

**IRAN'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS INDIA
(1979-1990)
A STUDY IN BILATERAL RELATIONS**

Thesis submitted to
University of Mysore
For the award of degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In

POLITICAL SCIENCE

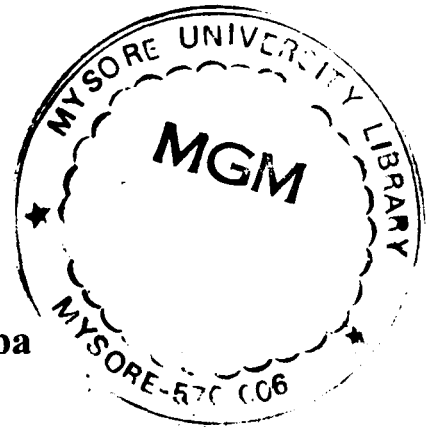
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2007

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the present thesis entitled “ *Iran’s Foreign Policy Towards India (1979-1990). A Study in Bilateral Relations*” is the outcome of the original research work undertaken and carried out by me for the award of degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in **Political Science** , under the guidance of **Dr.G .T.Ramachandrappa** ,Department of Studies in Political Science , University of Mysore, Mysore .

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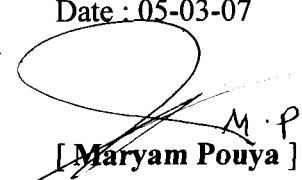
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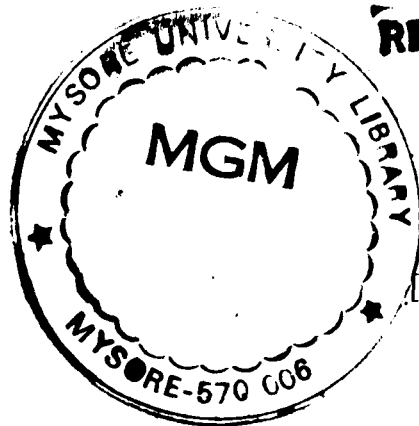
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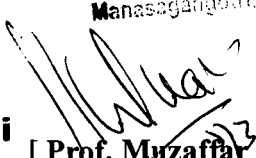
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an endeavour on Iran's Foreign Policy towards India from 1979 to 1990. India and Iran are not just nations of Asia, but rather two civilizations, which grew symbiotically through the centuries. The thesis not only focuses on centuries old bilateral relations, but also on several other vital issues. Some of the contemporary issues concerning Iran and India after revolution in Iran such as Iran-Iraq war, Kashmir issue, Iran and Pakistan Relations as a factor in Indo- Iran Relations, Afghanistan issues, Central Asia, and briefly India- Iran gas pipeline, etc are being continued in 1990s. Hence some of these issues are discussed contemporaneously to make them more meaningful.

The first chapter in the form of introduction deals with the conceptual analysis of foreign policy, elements of foreign policy of Iran. This chapter also deals with the statement of problems, objectives of study and methodology .It also mentioned to India and Iran strategic position.

The political, cultural, social & commercial relations of both India and Iran in ancient and medieval periods form the subject matter of analysis in the second chapter. This chapter also discusses about pre-history and culture, influence of Iranian culture on the literature and Indian languages, Influence of Iranian culture

on architectures and Akbar's court and the common origins of Indian and Iranian civilizations

Third chapter deals with Iran's Foreign policy during post- independence period in India. It focuses on the visiting of Shah of Iran and other Ministers to India and Iran, making on friendship agreement Indo-Iranian peace and friendship treaty and other Commercial Agreements. Iran's membership at CENTO, Non-alignment movement, Pakistan factor in Indo-Iranian relations.

Iranian revolution and Ayatollah Khomeini as leader of Iranian revolution and his political ideas and his Doctrine in velayat- al -Faqih are examined in the fourth chapter.

An endeavour has been made to examine the respective approaches Indo-Iranian relations after revolution in Iran and impact on Islamic revolution of Iran and its developments, strengthening mutual relationship, visiting of the foreign ministers of India and Iran as well as respective approaches of India and Iran towards regional issues and vital factors which directly affecting on both countries in fifth chapter. The final chapter is formed conclusion.

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I remember on this occasion my little sons *Sadra* and *Sina* for their loss of love and care because of my research. But owe my love to them for their living presence in my research years.



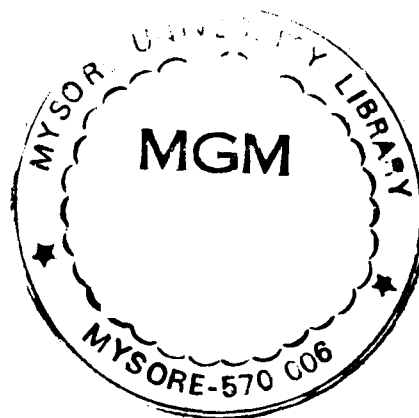
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ABBREVIATIONS

BPD	Barrels Per Day
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
ECO	Economic Co-operation Organization
GAIL	Gas Authority of India Limited
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IEA	Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan
IRNA	Iranian News Agency
ISA	Islamic State of Afghanistan
JBC	Joint Business Council
JWG	Joint Working Grant
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MUF	Muslim United Front
NIGEC	National Iranian Gas Export Company
NIOC	National Iranian Oil Company
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference States.
ONGC	Oil and Natural Gas Commission
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PPP	Pakistan People Party
RCD	Regional Co-operation for Development
SWAPO	South West African People's Organizations
UAR	United Arab Republics
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WANA	West Asia and North Africa

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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

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Concepts of Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is one of the wheels with which the process of international politics operates. Foreign policy is not separate from national policy; instead, it is a part of States. Almost all the states determine the course of their actions in maintaining national interest in their foreign policies but within the limits of their strength and relations with external environment.

In recent years, the term foreign policy has become so wide that it covers almost all sorts of relations within the scope of foreign policy. The term “foreign policy” has been defined in a number of ways. George Modelski defines it as, “the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment”. This definition makes clear that the foreign policy is a group of principles determined by the states. These principles involve the interests, which influence the behaviour of the states intending to establish their further relations and promote them effectively and successfully. These interests include not only the general principles, but also show interest in implementing them efficiently. Further these principles are concerned with broader interests, which states have to strive to achieve in their international relations as well.

The foreign policy of a state has two strategies of a government which is in power. It has to protect its national interests in a given period of time with relation to the international environment. This attitude reflects the nature and the view of government towards the international relationship. The formulation of foreign policies implies the domestic situation and the thinking of the people in determining

the foreign policy as external issues and the international situation. Foreign policy is generally modelled at two levels: the governmental / bureaucratic level and at the public or populist level. Primarily it depends on its strength or nature and the intensity of the issues involved with foreign policy. An issue related with foreign policy may be historical, economical, ideological, political or territorial. However it is possible that owing to political mobilization one or more of them have acquired on all pervasive characters.

As a result owing to the present inter-dependence in the international relations it is hardly possible for bilateral relations between states to remain isolated or exclusive. They are inevitably influenced by external variables over which neither side has any control. Although it is generally thought that the ideological considerations and objectives are the basic determinants of a state's foreign policy, ideology as such is losing its hold as the concept of state itself is undergoing change. Accordingly relations between two states are normally subjected to fluctuations as relations between two individuals. They are not either static nor do they view in straight lines, for there are complications and barrier caused by the constituent elements of foreign policy.

Analysis of Foreign Policy: A Brief Framework

Scientific study of foreign policy necessitates a conceptual framework. This frame work has to comprehend order and explain the data on foreign policy. In recent years, academic students of foreign policy, largely because of the influence of the systems theory and the latest developments in social psychology, have attempted to conceptualize or theorize about foreign policy behaviour. Although these efforts

have not yet produced a consistent general theory of foreign policy, we do now have a few conceptual frameworks or partial theories that are very useful in organizing and analyzing data about foreign policy. Modelski defines foreign policy as a system of action provided with four parameters of foreign policy for analysis. They are power input, power output, interests and objectives¹.

Richard Snyder and associates produce an elaborate model of foreign policy decision-making². As a matter of fact, Snyder's model was too complex to work with. There are problems about finding information to fill many boxes in Snyder's decision-making model. Joseph Frankel comes forward with a relatively convenient framework of foreign policy analysis. Following professor and Mrs. Sprout's distinction between psychological and operational environments, Frankel puts forward a scheme of foreign policy analysis that put emphasis on decision-makers³. Frankel defines foreign policy as consisting of decisions and actions which involve, to some appreciable extent, relations between one state and others. Distinguishing the psychological and operational environments of foreign policy, Frankel remarks: 'The psychological environment determines the limits of possible decisions while the operational environment determines the limits of possible effective action⁴.

Psychology or particularly by cognitive behaviourists Frankel stressed that man reacts to his environment according to his appreciation, that is, perception of the environment in the light of his past experiences. This notion of psychological

¹ George Modelski, *A Theory of Foreign policy*, New York: praeger, 1962.

² Richard Snyder et al, *Foreign Policy Decision-Making*, New York: pree press, 1963.

³ Horald and Margaret Spout, "Man –Milieu Relationship Hypothesis in the Context of International Politics," as cited in Joseph Frankel, *Making of Foreign Policy :An Analysis of Decision-Making*, London :Oxford University Press, 1963, p.1-4.

⁴ Frankel , p.4.

environment is a valuable analytical tool that provides the researcher with certain insights that they may use to dig below the surface for revealing information into behaviour of states.

It must be observed here that by operational environment Frankel meant the environment as it actually is and by psychological environment he meant the environment as perceived by foreign policy makers. The two environments may or may not necessarily be the same. Sometimes the decision-maker may have a perception that may not necessarily reflect the reality as perceived by some objective observers. Influenced by social excavate beneath the surface for revealing information about the behaviour of states. Accordingly a foreign policy may be analyzed under the following four headings:

1. The environment setting of international and domestic.
2. The decision – maker's perception of environment and of national interests.
3. The process of foreign policy making, the interaction between institutional and non- institutional.
4. The foreign policy output or decisions.

Elements of Iran's Foreign policy

With relation to the above-discussed policies Iran's foreign policy could be relatively discussed. Usually a sovereign state's external behaviour is determined by the interaction of several factors like, economic needs, political ideology, regional and global political systems which states must operate within geographic location, physical characteristic, historical experience, cultural traits and few others. Iran is not exception to this general description. Bearing this in mind, the determining

element in Iran's foreign policy has been the Iran itself. The land mass, the people, the culture, Iran's geopolitical, historical and economic realities as well as factors related to the nature of regional and international systems have most often structure its basic foreign policy options.

Iran's Islamic ideology and revolutionary worldview are not separated from its past to recent history. Iran's geopolitical situation and its ethnic and religious characteristics have also made their imprint on its foreign policy. Imperatives at national survival and the maintenance of territorial integrity and political independence are considered high on the list of priorities at Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy. And it is relevant at this point to quote Iran's later president Rafsanjani when he addressed the Majlis, (the Parliament), during his inauguration of the second term of Presidency on August 4, 1993.

Iran's foreign policy has never been or shall be adventures. It is in a calm environment and with confidence that Islam flourishes more. Those who make notices do not have logic and those are the people who wish to forcefully impose themselves. Our efforts are aimed to be a cultural focal point in the world. We wish to preserve our statute in the world through logic and words of reason.⁵

In the similar manner, one single nation's efforts do not seem to be sufficient for the materialization of national plans with relation to economic and social development. Therefore, the efforts of consolidation of point efforts and regional co-operation in recent years have come forth as an undesirable necessity for all countries of the world over.

⁵ Nasser Saghafe Amiri, "Iran: Element of Foreign Policy", published by Grijesh Pant, A.K.Pasha, P.C.Jain, New Delhi, p.70-77.

Considered a brief survey at Iran's neighbours foreign policy for instance, Afghanistan represents a focus of turmoil in Iran's eastern flank. On western border Iraq is a subject of attention in Iran foreign policy. These seems quite natural after eighty years of resistance to aggression with massive casualties. On the other hand, in the north the threat at an expansionist Russian Empire, later Soviet Union, has vanished but has been replaced by a pattern of relatively weak states, which combine sources of stability with targets of influence.

However Iran's perception of the new international developments and the emergence of Central Asia as Iran's new neighbour has comprehensively evinced in a message by the president Rafsanjani. He said, "Our country with its ancient civilization has been placed at heart of vast regional developments. The Persian Gulf on the one side and Central Asia and Caucasia on the other side have added to Iran a strategic stature and upgraded its significant foreign policy in international strategy.

Eventually, though the military threat has dwindled, security threats through the intervention and instigation of extra regional powers, especially in the Persian Gulf, still exists. Furthermore, ethnic conflicts in the neighbouring countries might lead to an extensive influx of migrants with the emergence of severe problems. It is followed by Soviet Union's disintegration and the region's subsystem in which Iran faced dramatic modifications in its foreign policy. Previously, in the Middle East subsystem, culturally Iran stood on the margins. The sub system was "Arab" in essence, and the Arab-Israel dispute was the regional crucial concern. The oil reserves, which met fifty five percent of the world's energy requirements, were the major economic hallmarks of this subsystem.

The Persian Gulf serves as one of the most strategic area of the world. This region was the centrepiece of recent international developments, namely the Persian Gulf crisis became a watershed for the United Nations new activities after four decades of paralysis. Iran's natural geopolitical superiority in the Persian Gulf emerges through the consideration of the region's map. This waterway is bordered on the north by Iran exclusively. This natural expense enables Iran to control the Strait of Hormuz, which heightens the country's significance. The Persian Gulf connects the world's single largest site of oil reserves and products in the world market. Hence the protection of Iran's interests in the Persian Gulf is regarded as a key factor in the territorial defence of the country.

On the other hand, in reviewing the common interests of Iran and India in present world politics and in finding the ways in which these two major Asian countries can develop their relations, one has to emphasize on the deep rooted cultural and historical ties between Iran and India that goes back for many centuries. Being aware of these historical ties and with regard to the radical changes in the world that altered the content of international relations and associations, the leaders of two countries have expressed their desires in a very precise term for closer relations. In this regard, the meeting between President Rafsanjani and Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao during their meeting at the summit meeting of Non Aligned Movement (NAM) in September 1992 in Jakarta has been considered as a turning point in the relations between India and Iran. Since that important events of much intensive interaction between the two countries have taken place. Thus, mutual desire for expansion of relations is now considered on three different levels.

First in the global level, the relation is marked by the end of international bipolar system. During that period certain policies influenced the system. Then the policies obstructed the close relations between Iran and India. For instance, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan promoted different reactions in Iran and India. India being conscious of its strategic relations with the Soviet Union implicitly took side with the Soviet policy while Iran in accordance with its policy against every kind at hegemonies, was one of the staunchest apparent of the soviet policy.⁶

On the other hand, now there are converging views between Iran and India on the emerging international system and especially on their emphasis on a new role that NAM can play in the future. This is important because certain questions have been raised among Non Align Movement's 110 Member countries about its reason after the end of bipolar system. But it seems that the mutual understanding between Iran and India in the post cold war situation has made a difficult political and economical relationship for the developing countries.⁷

Second is the regional level in which regional cooperation has an important place. Regionalism is considered to be one of the main features of the world in the future. In reviewing the potential views of co-operations in regional scale, cooperation with Central Asian Republics, Indian Ocean countries and "The Asian Co-operation" assumes significance in the context of Indo-Iranian co-operation.

The idea of creating an Indian Ocean block has its merits. Being a free trade zone in the long past, the countries involved, mainly major ones like Iran, India,

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ The phrase is formed J.N .Dixit (Former Indian Foreign Policy Secretary)in his article "New equations with China", The Hindu, March 17,2004.

Australia and few more will be traversing familiar ground for new market. The challenges for the 1990s for the countries which border the Indian Ocean will seize the opportunity to develop a mechanism for regional co-operation which will advance the economic and security interests of the nations of the region on a collective basis.⁸

To intensify regional interactions with regional free trade and economic co-operation arrangements, which is another goal is set for regional co-operation with the intention of a trilateral co-operation between Iran, India and China. This cooperation evolved around the following lines:

1. It would eventually become a comprehensive co-operation in embodying all Asian countries. In other words, the co-operation between Iran, India and China would be the first step towards a full Asian co-operation. In this regard, president Rafsanjani in an interview indicated that Pakistan would be another member of the proposed co-operation.
2. Despite some suggestions, mainly in the press, the motive of creating an axis or a military block was never the intention. Hence it would be derived that the core of the proposed co-operation is economic with emphasis on trade and other interactions between the member countries.
3. The ultimate goal, however, is the improvement of welfare and the economic betterment of the member countries.

⁸ For detailed discussion about the merits of cooperation in the Indian Ocean see, T.G.Ramamurthi, "India, South Africa and the Indian Ocean", *Journal of Indian Ocean Studies*, Vol.1, No.3, March 1994,p.8.

Third is a bilateral relation in which trade and economic relations have a prominent place. Recently much emphasis has been implied on the aspect of Iran and India's bilateral relations. The main areas of interests and major projects under consideration are as follows:

1. A project for the supply of natural gas through a pipeline from Iranian gas reserves in the Persian Gulf to India.
2. The Indian Minister of State has signed a MOU for petroleum and Natural Gas, with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, during the Minister's visit to Iran in July 7, 1993. The MOU provides for setting up of a team of experts of the two countries for the feasibility study.
3. A project for expansion of Iranian railway network with participation of India. The project will bring out a direct rail link from the Persian Gulf to the Central Asia.

Iran - India strategic profile

Defining Iran and Iranians

The country called Iran is only a part of the historical domain of Iranian cultural. In this text and the ones that follow, the use of the term *Iran* might not necessarily imply what we know today as Iran, bounded by modern borders. Historically, people of modern Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, western Pakistan, Caucasus, Iraq, and southern coast of the Persian Gulf have at one point or another been part of the greater Iranian cultural domain. This culture has not been necessarily centred in Iran, and thus does not; in anyway, suggest a chauvinistic or

nationalistic view. It is indeed true that many times during the history of Iran and its people, the centres of Iranian culture, and even political power, have lied outside its current borders. Therefore the terms *Iran* and *Iranian* not always mean the Persian, Kurdish, or Baluchi speaking population of modern Iran, but also the historical population of all other places when Iranian culture has made an impact.

Etymologically, *Iran* means the land of the Aryans, the eastern branch of Indo-Europeans. A group of Aryans or Indo-Iranians who migrated to the Iranian plateau around 2000 BCE from Central Asia, are thought to be the direct ancestors of modern Iranians. This has encouraged many historians to start the history of Iran from the Aryan migrations or the establishment of the first Aryan political power, the Achaemenid Empire. At the same time, it is true that long before the influx of Aryans into Iran, different peoples with established civilisations and kingdoms inhabited the country. These dynasties that deteriorated before the arrival of the Aryans or who were defeated by them, had an extensive system of international trade and relations with other civilisations of their time, as far west as Egypt and maybe Southern Europe and to China in the east. The history of these people, even if solely for their impact on the invading Aryans, certainly deserves identification and hopefully a profound investigation. At present the study briefly discusses these civilisation and their international relations and investigate their demise under the Aryan rule. Before that a short description of the Iranian geography seems appropriate to understand the political relationship.⁹

⁹ Khodadad Rezakhani, "History of Iran ", chapter ,Iran before Iranians part of Iranology.com.1996-2000.

Geography of the Iranian Plateau

In geological terms, the Iranian plateau is late formation. As late as the Mesozoic era, a large sea called the Sea of *Tetis* covered most of the land. This sea eventually drained and its remainders become the Caspian and the Black Sea. The lasting effect of the *Tetis* has been the persistence of salt deserts in Iran and the existence of at least one highly condensed salt lake, *Urmiyah*. Caspian, the largest lake in the world, also has one of the highest amounts of salt in cubic meter in the world.

The Iranian plateau today is a land surrounded by high mountains and spotted by warm lowlands. Two important mountain ranges, each with peaks over 5,000 meters high stretch from the north-western corner of the plateau to the current Azerbaijan province and to the south and east. The eastern branch, the *Alborz*, boasts the highest peak of the two ranges, Mt. *Damavand*. The *Alborz* range creates a high barrier south of the Caspian Sea, making serious impacts on the climate of the plateau. While lush forests and pastures abound south of the Caspian and give it a mild, humid weather, the *Alborz* prevents the passing of the rain-rich clouds to the inside of the plateau, causing very low rainfall, and thus creating a dry and mostly warm climate to the south of the mountains.

The second mountain range, the *Zagros*, stretches from northwest to the south and diverts to the east just north of the Persian Gulf. It does not cause as much complications as the *Alborz*, since the height of the *Zagros* peaks decrease around the Persian Gulf, allows more clouds to move over the mountains. On the

other hand the *Zagros* forms two branches, among them the south of Azerbaijan, an inhabitable area, shows some of the oldest signs of settlement on the plateau.¹⁰

Inside the country, there are two major deserts; one, the *Dasht-e Kavir*, around 200 km east of modern Tehran and at the feet of the *Alborz* range. It is covered with sand and is mainly uninhabited. The smaller desert, *Lut*, is not dry but provides enough resources for the survival of small communities. These two deserts, both pushing towards the east, have caused the shift of population to the west, north, and south of the plateau.

In addition to the southern Caspian region, two more regions, one the north of the Persian Gulf and the east at the point of the meeting of Tigris and Euphrates, and the other at the point of meeting of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of *Omman*, are agriculturally prosperous. These three areas, Caspian Coast, the *Khuz*, and *Persia* respectively, have thus provided some of the oldest centres of inhabitation in the Iranian plateau.

The rivers of Iran are few and mainly seasonal. From the major rivers, *Karun* in the south, *Aras* in the northwest, and *Sepid-rud* in the north flow year round, and the Karun is deep enough for modern navigation. This obvious lack of water supply should have made Iran an unattractive place for settlement. On the contrary, some of the world's oldest civilisations have formed in and around the plateau. Natural defence and rich resources could be an explanation, as could be the fact that in the pre-historic and early historic times, forests and rivers most likely covered more of the plateau than they do today.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Early Human Life in Iran

Although geologically new, the area of Iran has been inhabited from the very early times. Archaeological excavations have uncovered skeletons of early Homo erectus man in Iran and it seems that from the earliest stages of human development, Iran, as a land bridge, has been constantly inhabited.

In terms of civilisations, the evidence carries us to the earliest stages of human settlement. Hunter-gatherers from the high mountains have settled around the plateau as early as 30,000 BCE. The origins of most of the earliest human settlements in the plateau are not known and they seem to be local, developing from hunter-gatherer stage to the settled farmers settling in the mountains or plains of southern Caspian coast and northern Persian Gulf. Between 8,000 to 6,000 BCE, the earliest signs of settlement and domestication of animals appears in west and south-western Iran, followed by the appearance of painted pottery.

When the Sumerian kingdom was established in the southern most section of Mesopotamia, many tribes had already been settled and they were in early stages of state building. The apparent trade between the Dravidian civilisation of the Indus Valley and the *Sumer* passed through the territories of these small states. From the apparent peace and quiet that persisted on the area and the flow of trade, we can assume that some kind of agreement was reached for the protection of merchant caravans. The future rise of kingdoms in the area also points to the profit that was gained by them from the passing trade.

Civilisations in Iran

I. Early Settlements

The earliest of evidences of a civilization in Iran comes from the southern Caspian region, in present day province of *Gilan*. Around the village of *Marlik*, evidences of metal work and pottery have been found which date back to the 5th century BCE. This area seems to be inhabited by the same people who were settled in eastern Anatolia, proto-Hattians, and Hurrians of later *Urartu* kingdom. The similarity of art works seems to suggest close connections with the *Kassites* of *Luristan* who later became one of the two dominant civilizations of pre-Aryan era.

The other pre-historic civilization that is attested in Iran is the civilization of the people who lived in the city of *Sialk*, near modern *Kashan* in central Iran. This walled city attests the oldest fortified settlement in Iran. The dangers that these walls were trying to keep out are not known, but it might have come from migrating *Kassites* who moved from the north and northwest towards the south-western Iran and the mountains of *Luristan*. *Sialk* pottery is close to the *Marlik* and *Kassite* pottery, while the signs of metal works are limited. The houses are built of stones, the ready material of the region, and the position of the city suggests a port situation, probably of a larger lake whose remaining still exist as the *Daryache Namak* (the salt lake) near the modern city of *Qom*.

II. *Kassites*

The origin of the *Kassites* is not known, but their material life suggests close connections to the civilizations of Hurrians and Hattis and even to the *Luvian* and

other pre-Greek cultures of Anatolia and Minoans of Crete. The bronze work of the *Kassites* is very famous and is used to establish links between the Sumerians, Monoans, Etruscans, and Dravidian civilization of the Indus Valley/Muhenjudaro. Linguistic research relates the *Kassite* to the Indo-Iranians, but these are mainly extracted from the names of the deities, mentioned later in the *Kassite* history. As with the case of the Mitanni, these gods might belong to a ruling class that could have had Indo-Iranian roots. But in general, there is no strong evidence to suggest Indo-European roots of the *Kassite*. Other local inhabitants of *Luristan* and the rest of the southwest Iran, Lullubis and Gutians, do not show any Indo-Iranian characteristics as well.

Kassites first entered written history in the Babylonian records when they attacked Babylon in a campaign from 2080-2043 BCE under the rule of their first king, *Gandash*. The Babylonian king, *Shemshu-Ilune*, the son of *Hamurabi* the great lawgiver, defeated the unorganised *Kassite* tribes and drove them back to their mountain strongholds. Centuries later, in 1595 BCE, a united *Kassite* and *Gutian* force, under the command of *Agum-Kak-Reme*, attacked Babylon following the Hittite withdrawal, this time successfully, he ruled for about three hundred years, until 1180 BCE. The *Kassite* dominance of Babylon resulted in the introduction of horse to the Babylonian army, probably the result of earlier *Kassite* contacts with the Central Asian nomads.

The *Kassites* also extended their dominance to the Elamite kingdom of southwest Iran and put an end to the Old Elamite kingdom. They extended their lands to the borders of Egypt on one side, and as far as north the Urartu territory in Caucasus and Anatolia. Their last king, *Anllil-nadin-akhe*, was defeated by the

Elamite king and was taken prisoner to Susa where he died in 1180 BCE, putting an end to the *Kassite* power in Mesopotamia. The remaining of the *Kassite* tribes, who had managed to keep their own identity, retreated back to the high mountains of Luristan, where they eventually became part of the strong kingdoms of Elam and eventually becomes the Persian Empire.

III. Elam

Elam, the most powerful and the longest lasting civilization of the Iranian plateau prior to the Aryan arrival, has a complex history. Most of the history of *Elam* has been recorded by their fierce enemies Babylonians and Assyrians, or by their successors, the Persians, who had a strong incentive to undermine the late Elamite kingdom. As a result, Elamite representation has not been very fair or accurate, and only due to the recent scholarship and study of Elamite inscriptions we can have a good idea of their culture.

