtle balance.²⁹⁰ These reports, which were presented to the UN Security Council, didn't attract

²⁸⁴ Dursunoğlu & Eren.2014, p. 379.

²⁸⁵ Yakın Doğu Haber, Retrieved March 22, 2016, from http://www.ydh.com.tr/HD11850_suriye-ordusu-kusayrda-bir-israil-araci-ele-gecirdi.html

²⁸⁶ FP. Exclusive: June, 11, 2011, Israel is tending to wounded Syrian rebels, Retrieved June 22, 2016, from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/06/11/exclusive-israel-is-tending-to-wounded-syrian-rebels/>

²⁸⁷ Taştekin, 2015, p. 397.

²⁸⁸ Taştekin, 2015

²⁸⁹ Taştekin, 2015

²⁹⁰ Yosi, M. 2016 April, 11, Analysis; PM's admission to Syrian attacks leave more questions than answers, Jerusalem Post, Retrieved April 12, 2016, from <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Analysis-PMs-admission-to-Syrian-attacks-leave-more-questions-than-answers-450925>

enough attention due to the fact of immunity is provided to Israel by the international system although the reports revealed the cooperation between el-Qaeda and Israel.²⁹¹

Such cooperation between Israel and Syrian opponents led the opponents to become more interested in Israel in 2014. In a statement he gave to a newspaper in March 2014, one of the leading figures of the opposition, Kemal Lebvani, remarked, “Why shouldn’t we sell the Golan Heights to Israel? Such a deal would be better than losing Syria and the Golan Heights.”²⁹² Likewise, in a speech he made at a conference over Syria, the Israeli Defense Secretary, Moshe Yalon said, “If I were asked to work with Iran or DAESH, I would choose to work with DAESH.”²⁹³ This statement seems to clearly explain why Hezbollah actually joined in the Syrian War.

In line with this, Hezbollah and Iran were faced with assault in Syria from Israel during a period when they were diplomatically and militarily vulnerable. Israeli forces that were stationed on the Golan Heights struck a military convoy in the province of Qunaytra on 18 January 2015 and killed a commander of the Iranian Revolution Guardians and 6 militants of Hezbollah. One of the victims, Muhammad Ahmad Isa, was responsible for Hezbollah operations in Syria and Iraq. Jihad Mugniye, who was killed in the assault, was the son of Imad Mugniye, one of the Hezbollah’s commanders, who was assassinated in Damascus in 2008. Although Israel, whose record was filled with assassinations abroad, claimed that the Iranian Commander was not their target, this was the first time it had openly killed an Iranian official in Syria. The IRGC explained that the mission of Allahdadi was “consultancy to the Syrian government.” Then, general commander of the Iranian Revolution Guardians commandership, Ali Caferi, remarked that “Zionists should wait for their destructive lightning”, the retaliation came from Israel.²⁹⁴

These affairs show that Hezbollah’s war, which it had been waging against Israel since it was founded and which turned into a shooting war in some places, in fact continued uninterruptedly although Hezbollah was concerned about keeping up the Syrian

²⁹¹ Taştekin, 2015, p. 398.

²⁹² Miller, E. 2014 March, 17, Syrian dissident wants Israeli help, offer Golan in exchange, Retrieved March 23, 2016, from <http://www.timesofisrael.com/syrian-dissident-wants-israeli-help-offer-golan-in-exchange/>

²⁹³ Tevhidi Gündem, 2016 Jan, 20. Yalon: IŞİD’i seçerim, [Yalon: I prefer DAESH]. Retrieved March, 23, 2016 from <http://www.tevhidigundem.org/mose-yalon-isisdi-secerim-12748h.htm>

²⁹⁴ Taştekin, 2015, p. 396.

Government after the Arab riots. Eventually Hezbollah was declared by the Arab League to be a terrorist organization and Iran was condemned in the Islamic cooperation conference in Istanbul in April 2016 on such grounds as meddling with the domestic affairs of certain countries and providing assistance and financing to a variety of terrorist organizations. It is understood that the Gulf countries accepting the legitimacy of Israel and always remaining in cooperation and coordination with Israel sought to isolate Hezbollah for these reasons. Accordingly, the increasing influence of Iran in the region under the title of the “resistance axis” overshadows the expansionist policies of Israel and evolves into a stage at which the other countries of the region constantly feel under the threat of Israel

5.3 Relations with HAMAS

Both HAMAS and el-Fetih, with which Yaser Arafat was associated, sprung up from the Egyptian-centered organization of Ihvan-i Muslimin. We can define the philosophy behind its foundation as a movement of objection to the monarchy and to the system of exploitation which the West imposed. In this sense, the fact that HAMAS, as well as Iran and Hezbollah, is pronounced within the resistance axis results from the mentality of radical objection jointly to the imperial system of exploitation of de facto occupation. Indeed, following the occupation of the Palestinian land by Jewish settlers in the 1930s and the ensuing conflicts, the Palestinian cause became a vulnerable issue not only for the Ihvan-i Muslimin but also for the ordinary Arab people.