As with the *Kassites* , we do not have a reliable knowledge of Elamite origin. As far back to the 4th millennium BCE, evidence of Elamite settlement in the plains of Khuz (northern Persian Gulf) exist. Researches been done on the Elamite skeletons show their racial closeness to the Sumerians and Dravidians of Indus Valley. While their language, at least in its latest form, shows very little connections with these cultures. The Elamite pottery and crafts is strongly influenced by the Sumerian artefacts, as well as Muhenjudaro and Bactro-Margiana cultural artefacts. We might assume that Elamites arrived in their homeland, most likely via the sea from southern Indus Valley region, around 3500 BCE. Prior to their arrival, the plains of northern Persian Gulf were among the oldest civilised

areas in the world history and the site of *Susa* was inhabited as far back as 4200 BCE and had come under the rule of the kings of *Akkad*. When the ancestors of Elamites arrived, they settled in that area under the rule of the Sumerian kingdom of *Ur*. The proto-Elamites adopted many of the Sumerian cultural characteristics such as the cuneiform writing, which replaced their own original pictographic writing system. Still, they kept their own unique cultural peculiarities such as maternal system of succession and their own religion. Women seem to have held a very important position in the Elamite society. They inherited and willed their property, they ruled and conducted business, and as mentioned before, they were agents of succession in the government. The maternal characteristics of Elamite culture survived up to the Neo-Elamite era (around 750 BCE), around which it started to give way to the Babylonian/Semitic paternalistic system of its neighbours.

The Elamite history has been superficially divided into Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms, based on the Egyptian system adopted by early Orient lists. This division does not hold firmly for *Elam*, but it is generally used as a matter of convenience. The Old Elamite Kingdom started a period of growth around the early 2nd BCE. They first established their roots in the *Khuz* area, in the site of *Susa* (*Shusha* in Elamite), where *Puzur-Inshushinak* (r. ca. 2112–2095 BCE) built the first Elamite status in his own honour. Elamites initially attacked and destroyed *Ur*, and later invaded Babylonia around 2000 BCE and founded the *Larsa* dynasty. By that time, they were already the masters of *Uruk*, *Isin*, and *Babylon*. Later, *Hamurabi* of Babylonia stopped the expansion of Elam, but Babylonians could not stop the great kings like *Kutir-Nakhunte* to revive the Elamite power a hundred years later (ca. 1700 BCE).

Around 1600 BCE, *Kassites* attacked and invaded Elam and annexed it to their empire. This put an end to the Old Elamite kingdom which was ruled successively by *Kassites*, Babylonians, *Hittites*, and again by *Kassites* for another 400 years. In 1160 BCE, *Shutruk-Nakhunte*, a local ruler of *Susa*, drove the *Kassites* out of Elam and established a new dynasty and an Elamite Empire. The culture that allowed the foundation of the Elamite Empire created great cities of *Awan*, *Anshan*, *Simash* and especially the *Susa*, the lowland capital of the Elamites. It also built the great Ziggurat of *Chogha-Zanbil*, the famous temple of Elam that now remains as the oldest standing archaeological building in Iran.

The Elamite Empire was very short lived and it was soon invaded by *Nebuchadnezzar* of Baylonia in 1120 BCE. For 300 years, *Elam*, and *Susa* as its centre, he ruled as a Babylonian protectorate. During this time, the centre of the Elamite power was shifted to the east of their traditional territory and took refuge in the city of *Anshan* in the *Zagros* mountains. Elam once again rose to power in 750 BCE and took over their old capital of *Susa*. This New Elamite kingdom soon became a powerful state and started a campaign against the Babylonians and the new Assyrian Empire. This state, however powerful, could not stand against the overwhelming Assyrian expansion. In 645, *Ashur-Banipal*, the last powerful Assyrian emperor, invaded and raised *Susa* to the ground. This was the last blow on the Elamite power which at this point divided into small states and was soon ran over by the rising Median and Persian powers.

Despite its troublesome history, Elam holds a great place in the history of civilization, especially from the Iranian point of view. Elamites have been accused of cultural stagnation and lack of innovation. While it is true that many of their

cultural characteristics, especially writing system, was adopted from the Mesopotamian civilisations, it is undeniable that the Elamites possessed a distinctly *Elamite* culture. They kept their own religion and built great temples to their gods, including *Inshushinak*, the protector of Susa, and a goddess who probably became *Ardaui Sura Anahita* of the Achaemenid religion. Their government system, especially in its succession procedure, was unique for its time. Contrary to the agricultural economy of Mesopotamia, the Elamite economy was based greatly on trade, but also on mining and export of raw material such as tin that was crucial for the powerful empires of Babylon and Assyria. They also for a long while acted as a buffer zone between Mesopotamia and the internal nomads of Iran, in the process, forming a great hybrid culture of Elamite, and Babylonian and Sumerian characteristics.

As far as the later civilizations of Iran are concerned, Elam was the major transmitter of the achievements of older civilizations to the Median and Achaemenid empires. The modified cuneiform that was developed by Elamites from the Sumerian models, constituted an early form of Syllabry that made it possible to create the Old Persian alphabetic cuneiform. Elamite architecture was the model of Achaemenid palaces, and the court procedure of Persia was completely modelled after the Elamite costumes. In addition to that, the Elamite scribes who made their language one of the three official languages of the empire transmitted the sciences and knowledge of Elam and Mesopotamia, mathematics and astronomy, to the Persian Empire. Perhaps the greatest tribute paid to Elam was the selection of their old capital, Susa as the main capital of Achaemenids. Cultural legacy of Elam has affected their successors incredibly.

IV: Other Civilizations

To the north of the *Kassites* , there lived a group of people called *Hurrians* who were probably the native inhabitants of the southern Caucasus. They spoke a language unrelated to all other languages around them, and they seem to have spread quickly around the landscape in the 2nd millennium BCE. Their area of influence stretched westwards to the Van Lake area and made themselves the neighbours of *Hatti* and later established the Hittite Kingdom. Around the 1400 BCE, a group of Hurrian people formed a kingdom called the *Mitanni* in the areas of modern Kurdistan and eastern Turkey. The Mitannis adopted the Assyrian cuneiform and have thus left us with a few written documents of their civilisation. From these documents and also from an important inscription detailing a Mitanni peace treaty with the Hittites, we know that at least the ruling class of the Mitanni kingdom were from an Indo-European and specifically Indo-Aryan background. A manual of horse training uses many Indo-European names for horse accessories, and in the aforementioned peace treaty, we have the name of many Indo-Aryan deities included in the pantheon of Mitanni gods. This has for long puzzled the historians, since the distance between the Mitanni and the rest of the Indo-Aryans who at the time lived in Central Asia and Afghanistan is great. Conventional scholarship suggests a migration of Indo-Iranians from the plains of Central Asia to north-eastern Iran and then south to the Indus Valley. If this view is accepted, the existence of a semi-isolated Indo-Aryan ruling class in western Iran seems highly confusing. A possible hypothesis is the migration of a branch of Indo-Iranians from the northern plains of the Caspian Sea moved down to the Caucasus and into the western Iran. This hypothesis along with others suggestions are able to maintain the

Iranian origin at the level of theory in the absence of empirical evidence in their support.

Urartu, another Hurrian nation, also formed a civilisation of the Iranian plateau. Their kingdom was very successful in its relations with the dominant powers of the time, Assyrians and the *Hittite*. *Urartu*, formed a trade confederation that benefited from the Assyrian and Hittite which desired to access the tin and gold mines of Iranian mountains. With the wealth coming from their trade, the *Urartu* built lasting tributes to their civilisation whose remains still exist around north-eastern Iran and eastern Anatolia. The later Armenian kingdoms claimed to be the descents from the Uartans, and the name of the great mountain of Armenia, *Mount Ararat*, which comes from the name of the Urartu people. This civilisation ceased to exist sometimes before the rise of the Median kingdom in the southern borders of their territory (ca. 650 BCE). But it has left lasting influences, especially in architecture, on the kingdom of the Medes.¹¹

Iran is one the world's most mountainous countries. Its mountains have helped to shape both the political and the economic history of the country for several centuries. The mountains enclose several broad basins or plateaus, on which major agricultural and urban settlements are located. Until the twentieth century, when major highways and railroads were constructed through the mountains to connect the population centres, this basin tended to be relatively isolated from one another. Typically, one major town dominated each basin, and there were complex economic relationships between the town and the hundreds of villages that surrounded it.

¹¹ Ibid.

Iran located in south western Asia, shares its entire northern border with the Soviet Union. This border extends for more than 2000 kilometres, including nearly 650 kilometres of water along the southern shore of the Caspian Sea. Iran's western borders are with Turkey in the north and Iraq in the south, terminating at the *shatt al Arab*, which Iranians call the *Arvan Rud*. The Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman littorals form the entire 1770 kilometre southern border. To the east, lies Afghanistan on the north Turkmenistan and Pakistan on the south.

Iran is one of the foremost countries of the Middle East region, which from the very beginning of the twentieth has been century, has been attractive for political powers and super powers. It has been an important scene of political strategies. In post cold war period a number of strategic issues have emerged whose intricate dynamics are likely to affect Iran's status as a dominant player in the Middle East. Though Iran is the only non-Arab Muslim country of this region, it shares a significant commonality of Islam with other regional Arab countries. On the other hand, Iran has the longest coastline and the largest population in the region. It has the oldest and historical presence in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, which hold two thirds of the world oil reserves. The importance and sensitivity of this region is so obvious that the interest shown by America and its western allies in this region created a major battlefield. During the Persian Gulf conflict, together with the concept collection engagement, the will of the United States was openly imposed upon the UN for the first time.

During the cold war, the long borders, which Iran shares with the Soviet Union, created an important geopolitical situation for the country. But after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the geopolitical importance of Iran was further

increased because of the fundamental shift in the political geography of the lands beyond its northern flank. There a number of newly independent and land locked republics came into being. In these republics, many ethnic and territorial disputes, which had been suppressed for seven decades, became unleashed and distrust was created between them and Russia because of the political ambition of Moscow to dominate them as its security zone.

Central Asia provides Iran a route to China, just like centuries ago when the Silk Road was active. Iran's neighbourhood with South Asia is via Pakistan borders. However, as a geographical reality the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman are included within the Indian Ocean. According to the historical facts the thousand of years of interaction between India and Iran, it is inevitable that the countries of the sub-continent and Iran consider each other as neighbours and the feeling of neighbourhood causes deep mutual influence over political events as well. Particularly after the disintegration of the Soviet Union the issues pertaining to the Central Asia and Afghanistan, which enjoy priority in the foreign policy of Iran, have received considerable attention in the Indian foreign policy as well.

Geographically, the Iranian plateau lies like an immense crossroads between Central Asia (itself an extremely important meeting ground for the trade routes and various cultures at the Far East and West Asia) and the India, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. Since the 11th century B.C. Indo-European tribes have settled there. The name "Iran" is derived from the ancient Iranian genitive, plural *organa* (land of the Aryans).¹² The Iranians who gave their name and tongue to the country were

¹² Alessandro Bausani, "Iranians: From the Earliest Days to the Twentieth Century (Elerk Books Limited, London, 1971), p.11.

originally nomads from Central Asia closely related to the Indians who conquered the subcontinent.¹³

Indian subcontinent was known to the west by the name of India, a vast land with an area of about 16,575,000 square miles.¹⁴ Now Indian sub—continent is divided into India, Pakistan and Bangladesh based on their dominant religions. India is the greatest landmass of south Asia. To the South, India represents one of oldest and least disturbed large landmasses in the world. The sea has never extensively covered its rocks since their formation in the pre-Cambrian period 3000 million years ago, although they include a number of sedimentary states deposited by rivers under glacial conditions. Between the Himalayas lie the Indo-Gangetic plains stretching from the valley of the Indus River in Pakistan to that of the Brahmaputra River in Assam and taking in the deltaic low lands of Bangladesh.¹⁵

The south Asian country India includes a peninsula extending into the Indian Ocean, and it is a land of great contrast in geography .The barren, snow-capped Himalayas , the world's tallest mountain system, rises along its northern border. South of the Himalayas, the low, fertile Ganges plain is India's most populous region. The Great Indian Desert lies in the west, but eastern India receives some of the highest rainfall in the world during the monsoon season (June to October). India is the second only to china in population but India is growing faster (some 16 million a year) and may surpass china by 2030. Although 81 percent of the

¹³ Richard N. Frye, "Persia (George Allen and Unwin LTD, London, 1960), p.23.

¹⁴ The New Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol.21, 15th Edition (Chicago, 1973),p.21.

¹⁵ Robinson Francis ,ed, "The Cambridge Encyclopedia of India , Pakistan, Bangladesh, SriLanka, Nepal, Bhutanand the Maldives"(Cambridge up, Cambridge,1989),pp.14-16.

people are Hindu, India also has 126 million Muslims – one of the world's largest Muslim populations.

India can be divided into three distinct geographic regions. The Himalaya region in the north contains some of the highest mountains in the world. There is the Gangetic plain to the east and the plateau region in the south and central part. Its three great river systems – the Ganges, the Indus, and the Brahmaputra – have extensive deltas and all rise in the Himalayas.

Amongst all the oriental countries Iran and India stand first and foremost in their contributions to world culture. These two nations have been the torchbearers of knowledge, the fore runners of a well defined civilization. The relations between India and Iran have been a continuous historical process from the dawn of history, which has unfolded itself through alternate phase of harmony and conflict and has percolated down to our times. It is no small matter that during all these centuries the people of these two countries have shared racial affinities, spiritual qualities, identical intellectual pursuits, traditional values and common literary heritage to constitute the inseparable bonds of fellowship, friendship and understanding between them. India and Iran, two ancient civilizations having been bound together through ethno cultural bonds for millennia, have also shared common historical, cultural, political and commercial ties even in the contemporary time as well. Prior to the advent of British rule in India, Persian influence was predominant on the Indian scene through Persian language and literature. In the wake of India attaining independence in August 1947, new opportunities awaited India to renew and revive the countries old ties with Iran. However, the pace of nourishing bilateral relationship was very gradual which gained impetus only during the 1970s. The

divergent foreign policy objectives pursued by respective regimes in New Delhi and Tehran, Iran's total leaning towards the United States and India's apprehensions about Iran's alliance with Pakistan were some of the factors that impeded the expansion at full-fledged relationship between the two countries.

With the advent of Islamic revolution in Iran in early 1979, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran underwent a through change. The revolutionary regime in Tehran not only severed Iran's special relationship with United States but also dissociated itself from the US sponsored regional alliance like CENTO. The Islamic Republic of Iran joined the non-aligned movement and hence the promotion of better relations with the non-aligned countries became the hallmark of new Islamic government of Iran. Thus new opportunities again awaited India for forging closer relations with Iran. However, it took almost thirteen years both for India and Iran to bring amiable relationship. The keen developments like Iran-Iraq War (September 1980-August 1988) and India's resolution in Kashmir Valley and general plight of Muslims in India especially in the aftermath of communal riots and incident like demolition of Babri Mosque etc. have been the main irritants that have obstructed the healthy growth of friendly relations between India and Iran. It was only after the visit of Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao to Iran in September 1993 that the cobwebs of scepticism pervading two countries cleared and thus provided a new impetus to bilateral co-operation in almost all the spheres.

The Islamic revolution which finally led to the establishment of Islamic Republic in Iran has received various and extensive attention from political analysts and scholars in various branches of social sciences. Even though more than a decade after the Islamic Republic of Iran took place, working papers, reviews and

comprehensive work on the topic continue to appear. Good number of attempts has also been made to analyse the bilateral relationship between India and Iran with the emphasis either on making a reassessment of the older views and opinions or surveying the development from new angles and trying to throw some new light.

Literature review

The emphasis on political development during Shah regime is to be found in the writing of Donald N. Wilber “Iran: Past and Present”, Shahram Chubin and Sephehr’s “The Foreign Policy Relation of Iran: A Developing State in Zone of Conflict”, R.W. Cottom’s “Nationalism in Iran”, R.K. Ramazani’s “Iran’s Foreign Policy 1941-1973”, E. Abrahamian’s “Iran Between Two Revolution”.

The Islamic revolution point of view in this regard has been presented by A.H.H. Abidi’s work: “The Iranian Revolution its Origins and Dimension”, H. Amir Ahmadi and M. Parvin’s “Post-revolutionary Iran”, Hamid Algar’s “The Roots of Islamic Revolution”, J. Fisher’s “Iran: From Religions dispute to revolution”, E.F. Ezzati’s “The Revolutionary Islam and Islamic Revolution in Iran”.

The emphasis on cultural and economic relations of India and Iran has been studied widely in Irfan Habib work “The Growth of Civilization in India and Iran”. Fathullah Mojtabai’s “Indo-Iranian Studies” Mino-Salimi’s, “Cultural Relations of India and Iran”, Jasmes A. Bill “The Politics of Iran: Groups, classes and modernization”, Stephen, Longrigg’s “Oil in Middle East”, E. Kedourie’s “Towards a modern Iran. F. Kazemi, “Poverty and Revolution in Iran”, M.G. Majid on “The Relationship Between Land Reform and Rural Urban Migration in Iran, 1988”. These publications have made commendable efforts in explaining economical, social

and international relationship of Iran. Most dependable statistical materials and economic bearings are provided in Government publications like Bank “Iran reports”.

Iran relationship with other countries including India have been studied very competently in N.S. Grakar’s “Indo-Iranian Relations”, S. Gupta’s “India and Regional Integration in Asia”, Patwant Singh’s “India and Future of Asia”, John M. Mellar’s “India: Arising Middle Power”, R.M. Burnnell and A.J. Cotrell’s “Iran and her Neighbouring State, Security and Subversion Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan: Tension and Dilemma”.

An interesting studies at the regional problems and their impacts on Indo-Iranian relations can be found in Richard William Thomson’s “The Palestine problem”, Abbas Amiri’s, “The Persian Gulf and Indian ocean in international politics”, Henry S. Brasher’s “Afghanistan and the Soviet Union”, Satish Chander’s “The Indian Ocean: Exploration in History”, J.C. Huriwitz’s “After The Persian Gulf Iran’s Revolution”, M. Khadduri’s “The Gulf War: The origins and implication of the Iran-Iraq war”.

REFERENCE ONLY

Literature of general interest with the background of Indo-Iranian relations is quite rich and substantial. K.M. Panikar’s “Geographical Factor in Indian History of India, V.A. Smith’s “A History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon”, F.C. Davar’s “India and Iran through Ages”, Trachand’s “Influence of Islam on Indian culture” A.K. Pasha, “Contemporary Iran and Emerging of Indo-Iranian Relations” are very important contribution in this regard.

Methodology

This study focuses on Iran's foreign policy towards India with special reference to political, cultural, bilateral, economic and commercial fields. The study pursues historical and analytical method to bring out the results. The present study takes up the uphill task of academic exploration of those areas by bringing together the relevant literature as well as diversified and scattered sources.

Objectives

Accordingly the study focuses:

1. To study the foreign policy of Iran towards India between 1979 and 1990.
2. To study the most important factors dominating in the Indo-Iran relations such as political, cultural, economic, geo-political and socio-religious.
3. To study foreign policies of the new regime in Iran under Ayatollah Khomeini.
4. Finally the focus would be on the regional issues in the making of foreign policy of Iran and India.

Chapters

The first chapter in the form of introduction deals with the conceptual analysis of foreign policy, element of foreign policy of Iran. This chapter also deals with the statement of problem, objectives of study and methodology .It also mentioned to India and Iran strategic position.

The political, cultural, social & commercial relations of both India and Iran in ancient and medieval periods forms the subject matter of analysis in the second chapter. This chapter also discusses about pre-history and culture, influence of Iranian culture on the literature and Indian languages, Influence of Iranian culture on architectures and Akbar's court and the common origins of Indian and Iranian civilizations

Third chapter deals with Indo-Iran Foreign policy during post- independence period. It focuses on the visiting of Shah of Iran and other Ministers to India and Iran, making of friendship agreement Indo-Iranian peace and friendship treaty and other Commercial Agreements. Iran's membership at CENTO, Non alignment movement, Pakistan factor in Indo-Iranian relations.

Iranian revolution and Ayatollah Khomeini as leader of Iranian revolution and his political ideas and his Doctrine in Velayat- al -Faqih are examined in the fourth chapter.

An endeavour has been made to examine the respective approaches Indo-Iran relations after revolution in Iran and impact on Islamic revolution of Iran and its developments, strengthening mutual relationship, visiting of the foreign ministers of India and Iran as well as respective approaches of India and Iran towards regional issues and vital factors which directly affecting on both countries in fifth chapter.

The final chapter is formed conclusion.

CHAPTER - II

INDO-IRANIAN SOCIAL, CULTURAL, COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP DURING ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Historical Background

Pre-Aryan civilizations

The Indus Valley Civilization, which is the oldest historically known culture in India is contemporary with the Proto-Elamite civilization in Iran . The Indus people are identified with trade links with parts of Afghanistan , the coastal regions of Iran, and the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia as well. At Susa in the western part of Iran, decorated pottery has been excavated which appears to be similar to those of the Kulli culture in the north-west of the Indian subcontinent. Indus seals have also been excavated at Kish, Sura and Ur . The Harappan culture in India is believed to have imported silver, copper, turquoise and lapis lazuli from Persia and Afghanistan, in return for ivory. In terms of linguistics, it has been theorized that the Indus people spoke a Dravidian language, and this language or its variants must have also spread to neighboring areas: in the Baluchistan region in the southeast of Iran and in the southwest of Pakistan. The Brahui people speak a language that is classified under the Dravidian family.¹

Pre-Islamic Persia and Vedic civilization era

The languages of India which belong to the Indo-Aryan family are believed to be originated from the same source as of the Iranian languages, which is a member of the Satem group of Indo-European languages. The Indo-Iranians were nomadic people originating from the Central Asian steppes, probably in the region of the Oxus river valley, pre-2000 BCE. They referred themselves as Aryans, from which the word "Iran" originates (from *airyanam vaejo* meaning "Land of the Aryans"), and the

¹ <http://www.indianembassy-tehran.com/india-iran-links.html> .

word *Arya* in Sanskrit and other Indian languages signify "noble". Ancient India was also referred to as *aryavarta*, which means the same as "kingdom/domain of the Aryans".²

Aryan civilization first entered the north-west of India probably around 2000 BCE. The Aryans brought with them the patrilinear system, which worships the sky gods and uses horses and chariot. Vedic civilization began in India around 1500 BC, with the Rigveda being the oldest of the Vedas. The Rigveda was told in Vedic Sanskrit, which is very similar to Avestan, the ancient language in which the Persian Zoroastrian sacred text Avesta was written. The Vedas and the Avesta appear to agree that the Aryans might have migrated from their original homeland due to the "flood". In the Vedic account, the flood was of water, while the Avesta indicates that it was of snow and frost. According to Vedic scripture the survivor of this flood, Manu Satyavrata is considered to be the progenitor of the Aryans in India. The story has obvious parallels with the Semitic account of the Great Flood and the emergence of Noah. According to the traditions of the Vendidad, Aryans lived in fifteen nations, one of these being *Hapta hindu*, which is the Avestan form of the Sanskrit *Saptasindhu*, meaning "seven rivers" and referring to the region of the Indian subcontinent.³ Ancient Vedic religion and Zoroastrianism also have much else in common. The Vedas and the Gathas of the Avesta include fire worship, the performance of sacrifice (Sanskrit *Yajna* or Avestan *Yasna*) and the importance of priests or Magi. The myths that appear in the Yasht part of the Avesta probably have their roots in ancient Indo-Iranian culture.⁴

² <http://www.indianembassy-tehran.com/india-iran-links.html>.

³ <http://www.indianembassy-tehran.com/india-iran-links.html>.

⁴ <http://www.indianembassy-tehran.com/india-iran-links.html>.

Achaemenid Period and Seleucid Empire

The emergence of the Achaemenid empire in Persia, founded by *Hakhāmaniš* (*Sakhamani* in Sanskrit, meaning "one with friends or allies") saw parts of northwest India come under Persian rule. Indian emissaries were present at the court of the Great or *Kurush* (590 BCE - 529 BCE), whose empire extended as far east as Gandhara and Sind. It is also believed that when Cyrus was threatened by Croesus of Lydia, he received military assistance from an Indian king.⁵ Under Darius I or *Darayawus* (521 BCE - 485 BCE), there were inscriptions referring to Persian relations with India. The Behistun rock inscription (ancient *Bagastana* "place of Gods" or Sanskrit *Bhagasthana*) dating back to around 518 BCE includes Gandhara in the list of his subject countries. Here Darius also refers to his language as Aryan. The Persepolis inscription mentions Punjab as a part of the Persian empire. The epigraph of Nagsh-i-Rustam shows India as the 24th state of his empire. The Indian province of Darius was believed to be the richest in Darius's empire. Herodotus tells us of the wealth and density of the Indian population and of the tribute paid to Darius. 'The population of the Indians is by far the greatest of all the people that we know; and they paid tribute proportionately larger than all the rest – (the sum of) 360 talents of gold dust'. Herodotus also mentions the Indian contingent in the Persian armies consisting of infantry, cavalry, and chariots. Later, elephants are also mentioned.⁶ Under Xerxes I or *Khashayarsha*, the successor of Darius, it is believed that Indians

⁵ 'Iran and India: Age old Friendship' by Abdul Amir Jorfi, India Quarterly, Oct-Dec 1994, p 69.

⁶ 'The Discovery of India' by Jawaharlal Nehru, Oxford University Press 1992, p 147.

(specifically from north-west India, Bactria and Gandhara) fought alongside the Persian army against the Greeks in the battlefields of Plataea and Marathon .⁷

Achaemenian art and architecture also had a significant influence on India. Before the Ashokan period of history, there is not much evidence of epigraphy in India. It has been suggested that the idea of issuing decrees by Ashoka was borrowed from the Achaemenian emperors, especially from Darius. The pillars, with their animal capitals (fine examples of Mauryan imperial art), are influenced by Achaemenian pillars.⁸ The use of this means of propagating official messages and the individual style of the inscriptions both suggest Persian and Hellenistic influence.

Trade expanded mainly because Achaemenians introduced coinage, which facilitated exchange. India exported spices like black pepper and imported gold and silver coins from Iran.⁹ The grape , introduced from Persia with the almond and walnut, was cultivated in the western Himalayas.¹⁰ One of the earliest Indian words for a coin is Karsa (also a small weight), which is of Persian origin.¹¹

According to Herodotus, Artaxerxes or *Artakshathra* exempted the inhabitants of four Babylonian villages from taxation in return for their breeding Indian dogs for hunting and war. The dog is mentioned with respect only once in ancient Indian literature and was rarely, if ever, treated as a pet. The exception occurs in the Mahabharata, when the five Pandavas and their wife Draupadi take their dog with them on their final pilgrimage to heaven, and the eldest brother Yudhisthira refuses to

⁷ 'Indo-Iranian Relations' by Dr. Tara Chand, p 4.