The Palestinian Bureau of the Ihvan-i Muslimin was opened in Gaza towards the middle of the 1930s. From that date to the late 1980s, Muslim Brothers refrained from military acts in Palestine and focused on education and aids without displaying a political stance. However, the idea of armed fight emerging in the organization in 1956 led to the birth of el-Fetih movement pioneered by Yaser Arafat in 1958, and this movement parted with the Muslim Brothers.²⁹⁵ However, the failure of el-Fetih to generate policies leading to a solution to the dispute with Israel in the Palestinian cause and its generating policies that implied it was ready for compromise led to social dissatisfaction. This dissatisfaction reached a climax as a result of street demonstrations which Palestinian resistance fighters started against the leader of PLO under the influence of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. As a matter of fact, the Iranian Revolution gave hopes and visions to the Palestinian people with

²⁹⁵ Crooke, 2009, p. 209.

regard to what could be accomplished in the face of enemies.²⁹⁶ This hope turned into a rage due to the massacre conducted in Sabra and Shatila in 1982 during the period of the Israeli president, Ariel Sharon, and gave rise to HAMAS in 1987 led by Ahmad Yasin. In this sense, the intersection of purposes between HAMAS and Iran started with its refusal to recognize Israel and its insistence on resistance. Although this approach overlaps with the revolutionary ideology of Iran and the purpose of Hezbollah's establishment, it has become an issue of pride and honour for HAMAS, rather than an ideology.

Iran explains its inclusion of HAMAS, one of the Islamic resistance movements based in Palestine, and Islamic Jihad into this front along with Iraq, Syria and Lebanon which is called the resistance axis not only as a self-defensive strategy of the people of the region against the occupying powers, like Israel, but also as a way of eliminating American influence in the region. According to Iran, the US was planning to arouse a conflict between diverse sects and groups in Islamic countries and thus Iran invited Islamic countries to ruin this game.²⁹⁷ Accordingly, Iran has been providing HAMAS, which has adopted a radically objecting attitude towards the presence of Israel in the region with financial and military aids either directly or through Hezbollah or Syria without discriminating between ethnic groups or sects since 1990.²⁹⁸

In fact, the official support which Iran has been giving to Palestine started when Iran terminated all bilateral relations, including the commercial ones, with Israel, which it described as "the little devil" and "the Zionist being" just after the 1979 Revolution, closing down the Israeli Embassy in Tehran and opening an embassy for PLO in its place. Although Ayatollah Khomeini met Yaser Arafat, the leader of PLO, in those years, Arafat was criticized by Khomeini for coming up with a discourse in favor of nationalism and Arab populism and advised to take the Iranian Islamic revolution as an example. However, Iran-PLO relations were disrupted for a long time because Arafat ignored Ayatollah Khomeini and explicitly supported Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war. This

²⁹⁶ Crooke, 2009, p. 210.

²⁹⁷ İran İslam Cumhuriyeti Birleşmiş Milletler Daimi Temsilciliği, Direniş Eksenini ABD'nin bölgedeki etkisinin önünü almalıdır, [Resistance axis must block US influence in region: Iran official], Retrieved May 27, 2016, from <http://iran-un.org/en/2015/08/16/resistance-axis-must-block-us-influence-in-region-iran-official/>

²⁹⁸ Abu Amer, A. 2016 January, 27, Will Iran deal mean more money for HAMAS?, Al-Monitor, Retrieved May 27, 2016, from <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/01/gaza-hamas-resistance-iran-support.html#>

relationship was taken over by HAMAS when PLO invited Israel to peace in 1993. PLO wasn't invited to the Conference of Support for Palestine, which was organized by Iran in 1993 and in which, HAMAS participated. HAMAS in turn described its bureau it set up in Iran in that year as a common structuring of the Palestinian cause with an Islamic will.²⁹⁹ Iran, which maintains its support to HAMAS uninterruptedly during all the riots, raised the financial aid which it had determined at 30 million dollars before to 250 million dollars following the victory of HAMAS in the 2006 elections in Palestine. Iran came up with a large amount of military aid it provided to HAMAS during the 2008 Israel-Gaza war and with the military training it gave to the military wing of HAMAS. As a matter of fact, the spokesman of HAMAS, Halid Mashal, in a visit to Tehran after the war in February 2009 thanked Iran for the aids it provided to HAMAS throughout the war and talked about Iran as the partner of the victory.³⁰⁰

However, the Syrian war, which broke out in 2011, caused a crack in Iran-HAMAS relations because during the Civil War HAMAS was forced to choose between Iran, which supported the Syrian government and the Syrian Ihvan, which was directly part of the riots in Syria. In short, it remained in between Ihvan and Iran. HAMAS, which had a political representation office, though Ihvan was even forbidden to organize, moved its office to Qatar and stayed apart, heading for alternative financial support. Despite this, Iran saw the Palestinian cause independent from the Syrian issue and didn't cut economic and military aid to HAMAS so that it wouldn't be cut off from the resistance axis. In this way, the relationships have started to improve again.

5.4. Conclusion

Iran has given support and aid to the resistance movements both in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world in accordance with its policies of soft power and export of its revolutions following the 1979 Revolution. Also, Iran's need to get rid of regional loneliness resulting from the isolation by global countries of the system may have caused its search for strategic allies with the neighboring countries. As a result of this search, Iran set up one of the most important alliances in the region with the Syrian government.

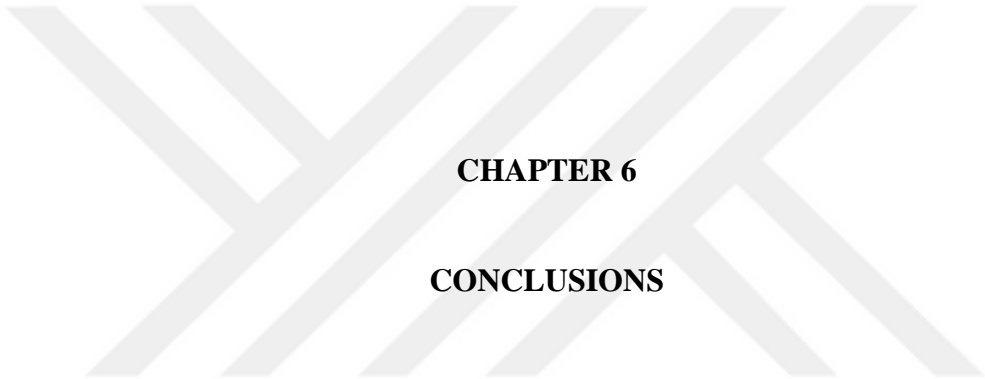
²⁹⁹ Rachel, B. 2016, Iran and Palestinians, US: Institute of Piece The Iran Primer Retrieved May 05, 2016, from <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-palestinians>

³⁰⁰ Rachel B. 2016

Although it had ups and downs in the post-revolutionary period, Iran-Syria alliance was never disrupted and the fact that US included Syria, along with Iran, in the evil axis in 2002 played a role in consolidating this relationship.

Although a lot of reasons can be given why Syria approached Iran following the 1979 Revolution, it can be said that the foremost reason would be to block the damage Syria suffered due to the occupation policies of Israel. The Syrian government which desired to become integrated into the global system from time to time took a defensive position as a result of the Israeli attempts to occupy the Golan Heights and got closer to Iran due to Iran's long-standing hostility towards Israel, the principle that “my enemy's enemy is my friend.” The support which the Syrian government gave to Islamic resistance movements in Palestine and Lebanon caused its relations with Israel and the global system countries to deteriorate. For this reason, Israel and US came foremost among the countries that desired the Syrian government to collapse by causing the riots of people that leapt to Syria in 2011 to turn into armed riots and by providing weapons to the rebels.

The affairs occurring in Syria after 2011 forced Iran to make radical decisions in its foreign policy. Restricting itself to providing material and financial support to the resistance movements in the region after that time, Iran started to explicitly give military and logistic support to people's armed riots after the middle of 2013 and set up a “destiny companionship” with the Syrian government. In this sense, the fall of the Syrian government would put Iran's own existence at a great risk. Therefore, the Iran-Syria alliance started to be defined by the public as the resistance axis. Yet the people's riots started under the leadership of Houthi Ensarullah in Yemen in 2011 considered itself within the resistance axis and this caused an increase in the interpretations that Iran was increasing its power in the region each day but there are differing evaluations as to the reasons and results of this power.



CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

If we put aside theoretical debates, resistance in practice emerges by itself most of the time in situations in which imperialist desires become obvious through pressure, domination, tyranny, occupation, economic and cultural exploitation in a place in everyday life. Since the day when humans started to live in a community or society, they have questioned the administrative deeds of the authorities through the phenomenon of resistance whenever there is a government a power or an authority and used the right to object in action or without any action when necessary. While resistance emerged in the West as a right, it can be seen as a holy duty or a religious and national responsibility in the Middle East, particularly against the imperialist attacks from the West. For instance, the people in Palestine standing up against Israeli occupation or the Hezbollah organization in Lebanon identifying itself as a resistance front against the hegemony of Israel and US have taken shape as a natural extension of the understanding of a holy mission. The mentality of resistance has a universal quality in this global age, rather than a local one.