⁸ 'Iran and India: Age old Friendship' by Abdul Amir Jorfi, India Quarterly, Oct-Dec 1994.

⁹ 'Iran and India: Age old Friendship' by Abdul Amir Jorfi, India Quarterly, Oct-Dec 1994 .

¹⁰ 'The Wonder that was India' by A L Basham, p 196 .

¹¹ 'The Wonder that was India' by A L Basham, p 222 .

enter without his faithful friend. It has been suggested that the episode shows Iranian influence, because for the Zoroastrians, the dog was a sacred animal.¹²

In 330 BCE, Alexander the Great defeated Darius III. In the decisive battle of Gaugamela, Indian soldiers with fifteen elephants fought with Darius against the Greeks.¹³ Alexander marched into India after defeating the Persians. Chandragupta Maurya, who founded the Mauryan dynasty, had friendly relations with the successor of the Macedonian conqueror in Persia. Seleucus Nicator, the Grecian ruler of Persia, sent Megasthenes as the envoy of Hellenistic Persia to the court of Pataliputra in India, the seat of the Mauryas. Persian nobles were also present in the courts of Mauryan kings. Tushaspa, a Persian, was present during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya. The Kharoshti script was introduced by the Persian officials in the northwestern frontier province and continued to be in use till the 4th century CE.¹⁴

Parthian and Sassanid Periods

The Parthian empire was actively involved in cultural and commercial interactions with India. In later Parthian times, the borderland areas of Kabul, Kandahar and Sistan, which formed part of Gandhara, were also referred to as "white India".¹⁵ The name "Gujarat", the region in western India, is associated with the Gujjar tribe that were partly descended from the Indo-Scythians or Sakas who were Iranian peoples, and fought against the Parthian Empire.¹⁶ The history of Gujarat from 78 CE to 400 CE is sometimes shown as the *Kshatrapa* (Satrap) period, when the suzerainty of the Parthian empire was gradually replaced by the Sakas. The Indo-

¹² 'The Wonder that was India' by A L Basham, p 196.

¹³ 'The Wonder that was India' by A L Basham, p 49 .

¹⁴ 'Iran and India: Age old Friendship', paper by Abdul Amir Jorfi, India Quarterly, Oct-Dec 1994, p 69 .

¹⁵ 'Discovery of India' by Jawaharlal Nehru, Oxford University Press, 1992, p148..

¹⁶ 'Iran and Gujarat – Political and Cultural Relations' paper by C.R. Naik.

Scythian rulers of this time included Nahapana, Chashtana, Jayadaman and Rudradaman. Over time the rulers assumed Hindu names.¹⁷ Additionally, the Ranas of Udaipur, the heads of the Sisodia clan of the Rajputs are believed to have originally been Iranians who came to India towards the end of sixth century CE. The Pallavas (Sanskrit for Pahlavas) are also believed to have originated from Iran. Pulakesin II, the ruler of Badami is known to have sent an embassy to Khosrau II (Parviz) in 625 CE.¹⁸

The Sassanian period in Persia (226-651 CE) coincided with the Gupta period (308-651 CE) in India. The Sassanian monarchs maintained relations with the Gupta empire which was based in Pataliputra. Pulakesin, the ruler of the Deccan, was known in Persia, and there were frequent embassies between Persia and India. Trade flourished as Persian merchants acted as intermediaries in the flow of goods between India and Europe. One of the murals in the Ajanta caves near Mumbai depicts a Hindu king with men in Sassanian dress.¹⁹ In the 6th century, sandalwood, magenta, shells, corals, pearls, gold and silver are said to have been traded between India and Persia.²⁰ Bam, in south-east Iran, was a major commercial and trading town on the famous Spice Road, a major tributary of the Silk Road, that connected trade routes from India through Iran to Central Asia and China.

Kushana and Gandhara art consisted of Parthian and east Iranian elements. Sassanian motifs are also visible in Gupta art. On the other side, the Indian peacock, dragons, cocks and spiral creepers adorn Sassanian monuments.²¹ The tiles of the

¹⁷ Iran and Gujarat – Political and Cultural Relations' paper by C.R. Naik.

¹⁸ 'The History of the Parsees of India' paper by P.P. Balsara .

¹⁹ 'Iran and India: Age old Friendship' by Abdul Amir Jorfi, India Quarterly, Oct-Dec 1994, p 71.

²⁰ 'Iran and India: Age old Friendship' by Abdul Amir Jorfi, India Quarterly, Oct-Dec 1994, p 72 .

²¹ 'Indo-Iranian relations' by Dr. Tara Chand, p 10.

Harvan monastery near Srinagar have Sassanian-influenced decorations signifying the extent of Sassanid influence in the Kashmir valley.²²

According to the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi (11th century CE), the 5th century Sassanian king Bahram V requested Indian king Shangol to select 12000 "gypsies", or Indian musicians, and introduced them to Persia. These gypsies are believed to be the ancestors of the Persian gypsies. They propagated Indian music and dancing in Persia, and might have traveled further west to Europe in the next four to five hundred years. It is possible that these "gypsies" are the ancestors of the modern Roma people in Europe. It is also believed that Bahram visited India in the 5th century CE. Persian poet Hakim Nizami Ganjavi has alluded to the Indian wife of king Behram in his famous work *Haft Paikar* (seven figures) indicating instances of inter-marriage.²³

During the reign of the Sassanian king Khosrau (531-579 CE), the game of chess, *Chaturanga* in India, is believed to be introduced to Persia as *Shatranj*.²⁴ Later, when Persia was conquered by the Arabs, the game quickly spread all over the middle east and then to Europe. The original game was played on 64 squares (*astapada*) with a king piece and pieces of four other types, corresponding to the corps of the ancient Indian armies – an elephant (rook), a horse (knight), a chariot or ship and four footmen (pawns).²⁵ Under Khosrau, Jundishpur was developed as a leading centre of Persian medicine, in which the Indian Ayurvedic system was syncretized with the Greek system propagated there by the Nestorian Christians. Burzuya, the physician to Khosrau, was sent to India to bring back works on medicine and searched for the so-

²² 'Some Iranian Sufi traditions & their impact on the evolution of Indo-Muslim culture', paper by Mohd Ishaq Khan.

²³ 'Iran and India: Age old Friendship' by Abdul Amir Jorfi, India Quarterly, Oct-Dec 1994, p 71.

²⁴ 'Iran and India: Age old Friendship' by Abdul Amir Jorfi, India Quarterly, Oct-Dec 1994, p 72.

²⁵ 'The Wonder that was India' by A L Basham, 1967, p 210 .

called "elixir of life". Burzuya on his return is said to have brought stories of the Panchatantra with him.²⁶ The Panchatantra is an ancient collection of Indian fables, and it was translated from Sanskrit to Pahlavi by Burzuya, who called it *Kalila-va-Demna*. Also in the field of medicine, the Charaka Samhita, the famous Indian medical text by the physician Charaka was translated to Persian and then to Arabic in the 7th century. In the field of astronomy, an early Pahlavi book *Zik-i-Shatro Ayar*, which was an astronomical work based on Indian elements was translated into Arabic by Al-Tamimi.²⁷

According to the Christian topography "Cosmos Indicopleustes" of the 6th century, there were churches in Kerala and Ceylon in the hands of Persian priests, supervised by a Persian bishop at Kalliana (perhaps modern Cochin). Indian Christians had embraced the Nestorian heresy, which was then widespread in Persia. The Nestorians were active missionaries and their monks had crossed Central Asia to found churches in China. These missionaries following in the wake of Persian merchants are believed to be chiefly responsible for establishing a Christian community in south India.²⁸

Buddhist influence in Pre-Islamic Persia

REFERENCE ONLY

Buddhism became widespread in Persia within a few hundred years of its emergence in India. The Kushana king Kanishka in northwest India, became a great patron of Buddhist faith. Kanishka patronized the Gandhara school of Greco-Buddhist art, which introduced Greek and Persian elements into Buddhist iconography. Buddhism became the religion of the east Iranian province of Khorasan through the

²⁶ Indo-Iranian Relations' by Dr. Tara Chand, p 5.

²⁷ 'A Concise History of Science in India', edited by D.M. Bose, INSA Publications, 1989, p 48.

²⁸ 'The wonder that was India', by A.L. Basham, 1967, p 345.

Kushana emperors. The legendary biography of the Buddha in Sanskrit – the Buddha Charita – composed by Ashva Ghosh - was translated into Khotanese and then into Sogdian and Parthian, followed by Pahlavi, and then Arabic and other languages. In Iran, the story of Ibrahim ibn Adham, the prince who abandoned his kingdom to lead a religious life, is modelled on that of the Buddha.²⁹

In Central Asia there was a mixture of languages, religions, and cultures, and, as Buddhism interacted with these various traditions, it changed and developed. Shamanism, Zoroastrianism, Nestorian Christianity, and later Islam to a certain extent coexisted with Buddhism. For example, some of the Mahayana bodhisattvas, such as Amitabha, may have been inspired, in part, by Zoroastrianism. There is also evidence of some degree of syncretism between Buddhism and Manichaeism, an Iranian dualistic religion that was founded in the 3rd century CE. Zoroastrianism and Buddhism also came in close contact in northwest India.³⁰

Buddhist architecture and imagery probably influenced and was influenced by its Persian counterpart, as Buddhism spread in Persia.³¹ The blue of turquoise from Khorasan became the symbol of the 'mind by nature luminous' (*cittam prakriti-prabhasvaram*), and the spires of Buddhist monasteries were made of turquoise, as blue was the colour of meditation. The shades of blue porcelain created by the Buddhists of East Asia signified the subtle planes of contemplation. This tradition was adopted centuries later by the blue mosques of Persia.³² The Jandial temple near Taxila was probably Zoroastrian.³³

²⁹ 'Indo-Iranian Relations' by Dr. Tara Chand, p 5.

³⁰ 'The Wonder that was India' by A L Basham, 1967, p 276

³¹ 'India and Iran: A Dialogue', paper by Prof. Lokesh Chandra.

³² 'India and Iran: A Dialogue', paper by Prof. Lokesh Chandra.

³³ 'The Wonder that was India' by A L Basham, 1967, p 357 .

Paintings on the walls of the Alchi monastery in Ladakh (northern Kashmir) reproduced in detail Sassanian motifs on textiles. They can be seen in round medallions with mythical animals. The most ancient stringed instrument from Persia – a red-sandalwood five-stringed veena – has been preserved at the Todaiji monastery in Nara, Japan since the 8th century. It is decorated with a Persian motif in mother-of-pearl inlay and represents a cultural exchange between the Persian and the Buddhist world.

The Tibetan histories of medicine relate that Jivaka, the physician to Lord Buddha was born as the son of King Bimbisara. The legend goes that as a child he once saw a group of white-clad men and asked his father who they were. The king replied, "They are doctors and they protect people from diseases". He then wished to become a doctor and he asked his father for permission. King Bimbisara sent him to Taxila. These white-clad men were Iranians, who were famous physicians as attested by Sanskrit texts.³⁴

Buddhist literature also influenced early Persian compositions. Early Persian poetry created abstract mental forms recalling the grace of Buddhist statues. Up to the 11th century, Persian poetry came from Khorasan, Sogdiana and adjacent areas, which were once steeped in Buddhism. The metaphor of *Bot* (Buddha) was constant and exclusive in early Persian poetry. The facial type of *bot-e-mahrui* ("moon-faced statue") was the norm in Persian paintings and poetry.³⁵ The Parthians are said to have translated Sanskrit texts into Chinese. An Shih-Kao was a Parthian prince who became a Buddhist monk. He came to China in 148 CE and translated 95 Sanskrit

³⁴ 'India and Iran: A Dialogue', paper by Prof. Lokesh Chandra .

³⁵ 'India and Iran: A Dialogue', paper by Prof. Lokesh Chandra .

works on Buddhism into Chinese. 55 of them are still available in Chinese Tripitaka. Another Parthian prince An Huen translated two Sanskrit works into Chinese in 181 CE.³⁶

Islamic Persia and India

Islamic conquest of Persia and Pre-Sultanate Period in India

In the 7th century, after the Persians lost the battle of al-Qādisiyyah in 637 CE to the Islamic Arab armies, the Sassanian dynasty came to an end. Following this, a large community Zoroastrians migrated to India through the Strait of Hormuz. In 712 CE, the Arabs under the command of Muhammad bin Qasim also invaded Sind from the west.

After Islam took over Persia, Zoroastrianism practically disappeared from the country. The followers of the religion fled Persia and took refuge in western India. They were the ancestors of today's Parsees or Parsis in India. The Parsis began arriving in India from around 636 CE. Their first permanent settlements were at Sanjan, 100 miles north of Bombay. They are believed to have built a big fire temple at Sanjan in 790 CE with the fire they had brought from Iran with them.³⁷ According to the Parsees legend, a band of refugees settled first at Diu in Saurashtra and then at Thane near Bombay in the early 8th century.³⁸ Their connection with their co-religionists in Iran seems to have been almost totally broken until later in the 15th century. Even today, Parsis maintain a cultural relationship with Iran, travelling to the cities of Tehran, Yazd and Kerman in Iran for pilgrimage. In the modern era, the Parsi

³⁶ 'India and Iran: A Dialogue', paper by Prof. Lokesh Chandra .

³⁷ 'The History of Parsees of India' paper by P.P. Balsara .

³⁸ 'The History of Parsees of India' paper by P.P. Balsara .

community have contributed significantly to India (and Pakistan) in the areas of politics, industry, science, and culture. Prominent Indian Parsis include Dadabhai Naoroji (three times president of Indian National Congress), Field Marshall Manekshaw, nuclear energy scientist Homi Bhabha, industrialist JRD Tata and the Tata family, literary figures like Bapsi Sidhwa (in Pakistan) and others.

The century following the Arab conquest of Sind was one in which Hindu culture influenced Arab Islamic and Persian Islamic culture. The scientific study of astronomy in Islam commenced under the influence of an Indian work, *Siddhanta*, which was brought to Baghdad by 771 through translations.³⁹ In about 800 CE, the Indian mathematician and astronomer Aryabhata's treatise "*Aryabhatiya*" was translated into Arabic under the title "*Zij-al-Arjabhar*". Before that, in 772 CE, Brahmagupta "*Brahmasphuta-Siddhanta*" and the "*Khandakhadyaka*", were taken to Baghdad and translated into Arabic. The knowledge of Hindu numerals and the decimal place value system reached the Arabs along with other Indian mathematical-astronomical works rendered into Arabic in the 8th and 9th century, giving rise to the Hindu-Arabic numeral system.⁴⁰ In the 10th century AD, a Persian pharmacologist Abu Mansur Muwaffaq ibn Ali al Harawi of Herat wrote "*Kitab'l Abniya*" an "*Haq'iq'l Adwiya*" (book of Foundations of the True Properties of Remedies) believed to be the oldest prose work in modern Persian, the book utilized material from Indian sources among others.⁴¹

The *Sh'ubia* movement in Iran preserved Iranian non-Arab traditions and also used their knowledge to translate Sanskrit works on mathematics, astronomy,

³⁹ 'A Concise History of Science in India', edited by D.M. Bose, INSA Publications, 1989, p 47.

⁴⁰ Encyclopedia Britannica.

⁴¹ 'A Concise History of Science in India', edited by D.M. Bose, INSA Publications, 1989, p 47 .

medicine and other sciences into Arabic. They used their knowledge of Sanskrit grammar to systematize Arabic grammar. The Sahihs of al-Bukhari and the Sunan of al-Tirmidhi are collections of the Hadith, which in their Iranian version seems to have been influenced by Buddhist works. The Hadith begins with “Thus have I heard”, which is also the usual beginning of Buddhist scriptures (*evam maya srutam*). The term *srutam* implies historic sanctity and glory, as does the hadith, which for Muslims is on par with the Quran.⁴²

Islamic Sultanate dynasties in India

In the 11th century, Islam came to India from Persia through the conquest by Mahmud of Ghaznavi. The subsequent form of Islam that reached India had a rich Persian influence. The art and architecture of Iran came to be associated with Islam, and Islam became the common element that linked Persian and Indian elites. Ghaznavi brought along a number of poets, artisans and religious persons who settled down in India. Lahore (now in Pakistan) in the Punjab became an important centre of Persian literature, art and mysticism. Between 1206 CE and 1687 CE Muslim dynasties appeared in different parts of India. During this period, Turks, Tartars and some Arabs who had imbibed Iranian influence came to India. During the rule of the Khilji dynasty (14th century) several Persian scholars from Tabriz and Isfahan visited the royal courts in India.⁴³

During the 11th century CE, Al-Biruni, believed to be a Shia Muslim of Iranian origin born in Khwarizm in northern Iran, visited India during the Ghaznavi period. He wrote his famous *Kitab-ul-Hind* in Arabic, which involved a detailed study

⁴² ‘India and Iran: A Dialogue’, paper by Prof. Lokesh Chandra .

⁴³ ‘Iran and India: Age old Friendship’ by Abdul Amir Jorfi, India Quarterly, Oct-Dec 1994, p 75 .

of Indian customs, traditions and the Indian way of life. Earlier, many Indian works on astronomy, mathematics and medicine had been translated into Arabic during the early Abbasid period, and Al-Biruni, who was interested in astronomy and mathematics, refers to some of these texts. Biruni was a prolific writer, and besides his mother tongue, Khwarizmi (an Iranian dialect of the north with Turkish influence), Persian and Arabic, he also knew Hebrew, Syriac and Sanskrit.⁴⁴ He studied Sanskrit manuscripts to check earlier Arabic writings on India. Al Biruni composed about 20 books on India – both originals and translations, and a great number of legends based on the folklore of ancient Persia and India. He developed a special interest in the Samkhya Yoga traditions of Indian philosophy and the Bhagavad Gita. He was possibly the first foreign scholar to have seriously studied the Puranas, specially the Vishnu Dharma.⁴⁵ Biruni also rendered the *al-Majest* of Ptolemy and *Geometry* of Euclid into Sanskrit.⁴⁶

The earliest evidence of Arabic/Persian influence on Indian astronomy is of the second half of the fourteenth century. Mahendra Suri, a court astronomer of the Sultan Feeroz Shah Tughlaq (1351-1388), composed in 1370 a treatise entitled *Yantraraja*. Based on Persian knowledge, it described the construction and use of the astrolabe, an instrument developed by Arab astronomers. Another Indian astronomer who made use of Arabic/Persian knowledge was Kamalakara, who wrote a treatise on astronomy called *Siddhanta-tatva-viveka*. Later it was Sawai Jai Singh II who showed the greatest interest in Arabic/Persian astronomy.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ 'India by Al-Biruni', edited by Qeyamuddin Ahmad, NBT Publication, 1995, p xvii .

⁴⁵ 'A Concise History of Science in India', edited by D.M. Bose, INSA Publications, 1989, p 49 .

⁴⁶ 'Hindu-Muslim Cultural Relations' by F. Mujtabai, NBB publication 1978, p 68 – 90.

⁴⁷ Encyclopedia Britannica .

During this period several Hindu and Jain religious and philosophical texts from Sanskrit and Prakrit were translated. Sanskrit and Prakrit were translated Ramayana, Mahabharata, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Nalopakhyaana (Nala and Damayanti), Bhagavata Purana, Vishnu Purana, Shiva Purana, Skanda Purana, Vayu Purana, Brahmanda Purana, Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Harivamsa, Atharva Veda, Yoga Vashishtha, Sankara Bhasya, Atma Vilasa, Amrita Kunda, Prabodhacandrodaya and Vraja Mahatmya.⁴⁸

Mughal-Safavid Period

In the 16th century, Iran witnessed the rise of the Safavid dynasty after a period of upheaval and India saw the rise of the Mughal Empire. India and Iran became great powers under these two dynasties. The intercourse between India and Iran was many-faceted, covering politics, diplomacy, culture, literature, trade, and religion. The language of the Mughal court was Persian. Mughal patronage of culture constantly attracted Persian scholars; talented Persians were absorbed in the expanding services of the Mughal empire.

The ties between the Safavids and the Mughals were marked by the alliance of Shah Ismail I with Babur and the friendship of Shah Tahmasp and Humayun. The Safavids established Shia Islam as the state religion in Iran.⁴⁹ Babur, who was originally a Timurid from the Uzbek region of Samarkand and received help from the Ismail I and established himself first in Kabul and then in Delhi and Agra.⁵⁰ Ismail also returned to Babur the latter's sister Khanzada Begum, who had been recovered by

⁴⁸ 'Hindu-Muslim Cultural Relations' by F. Mujtabai, NBB publication 1978, p 65 .

⁴⁹ 'Indo-Persian Relations' by Riazul Islam, Iranian Culture Foundation, 1970, pg 5, 185 .

⁵⁰ 'Iran and India: Age old Friendship' by Abdul Amir Jorfi, India Quarterly, Oct-Dec 1994, p 77 .

the Persians from Uzbeks at Merv. It is believed that during his occupation of Samarkand (1511-1512), Babur struck coins bearing Shia legends and the name "Shah Ismail Safavi". Babur was also an accomplished Persian poet and was a patron of Persian poetry. He invited Khwand Amir, a famous historian from Heart to join his court. He also selected Bairam Beg, a Shia, to be a constant companion to his son Humayun.⁵¹

Humayun, the son of Babur, after being defeated by the Afghan Sher Shah Suri, fled to Iran and was only able to return to India with the military help of the Iranian Safavid king Tahmasp I. On his way back, Humayun took over Kandahar from Mirza Kamran (his half-brother) with Persian help in 1545, but handed it over to the Persians as agreed, only to retake it later (the Persians retook Kandahar soon after his death in 1556). He then went on to take over Kabul. Humayun visited several other places including Sistan, Herat, Jam, Mashhad, Qazvin, Tabriz and Ardebil during his stay in Persia. There is an inscription of Humayun at *Turbat-I-Jam* dating back to 1544, wherein he alludes to himself as an "empty handed wanderer".⁵² During his stay in Persia, Humayun had to accede to the demand of Shah Tahmasp of Persia to explicitly accept the Shia faith. On his return from Persia, he is believed to have reverted to be a Sunni.

Today interaction between India and Iran is determined by variety of factors and situations. The basic factors which influence the actions and reactions at both of these countries can be grouped into geographic, economic, ideological and political. But one thing is clear that these factors do not operate and work in a particular way,

⁵¹ 'Indo-Persian Relations' by Riazul Islam, Iranian Culture Foundation, 1970, pg 5, 194 .

⁵² 'Indo-Persian Relations' by Riazul Islam, Iranian Culture Foundation, 1970, pg.

because individual perceptions and outlooks of the ruling and opposition elite change from time to time keeping in view of the developments in other parts of world.

Indian subcontinent was known to the west by the name India, a gigantic chamboïd with an area of about 1,575,000 square miles.⁵³ Now Indian sub-continent is divided into India, Pakistan and Bangladesh based on their dominant religions. India is the greatest landmass of south Asia. To the South, India represents one of oldest and least disturbed large landmasses in the world. Its rocks have never been extensively covered by the sea since their formation in the pre-Cambrian period over 3000 million years ago, although they include a number of sedimentary states deposited by rivers under glacial conditions. Between Himalayas lie the Indo-Gangetic plains stretching from the valley of the Indus River in Pakistan to that of the Brahmaputra in Assam and taking in the deltaic low lands of Bangladesh.

The extensions of Himalayas almost due south from the pamirs through the western borders of Pakistan are also of tertiary through the origin. Further to the South, the Baluchistan borderlands fall into two distinct parts. West of 66 degree East weak sandstones predominate in an extension of the Iranian plateau.⁵⁴

Contact between India and Iran goes back to the remote millennium B.C. But the commercial and trade relations between India and Persia.⁵⁵ which preceded the cultural and political relations could be traced back to the third millennium B.C. the days of Indus Valley civilization. The archaeological findings at Mohenjodaro in Sind prove conclusively that the Indus-valley civilization had commercial contacts with its

⁵³ The New Encyclopedia Britannica Vol.21.15th, Edition ,Chicago,1973),p.21.

⁵⁴ Robinson Francis, ed. The Cambridge Encyclopedia of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives (Cambridge, UP 1989), pp. 14-16.

⁵⁵ Modern Iran was earlier known as Persian in 1935 the Hellenic name of Persia was officially replaced by the indigenous name Iran.

contemporaries in Persian and Mesopotamia.⁵⁶ Harappan traders took pottery, grains, cotton goods, spices etc, to Persia in exchange for metal wares, precious stones and pearls. Early commerce between India and Babylonia, which included Persia was largely carried on via the Persian Gulf, the earliest, probably the oldest, trade route running from the mouth of the Indus to the Euphrates.⁵⁷ The continent of Asia has nurtured the Indo-European civilization. India's abiding ties with Iran have been due to similarity at the linguistic affinities, commonality of cultural values and shared techniques of arts and crafts. As Jawaharlal Nehru aptly observed, "there are no two countries in the world which, both in their origin and subsequent cultural intercourse, have been so close to each other as India and Iran."⁵⁸

Whether the intercourse between the two countries continued unbroken since the days of Aryans down to the historical time is difficult to say, but as early as the eighth century B.C. one finds positive evidences of regular trade relations, both by land and sea, between India and the countries of West Asia, Mesopotamia and Arabia. The Achaemenian dynasty in Persia the Sixth Century B.C. created a vast empire embracing nearly the whole of Persia. This brought India into close contacts with Persia and the Western world and subsequently gave rise to Indo-Persian trade.⁵⁹

Trade and maritime activities between India and Iran were also allusions in Rig-Veda to the voyages of Indians, who are experienced sailors in those days and

⁵⁶ R.C. Majumdar, *The Age of Imperial Unity* (Bombay 1957), p. 11

⁵⁷ H.C. Rallinson, *Intercourse between India and the Western world: From earliest time to fall of Rome* (Cambridge, 1929), p. 1.

⁵⁸ Jawaharlal Nehru, "India Foreign policy: selected speeches September 9, 1946 – April 1961 (publications Division, Government of India, New Delhi, 1961), p. 413.

⁵⁹ D.P. Singhal, *India and World civilization Vol. I* (Rupa and Co., Calcutta, 1972), p. 14.

carried on hold ventures on the open seas. The ordinary transactions were carried only by means of barter and the cow formed an important standard of valuation.⁶⁰

There are close resemblances between the language, mythology, religious traditions and social institutions of Indians and Iranian on the one hand, and those of the Greeks, Romans, Celts, Germans and slaves on the other. The theory that the Indo-Europeans were one people is based on linguistic evidence which has been successfully tested mainly through archaeological studies in western Asia and Eastern Europe. The Indo-European group of languages formerly known as the Aryan or Indo-Germanic group includes most of the languages of Europe, North America and India. Despite certain anomalies, the linguistic resemblances between the languages in this group can be presented in a convincingly systematized form which indicates a common source. The grammatical forms and the basic words at the vocabulary, like “father” and “mother” and the numerals are strikingly identical.⁶¹

GDB-4052

The eastern branch of Indo-European movement is often referred to as the Aryan movement because the ancient peoples belonging to this group called themselves “Arya” a word which later acquired the meaning of “The noble one”.⁶²

The Aryans were further sub divided into the Iranians and the Indians. It is inevitable, therefore, that Indian contacts with Iran should be the oldest and the most prolonged. These contacts began in pre-historic times and continued unto the Mughal and modern periods situated between the plains at the Euphrates and the Indus, Iran has occupied from the earliest times a position which made her one of the principal routes at commerce, conquest, and civilization. She has, through successive periods of

⁶⁰ R.C. Majumdar, Ancient India, (Delhi, 1968), p. 49.

⁶¹ V. Gordon Childe, New light on the Most Ancient East, pp. 3-18.

⁶² The Word Arya is also found in the Western group.

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history, influenced the culture of both her eastern and western neighbors, and has provided a bridge between India and the West. The Persian language, like the French in Europe, became the language of cultured people over wide areas of Asia. Persian was the court language of medieval India and even today is one of the principal Indian classical languages.⁶³

The continuous interactions between Iran and the India brought about a process of accretion among the Aryans and non-Aryans which is known as Aryanization even though pre-Aryan elements later determined the nature of this synthesis.

The acculturation or Sanskritization of the regions beyond Aryavarta was a slow process and continued into the second half of the first millennium B.C. While Dakshinapatha or the route to the south was mentioned in the later Vedic literature the extent to which the Aryans culture had penetrated the south by the end of the period is uncertain.⁶⁴ The North-West which had moved away from Brahmanical traditions had become relatively isolated from the rest of the northern India. It was the scene of the Persian invasion in 530 B.C. under Cyrus (559-530 B.C.) and Darius (521-486 B.C.) the mightiest rulers of Persia. Their great and powerful empire lasted until it was demolished by Alexander in 331 B.C. It is not known exactly how far the Persian Empire extended but it is said that the Indian province was the twentieth and the richest satrapy added to the Persian Empire. This period marked a major advance in history of Iran and in fact in history of world, for the Achaemenians conceived Iran as a state and made it a reality. An extensive Persian Empire emerged through a series

⁶³ Singhal, n. 10, p. 13.

⁶⁴ Francis, n. 5, p. 75.

of conquests stretching from the Indus to the Aegean. It included the ancient Kingdom of Egypt, Sind and Western Punjab in India, and some Greek City states in Ionia.⁶⁵

Indian national emblem, which contains the lions and wheel, was borrowed from the Sarnath Pillar of Ashoka. It is faintly reminiscent of Assyro-Persian prototypes, although clearly modified by Indian sentiment. During the Maurya period the use of stone for columns and statutes instead of ivory, wood or clay is also attributed to Graeco-Persian influence. Some scholars have noticed the Iranian influence on Chandra Gupta's system of communications and in Asoka's practice of inscribing rocks and columns. Although Asoka's use of such inscriptions to promulgate edicts they were profoundly original.

The close cultural resemblances between India and Iran date from the days of their common Indo-Aryan origin. It seems most likely that the Indians and Iranians lived together for sometimes, perhaps on the Iranian Plateau, before the Indian group moved into India. It is, however, surprising that the cultural link between pre-Aryan India and Iran should have been severed, rather than strengthened, as a result of the migrations of the Aryans into India through Iran.⁶⁶ Although evidence of continued relations between the Vedic Indians and the Iranians is not explicit, there is no doubt that the Vedic religion has much in common with Zoroastrianism, and the Vedic Sanskrit closely resembles the language of the Avesta. The Iranian God, *Mithra*, who centuries later found his way into the Roman world became a popular Sun God of the Roman troops, and the Vedic *Mithra* was undoubtedly originally identical. He is invoked as God of light in both religions together with the God of heaven and is

⁶⁵ Majumdar, n. 8, p. 628.

⁶⁶ R.S. Sharma, Aspects of political ideas and institutions in Ancient India (Motilal Banarasidass, varanasi, 1959), pp. 75-95.

called Varuna in the Vedas and Ahura in the Avesta. The beginnings of Zoroastrianism, however, mark a dividing the line between the Vedic and Iranian Aryans.⁶⁷ In the Avesta many of the Vedic became devils.⁶⁸ On the other hand, *Ahura*, *Asura*, came to mean “demon” in the Vedas. By changing the relative statutes of the Gods, Zoroaster endeavored to convert the old Polytheism into a spiritually monotheism. Varuna was raised to a position of supremacy, having been invested with the sublime majesty of guardian of the cosmic order (old Persian Asia or Sanskrit) and Indra was relegated to the armies of evil against whom the righteous man must fight on the side of Ahura Mazda.⁶⁹ Zoroastrianism was almost contemporary with Buddhism, and it is significant that both religions were a protest against the archaic practices of the old Aryan religions.⁷⁰

The modern term “Hindu” by which the majority of the Indians are now known, is of Persian origin. Indians were known to Persians as the inhabitants of the river Sindhu, the Indus River. The Persians softened the initial “S” to “H”, then making it “Hindu”, a name which has survived and come to be applied in a much wider and more complex sense. The Ionian Greeks, who came to know of India through the Persians, transformed the word into Indus, and the land of Indus came to be known as India.

The ever growing Iran-Indian ties were, however, interrupted by the invasion of the Huns, the Gurjars, the Turks and the Arabs after 9th Century A.D. particularly

⁶⁷ Muhammad Iqbal, *Iran* (Oxford University press), London, 1948, p. 31.

⁶⁸ Fara-Chand, “India and Iran,” *Indo-Iranian* (Calcutta), Vol. 22, March-June 1969, p. 48.

⁶⁹ Singhal, n. 10, pp.13-14.

⁷⁰ Donald N. Wilber, *Iran past and present* (Princeton University press, Princeton, 1958) pp. 1-8. Richard N. Frye, *Persia* (George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London, 1960), p. 45.

the Arab towards the east proved to be a severe blow to trade and inter-course between Iran and India.⁷¹

Indian punch marked silver coinage was on a Persian standard and the Kharoshti script was derived from Aramaic, used by the Achaemenians in their official documents.⁷² This Kharoshti script remained in use in the north western region of India until the fourth century A.D. the origin of Maurya court art, however, is a subject of keen controversy although general opinion appears to favour some Iranian inspirations. Havell, for instance, pointed out that symbolism in Indian art is thoroughly the characteristic of Indo-Aryan thought and he attributed the resemblances between early Indian and Iranian art to the two peoples common racial origin and imaginative heritage.⁷³ Certainly, differences of form and type separate the Mauryan columns from those of Achaemenian Iran.

Indo-Iranian relations in medieval period

It was the advent of Mughals which not only revived but also considerably revitalized the Indo-Iranian relationship. In fact, the medieval period has been regarded as the “Golden Age” of Indo-Iranian relations owing to the large-scale fruitful exchanges that occurred in various fields between both the countries.⁷⁴ The Islamic-Iranian influence has left permanent impressions on Indian culture, traditions language, literature, arts and science.

⁷¹ Maqbal Ahmad, *Indo-Arab Relations* (ICHP) New Delhi, p. 142.

⁷² Singhal, n. 10, pp. 13-14.

⁷³ H. Havell, *The History of Aryan Rule in India: From the Earliest times to the Death of Akbar* (George Harrap, London, 1918), p. 105.

⁷⁴ The Greeks did not pronounce an initial sharply or clearly, as they did not use a variety sibilants.

Iran offered refuge to Humayun who went there having been deposed by Sher shah, the Afghan victor, in 1541. It is a well known fact of history that the Persian Monarch helped Humayun to recapture the latter's Kingdom. During his period of exile in Iran, the Mughal Humayun is said to have embraced "twelvershiism" perhaps to secure the help of the Safavid Shah Tahmasp. Humayun brought with him Iranian official, Scholars thousand of soldiers to Delhi. Byram Khan, the Guardian of Humayun's son, Akbar (1556-1505), possibly held twelver beliefs as did Shaykh Gada's who was appointed as *sadr al-Sudur*, the highest religious office in the State, Nur jahan, the wife of Jahangir (1605-1627), was of Iranian descent and her father and brother were Shi'is. They both came to hold important official posts.⁷⁵ henceforth, diplomatic and cultural contacts between India and Persia became more friendly and frequent and a stream of Persian travelers, visitors and migrants began to flow from Persia to India.

The rise of Safavid dynasty and the establishment of the Mughal rule in India in the beginning of sixteenth century constituted a significant landmark in the history of Iran and the Indian relations. The establishment of Safavids in Persia and Mughals in India almost synchronized with the rise of ottomans under Salim I in Asia Minor, Uzbege under Shaibani Khan in Turan and Ilkhanids in Khurasan Perso-Mughal relations throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were governed by strategic, political and economic considerations. First, there was Perso-Mughal entente against the uzbege and Mongols. The rising power at Uzbege was a menace to both India and Persia and Babur made friendship with the safavid King, Shah Ismail, in order to defeat their enemy, the Uzbeges of Transoxiana. Commonality of interest,

⁷⁵ Munir, D. Ahmad, "the Shi'is of Pakistan" in Martin Kramere, *Shi'ism Resistance and Revolution* (Westview Press; London, 1987) pf. 277.

thus, drew them nearer marking the beginning of Perso-Mughal alliance, which survived fifty years notwithstanding occasional stress and strains.⁷⁶

The feeling of fraternity and friendship created by Babur's alliance with Shah Ismail and Shah Tahmasp's help to Humayun was further strengthened and cemented in the reign of Akbar. Akbar's generosity, tolerance and fair treatment of his subjects consolidated the Mughal Empire and raised the prestige of his dynasty abroad. As a consequence, Shah Abbas of Persia and Abdullah Baig of Turan sought his alliance each other.⁷⁷ In fact, conflicting socio-religious and politico-commercial interests of the Ottoman of Asia Minor, Uzbegs of Turan, Safavids at Persia and Mughals of India led to ever changing alliances. The above narrative, however, should not be taken to mean that Indo-Persian relations during the period were free from frictions and strains. The question of Kandahar became a bone of contention between the Mughals and the Persians for more than a century and half. From Akbar to Shajahan Kandahar, owing to its international strategic and commercial importance has caused friction and rivalry in Indo-Persian relations throughout the period. It frequently changed hands, first held by Persians from 1622 to 1638, then recovered by Mughals in 1638, who finally lost it in 1649.⁷⁸ According to the Encyclopaedia of Islam, in the Kandahar province the frequent changes of Government between India and Persia fomented dissension and intrigues⁷⁹. Besides the conflict over Kandahar there was an additional cause of Perso Mughal rivalry in the seventeenth century namely, the

⁷⁶ Islamic Culture (Hyderabad), Vol. VII, No. 2, 1934, p. 463.

⁷⁷ N.S. Gorekar, "Indo-Iran Relations during the Mughal period", *Indica*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1975, p. 17.

⁷⁸ J.N. Sarkar, "Indo and Iran in the Mediaval period: A Birds Eye-View" *Indo-Iranica* (Calcutta), Vol.26, No. 2-3 June-September 1973, pp. 8-9.

⁷⁹ Haushama and Arnold eds. *The Encyclopedia of Islam* Vol. I (London, 1913), p. 168.

conflicting ambitions of both Mughals and Safavids for exercising suzerainty over the Shiri sultanates in Deccan, Bijanpur and Golconda.⁸⁰

Deccan was also the area where Mughal and Persians interests collided. The conflict was political and Sectarian. The Bahmani Kingdom in the Deccan was founded in about 1347 A.D. By Hasan Gango Bahamoni towards the end of the 15th century it broke up into five independence states – Berar, Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golconda. But Mughals never recognized them as independent states. These Muslim Kingdoms at the Deccan were targets of Mughal territorial ambitions from the days of Akbar. Looking around for support these kingdoms saw in Persia the nearest great power which could counter balance the constant Mughal pressure upon them. Another tie which bound them to the Safavids was their common religious denomination. The Adil Shahis of Bijapur and the Qutb Shahis of Golconda were already existed Shi'i before Akbar launched his aggressive policy in the Deccan. Shah Tahir also maintained active contact with the Safavid court. The Adil Shahis were Shi'is intermittently and there were periods where sunnism prevailed in the state religion in Bijapur. It is, however, notable that the Adil Shahis maintained relations with Persia in their "Sunni" as well as "Shi'i" periods.

Towards the end of Jahangir's rule relations with Persia were not maintained although the Shah at Persia seemed anxious to renew them. No further diplomatic inter course took place between the two empires until the death of Shah Safi I when Shahjehan sent Jennithar Khan to Persia to gain Persian neutrality for his Central Asian Campaigns.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Riazul Islam, *Indo-persian Relation* (Iranian cultural foundation, Tehran, 1970), p. 92.

⁸¹ *Islamic Culture*, Vol. IX, 1934, p. 120.

Persians were also the much honoured at the Deccan Courts. Diplomatic relations between the Safavids and Deccan rulers date from the reign of Shah Ismail I. Shah Tahmasp and Shah Ismail II continued these contacts. Shah Abbas I greatly strengthened these relations by frequent exchanges of embassies. He also arranged for a matrimonial alliance with the Gutb shahi family. The close and growing contacts between the Safavids and the Deccan sultanates were unwelcome to the Mughal emperors. Mughals looked at this with suspicion and displeasure and objected to the inclusion of name of the Safavid ruler in Khutba in Galconda, a practice which the Qutb Shahis had adopted soon after the rise of Shah Ismail in Iran.

The Indo-Persian links also were manifested in other fields such as, language painting, music, sculpture, architecture and calligraphy. The impact of Iran on the India was widely acknowledged by Mrs. Indira Gandhi who said, “Our speech is punctuated with words of Persian, our speech is interlaced with Persian melodies and the Persian style is clearly seen in many of our historical monuments.”⁸² The cultivation of the Persian language in India began during the medieval period not only as state language, but also as a language of the intelligentsia. It reached its zenith during the reign of Emperor Akbar. He made Persian his court language. The two great epics (Ramayana and Mahabharata) were first translated into Persian under the orders and royal guidance of Akbar.⁸³

The continuous exchange of artists and a long fruitful process of synthesis brought about Indo-Iranian style of painting and architecture. The new architecture which developed in India was a combination of Indian ideals and Persian vision. The

⁸² “Indira Gandhi in Iran on 28th April” Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India, New Delhi, May 1974, p. 9.

⁸³ H.H. Abidi, “Iranian Rich contribution to Persia”, Indian and Foreign Review (ICHR, New Delhi), 15 February 1969, pp. 10-11.

first outstanding comment of the early Mughal style is the Mausoleum of Humayun (Humayun ka Makbara), built by his wido during Akbar's reign. She is said to have employed an Iranian architect, Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, who introduced certain Iranian features such as typically Iranian dome, an arched alcove as is found in the royal tombs of Iran and the interior arrangement of corridors, and the complex of rooms.⁸⁴ The style of this monument has been described as an Indian interpretation of an Iranian architectural conception. Both in spirit and in structure, Humayun's tomb is a captivating example of the synthesis of two great traditions of art.⁸⁵

The Mughal era was followed by emergence of European powers in Iran and British rule in India. British brought a cloud over this cultural traffic. Indo-Iranian contacts suffered a decline as the British rule concentrated itself in forging links with the west. British India did not bother about Indo-Iranian affairs. The Pahlavi regime, which came to power in Iran in 1921, was characterized by a closer interest in the affairs of India. In keeping with this new found interest Rabindranath Tagore visited Iran in April 1932 at the invitation at Reza Shah.⁸⁶

Iran thus played the same part in the development of the Indo-Islamic art during the sixteenth century as Renaissance Italy did art in France. Early in Akbar's reign, Iranian influence was blended with Indian styles. This fusion is reflected in the mosque and palace buildings at Fatepur Sikri, the capital city, built by Akbar in 1570-1574 on a site near Agra. These buildings form a brilliant complex, with broad terraces and stately courtyards surrounded by numerous palaces and pavilions. The most imposing building is the Jama Masjid, its finest features are the 176 feet tall

⁸⁴ D.P.Singhal, *Indian and World Civilization*, Vol. II (Rupa and Co. Calcutta, 1972), p. 180.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Chopra, "Indo-Iranian Relations during the Pahlavi Regime 1926-76", *Indo-Iranica* (Calcutta), Vol. 24, no. 1-4 January – December 1976, pp. 1-6 .

southern gateway. The Buland Darwaza, which is made of marble and sandstone, and is architecturally the most perfect gateway in India and the largest of its kind in the world. Indeed, the buildings at Fatehpur Sikri constitute one of the most spectacular structural achievements in the whole of India. The style of Fatehpur Sikri is mature in every respect fully, absorbing Iranian elegance into the exactness of Indian workmanship. A monument to Akbar's original vision it is, after the Taj Mahal, the most notable architectural achievement of the Mughals. According to a France critic, Grousset it "is the soul of Iran incarnate in the body of India."⁸⁷

Cultural relations between India and Iran

The Common Origins of Indian and Iranian Civilizations

Indian and Iranian civilizations enjoy an ancient coexistence. The two nations have experienced friendly relations for at least 3500 years. Both civilizations, due to their abundant cultural affinities, played an active role in developing human civilization and neither was considered a "marginal civilization".

Excavations in the Indian subcontinent and also by the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers near Iran have led to the discovery of antiquities that are considered the most important evidence for the cultural interaction and coexistence between the two nations in the midst of conflicts. In 1930, excavations at the Sialk Mound in the Kashan area led to the discovery of artefacts that showed the area was the point of convergence of the two civilizations.

In fact, the civilizations' commonalities are unique and the frequent exchanges of visits by both countries' educated people and common people have led to a close

⁸⁷ Quoted in Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India* (Calcutta, 1946), p. 162.

relationship between the two nations. Both nations share the same racial origin, descending from the Aryan tribes, and the coexistence of the two twin nations marks the start of Aryan civilization, while their separation is in itself the greatest unexamined social event in the history of nations.

Meanwhile, both nations in relatively the same period, particularly in recent centuries, have suffered due to internal and external dictatorships. However, none of these elements have broken the two nations' ties or caused the civilizations to wane, just as the Iranian expansion from the time of Darius the Great until the Sassanid dynasty (224-652 C.E.) did not cause the nations ties to decline. There are historical records of even relations between the Iranian court and Indian Maharajas. Today, the same close ties between the two civilizations have put both on the path of development and also they are being exposed to the same cultural threats. "Throughout history, the two nations of Iran and India have enjoyed such close ties that cannot be found between two other ancient civilizations anywhere in the world." Indeed, this statement by Jawaharlal Nehru and Shebli Na'mani is praiseworthy.⁸⁸

The Interaction of Literature and Common Culture

Indian literature has always been present in Iran's ancient, classic, modern, and even folk culture, or, to say it better, it is part of our cultural identity. This shows the Iranian civilization's extraordinary capacity for dialogue and cooperation. For years Iranian children have taken their first steps in reading and writing with the famous tale of "The Parrot and the Merchant" and there are many proverbs in our shared literature from India.

⁸⁸ Parviz Esmacili, "Cultural Exchange Between Iran and India ,article was presented at seminar on strengthening Regional stability through Dialogue among civilizations in New Delhi 2-9,2004.

Ferdowsi has frequently mentioned the cultural interaction between the two nations in his epic *The Shahnameh*. For example, he referred to the influence of Indian music on Iranian culture: “Bahram Gur who was interested in music, asked Shengel (or Shenkelt), the Indian king to send 10,000 Indian musicians and singers to Iran to teach the Iranians the instruments and techniques of Indian music.”

Another Iranian king, Khosrow Anushirvan, also asked an Indian king through a letter to transfer the book “*Kalila va Dimna*” to Iran in order to have it translated by Borzuyeh Tabib. Its translation into Middle Persian was the first translation of the book.

Thus, the translation of classic works from Sanskrit to Persian is a highly significant and influential cultural phenomenon that is an example of a golden age in which the translation of cultural works connected civilizations in a permanent way. This is the same process that Gandhi wanted to feel blow through the open windows.

In fact, India truly symbolizes compatibility and tolerance as well as cultural and ethnic diversity. With its geographical vastness, India has always been a foundation of world history and is connected with Iran’s literature and culture.

On the other hand, no other country possesses as much of Iran’s cultural heritage as India. The tens of thousands of Persian manuscripts in India are a witness that geographical borders have never disconnected the two nations. There are so many Persian works in India that some paradoxically assume they outnumber the Persian works in Iran itself and consider the British museums’ acquisition of manuscripts as a cultural invasion of India rather than Iran.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Ibid.

The influence of Iranian literature and culture on Indian cultural identity is undeniable. In his book “The Discovery of India”, Jawaharlal Nehru writes: “Among all the many nations and races that have related with India not one of them have influenced the Indians’ life and culture as constantly and permanently as the Iranians.” A former Indian official once said: “The ideas of great poets like Rumi, Sa’di, and Hafiz have become part of India’s national consciousness.” Indeed, there are two other nations in the world with the same cultural connection.

Language, an Important Factor for Cultural Interaction

Another source of the common origin of the two Indian and Iranian civilizations is the coordination and close relationship between the Avestan language in Iran and the Vedic or Sanskrit language of India. A group of emigrating tribes from both civilizations familiarized each others’ nations with these languages.

Remarkably, the two nation’s archaeology and linguistics share the same ancient past. The Indo-Iranian language group is a branch of the Indo-European language family, which is subdivided into the Indic and Iranian subgroups. In addition, the Persian language has been commonly used in the fields of medicine, philology, and philosophy in India for many years.

However it is believed that the British colonists gradually replaced Persian with English in India’s public discourse in order to expand their dominance over the country and culturally disconnect the two nations. We will not forget that in the early Islamic era Persian and Urdu were the Indians’ intermediary languages and the conventions between British and Indian envoys were initially all concluded in Persian.

The Role of Religion in Strengthening the Two Cultures

The advent of Islam was also a significant factor leading to further cultural integration of the two nations and expedited this process. The late Dr. Tarachand, a former Indian ambassador to Iran, has called Islamic traditions and the Persian language as the two important influences on Indian culture. “The cultural relationship between the two civilizations of India and Iran became more stable with the arrival of Islam in the Indian peninsula and since most of the Muslim preachers were Iranian, the Persian language expanded alongside Islam in India.”

Thus, the reign of Akbar Shah in the 16th century is the golden age of Iran-India relations. During this period, literary and philosophical interactions evolved between the two countries with the efforts of great men leading to closer ties between the two civilizations. For instance we can refer to Darashkuh (born March 20, 1615), the first-born son of Shah Jahan and his wife Momtaz Mahal, who studied the Holy Qur'an, was talented in calligraphy, and became an excellent military strategist. His mother tongue was Persian and he could also speak Hindi and Arabic fluently. In brief, he enjoyed studying Indian and Islamic wisdom to the same extent.

Approaches and Necessities

The study has come across that the Indian and Iranian civilizations were never opposed each other, and hence considers that the two countries have an excellent model for dialogue and interaction of cultures in the current millennium. The truth is that today, the idea of dialogue among civilizations and the issue of globalization have many points in common. The continuation of friendly relations between the two nations is essential for protecting civilization, culture, and national identity, and for

establishing world peace. If a civilization lacks physical, moral, and spiritual infrastructure it will be unable to enter into dialogue with other civilizations.

In the third millennium, the information revolution has influenced the cultural identity of all nations. Therefore it is essential to make use of cultural exchanges in international relations more than ever. The Indian and Iranian civilizations that, in my opinion both share the same heritage and destiny, can prevent cultural isolation as a response against the invasion of other cultures and also demonstrate a successful example of the efficiency of dialogue among civilizations, in a world escaping from the conflicts, by expediting the process of dialogue and interaction. Another future prospect could be the formation of a coalition between the three big Eastern civilizations of India, Iran, and China.

Deepening the ancient cultural ties that are a cause of pride for us today should create a strategic friendship between the two governments. World peace will not be realized on paper or through contracts but on the basis of cultural contacts and understanding and by accepting one another's differences.

This is just what Gandhi meant by the expression "blowing civilizations into each others' homes" or to put it in President Mohammad Khatami's words, "dialogue among civilizations." In this regard the media holds the greatest responsibility. Marshall McLuhan once advised superpowers to increase their media range as high as the range of their missiles. But today, undoubtedly, all powers yearn to increase the range of their missiles to that of the media. If today it is failed to recognize the

ability to bring nations and civilizations closer together and make the locomotive of the media move, there would not be regrets tomorrow.⁹⁰

Influence of Iran on the medieval architecture of India

Though the Indo-Iranian relations can be traced as far back into the hoary past as to the period of Aryan migration to the sub-continent, and can be studied thereafter intermittently during the first millennium B.C. A systematic inter-communication between the two cultural giants began during the Moghal period. Humayun was closely connected with the court of Shah Tahmasb where he resided for a considerable period of time after he was driven out of India by Sher Shah. Akbar's accession to the throne marked the dawn of an era. His prosperous court offered liberal patronage to painters and musicians, poets and litterateurs, artisans and craftsmen, ministers and courtiers and fugitive princes. It was under Akbar's supervision that two master painters of Iran, viz., Abdussamad and Mir Ali, collaborated with indigenous artists and developed the Mughal School of painting. Iranians who lived at his court left their mark on the court etiquette, customs and festivals and sometimes on the dress and diet of the aristocracy.

The influence on architecture is more pronounced than in any other branch of cultural activity. The Indian mosque from its very beginning evolved on the Iranian pattern, utilizing the *chahar taq* or the four-arched plan in his nave⁹¹ and the *iwan* in the centre of its façade in the form of an imposing portal. Both these features

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ The mosques which were constructed on this plan in Iran were called the kiosk-mosques, e.g., the Jami Masjids of Ardistan, Barsiyan, Gulpaygan, Ispahan, Quzwin, Qumand Sawa. cf. Godard, Andre, *The Art of Iran* (Michael Heron, London, 1965), pp. 575-77.

developed into magnificent dimensions and became distinctive characteristics of the Mughal mosque.

This was not accidental or co-incidental but a logical outcome of the development of an art. The Islamic architecture grew largely on the Iranian art traditions which played a preponderant role in its evolution with the overthrow of the Umayyads in A.D. 750 and the transference of the capital of Caliphate from Damascus to Baghdad. Hitherto a simple structure, the mosque borrowed and amalgamated in its body, whatever splendid came to be handy which did not violate the Canon Law. It was not the so-called Saracenic architecture which was introduced into India; the mosque-form and the tomb-form which were adopted in this land of the *sikhara*-temples came from Iran.