It is of great importance to conceive the meaning of resistance, its significance, the type of behaviour which the resisting community displays during the resistance and to retain

historical and social memory regarding the resistance in order to restore justice where the resistance is demonstrated, because reactions, rage and challenges directed towards local and global authorities through long-term demonstrations and activities rather than momentary ones could as well result in a revolution as a result of surmounting the walls of fear. Besides, to whom the resistance serves in terms of its consequences and how the resistance is interpreted by imperialist powers are of importance. Nevertheless, resistance should have a moral just as all social and political behaviour do. Some political movements, despite displaying such attitude as favouring sects, agencies and foreign powers, seek to define their activities as resistance movements. Resistance movements that don't adhere to moral values are bound to be provoked by dominant powers.³⁰¹

The geography of the Middle East, whose name was invented by imperial powers and which is of not only geographical but also strategic importance, has become identical with armed or unarmed resistance movements in recent centuries. In the last two centuries, from Algeria to Egypt, from Syria to Yemen, from Palestine and Lebanon to Bahrain, this region has been the scene of various resistance movements whose conceptual framework we have drawn up above. In the essence of these resistance movements lie the occupations the West imposed on the region as a result of the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the unfair distribution of revenue and public estates in these particular conditions of the nation state practice. However, some of these movements resulted in revolution although they failed to yield the expected results as regards the establishment of a power balance in line with the will of the people of the region and the social order desired as a consequence of resistance.

For instance, in Egypt millions of people occupied the Tahrir Square for 3 weeks because of the historical rage accumulating as a result of the system of exploitation that had been continuing for years, and this resistance ended up in toppling the president who was then an ally of imperial powers. Egyptian resistance was set in motion with the expectations that the orders of Sykes-Picot and Camp David that was created by foreign powers would change for the better, the system of exploitation and poverty would come to an end and a new regional order would be set up by the will of the regional people. However, it was seen in the following political processes started after the toppling of the Egyptian president that the local elements that had such expectations didn't have either the vision or the tools to fulfil these expectations. Not the political groups or leaders but the people led the

³⁰¹ Tripp, 2013, p. 12, 317.

resistance taking place in Egypt as a result of the explosion of the anger which had been mounting since the bread riots in 1977. For the first time in history of the country, the political groups which had been excluded by the political system gained an initiative for the establishment of a new order. However, the revolutionaries in this country turned out to be lacking in a vision to establish a new order and to have perceived the revolution as a change of government. For this reason, the Egyptian revolutionaries considered it sufficient to take a role in the transition of processes specified by the military bureaucracy. These affairs show that the local actors in Egypt were also deprived of the theoretical background and the real powers which would enable them to set up a government.³⁰² Consequently, the extraterritorial powers which were in favor of the continuation of the Sykes-Picot order in the region and which were caught unprepared can be said to have taken advantage of the Egyptian revolution.

In this regard, the resistance story of the Iranian people which resulted in the 1979 Revolution exhibits a different characteristic because the Islamic revolutionaries declared that their resistance aimed not only to topple the Shah and to change the government but also to establish a new order opposed to the global imperialism. As a matter of fact, the concept that constituted the slogans of resistance such as oppressed, oppressor, the one who sees himself as the greatest, neither the east or the west, etc. contained a radically objectionist attitude and mentality, suggesting such values of Islam as equality, justice and mercy as opposed to the way of living which the Western capitalist system and Soviet socialism considered appropriate for the Eastern communities. For this reason, the Iranian Islamic revolution took place not only against the enforcement of the conditions of colonialist modernity by Shah to the Iranian people but also against the normalization, institutionalization and legitimization of the Zionist dictatorship, colonialist domination and Zionist racism in Palestine under the leadership of the West, challenging all mankind. Indeed, as it happens today, the law, conscience, morals and political solutions could be arbitrarily suspended in Palestine in favor of the interests of Israel during those years. Therefore, while the Iranian Islamic revolution set forth the claim that it would bring an alternative system of life and order as opposed to the imperialist enforcement by the modern, secular and democratic world, it brought a new breath into the concept and

³⁰² Dursunoğlu, A. 2015 March, 01. Sykes Picot-Camp David ve Arap Baharı, [Sykes Picot-Camp David and Arab Uprising], Yakındoğu Haber, Retrieved June 24, 2016, from http://www.ydh.com.tr/YD450_sykes-picot-camp-david-ve-arap-bahari.html

phenomenon of resistance in eastern communities, serving as a long-term source of hope and inspiration for the resistance movements in the east.