The *chahar-bagh* or the four-quartered garden of the Mughals in Iran is Iranian in essence as well as in details. The idea was brought into India by Babur. Garden-craft was a favourite art in Persia since ancient times.⁹² It received great impetus in the Mohammedan period. Caliphs immensely favoured it. Writings of early Persian poets are full of delight in the gardens and their flowers.⁹³ Particular mention may be made of Firdausi's *Shahnama* and Sadi's *Gulistan*. Sadi entitled his work *Gulistan* or the "Rose Garden". Hafiz lavished unbounded applause on the gardens of Shiraz and so did famous Omar Khayyam of Khorasan who desired that his tomb "shall be in a spot where the north wind may scatter the roses over it".

Persian garden is essentially a terraced garden – a garden in descending stages with the life-giving water as one of the principal adornments as well the very life and

⁹² Brown, Percy, *Indian Architecture (Islamic period)*, 4th ed, p.109.

⁹³ Stuart, C.M. Villiers, *Gardens of the Great Mughals* (London, 1913) p.39.

soul, the *raison d'être*, of the garden itself. Water as manipulated beautifully in the canals, jets of water, waterfalls, cascades, ponds and lakes. Canals and tanks were so constructed as to keep the water brimming to the level of the paths on either hand. The shallow water-courses were paved with brilliant blue tiles, “the clear rivulets running in and out between the gloom of the old cypress avenues reflecting even a deeper blue than the cloudless sky above them”.⁹⁴ Each terrace had a *char-bagh* or four-quartered plan with paved-paths, flowerbeds, cypress-avenues and other ornamental features.

Babur was fully conserving with these traditions of gardening. It was on Persian *char-bagh* plan and terraced style that he founded Bagh-i-Vafa or the Garden of Fidelity at Kabul in 1508. Other similar gardens which he founded at Kabul were *Bagh-i-Banafsha* (Garden of Violets), *Bagh-i-Padshahi* (The Imperial Garden) and *Bagh-i-Chenar* (Garden of Plane Trees).

Imbued with these traditions of Persian garden-craft Babur founded *Bagh Gul-i-Afshan*, now popularly known as Rambagh, at Agra, in about 1526.⁹⁵ He also laid a full-fledged. *Bagh Hasht-Bihesht* at Agra in imitation of its counterpart of Tabriz and a *Bagh-i-Nilofer* garden traditions in India and introduced them marvellously. His descendants carried forward this tradition to magnificent proportions. The famous Mughal gardens of Kashmir, the Shalimar and the Nishat, the garden of Pinjore, the gardens of the tombs of Humayun, Akbar, *Itmad-ud-Daulah*, Jehangir and the Taj-Mahal and Indoor gardens of the Agra Fort and the Red Fort at Delhi – all owe their origin to the Iranian traditions of gardening.

⁹⁴ Stuart, p.13.

⁹⁵ Nath, R., “Bagh Gul-i-Afshan of Babur at Agra”, *Indo-Iranica*, Calcutta, vol. xxxIII, No.3 (September, 1970).

Much can be said about the Bulbous domes of the Mughals which derived inspiration to some extent from their Iranian counterparts. It may once more be emphasized that the typically Islamic constructional devices which were utilized in the medieval times in India belonged more to Iran than to a so-called Saracenic or any other school of Arab art. The squinch arch and the stalactite, two favourite Iranian contrivances, were introduced into India much before the advent of the Mughals. It was, however, during their splendid age that both were used magnificently for structural as well as ornamental purposes.

The Iranian influence is, however, most avowedly marked on the ornamental schemes, the glazed-tiling being the most important. It was a characteristic feature of the Islamic architecture of Iran. It was almost exclusively used for exterior ornamentation of the mosques and the tombs from 11th century onwards. Jami Masjids at Damghan and Isfahan, tombs at Qub, Sawa, Damghan and Mashhad, tomb and Uljaitu Khudabanda at Sultaniya and the Blue Mosque at Tabriz provide some of the best examples. Kashan was so closely associated with the manufacture of glazed tiles that the tiles themselves came to be called Kashi or Kashani.

Glazed-tile decoration had brilliant colour scheme in geometrical and floral designs and the effect was most acceptable to the Muslim rulers in India. Multan and Punjab gradually became centres of glazed-tile ornament.⁹⁶ Not only the technique but also the artisans were imported from Iran at the initial stage of its adoption. Glazed tiles, the important examples being the tombs of shah Yusuf Gardizi, Shadna Shahid and Ruknudd in at Multan, the old Dabgir mosque, the tomb of Mirza Jani Beg and the Jami Masjid at Thatta (Sindh), the tombs of Khwaja Khizr at Sonapat, of Maulana

⁹⁶ See for details Nath, R. *Colour Decoration in Mughal Architecture* (Taraporavala, Bombay, 1970), pp. 5-22.

Jamili, of Faizulla Khan and of Sikandar Lodi at Delhi. The glazed-tile work of the Man-Mandir at Gwalior also belongs to this age. The Madrasa of Mahmud Gawan at Bidar is, however, the best example of the pre-Mughal period.

Though the indigenous artisan of stone received preference during the Mughal age, recourse was also taken to the glazed-tile decoration. The Khairul-Manzil, the tomb of Shamsuddin Atagah Khan and Nili Chhatri are some of the early monuments where this ornament has been utilized. Akbar used this sparingly at Fatehpur Skiri and at Agra Fort. His tomb at Sikandra Agra built during the reign of Jehangir has glazed-tiles on the cupolas of its third storey *chhatris*. The wonderful glazed-tile pictures of the Lahore fort covering an approximate area of 24,000 feet also executed during the reign of Jehangir. The Wazir Khan's mosque at Lahore and the *Chini-ka-Rauza* (tomb of Shukrulla Shirazi) at Agra which are the best examples of glazed-tile decoration belong to Shah Jehan's magnificent age. The *Chini-ka-Rauza* is entirely covered with brilliant polychrome glazed-tiles. The technique as well as the designs is unmistakably Iranian.

While the *arabesque-stucco* art of the Jahangiri-Mahal is more akin to the Arab Art, having almost identical examples at Cairo and Cordova, the incised stucco work of the tomb of *Itmad-ud-Daulah* is typically Iranian. It appears to be more an embroidery work rather than an architectural ornament. The whole of the interior of the tomb has beautiful designs – highly conventionalized floral motifs, flowers like tulip and narcissus, trees like cypress, and dish are all of unquestionably Iranian origin. The entire ornamental scheme of the monument seems to be derived and inspired from the decorative arts of Iran and it is this aspect which predominates in its conception. Of all the consequences of Indo-Iranian cultural exchange during the

medieval ages, the adoption of the Iranian ornament and some of the associated aesthetic ideals in Mughal architecture is the most pronounced.

Indo-Islamic Architecture, as it developed in Mughal India, heavily borrowed stylistic, idiomatic (characteristic forms, architectonic and decorative), axiomatic (form appropriate to the purpose of the structure) and aesthetic traditions from Iranian, Trans-Oxanian and Indian regional styles (for example, Delhi Sultanate, Sharqi, Gujarat, Malwa, Bengal and Rajasthani). In fact, Mughal architecture itself has been defined as a synthesis of these foreign and indigenous styles.

A study of the Mughal architecture reveals that the Mughals, who considered themselves the heirs of the Timurid tradition, borrowed heavily from the Iranian style which had developed under the Ilkhanids, Timurids and Muzaffarids. Babur, when he marched into India he brought with him two Iranian and Central Asian architectures, Ustad Mir Mirak Ghiyas of Herat and Ustad Shah Muhammad of Khurasan.⁹⁷ According to Lisa Golombek, the Shaibanids of Bukhara, who were contemporary to Babur, were a conduit for the transmission of Timurid architectural forms to the Mughals.⁹⁸ It should be borne in mind that most of the synthesis of the Iranian style with the Indo-Muslim style of architecture in India took place till the reign of Akbar. The reign of Shahjahan, however, is marked by the heavy influence of the indigenous styles on the Mughal architecture.

Idiomatically and axiomatically, one of the most important marks of Iranian influence on Mughal architectural tradition was *chaharbagh*, the four-quartered paradisaical garden with its intersecting water-channels lined with walk-ways

⁹⁷ *Baburnama*, (tr.) A.S.Beveridge, New Delhi, 1970, pp.343, 642.

⁹⁸ Lisa Golombek, "From Tamerlane to the Taj Mahal", pp.43-50.



(*khiyabans*), platforms, water-chutes, tanks and fountains, flower-beds, fruit bearing trees and foliages, all surrounded by screen walls and gateways.⁹⁹ These *chaharbagh* gardens were to become the standard setting for Mughal tombs. In these gardens, the focus was the centre, marked by the construction of a large platform. In its funerary variant this central platform was replaced by the mausoleum. Typical examples of such funerary gardens are Humayun's Tomb at Delhi, the Tombs of Akbar and Mariam at Sikandara (Agra), the Tomb of Itimadud Daulah at Agra and the Tomb of Jahangir at Shahdara, Lahore. In the Taj Mahal, the focus was shifted from the centre to the periphery, in this case the river front, where the mausoleum was now constructed. Further enhancement to the river-front was provided by constructing octagonal bastions flanked by a mosque (west) and a *mehmankhana* (east) in the corners. The mausoleum and the main gateway are on the main axis, while the terminals of the transverse axes are marked by a pavilion on each side. The structures on the terminal points of the axes of the garden result in a cruciform shape which is similar to the plan of cruciform (*chahartaq*) tombs and mosques of Iran (for example, the *Musalla* of Gauhar Shad, Heart (1417-38), and Jami' Masjid Turbat-i Shaikh jam (1440-43). This shift of emphasis from the centre to the terminus is, first seen in the Tomb and Itimad-ud Daulah where although the mausoleum was retained in the centre, a river-side decorated pavilion was added.¹⁰⁰ A fore-court (*jilau khana*) with a series of cloistered cells is also added to the *chaharbaghs* in the tombs of Jahangir and Shahjahan.

⁹⁹ For a study and survey of Mughal gardens, see S.Ali Nadeem Rezavi, Exploring the Mughal Gardens at Fathpur Sikri'. *Proceedings of History Congress*, Bangalore session, 1997.

¹⁰⁰ For further such examples from the reigns of Jahangir and Shahjahan one might refer to the Buland Bagh-I-Nur Afshan and Bagh-i-Jahanara, all situated on the left bank of Yamuna at Agra. For the Bagh-i-Jahanara (Zahra Bagh) see Ebba Koch, 'The Zahara Bagh (Bagh-I-Jahanara) at Agra'. *Environmental Design*, n.d., pp.30-37. (special issue on 'The City as a Garden').

The *chaharbagh* was first introduced in India by Babur who constructed a number of them in Agra region. One of the earliest Mughal gardens on *chaharbagh* pattern to be laid out by Babur was the *Bagh-i Fath* situated between the lake and the ridge at Fathpur Skiri. Rectangular in plan, it comprises intersecting water channels and *khiyabans*. In the centre an Iranian-inspired pavilion (*baradari*) is constructed. Aligned on east-west axis, it is surrounded on all its sides with a cloistered *riwaq* (verandah) pierced with an entrance in the north. The water channels, which are provided with *mathi-pushtabshars* (fish-scaled chutes) in the east.¹⁰¹ A more elaborate *chaharbagh* of Babur, the *Bagh-i Nilufar* (Lotus Garden) Survives at Dholpur (Rajasthan). Two other gardens of Babur which have been identified are the so-called Rambagh (*Aram Bagh* or *Bagh-i Gul Afshan*, later renovated by Nurjahan Begum and thus renamed as *Bagh-i Nur Afshan*) and the *Bagh-i Hasht Bihisht* which are located on the left-bank of Yamuna at Agra.¹⁰²

The use of the typical mosaic tiles was confined to a handful of monuments under the Mughals. For example it appears on the Tomb of Afzal Khan (*Chini ka Rauza*) at Agra in its most profuse form. At other places the use of coloured glazed tiles – so popular in Iran – remained confined to the outer facing of the domes. For example ‘*Nili Gumbad*’ and *Sabz Burj* near *Humayun’s* Tomb, Delhi is of early sixteenth century. Brick-tile decoration is also found at the Lahore Fort. The calligraphic bands, so preferred in Iranian architecture, make their appearance under the Mughals but are generally confined to the rectangular panels encircling the arched openings of the gateways. Under the Mughals the calligraphic decoration is

¹⁰¹ For the identification of this garden, its plan and its site, see S.A.N.Rezavi, ‘Exploring the Mughal Gardens’.

¹⁰² See for example Ebba Koch, *Architecture of Mughal India*, pp.32-33; Catherine Asher, *Mughal Architecture*, pp.22-24: See also Catherine Asher, ‘Babur and the Timurid Char Bagh: Use and meaning’. *Environmental Design*, no.11, pp.56-73.

accomplished with black-stone letterings inscribed on white marble bands (for example, Buland Darwaza, Fathpur Sikri, the Gateway to Akbar's Tomb, Sikandara, Agara, and Entrance Gate of the Taj Mahal). The most representative example under the Mughals is of the facades of the Taj Mahal. The use of these elements in Iranian architecture had transformed the mosques into 'something which was generally missing in Mughal India'.

Aesthetically, the tile and faience mosaic of the Iranian style was replaced in Mughal India by the red and white bichromy or a marble monochrome which is so typical of Akbari structures and monuments (For example Humayun's Tomb; *Badhahi Darwaza*, *Jami' Masjid*, Fathpur Sikri; *Jahangiri Mahal*, Agra Fort) . The *Buland Darwaza*, Fathpur Sikri, however depicts a red-yellow bichromy.

Two further Iranian idiomatic innovations, the 'arch-and-panel' articulation.¹⁰³ and the stellate vaults (the *Chahartaq*) based on cruciform domed-chambers found wide acceptance under the Mughals. The Iranian architects of the thirteenth and fourteenth century had imposed order on architectonic and decorative forms by a consistent system of articulation which had a five-fold relationship between arch and panel and arch and arch. In this system the theme was primarily curved and arcuate (arch) and only secondarily rectangular or trabeate-based (panel). By repeating the identical arcuate patterns, the 'arch-and-panel' idiom, aesthetically and idiomatically unified the surfaces and voids of a structure, while controlling the decoration covering its walls. The five features of its relationship, alignment (when the arch symmetrically alternates with a panel or an arch, vertically or horizontally), empanelling (arch

¹⁰³ For a discussion of 'Arch and Panel System', see Jose Pereira, *Islamic Sacred Architecture*, pp.249-50, also pp.92, 100.

contained within a panel), multiplication (progressive increase upwards of arches), enflaming (arch framed by arch) and intersecting (arch crossing arch) initially found their way into Sultanate architecture, but gained much greater prominence under the Mughals.

As far as the *Chahartaq* is concerned, it was formed by the Iranians through intersecting arches. Generally a square vaulted chamber spanned by four large intersecting arches, resting on massive wide piers, forms a cruciform with an open square in the centre. This square is then turned into a polygon or circle with the help of smaller arches, supplemented by the decorative ribs rising from the main arches.

In Iran and Central Asia (Trans-Oxiana), masonry buildings were constructed with 'post and beam' (timber) porches. Two prominent examples are Ali Qapu in the Maidan-i Shah, Isfahan and the Balyand mosque in Bukhara. Porched pillared halls, raised on slender wooden pillars were known as *talar* in Iran and *aiwan* in Trans Oxiana. In Iran, the term *aiwan* was used for an open-fronted room with a barrel vault. The use of the term *aiwan* to designate pillared constructions was adopted by the Mughals. Most such pillared constructions in India took place during the reign of Akbar.

The high-*pishtaqs* subsequently emerged as the hall-mark of Mughal architecture, not only in the mosque but also in the tomb construction. The earliest Mughal tombs with elongated *pishtaqs* are the Sabz Burj and Nila Gumbad near Humayun's Tomb.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ For details on these tombs, see Ebba Koch, *Mughal Architecture*, pp.36-37.

As far as the ground plan is concerned, the Mughal mosque closely followed the Iranian axiom or phic proto-types. By fourteenth century, the Iranian architects had perfected the two-and four-*aiwan* (open fronted construction with a barrel vault). The form of the two-*aiwan* mosque was achieved by having the sanctuary chamber with a high *pishtaq* preceded by an enclosed open quadrangle. The entrance portal (*aiwan* of the Iranian architecture) was constructed on the same indigenous idiom, was surrounded by double-storied cloisters used in conjunction with the Delhi Sultanate elements to produce a new form. Thus in the Khairul Manazil Mosque at Delhi we find that the tall *pishtaq* of the western *liwan* and the double storeyed *riwaq* are typically Timurid. The single-aisled western *liwan* was itself built on Delhi Sultanate traditions. As in the Iranian examples; this single aisled, five bayed mosque has a single dome. In the Akbari Masjid near the Ajmer Dargah, the western *liwan* with multiple aisles and a dominant dome over the nave is Timurid, while the low single aisle cloisters are typical of Delhi Sultanate architecture. The Jami Masjid of Fathpur Sikri is again a two *aiwan* mosque, which acquired its third portal (Buland Darwaza) at a later stage.

By the twelfth century the four *aiwan* congregational mosque with domed chamber and cloisters had been perfected in Iran. In fact it was the Jami Masjid at Varamin (1322-26) which established the general plan for the subsequent Jami Masjids of Iran.¹⁰⁵ In this type of mosques a harmonious synthesis of such traditional elements as the *aiwan*, the four *aiwan* court and *aiwan*-dome combination was effected. The courtyard was framed by cloisters (usually double storeyed) of equal height, on three sides, while the prayer-chamber (western *liwan*) was given a

¹⁰⁵ D. Wilber, The Architecture of Islamic Iran, the Ilkhanid Period, p.731.

heightened importance through its crowning dome and a higher *pishtaq*. In the middle of each of the other three arched faces of the interior court, an *aiwan* (in the form of an arched and vaulted niche) is introduced. As in the overall plan these four *aiwans* can be seen as the arms of a cross, this type of mosque plan has been termed a cruciform plan.

The cruciform of four-*aiwan* mosque made its appearance in India during the reign of Jahangir, but became popular during the reign of Shahjahan. The first crucial form mosque constructed under the Mughals appears to be the Begum Shahi mosque at Lahore (1611-14). The second mosque on the same plan is the Wazir Khan mosque (1634-35), again at Lahore. Later the Jami Masjids of Agra and Shahjahanabad were also constructed on the same pattern.

Contrary to the Iranian four-*aiwan* mosques, these Mughal mosques, however, emphasized the importance of the sanctuary by tending to isolate it from the cloisters of the courtyard and by diminishing the size and width of the latter. The Wazir Khan Mosque had two other changes. As at the Taj mausoleum, this mosque has an additional court in the front of the entrance (*jilaukhana*) which acted as a bazaar. Secondly, the transverse *aiwans* of this mosque take a form no longer open fronted in the Iranian manner, but of gate-houses with doors.¹⁰⁶

Iranian architects and builders of the fourteenth century have also developed a technique for providing domed roofing to long rectangular structures. This was the technique of applying transverse arches and groin vaults.¹⁰⁷ In such constructions the

¹⁰⁶ For the non-Iranian influences on the Mughal Congregational mosques see Jose Pereria, *Islamic Sacred Architecture*, pp.231-32.

¹⁰⁷ Pinder-Wilson, 'Timurid Architecture', *Cambridge History of Iran*, p.732; Lisa Golombek, 'Discourses of an imaginary Arts Council in Fifteenth Century Iran', in *Timurid Art and Culture : Iran and Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century* (ed.) , Lisa Golombek and Maria Subtelny, (being Vol.VI of *Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture: Supplements to Muqarnas*), E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1992, p.5.

rectangular space to be covered was divided into square units by crossing it transversely from one longitudinal wall to the other. Short arches were applied to bridge the transverse arches, and provide the base for the domical vaults erected on the top. The unfilled space between the transverse arches were pierced with windows to let in light. This technique made its appearance in Eastern Iran where it was adopted in Masjid-Kirmani near the Tomb of Turbat-I-Shaikh.¹⁰⁸ It is then found in such religious structures as the oratory near the Jami Masjid at Yazd and the Tomb of Shaikh Ahmad Yasavi in Turkestan. In India we find one example of this kind of elongated vaulted structure in the reign of Shahjahan. But here it is in the form of a Safavid inspired *bazaar*, the *bazaar-I-musaqqaf*. This unique structure is the covered bazaar adjoining the Lahori Darwaza of the Delhi Fort.

From the above it appears that the Mughal architects and planners heavily borrowed their idiomatic, axiomatic and aesthetic traditions from Iran. The beauty and uniqueness of Mughal architecture, however, was owing to these inspirations being intelligently synthesized with the older indigenous elements. This synthetic tendency was at its best at the Taj Mahal, making it one of the best architectural achievements of the world civilization.

Iranian ideological influences on Akbar's court

Humayun's short stay in exile in 1545 in Iran and his return to India to regain his lost kingdom resulted in an influx of a number of Iranian scholars, nobles and soldiers along with him. From now on the gates for social and intellectual exchange seemed to open still more widely between the two countries. On Akbar's accession to the throne (1556), this contact grew further owing partly to the religious policy of the

¹⁰⁸ Pinder-Wilson, 'Timurid Architecture', p.732.

Safavid regime in Iran, which made continued residence in Iran awkward for several people who held beliefs different from those of the ruling house. On the other hand, Akbar's policy of religious tolerance and the favour he showed especially to Iranian émigrés made India a major attraction for Iranians of all persuasions. Iran itself was in an ideological ferment, and the émigrés belonged to the most varied schools of thought.

Iranian immigration in the second short phase of Humayun's reign (1555-56) was considerable. A number of Iranians were awarded important positions in the State.¹⁰⁹ Prominent among them were Bairam Khan, Wali Beg Zu'lqadr (including his two sons, Ali Qwuli and Bahadur Khan), Afzal Khan, Ashraf Khan, Khwaja Abdul Majid, Khwaja Ataullah, Shahanbuddin, Khwaja Abul Qasim and Others.¹¹⁰ The trend continued under Akbar, Professor Athar Ali's study shows that out of eighteen central ministers in Akbar reign (1574-1605), as many as eleven were of Iranian origin, three were Turanis and four Indians (two Hindus and two Muslims).¹¹¹ This shows the extent to which the Iranians were placed in the higher levels of the bureaucratic structure and the degree of their proximity to the Emperor.

It has been argued that, 'Akbar came increasingly under the influence of the pantheistic *sufi* doctrine, roughly from 1571'.¹¹² In this connection the presence of a leading India scholar Shaikh Mubarak in Agra should be remembered. The Shaikh had acquired considerable knowledge of various sects and was greatly inclined to the

¹⁰⁹ Iqtidar Alam Khan, *The Political Biography of A Mughal Noble: Mun'im Khan Khan-I-Khanan, 1497-1575*, New Delhi, pp. xvi-xvii; Afzal Husain, 'Growth of Irani Elements in Akbar's Nobility'. *Proceedings of the India History Congress*, 1975, pp.166-79.

¹¹⁰ Bayazid Bayat, *Tazkirah Humayun was Akbar* (ed.), Hidayat Husain, pp.36, 87. Abdul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, I, pp.218-342.

¹¹¹ *The Apparatus of the Mughal Empire*, New Delhi, 1985, Table:I, pp.xxvii-xxviii.

¹¹² Iqtidar A.Khan, *Akbar and his India* (ed.) Irfan Habib, New Delhi, 1997, p.86.

Ishraqi creed of Shihabuddin Suhrawardi Maqtul, the great Iranian *sufi*, as well as the ideas of Ibn Arabi. Mubarak obtained his early traditional education at Nagaur and Ahmedabad.

The founder of the Ishraqi philosophy Shihabuddin Suhrawardi (d.1191), expressed his mystical notions and teachings in his *Kitab hikmat-al-Ishraq* (the philosophy of illumination) and other works.¹¹³ His works appear to have been widely read in the Islamic world though the orthodox theologians had strong objections to some of the statements he made.

The period from 1571 to 1580 is quite important for the development of Akbar's religious ideas. During this period, he went through several experiments (or experience) so as to satisfy his own search for spiritual truth and understanding. This period also coincides with large scale immigration from Iran. Hakim Abul Fat'h of Gilan and Hakim Nuruddin, two sons of Maulana Abdul Riza Gilani, came to India and found patronage under Akbar. Their fathers had been tortured by Shan Tahmasp who (apparently falsely) suspected them to be Sunnis.¹¹⁴ By his intelligence and good manners Abu'l Fat'h soon became a close companion of Akbar and exercised considerable influence at the court.¹¹⁵ By 1575 Shaikh Mubarak's son, Abul Fazl also admitted to the Court, Hakim Abu'l Fath Gilani, and Abul Fazl soon became friends.

New influences began to modify Akbar's policy that until early 1570's had followed conventional lines. As late as 1572 a *farman* of his addressed to the *Muhtasib* (Censor of Morals) of *Bilgiram* directed the addressee to eradicate Shi'ite

¹¹³ For the essential facts of Shihabuddin Suhrawardi's life see *Encyclopedia of Islam* (henceforth EI), IV, pp 19-20. For an insightful short interpretation, see Roy Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran*, New York, 1985, p.149.

¹¹⁴ Badauni, II, p.211.

¹¹⁵ Badauni, II, p.198.

heresy from there. Akbar's interest in Ibn'Arabi went on increasing as the time passed. He began to listen attentively Ibn Arabi's writing on *Wahdat-al-Wajud* (Unity of Existence). There is little that is specifically 'Nuqtavi' in Akbar's beliefs. Any emphasis on numbers or incarnations in any form is totally absent. This is despite the fact that a known Nuqtavi adherent, Sharif Amuli,¹¹⁶ not only retained a high position under Akbar, but also received promotion under Jahangir, with some favourable observation recorded by that king about his knowledge of Sufism.¹¹⁷ It seems, therefore, that though Akbar freely borrowed from Iran, he did so with a spirit of discrimination.

¹¹⁶ Badauni, II, p.258-9.

¹¹⁷ Tuzuk-I-Jahangiri, tr,by Rogers and Beveridge, I, pp.47-48. The emperor, found Sharif Amuli to be 'a pure-hearted, lively-spirited man'.

CHAPTER - III

**THE FOREIGN POLICY OF
INDIA AND IRAN
FROM 1947 TO 1979**

REFERENCE ONLY

Post Independence in India

From India's Independence to Iran's Revolution

The partition of the Indian subcontinent in August 1947 meant that the centuries old territorial contiguity between India and Iran came to an end as Iran and the newly founded Muslim state of Pakistan became neighbours, sharing a 590-mile border. However, it did not result in a permanent rupture in Iran-India relations, and the two sides, even before the establishment of formal diplomatic relations, signed an Air Transport Agreement in November 1948.¹ Both countries also signed a treaty of friendship establishing diplomatic relations in March 1950.²

But soon afterwards, as the Cold War extended to this region, a qualitative difference became evident in Iran-India relations. Iran, under Reza Shah Pahlavi, chose to ally with the West, while India, under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, professed to follow a policy of “non-alignment” which meant avoiding “foreign entanglements by not joining one block or the other.”³ However, Nehru’s “non-alignment” pretensions notwithstanding, India’s tilt towards the Soviet Union was unmistakable. There was very little in common between India’s pro-Soviet “non-alignment” and Iran’s alignment with the West. These contrasting approaches to the East-West struggle were to determine the parameters of Iran-India relations for many ensuing years during which their relations remained “cool, low-keyed, verging on mutual suspicion, and even tinged with hostility.”⁴

¹ A.H.H. Abidi, “Relations Between India and Iran, 1947-1979”, *The Iranian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. VII, No. 4, Winter 1996, p. 881.

² John Calabrese, “Indo-Iranian Relations in Transition”, *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. XXV, No. 5, Summer 2002, pp. 61-62.

³ Farah Naaz, “Indo-Iranian Relations 1947-2000”, at www.idsa-india.org/an-jan-8-01.html

⁴ A.H.H. Abidi, *op.cit.* p. 882.

The Cold War alignments, however, were not the only factor keeping India and Iran away from each other: other factors also played a role. One was the “Pakistan Factor.” Right from the outset, Iran appeared better disposed towards Pakistan. This was evident from the fact that Iran was the first country to recognize Pakistan; it established diplomatic relations with Pakistan in May 1948 and Pakistani Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, visited Iran in May 1949; and the Shah of Iran was the first Head of State to pay a state visit to Pakistan, in March 1950.⁵ As Iran joined Pakistan in the Western-sponsored Central Treaty Organization (CENTO, 1954 - 1979),⁶ whose formation Nehru described as “a wrong approach, a dangerous approach, and a harmful approach,”⁷ it became, in effect, “a strategic partner of Pakistan,”⁸ India’s arch rival. When viewed against the backdrop of hostile relations between Pakistan and India, it is evident that such an Iranian “tilt” towards Pakistan must have irked the Indian leadership.

Just as Iran’s closeness with Pakistan concerned India, India’s close relationship with certain radical Arab states like Egypt and Syria and Nehru’s fraternity with Egyptian President, Jamal Abd al Nasser, irked the Shah of Iran. Nehru’s endorsement of Nasser as the leader of the Arab world and of his policies was not relished by the Shah who felt threatened by Nasserism and Arab radical republicanism.⁹

However, in the absence of any irritant in a strictly bilateral context, the Shah thought it prudent to engage India in order to assuage her apprehensions about the

⁵ Ibid. p. 881.

⁶ “Baghdad Pact”, at http://lexicorient.com/e.o/baghdad_pact.htm

⁷ Quoted in Farah Naaz, op. cit.

⁸ John Calabrese, op. cit. p. 62.

⁹ A.H.H. Abidi, op.cit. p. 885.

perceived Iranian “tilt” towards Pakistan. The Shah, just four months after Iran’s adherence to the CENTO, paid his first visit to India in February 1956, during which he tried to assure the Indian leadership that Iran’s close relations were not directed against India nor were they at the cost of friendship with India.¹⁰ The visit was reciprocated by the visit to Iran of the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, in 1959. But even such high level visits could not bring about a positive change in Iran-India relations; rather, they highlighted the political gulf between the two. During the 1950s, therefore, Iran-India relations remained confined to non-political spheres like trade and commerce.¹¹

With the beginning of the 1960s, however, Iran-India relations started showing some signs of improvement, primarily due to the Shah’s decision to follow a more independent foreign policy vis-à-vis the United States and to improve relations with the Soviet Union. The détente between Iran and the Soviet Union allowed for more relaxed relationships between countries like Iran and India. Iran’s support for India during the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict further contributed to the warming trend in Indo-Iranian relations.¹² This Iranian gesture was reciprocated by India through President S. Radhakrishnan’s visit to Tehran in May 1963.¹³ In the same year, Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, too, visited Iran.¹⁴ But this honeymoon period proved to be short-lived as the “Pakistan Factor” once again came in the way of strengthening Iran-India relations. This happened during the 1965 Pakistan-India war. Iran unequivocally condemned what it saw as Indian aggression against Pakistan and

¹⁰ Farah Naaz, op. cit.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² John Calabrese, op. cit.

¹³ A.H.H. Abidi, op.cit. p. 887.

¹⁴ “India-Iran Relations” at www.meadev.nic.in/foreign/iran.html

promised every possible help to Pakistan.¹⁵ Quite obviously, Indians took umbrage at Iran's stance towards the war. The warming trend in Iran-India relations thus came to an abrupt end.

However, the last years of the sixties once again set the stage for improvement in Iran-India relations. The Shah of Iran is believed to have been rudely shaken by the US stance towards the 1965 Pakistan-India war. Instead of helping its ally, Pakistan, the US imposed an embargo on both the adversaries, which, in effect, suggested a tilt against Pakistan. This brought home to the Shah the "futility of alliance, limitations of external assistance, and need for self-reliance."¹⁶ Another factor which must have impacted upon the Shah's decision-making calculus was the comprehensive defeat of three Arab states by Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, which heralded the debacle of Nasserism and immensely relieved the Shah, enabling him to embark upon a more independent and confident foreign policy.¹⁷

These developments almost coincided with the changes in the Iran-Pakistan equation as well as in India's relations with the Arab world. The Shah was highly sceptical of Pakistan's warming relations with Communist China. Besides, Pakistan's patch-up with certain Arab states, especially Egypt, did not go down well with the Shah. Meanwhile, India's relations with the Arab states came under stress as Indians grew disillusioned over the Arab world's lukewarm response during India's wars with China and Pakistan, which led to calls for a reassessment of India's policy towards the Arab states.¹⁸ All these factors contributed to a convergence between India and Iran

¹⁵ A.H.H. Abidi, op.cit. pp. 887-888.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 888.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 889-890

and paved the way for yet another spell of warm and friendly relations between the two states. This new found convergence between Iran and India was highlighted by the Shah's second 12-day visit to India in January 1969.¹⁹

By the early 1970s, both Iran and India had emerged as important regional players. Iran had emerged as a powerful actor in global oil politics and a military force in the Persian Gulf, whereas India had emerged as the strategically pre-eminent power in South Asia. Though Iran's support for Pakistan during the 1971 crisis had once again adversely impacted upon the warming trend in Iran-India relations, Indian Foreign Minister, Swaran Singh's visit to Iran in July 1973, helped dispel some of the mutual apprehensions.²⁰ Pakistan's successful wooing of the Gulf Arab states further prodded Iran to cultivate friendly ties with India. On India's part, improvement in its relations with Iran was a means to neutralize its support for Pakistan.²¹ so, a new era of mutual engagement commenced.

Economic considerations were also there, pushing the two states closer. For India, which was in dire need of foreign capital and credit facilities for its massive industrialization programme, close relations with petrodollar-rich states like Iran could be immensely beneficial. Besides, it could also export its surplus reservoir of skilled manpower to earn foreign exchange. As the Shah had set before himself the task of industrializing Iran, there was a clear complementarity of interests. Iran could buy Indian technology, raw material, and manpower as it had surplus capital, particularly after the oil price hike in 1973.²² The change in Iranian thinking vis-à-vis India was evident in an interview by the Shah to *The Times of India* in July 1973,

¹⁹ Ibid. pp. 891.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 894.

²¹ Ibid. p. 895.

²² Ibid.

wherein he stated that he wanted to pursue a “policy not only of peaceful coexistence but also of active cooperation with India because it was evident to him that there could be no stability in Asia without it.”²³

It was against this background that a major breakthrough in Iran-India relations was achieved with the visit of Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, to Iran in April-May 1974. During the visit, the second by an Indian Prime Minister, a basket of agreements were signed.²⁴ The most important was the agreement to collaborate in the field of atomic energy. The communiqué issued, following the visit, stated that contacts will be made “between the atomic energy organizations in the two countries in order to establish a basis for cooperation in this field.”²⁵ Iran and India signed a nuclear cooperation agreement in February 1975.²⁶ Thus, the visit set the stage for cooperation in the fields other than the economic one. The warmth of Iran-India relations during this phase could be gauged from the fact that, between October 1974 to February 1978, Shah visited India twice.²⁷ However, this phase too could not last long and the upward trend in Iran-India relations was arrested by the overthrow of the Shah’s regime in Iran in 1979.

With the advent of British power in India till independence in 1947 Indo-Iranian relations were basically political in nature, due to geo strategic and political interests of British Government of India in Persia. Once the British consolidated their position in India, after the Battle of Plassy (1757) India became the shining jewel in the imperial crown.²⁸ Having acquired firm control over India, the British moved on to

²³ Ibid. p. 894

²⁴ Ibid. p. 896.

²⁵ At www.nti.org/e_research/profiles/1825_1826.html

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ A.H.H. Abidi, op.cit. pp. 897-898.

²⁸ L. Greaves, *Persia and Defence of India*, (London , 1959) . p .25 .

safeguard this prize possession by creating a chain of protective outposts in the West Asian region. In this process, Afghanistan and Iran were turned into a buffer between British India and Russia. The geographical situation at Persia between the rapidly expanding Russian empire on the one side and Great Britain on the other cast it into a buffer state and made it a predominant factor in the British strategy of defence of India.²⁹

The importance of Persia in the defence of British India can be traced back to the Eighteenth Century. In 1798, the Marquis of Wesley took the first step to bring Persia into the orbit of India foreign policy,³⁰ when he sent Mehdi Ali Khan to Tehran to find out the Shah's attitude towards the aggressive designs of Zaman Shah of Afghanistan.³¹ While the Afghan threat was one of the original compelling motives, for British contacts with Persia, the dominating factor which closely identified Persia with the imperial interests in India was the impending danger or French invention of India. Pursuing his grand strategy of world domination and break up of the British Empire, Napoleon in 1798, had dispatched emissaries to the court of the Shah of Persia to pave the way for the Passage of the French army to India, but their mission failed.³² The French danger to India was gone with Napoleon, but the fact that he had toyed with the impracticable scheme of invading India, in collusion with Russia and Persia, loomed large in British calculations for the defence of India.³³ The emergence of Russia as a super power in Eastern Europe Napoleon's star had set and Russia's advances in Central Asia posed a much greater threat to British interests in India.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia* Vol , II , (London , 1969) , pp . 295 – 300.

³¹ Ibid .

³² Valentine Chirol , *Middle Eastern question and some political problems of Indian Defence* (London , 1963) , pp.10 –13 .

³³ John Mutton, *Arms and Insecurity in the Persian Gulf* (Radian, New Delhi, 1984) pp. 35 – 36.

Throughout the nineteenth century Russia and Britain clashed repeatedly in Iran to secure imperial privileges for one sort or another.³⁴ Rivalry between Britain and Russia for Iran reached a high point by the turn of the 20th Century. According to a treaty signed by Britain and Russia in 1907 these powers divided Iran into two “zone of influence.” Britain acknowledged Iran’s northern and central province as British zone.³⁵ The stage was set for a long duel between Russia and Britain, and that was the determining factor in the Central Asiatic question and Indo-Iranian relations till the partition of the India in 1947.³⁶ A new era began in the bilateral relations between Iran and India following the partition of the latter land mass into India and Pakistan on the basis of the two nation theory.

Independence of Pakistan and its Relations with Iran

Iran was the first country that recognized Pakistan as an independence state and Shah of Iran (Mohammad Reza) was the first head of state to pay state visit to Pakistan in March 1950 when the Quaid-I-Azam appointed Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan as the first Pakistani an envoy to Iran in May 1948.

Pakistan and Iran own their close bilateral relations to the geographical location. Their territorial contiguity creates many common interests. Pakistan inherited about 590 miles of a common frontier with Iran. The boundary which was partially demarcated runs from the Koh-I-Malik Siah, the tri-junction of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan to Gwatar Bay, in Arabian Sea. Pakistan’s border with Iran is also an imperial legacy. Some parts of Baluchistan had been under Iranian – Suzerainty

³⁴ Sykes, n. 46. Pp.300 – 310.

³⁵ A .H. Hamzavi, Persia and the powers: An Account of Diplomatic Relations 1941 – 46.

³⁶ Bishsheshwar prasad, Foundations of India’s Foreign policy : Imperial Era , 1882 – 1914 . (Calcutta, 1974). Pp. 316 – 383.

before the advent of the British Raj. Britain, after conquering Baluchistan, entered into border agreements with Iran in 1871, 1895 and 1905.³⁷

As a result of confusion about boundaries existing during 1947-49, some minor border clashes occurred which were never serious enough to be reported by the press. Neither Pakistan nor Iran ever made any public statements on border issues. In 1955, the two countries agreed to submit their boundary problem to the arbitration if direct negotiations between them failed to produce agreement. To expedite the demarcation on large scale maps of the entire border area, clearly indicating frontier pillars, were approved by the governments of Pakistan and Iran. Both governments were equally anxious to remove this block. The Iranian envoy observed on December 26, 1955, "we will never make boundary matters an issue between the two countries as we are very friendly."³⁸ Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran, Major General N.A.M. Reza, was equally optimistic and visualized "no difficulties and no hitches" in the demarcation of the frontier. On October 30, 1956 it was reported that complete agreement on the demarcation of their boundaries had been reached between the two countries. By October 1957 the Pakistan cabinet had completed consideration of the draft agreement, and it was formally approved and signed on February 9, 1958. The implementation of the unpublicized agreement, however, was delayed until the advent of the military regime in October 1958, which then gave it top priority. The task of demarcating the line by creating boundary pillars was completed on February 10, 1959, a year after the signing of the accord.³⁹

³⁷ I. W. Lyde, *The Continent of Asia* (Makmillan, 1st ed. 1983), pp. 345 – 347.

³⁸ *Dawn* (Karachi), November 3, 1955.

³⁹ *Ibid*, December 27, 1955.

Another was related to the problem of Baluchi dissidents within Pakistan. Pakistan and Iran have collaborated or almost acted as a “federation” or “confederation” on the issue of Baluchistan. Baluchistan is a problem province of Pakistan. Under the British rule as well as after the formation of Pakistan, it was treated as a special administrative region. Ethnically, Baluchistan is inhabited by Baluchis, Brohis and Pathans speaking Baluch, Brohi, Push to and Jatki dialects respectively.⁴⁰ The Baluchi population is spread out in the areas of Iran and Afghanistan as well, Iran. Therefore is interested in the Baluch problem of Pakistan both as a domestic problem and as a problem vis-à-vis Afghanistan. The persistent demand of Baluchis for a separate state is looked upon with concern by both Iran and Pakistan. Religion provided another bond of friendship between Pakistan and Iran. Pakistan geographically located in South Asia belong to West Asia by religion and to South Asia by culture and tradition.⁴¹ Liaquat Khan during his stop over at Tehran on his way back home from London in May 1949, remarked: My hope for the future is that Iran and Pakistan will be like one soul in two bodies. All the Muslim countries are our brothers, but Iran is closest in our heart. The Shah who returned this visit in March 1950, stated at the banquet given in his hands by the Governor General of Pakistan. “What could be more natural than love between the two nations that are neighbours and profess the same faith. Iran will never forget the affectionate regards and sincere feelings of this and co-religionist nation.”⁴²

In 1955, the Pakistan National Assembly passed the West Pakistan Act which provided for the merger of its four provinces the Punjab. The North West Frontier,

⁴⁰ Ibid, February 1959.

⁴¹ Keith callard , Pakistan Foreign 's policy (New York , 1951 , p.6.

⁴² Aslam Siddiqui , Pakistan seeks security (Lahore , 1960) , p. 88.

Sind and Baluchistan were formed into "one unit." The Act established the predominance of Punjabis, a fact much resented by the people of other provinces. A movement in Baluchistan was launched against this arrangement. It was as late as in 1970 that Baluchistan got its first provincial. Its government led by the National Awami party. This victory, however, proved to be short lived. In 1973, the N.A.P led government was dismissed and it was believed that Pakistan did it at the instance of the Shah of Iran. The presence of Iranian helicopters in Baluchistan shortly after the dismissal of indicated that a state-to-state co-ordination had already begun regarding the border province.⁴³ The quest for national security, the search for friends and allies and the anxiety to maintain territorial integrity led both Iran and Pakistan to be constant partners. For Iran as well as Pakistan the security vis-à-vis the Soviet Union was an important element in their foreign policies.⁴⁴ The geographical destinies of Iran and Pakistan have been linked historically with those of "Northern Tier" countries.⁴⁵

All calculations at the regional and global levels, concerning strategy and geo politics, have placed both countries in the same bracket. Further, these calculations drew Iran and Pakistan into the vortex of super power rivalry. It is interesting to note that despite the transition in international politics from a bipolar to flexible balance of power system, Pakistan and Iran found themselves on the same side of the fence.⁴⁶ Both looked to the West in their period of consolidation and they were united in their adherence to the Baghdad Pact in 1955. Later known as the CENTO in 1959 both

⁴³ The Gauba, Pakistan today (Bombay, 1970), p.80.

⁴⁴ Mainstream (New Delhi), Vol.2, July – August 1973, p.15.

⁴⁵ Harvard writings, changing power Relations between the Middle East and south Asia, "orbis (Philadelphia), Fall 1976. Pp.787-788.

⁴⁶ Leo.E.Rose, "The super powers in south Asia :A Geo-strategic Analysis", "orbis (philadelphia), summer 1978, p.399.

Pakistan and Iran signed defence agreements with the United States on bilateral basis.⁴⁷

The Baghdad Pact resulted in the formal involvement of Iran in military alliance with one of the countries of the Indian sub continent. Iran gave diplomatic support to Pakistan over Kashmir. In the Iranian Majlis, Kashmir was discussed as an inseparable part of Pakistan Deputy Speaker Sayed Ahmed Sarai said, “we believe the decision of the Security Council” should be binding. The Kashmir issue settled through plebiscite under the auspices of United Nations. It is, however, regrettable that India on the hand criticized even defence arrangements as envisaged in the Baghdad Pact and on the other hand believed in the outmoded maxim of might as right.”⁴⁸ In 1962, Iran volunteered to act as a mediator between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue but the tilt was clearly in Pakistan’s favour Iran’s Foreign Minister, Ardashir Zahedi, for instance, declared that “Iran had been telling India to solve the Kashmir problem with Pakistan on the basis of self-determination.”⁴⁹ Iran also helped to restore diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan after a break of two years. King Zahir Shah of Afghanistan was persuaded to tone down his support for the Pakistan” issue.⁵⁰

Iran’s attitude and actions in both the Indo-Pakistan wars showed a pro-Pakistan tilt. The first instance of military assistance from Iran to Pakistan was manifest during the 1965 Indo-Pak war. Iran considered the defence of Pakistan as its own defence. Abdul Rasul Azimi, the editor of *Paigham-I-Imroze*, clearly stated that,

⁴⁷ R.K.Ramazani, “Emerging pattern of Regional Relations in Iranians Foreign policy “orbis(Philadelphia, winter 1975) ,pp.1046-1047.

⁴⁸ Pakistan constituent Assembly, Vol.I.no, 2.15 March 1950,p.35.

⁴⁹ Dawn (Karachi), December 22, 1955.

⁵⁰ The patriot (New Delhi), July 16, 1962.

“Iran comes out to help Pakistan against Indian aggression with full consciousness that it was helping the defence of its own country.”⁵¹ The official Iranian circles also confirmed this position. A statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry declared that Iran was concerned with India’s aggression against Pakistan, a fraternal Muslim nation.⁵²

In war, Iran’s aid to Pakistan was mainly continued to medical supplies and medical teams. Besides this, Iran also provided shelter to the PIA fleet and other Pakistani civilian aircraft. The PIA aircraft were garaged each night at Tehran from where they operated the essential defence measures.⁵³

Unlike in 1965, Iran did not denounce India as an aggressor in the Indo-Pak war of 1971. Nonetheless, India was condemned for armed intervention in the internal affairs of Pakistan. The Iranian’s foreign Minister’s statement in the UN General Assembly on 7 October reflected this stand. He said, “No matter how grave has been the situation of Pakistan with regard to the humanitarian question of refugees, nothing can justify armed intervention on the part of India against the territorial integrity of Pakistan. To approve such an action or to cover it up by silence and convenience would be tantamount to undermine the very foundation of the system of international relations upon which our organization is based.”⁵⁴

This war flared up not from any conflict between the two neighbours, but from Pakistan’s internal anomalies. The internal state imperialism, i.e. the exploitation of East Pakistan by its western counter-part in the economic, political and cultural of life

⁵¹ Safla.S.Mohammadally, “Pakistan - Iran Relations (1947-1979),” *Pakistan Horizon* (Karachi), Vol,39,no.9.1979,pp.54-55.

⁵² Dawn, May 10, 1966.

⁵³ United Nations General Assembly, official Records (GAOR) sess,20,plen mtg .1362,October 14,1965,p.13.

⁵⁴ Herbert Feldman, *From Crisis to Crisis. Pakistan 1962-69*(London, 1977), p.152.

had begun to tell on Pakistan's internal stability. When the demand for a separate state was going on in East Pakistan the Shah observed: "President Yahya Khan must remember the basic canons of History, firstly that the interest of the majority must remain the over riding consideration where the majority of people were impoverished, secondly, the rich should not be permitted to become richer at the expense of the unprivileged, finally world was heading towards social justice and Pakistan could not remain silent in this movement." Further, he also added that he did not want to interfere in the internal affairs at Pakistan. However, as a friend of the country, he would say that General Yahya Khan must introduce the necessary reforms before elections were held and top priority must go to uncompressing fight against corruption.⁵⁵

The actual crisis began in March 1971, after the refusal of President of Yahya Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the leader of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) to allow the Awami League, who had won the mandate in the December 1970 elections, to form the government under the leadership of Sheik Mujibur Rehman and to implement its six point programme. When the triangular negotiations between Yahya Khan, Bhutto and Mujibur Rehman failed, the army cracked down on East Pakistan on 25 March 1971.

During the initial days of the crack down Iran took the stand that the developments in Pakistan were an internal matter of that country and a spokesman of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, in a statement on 29 March 1971, strongly advised all powers to refrain from entering in the internal affairs at Pakistan in the period of

⁵⁵ United Nations General Assembly, official Records, sess.26, plen, mtg. September 27, 1971, pp.14-15.

crisis.⁵⁶ On 18 June, the Iranian Foreign Minister visited Karachi to deliver a message from the Shah to Yahya Khan. On this return, he expressed Iran's full support to Pakistan.⁵⁷

Iran considered the territorial integrity of Pakistan as a grave concern to its own security. Shah said in an interview to the editor of *Blitz*: "An Indo-Pak settlement is the first imperative not only for the security development and prosperity of the India but also of the neighbouring region and particularly Iran."⁵⁸ The same idea was conveyed in the address of Iranian Foreign Minister to the UN General Assembly on 27 September 1971 when he observed: "Recent developments in the relations between India and Pakistan are of grave concern to us. The separatist movement in East Pakistan and the subsequent flight of refugees to India have strained to a critical point the already tense relations between the two countries. We support every effort under the banner of UN to deal with the humanitarian aspect of the problem on both sides of the borders. As to the political aspect of the problem without wishing in any way to interfere in the affairs of Pakistan, we are confident that the Pakistan government will do its utmost to climate through pacific means the causes of friction and strife which brought panic and unhappiness among brothers in Pakistan."⁵⁹

Iran offered to mediate between India and Pakistan over the East Pakistan issue,⁶⁰ but India declined to respond to the offer. Minister of external Affairs, Swaran Singh, told the Lok Sabha: "the question of mediation or good offices of any third country did not arise as the issue of Bangladesh is a matter between the military junta

⁵⁶ Times of India (New Delhi), April 18, 1969.

⁵⁷ Kyhan International (Tehran), March 29, 1971 and Dawn (Karachi) March 30, 1971.

⁵⁸ United Nations General Assembly, official Records, sess, 26, plen. mtg. 2002 December 7, 1971, p. 5.

⁵⁹ Blitz, (Bombay), June 26, 1971, p. 1.

⁶⁰ UN General Assembly, official Records (GAOR), sess 26, plen. mtg. 1940, September 27, 1971, pp. 14015.

of Pakistan and already elected representative of East Bengal and not between India and Pakistan.⁶¹

Iran went all out in support of Pakistan when hostilities broke out between India and Pakistan in December 1971. This included providing Pakistan with military and logistic support during the war. Iran rendered considerable help to Pakistan.⁶²

Iran's Ambassador in the United Nations agreed that "an immediate end of military operation, an unconditional cease-fire, should be followed by withdrawal of troops from the territories occupied by both sides."⁶³ This stand, calling for a cease-fire and withdrawal first and settlement of the refugees thereafter, was supportive of Pakistan's position. Support to Pakistan was expressed outside the United Nations also.⁶⁴

Iran's support to Pakistan on post-war issues was also total. In early 1972, Iran joined Pakistan in refusing to acknowledge the latter's break up as final. The joint communiqué issued after the Shah's visit to Pakistan in January 1972 said that "future relations between the two wings of Pakistan should be resolved through negotiations between their elected leaders." The communiqué also called for the withdrawal of Indian troops from occupied Pakistan territories.⁶⁵

On 23 December 1972, the Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Hoveida, declared that his country was against the hasty admission at Bangladesh into United Nations and emphasized the need to settle the powers issue in order to normalize the situation

⁶¹ Eco of Iran. Vol.19.no.133.June16, 1971,p.1.

⁶² India Lok sabha Debates, Vol.8.no.9.November 25,1971,cols.23-24.

⁶³ K.R.Singh, Quest for security (New Delhi, 1980), p.163-164.

⁶⁴ United Nations General Assembly, official Records. Sess.26.plen. Mtg.2002, December 7,1971,p.5.

⁶⁵ Eco of Iran. Vol.19.no.181, December 16,1971,p.1.

in the subcontinent. The joint communiqué issued after President Bhutto's visit to Iran in May 1973 expressed deep concern over the plight at 93,000 prisoners of War and 12,000 civilians, as their continued detention by India was in "flagrant disregard" of the United Nations resolutions. It also regarded the threat of trial of some prisoners at war by the "Dakka" authorities as a step that would under mine normalization in the Indian sub continent.⁶⁶

Iran and Indian relations in pre-revolutionary period of Iran

Iran's relations with India grew slowly. An air transport agreement was concluded on 24 November 1948.⁶⁷ A fillip to this friendship was given by "the Treaty of perpetual peace and friendship" signed on 18 March 1950 at Tehran between India and Iran "pledging both the countries to settle any difference through ordinary diplomatic channel or by arbitration or other peaceful means. The Treaty referred to the ancient ties which existed between the two countries for centuries, and keeping in view the mutual need for co-operation."⁶⁸ Moreover, India was critical about the nationalization of Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in 1951 by the Mossadeq government. In a letter to Chief Ministers, Jawaharlal Nehru said that the Iranian government has taken up a very strong and unbending attitude and perhaps it might be criticized to some extent.⁶⁹ In spite of this critical stand a consulate General at Mashhad in Iran was opened by India in December 1952 and a direct radio-telephone service between the countries was inaugurated on 1 March 1952.⁷⁰ Besides, the

⁶⁶ Kayhan International January 25, 1972.