Iran was faced with embargoes and isolationist policies of the global system following the Islamic revolution and formed long-term alliances with certain countries and organizations in the region to get out of this isolation. On the other hand, the idea to prevent the expansionist policies of Israel in its source, whose Constitution and borders weren't clear in accordance with its revolutionary ideology, played a role in Iran forming these alliances. Apparently the Iranian foreign policy in the region is particularly active in every field of diplomatic relations. The systematic and multiple character of Iranian influence and collaboration with Syria, Lebanon and Palestine makes Iran the only country in the region which has developed such a diverse activity. Moreover the Iranian activity in these countries is not accidental but it takes place according to a plan with specific goals. These features could term the ongoing Iranian activity as an effort to create and sustain an "axis." The "Islamist" dimension of the 1979 Iranian Revolution reflects the cultural and ideological dimension of this alliance.³⁰³

In this respect, the Syrian government, the Palestinian Islamic resistance movements and Hezbollah became victims of the aggressive policies of Israel acted together with Iran in this issue and were involved in the resistance axis. First, a Civil War and then a substitution war in which imperialist factors were involved broke out in Syria in 2011 following these events; the imperialist powers wanted to market this war to the public opinion of the Islamic world as an Islamic resistance and revolutionary movement. Indeed, the public opinion of the regional countries started to question why imperialist countries were playing a leading role in the process of transformation which was imposed on Syria. Therefore, while the majority of the Syrian people at first demanded that the Baath regime and the administrative system in which a mafiocentric system settled should collapse, they joined in resistance alongside their government, which they didn't appreciate much, for the sake of defending their country after they realized the global imperialist attacks and the tricks aiming at their country. Upon seeing that its efforts to stop the war primarily through diplomacy resulted in failure, Iran in turn offered its ally, the Syrian government, an unconditional support and directed the course of the war and enabled the resistance axis to

³⁰³ Venetis, E. 2011, The Rising power of Iran in the Middle East: Forming an axis with Iraq, Syria and Lebanon Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, (ELIAMEP), (Working Paper 21/2011)

survive. However, from the perspective of Israel, which considers Syria a military threat, this process seems to have ended up in a way to benefit Israel most because the Syrian Army was weakened and remained ineffective during these riots.

The regional Iran-Syria-Hezbollah and HAMAS alliance, which was set up as a resistance axis is of vital importance in understanding the balances in the Middle East. Today, all the local, regional or global political formations in the Middle East have to take this alliance into consideration in a way and to weigh up positive and negative aspects in line with this alliance. There is no doubt that it is Iran which plays the greatest part in this alliance and this alliance is providing ensuring a regional dominance for their resistance axis. The actuality of the concerns that countries, such as US and Israel and certain Arab countries such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia, began to pronounce following the occupation of Iraq has been tested in terms of how genuinely these concerns were, based on the regional equations.³⁰⁴The victory Hezbollah gained in the face of Israel in 2006 helped the resistance axis to become more legitimate in the Islamic world, and the proxy war that has been going on in Syria since 2011 led the resistance axis to be firmly clamped together. Today, the survival of the Assad-controlled Syrian government may be interpreted in the way that the majority of the Syrian people embrace the resistance axis discourse.

The main aims of this axis are: to react to the penetration of western powers in the region by generating power beyond Iran and her allies' borders responding to Western trans-state forces in the region; to fill the existing power vacuum after the 2006 War between Israel and Hezbollah and eventually to influence the Arab-Israeli peace process and developments in the political and security sector in Palestine. For this reason, the interests of the resistance axis are against the interests of Israel and USA in the Middle East. By supporting her allies Iran poses as the major challenge to American policy in the region and acts in a similar fashion with her allies, as Washington does in the case of supporting Israel. Inevitably the results of the formation of the Islamic Axis are against the competitors of Iran in the region such the Sunni Arab states of Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. What is striking regarding its formation is that Iran invests on soft power (economy and culture) in order to expand her alliances by influencing the public mind in every country. The use of soft power results from the fact that Iranian leaders are aware of the power of culture in the Islamic world and they consider US presence in the region as a

³⁰⁴ Korkmaz, 2015, p. 2. 159. 170. 171.