⁶⁷ Kessing's contemporary Archives, Vol.7, December 1948, p.9672.

⁶⁸ See the text of Treaty in Foreign policy of India, Text of Documents 1947-64 (Lok sabha secretariat, New Delhi, 1960, pp.4243.

⁶⁹ Jawaharlal Nehru letters to chief Ministers 1947-64. Vol.2. (Jawahar lal Nehru Memorial Fund, Teen Murti House, New Delhi), p.438.

⁷⁰ Annual Report 1952-54 (Ministry of External Affairs Government of India, New Delhi, 1953), p.10.

Government of India also entered into a comprehensive trade agreement with Iran on 15 December 1954, known as "The Treaty of Commerce and Navigation." In the cultural field, the education minister of India, Moulana Abdul Kalam Azad paid and goodwill visit to Iran in August 1951. A party of two Iranian Professors and eight students visited India in April 1952 for study of some of the veterinary institutions of India. Two Deputy Ministers of External Affairs went on a goodwill mission to Tehran in 1953, and a press delegation from Iran visited India in January 1953.⁷¹

India's intentions of friendship with Iran, despite the latter's membership of the Baghdad Pact, were also manifested by the visit of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1959 and of Dr. Radhakrishnan to Iran in 1963. All these visits helped the two countries to come closer to each other. The bilateral cultural agreement at 1956, the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation at 1957 and three-year trade agreement of 1954 were steps in the same directions.⁷²

Iran also made efforts to convince India that its friendship with Pakistan was not based on anti-Indian sentiments. A few months after the war of 1965, while stressing Iran's ties with Pakistan, the Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations, speaking in the General Assembly, laid stress on his country's ties with India. He observed that "Iran has always maintained friendly relations with India and its cultural ties with India can be traced back to the beginning of history."⁷³ The Shah of Iran himself took pains to clarify Iran's stand on arms aid to Pakistan. In an interview with editor of *Blitz*, he said that "there is no truth in any reports which suggest that Iran is to give large scale military aid to Pakistan." Iran's sympathy with Pakistan, he said,

⁷¹ India Parliamentary Debates, Vol.1, no.4part1, February 15,1953,,Col.149.

⁷² Indian and Foreign Review (New Delhi), Vol.5.August20, 1968p.6.

⁷³ United Nations General Assembly, official Records, sess.20, plen, mtg.1962, October 14,1965.

was intended to refrain the latter from jumping into the Chinese lap: "Pakistan will get all the arms, it wants, not from Iran, but from elsewhere and you know from where we want to prevent such a situation."⁷⁴ Iran did not stop the flow of oil to India during the two Indo-Pak wars. When the Tashkent Declaration was signed between India and Pakistan on 10 January 1966, the Iranian government, welcoming the Declaration expressed the hope that "both India and Pakistan will resolve their differences peaceful and amicably."⁷⁵

Iran gave assurances to India that its closeness to Pakistan, as a result of common membership of the Baghdad Pact, was not directed against India and it was not at the cost of friendship with India. The visit of Shah to India in 1956 just four months of few Iran's adherence to the Baghdad Pact was a clear indication of his desire to mend the fences of friendship with India. This was his first and one of the longest trips that any Head of state had made to this country. The Shah stayed in this country for 23 days, from 18 February to 9 March 1958. He did refer to difference between India and Iran but made it a point to emphasize the traditional ties. The Shah while speaking at a banquet given by the Governor of Bombay, said:

"Our community of thought had sentiments have been expressed many times in same language, sometimes in different language, but having always the same meaning, responsibility for the right of individual, and also in different ways responsibility for the freedom and independence. Having so many plans in common and having both peace, fraternity, you in your country in this part of world ... we in

⁷⁴ Quoted in Asian Recorder, Vol.12, 13, August 19, 1966, p.7235.

⁷⁵ Eco of Iran, Vol.no.11, January 13 1966, p.1.

Iran in slightly different geographical situations, I am sure are trying to do the same thing to preserve and continue the legacy of our ancestors.”⁷⁶

Another important point was that the economic factor brought Iran and India closer to each other for mutual benefit. The visit of the Shah to India in 1959 was motivated by economic consideration at finding diversified source of techniques, Indian know-how and joint collaborations to assist Iran in its ambitions and industrially oriented five-year plan in March 1968.⁷⁷ To give effect to mutual desires of increasing collaboration between them, an Indo-Iran joint Commission for economic, trade and technical co-operation at the ministerial level was set up during the Shah's visit.⁷⁸ A grand welcome was accorded to the Shah during his visit to the modern temples of India at Heavy Engineering complex, Hindustan Steel Limited, Integral Coach Factory, Bhabha Atomic Centre etc. During his visit to India he emphasized his desire to build close relations with India by making two others. First, he offered two trade routes, one to Europe and the other to Russia via Iran as a gesture of help to India to overcome the problem which arose after the closure of the Suez Canal.⁷⁹

Secondly, for peace in the region, he offered to mediate between India and Pakistan if both countries desired it. He also said, “I shall be the happiest man in the world if I could do something to bring India and Pakistan closer.”⁸⁰

REFERENCE ONLY

⁷⁶ Times of India, (Bombay), March 6, 1965.

⁷⁷ National Herald, January 4, 1969.

⁷⁸ Times of India, January 14, 1969.

⁷⁹ Foreign Affairs Records, Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India, New Delhi, Vol. 151.no.4, April 1969.

⁸⁰ Times of India, November 11, 1969.

India, on its parts, also made efforts to forge close relations with *IRNA*. Indo-Iranian negotiations on the Madras Refinery were successfully concluded and an agreement was signed in November 1965,⁸¹ providing not only for a continued supply at Iranian crude for the refinery but also \$ 30 million in hard currency for the construction of the refinery,⁸² the visit of the Indian Deputy Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, with an economic delegation to Iran proved to be a shot in the arm of Indo-Iranian economic co-operation. Negotiations were started for Rs.2.060 million Indo-Iranian Chemical and Industrial Complex to be set up in Gujarat. Desai's visit also paved the way for the visit of the Shah to India which came about in January 1969.⁸³

Indo-Iranian Relationship reached its zenith particularly since 1973. A major breakthrough was achieved between two countries during Foreign Minister Swaran Singh's visit to Iran from 9-12 July 1973. During the visit, widely regarded as the "turning point" in Indo-Iranian relations,⁸⁴ Swaran Singh held discussions with Iranian leaders including an audience with the Shah. As a result of the visit which was aimed at highlighting the mutuality of interests between India and Iran, a new protocol for trade and technical co-operation was signed,⁸⁵ and it was decided to hold the fourth meeting of the Indo-Iran joint Commission, which had not met since December 1970.⁸⁶

The visit not only helped in widening mutual co-operation between the two countries, but also marked the evolution of a mature relationship based on political understanding. The Iranian Foreign Minister was understood to have told the

⁸¹ Annual Report 1966-67, Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India, New Delhi), 1967, p.31

⁸² Singh, n.92, p.162.

⁸³ National Herald, January 2, 1969.

⁸⁴ Lok Sabha Debates (New Delhi), Vol.30, no.17, August 1973, Col.60.

⁸⁵ India and Foreign Review (New Delhi), Vol.10, no.20, August 1973, p.5.

⁸⁶ Lok Sabha Debates, vol.30, no.17, August 1973, pp.90-91.

consultative committee of the Parliament later that “India could not write off Iran or vice versa because of the arms build up by the country and its close relations with Pakistan. Even though Iran is a friend of Pakistan, there is scope for expanding commercial and economic relations.” He also added that “it (the visit) greatly cleared up the atmosphere and proved to be the starting point of fruitful co-operation between the two countries.”⁸⁷ A new trend was seen towards the emergence of a mature relationship independent of the two countries respective strategic interests, as was evident from the statements of the Foreign Ministers of both the countries.

“Iran friendship with Pakistan and India’s friendship with Iraq like Iran’s close association with the United States and India’s treaty relationship with the Soviet Union need to be viewed as something incompatible with the desire for better relations.”⁸⁸ The drastic changes in the mutual relationship between Iran and India could be seen in the context of various developments in the India as well as in the Persian Gulf, with the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, and consequence dismemberment of Pakistan, New Delhi had been able for the first time since 1947 to rid itself at its rather unhealthy pre-occupation with Pakistan and the Indo-Pak power balance. This pre- occupation had kept India tied down to the sub continent and prevented it from playing an effective role in the wider area of international affairs commensurate with its size, geo- strategic location and potential resources. This state of affairs had admirably suited some external powers, since it had adversely affected India’s aspirations to become an autonomous decision-making 1974. It had also prevented India from emerging as a “subject” rather than a mere “object” in the arena of global politics. After 1971, when the futility of Pakistan’s search for power- parity

⁸⁷ Times of India, August 23, 1973.

⁸⁸ Annual Report 1973-74 (Ministry of External Affairs Government of India, New Delhi, 1974), p.47.

had been demonstrated beyond doubt and India had emerged as the pre-eminent power in the sub continent. New Delhi could afford to see and formulate its policy towards other countries relatively independent of the “Pakistan factor.” This did not, however, mean the complete elimination of the “Pakistan factor” from Indian foreign policy considerations. In fact, Pakistan still looms large in the Indo-Iranian equation. Nevertheless it did mean that other factors were also given their due weight in the assessment of bilateral relationships. As India, more sure of itself than before, could now afford to take in its stride the close relations between Iran and Pakistan and not allow that equation to distort its assessment of Iran and the economic and political dividends that New Delhi could achieve by developing close relations with Tehran.

At the same time, Iran’s regional environment also underwent a change following the British withdrawal from the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf and Iran’s ambitious bid to assume British’s responsibilities in the region. The emergence of Iran as the more and dominant partner was further confirmed when following the oil embargo and the subsequent increase in oil price.⁸⁹ Iran began to cultivate regional supremacy. In order to achieve its goal in the Gulf, it was imperative for Iran to ensure a stable eastern flank so that its energies did not get diverted at this critical juncture, Iran was, therefore, willing to go out of its way at this stage to underwrite Pakistan’s integrity and to augment Pakistan’s strength.⁹⁰

Swaran Singh’s visit was followed in quick succession by the visit to India at Princess Ashraf, the Shah’s sister on 25 August 1973, and that of Foreign Minister,

⁸⁹ S.Chubin and S.Zabin, *Foreign Relations of Iran :A Developing state in a state of Great power conflict* (university of California press), Los Angeles ,1974, p.214.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Abbas Ali KhalaTbari, in December 1973.⁹¹ Khalatbari described the Indo-Iranian relations as “very close and friendly” and looked forward to having them still closer.⁹² A cultural agreement was signed during the visit.⁹³ The exchange of visits culminated in the visit of Mrs. Gandhi to Iran in April 1974 and the Shah’s return visit in October that year. These visits marked the evolution of mature relationship based on political understanding pointing this out Kayhan International and its editorial commented that “suspicious entertained on both sides a year ago have blown away. There is feeling that concrete interests both of trade and of state, bind the two nations together. “The speeches of the Prime Ministers of both countries reflected this understanding speaking at a banquet given in her honour on 29 April 1974 Mrs. Gandhi said, “it was short sighted to seek exclusive relationship, friendship with one group of countries should not mean hostility for another.”⁹⁴ The Iranian Prime Minister stated that “no cloud of suspicion or misunderstanding can make the atmosphere of Indo-Iran relations.”⁹⁵ The Shah also spoke of his sincere desire to establish the closest possible relations with India. He even went to the extent of saying that he could not find better goodwill and better understanding during any conversation with any other responsible leader at any country than India.⁹⁶

These visits also helped in fostering economic co-operation between the two countries. They resulted in the preparing of a blue print for economic co-operation covering a wide range of fields, Iran sought to provide cushion to the spoke felt by India as a consequent of oil price hike by stepping up imports from India besides

⁹¹ Foreign Affairs Record (Ministry of External Affairs Government of India, New Delhi), Vol.19, December 1973,pp.5-16.

⁹² Statesman (New Delhi), December 15,1973.

⁹³ Hindustan Standard (Calcutta), April 30,1974.

⁹⁴ Indira Gandhi in Iran April 28-May, Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India, New Delhi 1975), p.5.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

extending soft loans for the development of the production capacity of the Kudermukh Iron ore project, setting up an aluminium plant for export to Iran, and for the setting up of an Indo-Iranian joint shipping line with the initial of 500,000 tonnes.⁹⁷ India on this part, agreed to push up the export of the much needed iron and steel. It was also agreed to provide technical personnel, engineers, professors and doctors for service in Iran.⁹⁸

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The increasing Indo-Iranian collaboration was well evidenced by a number of joint industrial projects such as an aluminium plant in India and a petroleum and power station in Iran, the formation of a joint chamber of commerce, the conclusion of a five year trade deal (September 1974) and twenty years contract for the purchase of 7.5 million tones of iron ore a year from India.⁹⁹

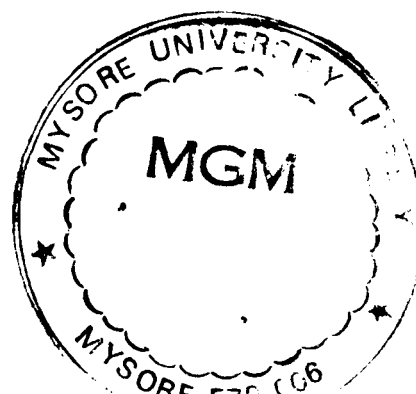
The economic factor combined to impact Iran for seeking a better relationship with India with oil price hike; Iran's oil revenue had ce hike; Iran's oil revenue had sed. The Shah confidently declared "in the next 10 years, Iran will be what Britain is today and that in the next 25 years, Iran will be among the most industrial countries in the world." India appeared on attractive economic partner. According to Iranian Prime Minister, Amir Abbas Hoveyda, "the sky is limit of our co-operation." Iran, he said is looking forward to a "much more flourishing trade with India and is interested in having assured supplies at a number of commodities."¹⁰⁰ As one of the most developed of the developing countries and due to the complementary nature of the economic of the two India was well set to supply the inputs for Iran's development

⁹⁷ Patriot (New Delhi), May 3, 1974.

⁹⁸ Statesman, September 25, 1974.

⁹⁹ Ibid. See. Tribune (Chandigarh), September 30.

¹⁰⁰ Kayhan International (Tehran), July 7, 1973.



programmes with goods such as iron ore and building material, technical manpower and equipment.¹⁰¹

Equally, economic factors also implied India towards seeking a rapprochement with Iran. For India, in view of the fact that Iran supplied one-third of its oil supplies, the oil crisis necessitated a rethinking about its relations Iran.¹⁰² It is note Worthing here that oil crisis shifted the focus of India's Middle Eastern priorities from Egypt to the Persian Gulf region, more so as it was felt in New Delhi that oil would not flow in merely for the asking. Close concentrated and sustained contacts with the countries of the region would be necessary.¹⁰³ As result of this realization, India's relations with Iran acquired added significance.¹⁰⁴ "Iran, was hoped, would supply an assured quantity of oil on concessional rates and deferred payment basis. Besides, a furiously industrializing Iran could also provide a market for India's consumer goods, technological equipment and skilled manpower. The Iran's apprehensions were compounded by the Indo-soviet Treaty compounded Iran's apprehensions of 1971, the emergence of Bangladesh and consequent dismemberment of the old Pakistan. In the words of Hettinger, "some circles in the Iranian capital city had voiced the opinion that the sequence of events fitted into a pattern of long-term Soviet plans for the encirclement of Iran".¹⁰⁵ The shah felt that the break up of Pakistan with Soviet military hardware and the treaty ensured Moscow's future support to India. In an interview, he linked the Indo- Soviet Treaty with the break up of Pakistan and said that "we suddenly saw the divisions crossing international borders, the dismemberment of Pakistan, the mass media applauding, the UN once again

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Annual Report 1972-73 (Ministry of External Affairs Government of India, New Delhi, 1974), pp.5.35.

¹⁰³ Awaran Singh's statement in Lok Sabha Debates (New Delhi), Vol 25, no.43, April 24, 1973, pp.267-89.

¹⁰⁴ Maharaj K. Chuppra, India and Indian Ocean (New Delhi, 1982), pp.114-15.

¹⁰⁵ A.Hettinger, "Iran and its neighbours" swiss Review of world Affairs, Vol.23, no.Vovember 8, 1973, pp.4-6.

paralyzed ... and all this preceded Indo – Soviet Treaty”. He also went on to say that “I was against the intervention of Pakistan Army in East Pakistan but this does not detract from the fact that India invaded and dismembered the country”.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the shah took a serious view of the use of force by India in changing the status quo in the subcontinent. That was in line with Pakistan perception of India as aggressive power intent upon wiping her out.

In the Iranian view a weak and disintegrated Pakistan would seriously threaten Iran ‘s south-eastern frontier region. In an exclusive interview, the shah of Iran reiterated that in case of an attempt aimed at further dismemberment of Pakistan, Iran would “certainly intervene”¹⁰⁷ It is in this context that the shah justified his new plans for massive military build up and arms acquisition, the bulk of which came from the United States. The joint communiqué issued after Bhutto’s visit to Iran in May 1973 clearly said that Iran and Pakistan would stand together in defence of Pakistan’s territorial integrity.¹⁰⁸ Iran’s interest in underwriting Pakistan’s territorial integrity was related to providing for stable eastern flank.

India was able to convince Iran that as for as Pakistan was concerned, New Delhi’s interest of Tehran. Sawarn Singh, the foreign Minister of India during his visit to Iran in July 1973, made Iran realize that India was not interested in disintegration of Pakistan. He declared at the banquet hosted by Iranian Foreign Minister, Abbas Ali Khalatbari, that India had friends who might not be so friendly with Iran. “But we give you full assurance their friendship shall not be used against you”.¹⁰⁹ It was a

¹⁰⁶ Newsweek, May 22, 1973, pp.16-17.

¹⁰⁷ Zubeidia Mustafa, “Recent trends in Pakistan’s policy towards the Middle East “, Pakistan Horizon (Karachi), and Fourth Quarter 1975, pp.9-12.

¹⁰⁸ The Hindu (Madras), July 23, 1973.

¹⁰⁹ Times of India July 22, 1973.

calculated move by India to hope that a friendly Iran would be less enthusiastic to help Pakistan in any Indo-Pakistani conflict . According to Kuldip Nayar, a journalist “Once New Delhi had reached an understanding with Tehran, the flow of the U.S arms to Rawalpindi through third countries will stop. In this condition Pakistan would not be encouraged to embark on any new adventure in the belief that Iran would help it in another war against India”.¹¹⁰

The Iranian Government also convinced India that its huge arms acquisition from the United States was primarily related to the defence of Pakistan of the Persian Gulf and protection against the regional rivalries. During this visit to New Delhi in September 1974, the shah categorically stated, “his government will not supply arms to Rawalpindi. He also said: “there is no need for the countries in the region to remain at loggerheads and they stand to gain by co-operation.”¹¹¹

A new era began not only in Indo-Iran relations but also in the overall bilateral relationship between Iran and Pakistan and Bangladesh when the domestic scenes both in Iran and Pakistan underwent a radical change in the period between 1977 and 1979.

With the proclamation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (April 1979) the new Government started to emphasize on solidarity among all Islamic ideology and activity upheld the export of Islamic revolution into other countries. These became cordial principles of Iranian foreign policy. In this context, to what extent Islam and Islamic brotherhood governed the foreign policy of Iran and its attitude towards the India have to be observed.

¹¹⁰ Kuldip Nayar, “Between the lines,” statesman (Delhi) January 15, 1974.

¹¹¹ Patriot, May 3, 1974.

Determining Factors in Indo-Iranian relations

The triangular relations of the three countries of South and Southwest Asia represent the complexity of the political scenario in this region. At one level India-Iran relations have been friendly, a continuation of the long traditional relations between the two countries through the ages. Similarly Iran-Pakistan relations have been very close since the inception of the latter. At another level there have been tensions and suspicions between India and Iran on the one hand and Pakistan and Iran on the other.

The partition of the Indian sub-continent had created two independent and sovereign states: India and Pakistan. The latter was much weaker than its neighbour in size as well as natural resources, manpower and economic development. The partition had taken place in the wake of bitter controversy and rancour between the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League on the creation and validity of the concept of Pakistan. When the leaders of the Muslim League took over power in the newly created state of Pakistan, they were convinced that India had not accepted Pakistan and was out to undo it.

India was perceived by Pakistan as a big powerful country and a permanent threat to its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Afghanistan, Pakistan's western neighbour which has suffered at the hands of the British imperial policies during the last hundred years had also refused to recognize the borders of the new state and had laid claim to the North West Frontier Province which had been forcibly ceded to British Indian territory during the British rule in the sub-continent. Thus Pakistan felt threatened on its Western frontiers as well. This created a state of siege on the two sides for the new state. Hence Pakistan fashioned its defence strategy and foreign

policy to seek external support through alliance to make up for its vulnerability of India. To this end on one side Pakistan joined the US sponsored military alliance like CENTO and SEATO on the other side it sought close relations with the Muslim countries of West Asia. It was in this background on the basis of Iran Pakistan relations were laid during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi.

Iran under the Pahlavi dynasty had been turned into a strong bulwark of American interests in West Asia. The strategic location of Iran close to the rich Persian Gulf states and Strait of Hormuz made the country an important pillar of United States security perimeter. The Americans ensured that no regime could emerge in Iran, which was hostile to its interests in the economy and also in the region. The role of US intelligence agencies in the early toppling the nationalism Mossadeq regime and restoration of the shah as the King in Tehran is well known. Pakistan had joined the Baghdad Pact in the early 1955. Iraq and Turkey were the other participations in the alliance from the region. The Baghdad Pact was sponsored alliance mainly directed against the Soviet Union and to prevent the possibility of a Soviet backed regime taking over in any country in West Asia. The Baghdad Pact was later renamed the Central Treaty Organization, CENTO after Iraq's Hashemite monarchy was overthrown by the armed led by Brig. Qasem in the early sixties. The CENTO had been created a time when rising Arab nationalism was posing a threat to the old established order in West Asia, which had been put together by the former colonial powers after the First World War.

Pakistan had joined the Baghdad Pact in the context of its conflict with India. This military alliance with Pakistan had hoped that it would support in the event of a confrontation with India. The United States interpreted the objective of the Baghdad

Pact as directed against Communist aggression but Pakistan insisted it meant any aggression coming from any quarters. The United States had recognized the strategic importance of Pakistan only in the context of its potential to resist Soviet push southward in the Middle East. It had decided to strengthen Pakistan's armed forces to oppose communist moves in the Southwest Asian region.

During the early seventies the regimes of late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Ziaul Haq a United Asian region.¹¹² The Shah projected Iran in the role of a regional super power . He saw himself in the role of influencing political developments in the countries of the Gulf, Pakistan and Afghanistan. He joined hands with Bhutto to suppress the Baluch uprising in Pakistan in the early seventies. Later during Ziaul Haq's military regime the Shah was pressurizing the Pakistani politicians to provide civilian façade to the military regime.

After the Islamic Revolution in 1979 the framework of Iran's foreign policy has changed but some of the determinants remain unaltered. Iran broke away from the United States and withdrew from the CENTO. The CENTO, however, had become moribund by that time anyway. Iran joined to the non-aligned movement but by then there was no alternative it in the absence of strong American military support and the regimes antipathy to the Communist Soviet Union. But the Islamic Iran still looks for a dominant position in the Gulf and would not tolerate any other power in the area and it was this which led to the decade long Iran-Iraq War. Iran has mentalist parties.

India under the leadership of Nehru had seen Iran as one of those third world countries which had not been directly taken over by the colonial powers but had

¹¹² rke , S. M , Mainspringsof Indian andpakistanian Foreign policies ,Minneapolis , 1974, p. 228 .

politically and economically suffered during the hey day of imperialism. India therefore, sought close economic and political relations with Iran as with other third world countries. In the early years after independence India and Iran had signed the Commerce and Navigation Agreement in 1954. Other trade agreements were signed in 1961, 1963, 1968, and Indo Iran joint commission was set up in 1969. The well - known India-Iran Agreement on the Kudermukh Iron Ore complex was signed in 1974. India had also welcomed the Islamic revolutionary regime. The Janata Party delegation led by Ashok Meta had gone to Qum to meet Ayatollah Khomeini and Indira Gandhi, then in opposition, had also sent message of greetings.

Parallel to these developments India felt concerned in the fifties when Iran had joined the Baghdad Pact later called the CENTO along with Pakistan. Baghdad Pact was seen in India as the bid by Western powers to continue their political domination of their former areas of influence and also to roll back the perceived threat of expanding communism. Whereas, communism was no great threat in any of the CENTO countries except to some extent in Iran, the massive induction of weapons by the United States in the countries of the CENTO particularly Pakistan was perceived by India as a source of tension and conflict in the region.

The fall of Shah regime and the emergence of the Khomeini's Islamic regime changed the scenario in the Gulf region. Pakistan's perspective on Iran after the Islamic revolution was governed by three factors. One is the ideological affinity between Iran and Pakistan. The main focus was on the Islamic revolution, which had galvanized the entire Muslim world in a period when it discovered the power of the oil wealth. Moreover, Iran was now the centre of the Islamic revolution. Second, Iran was vital to Pakistan's security on the Western flank a role it had played satisfactorily

during the 1965 and 1971 wars. Third, Pakistan perceived itself as a bridge between Iran and the United States. However, Pakistan has not seen with favour any close political and economic relations between India and Iran. It opposed Shah's proposal for trade with India through the rail route via Pakistan. Recently Pakistan has refused to co-operate in the laying of direct oil pipeline from Iran to India.

Iranian leaders in their turn were influenced by the Islamic rhetoric of General Zia ul Haq's Islamization drive. During the Iran-Iraq War Pakistan had taken a neutral position, which was tilted in favour of Iran. This led to greater Iran Pakistan strategic ties since the eighties. In 1989 Pakistan and Iran signed an agreement on co-operation in military training and defence industry. There was talk by Iran officials of a natural joint alignment with Islamabad to ensure against an Indian victory in a Pakistan Indian war. There were many harsh and militant statements against India, not all of them provoked by communal riots in this country. A revolutionary great officer called for Iran Pak collaboration in forming an Islamic defence line in the region .¹¹³ Pakistan military Chief General Aslam Beg had proposed a military consensus among Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey.¹¹⁴

The Islamic regime in Iran has all along taken strident anti-India line on Kashmir.¹¹⁵ Even president Rafsanjani has gone on record condemning India in harsh language. This and India instance cannot be attributed to Iran's solidarity with Kashmir Muslims due to Islamic brotherhood alone. In many other cases Iran has not been as enthusiastic on Islamic brotherhood.