declining one.³⁰⁵

The countries or organizations included in the resistance axis of Iran are considered, in the literature of international relations, countries or organizations that are left out of the system because Iran, as well as the countries and organizations in this Camp, are specified at various times either as “evil axis” or as “terrorist organizations” by the US, which plays the greatest role in the international system. Accordingly, challenging the international system at the same time with the Islamic revolution it achieved in 1979, Iran, within the framework of the policies of the export of its revolution, summons the governments or organizations which bear affinity to its own ideology to resist to the global system of exploitation in cooperation by remaining out of the system and thus to get out of the system. After all, Hezbollah in Lebanon was set up by Iran to block the expansionist policies of Israel and became a member of the resistance axis. The main reason why Syria followed this call was the alliance it had made with Iran because of the land and soil problems it had experienced with Israel during the Israeli attempt to occupy the Golan Heights. The reason why HAMAS followed this call was partly related to its objectionist attitude which doesn't recognize the existence of Israel, just like Iran as well as to the divergence of el-Fetih from its ideology of resistance. Although it was set up for resistance against Israeli occupation, in time it turned into a form compatible with Israel and with the international system. In this way, el-Fetih remained inefficient in finding a solution to the problems of the Palestinian people which had been mounting for years.

Iran's regional policy is based on long-term planning. For this reason, depending on the situation, the Iranians are ready to speed up or slow down the implementation of their plans. Up to now, it can be said that the formation of the resistance axis found a healthy ground and it came from the superiors of the obstacles and reacted directly to the US doctrine of the “axis of evil”. The resistance policy which it exercised in its foreign policy caused Iran to become a regional power over time. Put forth by Imam Khomeini in the Iranian administration, which bases its legitimacy on the Islamic revolution, the essential anti-imperialist, anti-western and “pan-Islamist” revolutionary ideology and values had a tremendous role in the emergence of this power. These values have largely found their places in the Iranian Constitution and determine the guidelines of the Iranian foreign policy. Nevertheless, the concept of why something is for the good (maslahat), which is embraced in the face of the structural problems and practical difficulties, has made the Iranian foreign policy flexible. What's more, the constant pressure and domination on the

³⁰⁵ Venetis, 2011, p. 37.

political structure of the region by Western countries have caused the resistance policy to easily find a ground.³⁰⁶ Consequently, it's possible today to observe that the Iranian ideology of Islamic resistance has influenced political movements in a wide area, from the Islamic movements in Africa today to the Houthi Ansarullah movement in Yemen.

A large number of thinkers and authors accept that the revolution achieved with the slogan of “neither the East nor the West, Islamic Republic” under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini is essentially a refusal of nation-states based on ethnic nationalism or pact formations in the West and the kingdoms in the east and based on the search for a new system which is centered on an Islamic community without discriminating between sects. However, the Iranian Foreign policy is criticized most for abandoning the ideal of Islamic unity and embarking on generating policies on the axis of real politics following the death of Khomeini. Such criticisms started with the allegations that the well-established Persian aristocracy called “Bazar” conquered the revolution internally and established some sort of Shi’ite Umayyad dynasty with the formula, “Islam for Iran”. However, it is claimed that such values as Islam, revolution and Khomeini, were turned into symbols necessary for Iran and thus became just tools. The same criticism stresses that revolutionary Iran, that is, the Iran in line with the thoughts of Ali Shariati and Khomeini was replaced by attacks of imperialist hegemony to the region and that the ancient Iranian nationalism has become dominant again in today's Iran.³⁰⁷

Nevertheless, the fact that a country which has been forced to live under constant embargos and isolation policies of the West since the revolution became pronounced as a regional power today arouses much controversy with respect to the ways in which this power has been obtained. The most prominent point of controversy is the one related to the fact that Iran has transformed the anti-western resistance discourse into a form of sectarianism and nationalism, digressing from its revolutionary policies. The increasing regional power of Iran is seen as a threat by certain countries and by some circles, mainly by Western countries, Saudi Arabia and Israel. Therefore, the “regional aspirations” of Iran have started to be questioned. Some evaluate this process from a sectarian perspective.

³⁰⁶ Sinkaya, B. Ortadoğu Analiz Dergisi, Mart-Nisan 2016 Ortadoğu’da bölgesel bir güç olarak İran, [Iran as a regional Power in the Middle East], Vol. 8, No: 73. Retrieved June 25, 2016, from http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Yazilar/Dosyalar/2016322_bayramsinkaya.pdf

³⁰⁷ Özcan, A. 2012 February, 04, Humeyni, İran ve Türkiye, [Khomeini, Iran and Turkey], Retrieved June 08, 2016, from http://www.haber10.com/yazar/ahmet_ozcan/humeyni_iran_ve_turkiye-17972

According to this view, Iran is running after “a Shi’ite Crescent”, even after “a Shi’ite Empire”, the basis of the Iranian Middle East policy is just “a neo-Safavid project” which struggles to resurrect the Shi’ite Safavid Empire. Some others evaluate this issue from a racist perspective. Focusing on the dispute experienced in history between Persians and Arabs, they claim that the existing Iranian administration is in fact trying to set up a Persian Empire and using Shi’ism as a tool for this purpose.³⁰⁸

On the other hand, the expansionist activities of Iran for the purposes of gaining land, conquest, etc. don't seem permissible according to its own Constitution, because a war is legally and logically described with the concept of oppression if it is fought to claim others' land, to eliminate others' liberty, to get hold of all their wealth and power and to assimilate others in its own entity.³⁰⁹ As a matter of fact, the foreign policy of the Iranian Islamic Republic defined in the Iranian Constitution is based on the principles of refusing to establish domination of any kind and being subdued to any domination, protecting the liberty and integrity of the country in every field, defending all Muslims' rights, not making any commitments against the powers in pursuit of sovereignty and establishing peaceful relations with the states that don't declare war. What's more, the Iranian Islamic Republic sees the well-being of humanity in all communities as his own goal and regards liberty, independence, a just and fair administration as the rights of all human beings in the world. Also, there are provisions in the same Constitution about completely refraining from intervention of any kind in the domestic affairs of other nations and patronizing the just fights of the oppressed with the oppressors wherever they take place.³¹⁰

According to the principles of the Caferi sect, which Iran has accepted as an unalterable article of the Constitution, canonists of Islam have divided the concept of jihad in Islam into two groups, aggressive and defensive. Most of the Imamiye canonists attach the aggressive Jihad being a binding duty and even its legitimacy to the innocent Imam and his substitute. According to these canonists, the Substitute of the Imam refers to the genuine substitute. Another view holds that it doesn't include the general substitutes in the absence of the Imam,³¹¹ because the aggressive war is the Jihad fought with polytheists or heretics

³⁰⁸ Özcan, 2012 February, 04

³⁰⁹ Mutahhari, 2016, p. 27.

³¹⁰ İran İslam Cumhuriyeti Anayasası, 1980, [Islamic Republic of Iran Constitution], Translated by Hüseyin Hatemi, İstanbul: Çağrı Yay. Retrieved Jun 06, 2016, from

<http://www.imamkhomeini.com/web1/turkish/showitem.aspx?cid=1736&h=22&f=23&pid=2048>

³¹¹ For example see Kuleyni, Vol. 5, p. 3; Tusi, Vol. 2, p. 8; p. 290; Şehid S., Vol. 3, p. 9; Necefi, Vol. 21, p.

to invite them to Islam and to the Oneness of Allah³¹² and to restore justice Although there are sectarian differences³¹³ in the regions in which Iran is claimed to have attacked with imperialist aspirations, these regions don't come under the scope of aggressive war because they are Islamic places.

On the other hand, defensive Jihad means resistance in nature. The defensive Jihad is considered one of the binding duties in Islam since it is fought to defend Muslims and Islamic lands. In this regard, Iran regards not only defending its own land, for example its defense against Iraq during the Iran Iraq war, but also giving aid to the Islamic communities, such as those that demanded help during the imperialist interventions in Lebanon and Palestine as defensive Jihad, seeing such Jihad as an extension of the export of its revolution.³¹⁴ Likewise perceiving the intervention of the system countries in the Civil War which broke out in Syria in 2011 as an attempt to break the backbone of the resistance axis,³¹⁵ Iran seems to have plunged in a direct front war against imperialist attacks in Syria.

After the attacks on the Twin Towers in the US in 11 September 2001 in opposition to US declaring several countries, some of which are in the Middle East, as “evil axis”, the “resistance axis” which Iran declared brought about some comments on the fact that Iran is expanding in the region. It is known that Iran continues to export policies of its revolution as a soft power. However, considering the fact that the revolution itself was realized due to resistance displayed against Western attacks, it can be said that the resistance axis resulted not from the expansionist policies of Iran but from the desire for the mentality of resistance to become dominant in the whole region. Consequently, the deputy president, Ali Yunusi, who had to apologize after he remarked in 2015, “Bagdad is our capital city”, which has imperialist connotations couldn't get away from being tried in Iranian courts.³¹⁶

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³¹² Mutahhari, M. 2016

³¹³ Different sects are deserving of total respect according to Iran Constitution. See Islamic Republic of Iran Constitution, Article: 12

³¹⁴ Detailed explanations of Iran's reliance on aid to the Palestine resistance were made in the third part of this work under the heading "Resistance Against Whom."

³¹⁵ Haydari, İ, 2013 March, 25, İslam Devrim Muhafizlerinin Suriye'deki Varlığı, [The Islamic Revolutionary Guard's Existence in Syria.], Retrieved 2016 June, 09, from <http://medyasafak.net/haber/1131/islam-devrimi-muhafizlarinin-suriye-deki-varligisehid-ismail-haydari->

³¹⁶ Farsi El Arabia.net, <http://farsi.alarabiya.net/fa/iran/2015/03/17/>، -ماست-پایتخت-بغداد .-، -علی-، -یونسی-به-را-دادگاه-کشاند-، [Ali Younisi brought to justice for expression of “Baghdad is our Capital”], Retrieved June 08, 2016, from <http://farsi.alarabiya.net/fa/iran/2015/03/17/>، -ماست-پایتخت-بغداد .-، -علی-، -یونسی-به-را-دادگاه-کشاند-،

In its present form, the principle of helping the oppressed people all over the world, which Iran specified in its foreign policy as the main principle in connection with the Islamic resistance, can be confused with Iran pursuing an expansionist policy in its region. Yet the resistance axis isn't a pact or an illegal formation which is based on the distribution of duties embedded in the theories of the system. The resistance axis is a symbol of defense against Israel and imperialist foreign intervention. As expressed in its Constitution, Iran's export of revolutionary policies doesn't require military sanctions on the countries of the region but forming a resistance ideology against oppression and imperialism because the Revolution was realized not only against the exploitation and dominance within the country but also for a formation which would have a say to the outside world. After the Revolution, Iran was stationed in Lebanon via Hezbollah to block the expansionist policies of Israel, which has no borders and no Constitution and managed to stop Israeli expansion this way. Nevertheless, it can be argued that Iran is in charge of meeting physical attacks on it at a faraway front.

The claim that Iran, with its population of 90 million, has been pursuing expansionist and sectarian policies in the geography of Islam, with a population of around 1.5 billion, isn't considered realistic because Iran is in a minority position in the Islamic world. As a matter of fact, the fact that a sect in a minority position could impose its sect on the majority doesn't seem physically realistic. In this sense, Iran, with its emphasis on Oneness, wants the sectarian dispute to remain on a scholarly level each people to believe according to its own faith but to identify common interests and to enlarge the ground for these interests. In practice, positive or negative effects and results of this foreign policy, which it brought about in this geography, are the subject of another debate.

Neither its Constitution, nor its revolutionary ideology allows Iran to carry out an expansionist project based on its sect or on nationalism. In today's Iran, revolutionary staffs are still at work in running the administration based on the system of canonists. For this reason, although it slips into a pragmatic plane from time to time, it doesn't seem possible for Iranian regional foreign policy to diverge from its resistance ideology. In addition, it doesn't seem physically realistic for a sect which is in a minority position to impose its arguments on the counter-majority. It also seems meaningless for a country which is not economically strong enough to generate a foreign policy based on competition and

hostilities against the other countries of the region. In this context, instead of using sectarian arguments, Iran bases its discourses on Islamic oneness and thus tries to get out of loneliness in its region. Also it summons the other Muslim countries in the region to act against imperialism, which is a common enemy, on a common ground.³¹⁷

In fact, the points which should be questioned about the foreign policy of today's Iran are how consistent the resistance discourses it has developed are against the cultural and economic damage which the economic and political system of the West has caused to Iran and to the region. Besides, the West, which conducts imperialist attacks on the countries in the Middle East, carry out these attacks mostly through neo-liberal economic tools which it created itself and imposed on the countries all over the world. Iran didn't have any precautionary vision or any alternative system of economics against these tools in the Revolutionary structuring within the Islamic resistance. For this reason, following the death of Imam Khomeini, Iran which cannot generate any other solutions but being attached to the global neoliberal economic policies in order to overcome the economic crisis in the country, is weaving in and out as regards resistance in the face of the West in order to remove the problems these policies have caused to itself. Nevertheless, the promise that social justice will be realized after the revolution, one of the main targets of the resistance, hasn't been fulfilled in the Iranian streets. In the sense so-called moderate wing of the government is focusing on its globalization discourse based on integration with the West economically and desires to meet the expectations of the people as to economic prosperity. However, this discourse is inconsistent with the Revolutionary ideology, and it causes a breakpoint in the quality of the relationships with the West.³¹⁸ On the other hand, the calls for "economy of resistance" made by revolutionary staff seem to block the embargoes of the West with local resources of the country but whether these calls have had the desired effect on the Iranian economy, which is compatible with the neoliberal economy is the scope of another debate.

³¹⁷ Hamenei, 2012, p. 80.

³¹⁸ Sinkaya, B. 2016, Nükleer Anlaşma Sonrası İran Siyaseti, [Iran Policy after Nuclear Deal], Orsam Dış Politika Analizleri, 10 Haziran 2016, Retrieved June 25, 2016, from <http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/yazigoster.aspx?ID=5714>

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