¹¹³ The Statesman , New Delhi , 12 February 1990 .

¹¹⁴ Times of India , New Delhi , 3 April 1990 .

¹¹⁵ Ibid .

Even in the economic sphere Iran has been tardy in fulfilling its side of the agreement with India particularly in relation to the supply of oil.¹¹⁶ Iran has been creating difficulties in visa for Indian diplomats and journalists etc. Iran has been co-operating with Pakistan in many countries to raise the issue of Kashmir. Particularly in the OIC the two countries have taken initiative together to raise the hype on Kashmir. Although OIC itself is dominated by Saudi Arabia and other oil rich sheik Arabia and other oil rich sheik topple the Kashmir regime during the long Iran Iraq war.¹¹⁷

It was only on Afghanistan that Pakistan's interests diverged somewhat from those of Iran. Whereas, Iran was one with General Zia's Pakistan in opposing Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, it wanted a large share for Afghan Shnted a large share for Afghan Shation in that country. Pakistan and the Afghan Mujahedin based in Peshawar were opposed to a legitimate share for the Shia parties in Iran. Even after the fall of the Najib regime Pakistan had supported Hikmatyar's *Hizbe Islami*, which has been fighting the Shia *Mujahideen*.¹¹⁸

Incidentally it may be mentioned here that Iran not only supports the Shia militants in Afghanistan it supports the Hizbullah organization everywhere in the world irrespective of its Shia or Sunni denomination. Iran finances Hizbullah organizations working in other countries including in Kashmir Muslim but those of other parts of India to rise against the Indian government.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ The Hindu , Madras ,3 July 1987.

¹¹⁷ The Hindustan Times , New Delhi , 11July 1990.

¹¹⁸ The Times of India , 26 September 1993.

¹¹⁹ The Statesman , 24 December 1991.

The recent apparent changed in Iranian attitude to India as reflected after the visit of Indian Prime Minister in September 1993 and at Geneva Conference on human rights may be attributed to some changes that are taking place in the region.¹²⁰ I Iran has been feeling uncomfortable with the Pak- US relations particularly with their policies in the Central Asian republics. The emergence of the United States as the sole super power without a countervailing force has made Iran more vulnerable and therefore it would like to mend its fences with India, which alone has the potential to resist the U.S. pressure in the region. Iran would also not like to see India Pakistan join hands under the U.S pressure which may go against its own interests.¹²¹

The geo-strategic situation in the region is such that the three countries of India, Iran and Pakistan have their vital political, economic and strategic interests intertwined. They can co-operate to the benefit of each other. Their mutual conflicts will not benefit either of them.

The Shah's response to the perceived threats from these challenges (Arab radical Republicanism/ Nasser) appeared in two counter-moves. Firstly, he sought to use Islam as a counter ideology in order to neutralize Nasserism. That was why he supported the Islamic bloc.¹²² It was because of this that the Shah attempted to organize the Islamic conferences particularly in the 1960s. Secondly, Shah intensified his efforts to shore up Iran's isolation by cultivating non- Arab countries in the region as well as Pakistan. It may be stressed that the Shah's motives in taking interest in Islamic solidarity and befriending Pakistan was basically political and not

¹²⁰ Strategic Analysis , New Delhi , November 1994.

¹²¹ Times of India , 26 September 1993 .

¹²² Though Shi'ite Islam was declared the state religion in Iran, the Shah was not a religious man in any sense of the term. Under the Shah, the emphasis in Iran was on pre-Islamic Aryan civilization. His title 'Aryamehr' meant the 'Light of the Aryans'. In 1971, the Shah celebrated the 25th centenary of the founding of the Persian empire by Cyrus the Great, emphasising Iranian ethos and heritage.

Islamic. Thus Shah cultivated both Islam and Pakistan as a counterpoise to Nasserism and a possible Arab domination of the region. However, Iran's reason to befriend Pakistan due to its security concerns failed to convince the Indian policy makers. The Indian policy makers did not seem to realize that the West Asian considerations were more important to Iran than its considerations towards India. Iran's tilt towards Pakistan was not directed against India. That was the main reason why commercial relations between India and Iran remained by and large steady.

Pakistan, right from its formation, carried on propaganda in a sustained manner against India in the West Asian and North African States in order to establish an Islamic bloc and to internationalize the Kashmir issue.¹²³ This had an impact on Indo-Iran relations because Iran was well disposed towards Pakistan. This was evident from the fact that Iran was the first country that extended recognition to the state of Pakistan and established diplomatic relations with it in May 1948. Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan of Pakistan visited Iran in May 1949 and the Shah visited Pakistan in March 1950 and the Treaty of Friendship was signed between Iran and Pakistan the same month.¹²⁴ The overall relationship, by and large remained cool and low key.

Formal diplomatic relations between India and Iran commenced in March 15, 1950. One year after the formalization of bilateral relations Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq of Iran nationalized the Anglo-Iranian oil company. India's reaction to it was found to be equivocal. "The Iranian government has taken up a very strong and unbending attitude and perhaps it may be criticized to some extent...

¹²³ Farah Naaz, "Indo-Israel Relations: An Evolutionary Perspective," *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 23, no. 2, May 1999. pp. 247-248.

¹²⁴ Abidi, n. 2, pp. 240-241.

But I have ventured to suggest to the Iranian government, as well as to the British government, that it is in the interests of all concerned as well as of world peace to have a peaceful settlement."¹²⁵

The regional alliances like the Baghdad Pact and SEATO were not seen by India with favour. In his speech Jawaharlal Nehru stated: "It is clear that the approach of military pacts, like the Baghdad Pact and SEATO is a wrong approach, a dangerous approach and a harmful approach.... The Pakistan newspapers and the statements of responsible people in Pakistan make it perfectly clear that they have joined this pact because of India.... They have joined the Baghdad Pact and SEATO essentially because of their hostility to India.... people enters into these pacts with different motives. I am quite sure that the other members of the pact have no hostility to India...."¹²⁶ The Baghdad Pact was also instrumental in bringing Iran and Pakistan closer.

It is important to note the motives of both Pakistan and Iran for joining the alliance. Pakistan of course joined the alliance so that it could count on the support of Iran and other pact members on the Kashmir issue both at the UN and outside. Iran however joined the Baghdad Pact for its own security reasons.

Iran aligned to the West and non-aligned India was not politically on the same wavelength. Trade between the two was not significant enough to fill the void created by the diametrically opposite positions of the two in the Cold War. Just four months after Iran's adherence to the Baghdad Pact, the Shah paid his first visit to

¹²⁵ Jawaharlal Nehru, Letter to the Chief Minister, July 7, 1951, in, G. Parthasarthy, ed., *Jawaharlal Nehru, Letters to the Chief Minister 1947-1964*, vol. II, 1950-52, (London: OUP, 1986) p. 438.

¹²⁶ From speech in Lok Sabha, March 29, 1956, in Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches, September 1946- April 1961*, (New Delhi: Publications Division, 1961), p. 94.

India (February 16 to March 9, 1956). The Shah tried to assure the Indian Prime Minister that Iran's closeness to Pakistan was not directed against India and that it was not at the cost of friendship with India. No joint communiqué was issued at the end of the visit and the bilateral state relations could at best be described as cool and correct. Nehru paid a return visit to Iran in September 1959 but that only highlighted the political gulf.¹²⁷

There was very little in common between India's non-alignment and Iran's alignment with the West. That was the reason why Indo-Iran relations during 1950s, were confined to non political spheres like trade and commerce.¹²⁸

The 1960s witnessed certain changes in the international environment, the repercussions of which affected Indo-Iranian relations. The diversification and expansion of trade during this period tended to bring India and Iran closer and improve their relationship. By the 1960s, India was in a position to share its experience and expertise with other developing countries due to the importance that India attached to technical and commercial collaboration with them.

Due to the changes in the strategic environment, Iran was compelled to redefine and enlarge its role as a regional power. The détente between the superpowers had started and by 1964-65, the US strategic interest in the area had shifted from the landmass of the northern tier to the Indian Ocean. The changing American perceptions had serious implications for Iran. For example, the US policy towards Iran tended to be a little more relaxed and America was reluctant to aid Iran in case of threat from sources other than the USSR. The Shah realized the

¹²⁷ Mudiam, n.6, p 71.

¹²⁸ Jorfi, n. 1, p.261.

limitations and conditional nature of external assistance in safeguarding Iran's security and integrity and its basic unreliability.¹²⁹ As a result, the Shah started looking beyond the Persian Gulf and Pakistan for understanding and support in favour of Iran's new regional policy. In other words, Iran began to follow a more independent foreign policy to emphasize both the end of a client relationship to the United States and to restore, as much as conditions permitted, normalcy in its relations with the Soviet Union. As a consequence, on September 15, 1962, it assured the Soviet government that it would not grant any foreign nation the right of possessing any kind of rocket bases on Iranian soil. Since then Soviet-Iranian relations and mutual co-operation substantially improved and expanded.¹³⁰ Hence, the détente allowed more relaxed and uninhibited relationships between countries like India and Iran.

The Shah had also lost faith in CENTO. The trend in Iran was to play down the importance of CENTO, to de-emphasize its military side and instead to stress economic and technical cooperation among its Asian members. It was in line with this policy that Iran, Turkey and Pakistan signed a pact establishing the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD).¹³¹ Initiated by the President Ayub Khan in 1964, the RCD was a by-product of the growing disenchantment of Pakistan, Iran and Turkey with their ties with the Western countries. The RCD partners could see that the USA and USSR were emerging towards a relaxation of tension, reducing the value of military pacts.¹³²

¹²⁹ Mudiam, n. 6, pp 74-75.

¹³⁰ Abbas Amirie and Hamilton A. Twitchell, ed., "Iran in the 1980s", (Tehran: Institute for International Political and Economic Studies, 1978), p.337.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 363;

¹³² S.M. Burke and Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy* (Karachi: OUP, 1990), p. 305.

Economic development and political stability brought more independence in the foreign policy posture of Iran. Iran also started deepening its relations with India. It led to better technical and commercial co-operation and signing of agreements between India and Iran. Despite that, Iran's posture towards India, during this decade was a sort of up and down relationship, for example during the Indo-Chinese war, Iran came out strongly and openly on India's side and condemned China. But the same attitude was not seen during the Indo-Pakistan war in 1965 when, Iran's tilt was towards Pakistan, keeping in view its political, religious, strategic and national interests. The Iranian ambassador however assured the Indian government that its country's friendship with Pakistan would not come in the way of their relations with India.¹³³ Iran however, did not interrupt its oil supplies to India.

The 1960s exposed the limits of Iran's economic relationship with Pakistan, RCD notwithstanding. Economically India was a bigger market for Iran. Also India's oil needs and its oil imports from Iran were greater than those of Pakistan.

Iran also firmly opposed Pakistan's attempts to give a religious colour to the RCD. The Iranian Foreign Minister told the Majlis "...incidentally, Turkey, Pakistan and Iran are all Muslim countries... this unity, alliance and concord has no direct connection with Islam, nor does it have any specific religious aspects. Other nations of Asia...may share in this regional alliance."¹³⁴ Iran wanted RCD to be enlarged to include India, Afghanistan and Iraq, which was severely criticized by Pakistan.¹³⁵

¹³³ Jorfi, n. 1, pp.263-269.

¹³⁴ Mudiam, n. 6, p 73.

¹³⁵ Indian Express, November, 20, 1975; The Times of India, December 4, 1975.

During the same decade, Pakistan also tried to patch up with the Arab countries especially Egypt. Pakistan's decision to join the Western inspired Baghdad Pact had drawn criticism from most conservative Arab states and sharpened differences with the more radical Egypt and Syria.¹³⁶ However, despite frequent rebuffs, Pakistan's leaders were constrained from withdrawing their endorsement of Arab causes. Its foreign policy remained committed to speaking up for the Arabs. The forced retirement of President Ayub in 1969 and the death of Nasser the following year appeared to remove the personal barriers to closer relations between Pakistan and Egypt. There were occasional dividends for Pakistan's continued advocacy of Arab rights in international forums. Syria and Iraq publicly sided with Pakistan and Jordan argued Pakistan's case at the United Nations during the 1965 war with India.¹³⁷ After Pakistan's humiliating military defeat in the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war and the loss of its East wing, Pakistan's policy makers hoped to recoup some esteem by gaining influence on a larger Middle Eastern and Third World stage. Under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Islamic unity was transformed from a secondary theme, to a principal instrument of foreign policy. As a result, the Arab nationalists viewed Pakistan more benignly.¹³⁸

Nehru's endorsement of Jamal Abdel Nasser as the leader of the Arab world and of his policies did not go down well with the Shah. Similarly, Nasser's crusade against monarchies and his attempts at the unification of the Arab states, like the formation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) by the merger of Egypt and Syria only tended to increase the Shah's sense of insecurity.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ To the Arabs, Pakistan in effect had broken ranks in the paramount struggle against Israel and its supporters.

¹³⁷ M.G. Weinbaum and Gautam Sen, "Pakistan Enters the Middle East", ORBIS, vol.22, no. 3, Fall 1978. p. 598.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 299.

¹³⁹ Prithvi Ram Mudiam, "India and the Middle East", (London: British Academic Press), pp.71-72.

Around the same time, Indo-Arab relations saw stresses and strains. The Arabs had disappointed the Indians during the Sino Indian war of 1962 and the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 and questions were raised about India's unqualified support of the Arabs.¹⁴⁰ The humiliating defeat that Egypt had suffered during the 1967 Arab Israeli war and the emergence of Iran and Saudi Arabia as important actors in the region awakened the Indian policy makers to the risk of too much dependence on Egypt.

By the 1970s, both India and Iran emerged as important powers within their geo-political areas. They could approach each other with a greater degree of confidence. By the beginning of the 1970s, in Iran's view Moscow-Kabul and New Delhi-Baghdad axis was in the offing. Such an alliance could not only weaken Pakistan, but also help Moscow to have a chain of centres of influence from Delhi to Baghdad to Aden and increase its pressure on Iran. Hence the Shah began to seek new ways of strengthening Iran's capability to pursue more assertive regional behaviour, one of which was to conduct balanced relations with all the three South Asian countries, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. In order to keep up the balance of power and the territorial integrity of Pakistan, Iran supported Pakistan during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. Even then it did not take a very harsh attitude towards India and resisted the Pakistani pressure to activate CENTO, nor did it indulge in any direct provocation against India.¹⁴¹ Later, the Shah made it clear, "We will never assist Pakistan if they start an aggressive war against India...I am sure India is

¹⁴⁰ Naaz, n. 8, pp. 243-244.

¹⁴¹ Mudiam, p. 79.

not going to start a war for the sake of it. We will support no country in an aggressive move."¹⁴²

After the fourth Arab Israeli war of 1973, OPEC doubled the price of oil in late 1973, and then doubled it once again in early 1974. The income earned from this provided Iran a position for boosting joint development projects with other countries. Iran felt that India was a major regional power in South Asia. In order to strengthen its own position in the region, normalization of relations with India must be achieved by establishing strong political and economic links with this country. As a result there was a phenomenal increase in the economic collaboration between India and Iran. For India, having close relations with Iran could neutralize the latter's support to Pakistan.

Though, both India and Iran had their postures, the former vis-à-vis the Arabs and the latter vis-à-vis Pakistan, it was tacitly agreed that neither side should allow these to come in the way of their developmental interests. Iran continued to be a member of CENTO and its fallout RCD. It also continued to arm itself and maintain close ties with Pakistan. The Shah had been most anxious to ensure stability on its eastern border. As a result, he agreed to give economic aid to Pakistan inspired by its pro-Arab stance and its sharp criticism of Iran, for example, efforts in Pakistan to convert Persian culture to Arab culture. Bhutto also described the Persian Gulf as the Arab Gulf.¹⁴³ Shah was now thinking in economic terms and sought India's economic cooperation for providing Iran with industry, goods and services.

¹⁴² The Hindustan Times, October, 4, 1974.

¹⁴³ Motherland, October 1, 1974.

Visits of leading statesmen to each other's country stabilized the economic bonds and promoted political understanding. Indian Minister of External Affairs, Sardar Swaran Singh visited Iran in July 1973, while Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Ali Khalatbary came to India in December 1973. A meeting of Joint Commission of the two countries was held in New Delhi in July 1974 and continued in Tehran in February 1974.¹⁴⁴ Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Sardar Swaran Singh paid an official visit to Iran in April-May 1974¹⁴⁵ during which discussions were held on matters of international significance, mutual interest and bilateral cooperation. In 1975, also, there were a number of visits. The Minister for External Affairs visited Iran in November 1975 to attend the fifth meeting of the Indo-Iran Joint Commission for trade, economic and technical collaboration. A significant outcome of this visit was the finalization of the \$630 million agreement for the exploitation of Kudremukh iron ore project, which was the landmark in the development of Indo-Iran relations.¹⁴⁶ For the rest of the 1970s, these visits from both sides continued. Other important visits included Prime Minister Morarji Desai's visit to Iran in June 1977 and from Iran, the Shah and Shahbano's visit to India in February 1978. These high level visits concentrated on matters of common interests and multifaceted economic cooperation. There was also close similarity of views on major international issues such as disarmament, the West Asian problem and the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.¹⁴⁷

The overthrow of the Shah and the emergence of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini were viewed as positive

¹⁴⁴ Report 1972-73, Ministry of External Affairs, (MEA) Government of India, (New Delhi, 1973) p. 47.

¹⁴⁵ Report, 1974-75, MEA, Government of India, (New Delhi, 1973), p. 45.

¹⁴⁶ Report, 1975-76, MEA, Government of India (New Delhi, 1976), pp. 37-38.

¹⁴⁷ Report, 1977-78, MEA, Government of India, (New Delhi, 1978), p. 12.

developments. India viewed the revolution in Iran as a reflection of Iran's quest for identity and national self-assertion and a desire to charter an independent course without Big Power influence.¹⁴⁸ An unofficial goodwill delegation led by Sri Ashok Mehta, visited Iran in 1979 and established contacts with the new Iranian leader who reciprocated the good wishes from India.

For quite some time after the Islamic revolution in Iran, India's interaction with Iran remained minimal. The 1980s showed a downward trend in visits from both the countries. The overall relations were described as smooth, but Iran's preoccupation with Iraq in the Iran Iraq war and the new regime's penchant to take up Islamic causes; its stand on the Kashmir issue, and Indian Muslims led to strains in Indo-Iranian ties. India's response to Iran's attitude was muted because of a number of factors, including the importance New Delhi attached to economic ties, acknowledgement of Iran's role in the Gulf, Central Asia, and Afghanistan and also due to the conviction that realists ruling Iran wanted to do business and maintain good state to state ties with India.¹⁴⁹

The end of the Cold War and emergence of Pan- Americana in the West Asian region and common security threat perceptions brought India and Iran closer. Iran remained hostile to the US and its allies and unrecognized to the current international order. Two wars in the Persian Gulf consolidated US ties with the Arab states and increased the US military presence there. This diluted Iran's inherent regional influence and increased the cost of hostility towards the US during the post-Cold War strategic environment. Iran was also facing economic problems.

¹⁴⁸ Report, 1979-80, MEA, Government of India (New Delhi, 1980), p. 22.

¹⁴⁹ A.K.Pasha, "India, Iran and the GCC States: Common Political and Strategic Concerns", in A.K.Pasha, India, Iran and the GCC States: Political Strategy and Foreign Policy, (New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2000), pp 227-228.

The strategic benefits of the disintegration of the threatening USSR had been offset for Iran by disorder on its northern frontier. The states of Iran's new north were politically unstable and at odds with their neighbours. Besides the possibility of getting entangled in their disputes with each other, Iran was concerned about ethnic conflicts, which could spill over into its own territory and pit its minorities against each other. Iranian interests demanded a stabilized Central Asia. Russia was important to Iran as a source of technology and arms. Relations with the Gulf were also central to Iranian interests.¹⁵⁰ It was because of these changed dynamics in the region that Iran wanted to promote regional ties and consolidate its relations with the countries of the region.

The post-Cold War situation had repercussions on India also. From the diplomatic trends in India, it appeared that the main focus of its diplomacy would be more on economic and political matters. India's main security dilemmas arise from international pressures and regional rivalries.¹⁵¹

The common political and security concerns led to the convergence of interests between India and Iran, the main areas being-Energy, Afghanistan, Central Asia and business contacts.

Iran, which is an important energy source for the world was keen to find export, markets. India which has now emerged, as one of the world's biggest consumers and importers of petroleum products was best positioned to receive this natural largesse. India and Iran have three broad options for transporting gas from Iran to India. The first, the cheapest and easiest is to build an overland pipeline

¹⁵⁰ Shahram Chubin, *Iran's National Security Policy* (Washington: the Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 1994) pp. 1-7.

¹⁵¹ VP Dutt *India's Foreign Policy in the Changing World*, (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House 1999) p. 357.

between India and Iran via Pakistan. Iran has been seeking Indian co-operation in building an overland pipeline; second, is the shallow water pipeline running along the continental shelf of Pakistan. And the third, to lay pipelines on the sea bed from the Persian Gulf to the western coast of India; and/or build an overland pipeline between India and Iran via Pakistan. There is a fourth option, which is already in place-LNG. This is currently in operation. But while the LNG option sounds safer, the expenses are considerable.¹⁵²

Both the countries are currently engaged in negotiating an Iranian project for a gas pipeline to India. It is the security problem of running a pipeline through Pakistan that is dogging the Indian decision-makers. The idea of an energy pipeline passing through Pakistan being held hostage to terrorists, is frightening to strategists here. But others say the pipeline could be used to tie Pakistan to international guarantees.¹⁵³

During his Iran visit Jaswant Singh had turned down the offer to include Pakistan in the project. "It is a bilateral agreement between India and Iran. The assumption that it is a trilateral agreement (involving Pakistan) by Iran is an over simplification... there is no way we can agree to it unless the fundamentals are addressed."¹⁵⁴ The setting up of the Indo-Iranian Joint Working Group (JWG) was a part of Jaswant Singh's energy diplomacy. This group would study the political and technical hurdles in the way of transporting gas to India.

The rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan in recent years has drawn India and Iran closer in their assessment of the new threats to regional security. If Iran is

¹⁵² The Economic Times, July 12, 2000.

¹⁵³ The Economic Times, May 17, 2000; The Economic Times, May 22, 2000 .

¹⁵⁴ The Telegraph, July 20, 2000.

worried by Kabul's role in drug trafficking and its harsh treatment of the Shia minority, India has made no secret of the Pakistan-Afghanistan nexus in the so-called Kashmir Jihad. Neither India nor Iran recognized the administration of the Taliban fundamentalist Islamic militia, which swept Afghanistan in 1996 and ousted the government of then President Burhanuddin Rabbani. Both the countries are backing the moderate forces represented by the government-in-exile of President Rabbani and favoured a peaceful settlement through the establishment of a broad based government with the representation of all ethnic groups in Afghanistan.¹⁵⁵

Iran's concern towards the region has been for security reasons as well as for economic interaction. Iran could provide the Central Asian countries necessary infrastructure support in promoting their external trade. Iran is not interested in destabilizing the Central Asian Republics by promoting any kind of fundamentalist ideology and wants a stabilized and consolidated Central Asia.¹⁵⁶

The region of Central Asia has been a captive market for Indian products. A significant share of Indian goods exported to the Soviet Union was used in the Central Asian Republics. Iran is India's best gateway to Central Asia. Additionally India could play an important role in developing the technical infrastructure of these countries.¹⁵⁷

Iran recognized India's importance as a supplier of low cost technological inputs. The Iranian compulsion behind wooing the EU powers as a riposte to the

¹⁵⁵ The Times of India, May 18, 2000) <[www. Afgha. Com/EN/News/afp2007002.html](http://www.Afgha.Com/EN/News/afp2007002.html)>

¹⁵⁶ S.M.K. Sajadpour, "India, Iran and Central Asia", in "Indo-Iranian Relations in the 1990s", Seminar Report, (Gulf Studies Programme, SIS, Jawahar Lal Nehru University), p 13; Shamsuddin: "Central Asia : A Factor in Indo-Iranian Relations", in *ibid.*, p 14.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

United States is something that India appreciates.¹⁵⁸ Both India and Iran agreed to substantially increase co-operation in a number of areas including surface transport shipping, and railway system and setting up new power plants.

Iran has asked for India's support to join the World Trade Organization. Iran has even asked for India's help for membership to G-17 and the G-77. During Vice-President Krishna Kant's visit to Cairo in mid-June to participate in the G-15 summit, India was actively instrumental in supporting Iran's admission to G-15.¹⁵⁹

As the interests of India and Iran coincide, the two are making conscious efforts to improve ties by keeping up high level contacts. In the later half of 1991, India negotiated for the sale of a 10 mega-watt nuclear reactor to Iran. Despite sharp reactions from the United States, which threatened to torpedo the transfer of American high tech to India, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao said India would not be browbeaten by anyone on the issue of supplying a nuclear reactor to Iran.¹⁶⁰

The destruction of the Babri Masjid in India only temporarily affected the relations. Though Iran reacted very harshly to the destruction of the Babri Masjid in India,¹⁶¹ it did not affect the relations for long. The leader of the Iranian delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference, Mohsen Mojtahed Shabestari, though urging India to reconstruct the Babri Masjid, evaded with diplomatic ease the question on the impact of the Ayodhya events on relations between India and Iran. "The demolition was not an act by the Indian government. And now the

¹⁵⁸ The Hindustan Times, May 23, 2000; As soon as the Iran Iraq war ended, the Islamic regime decided to adopt a pro European policy which took effect in 1989. Though many developments disturbed Iran-EU relations, Europe remained Iran's principal foreign policy orientation.

¹⁵⁹ The Economic Times, May 24, 2000; Indian Express, June 29, 2000.

¹⁶⁰ Muslim, (Hydrabad), November 17, 1999; Patriot, November 20, 1991; The Hindustan Times, January 16, 1992.

¹⁶¹ The Frontier Post (Peshawar) December 13, 1992; The News (Lahore) January 11, 1993.

Government has promised to reconstruct the Mosque, we hope that they will keep their promise..."¹⁶² Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited Iran in 1993 where he told Ayatollah Khomeini that the destruction of the Babri Masjid was an isolated incident and did not impinge on India's secular character. He assured him that the Indian Muslims were very much a part of the national mainstream and decision-making process in India.¹⁶³ During his visit, the most important item on the agenda was the gas pipeline project. Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani too made it clear that he had no intentions of interfering in the Kashmir issue.¹⁶⁴ These gestures were enough to suggest that both the countries did not want to hinder their relations because of the Babri Masjid issue.

The desire to improve ties was evident from the high level contacts. The Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati came to India for the sixth session of Indo-Iranian Joint Commission in November 1992.¹⁶⁵ During Narasimha Rao's visit to Iran in September 1993, there were wide ranging discussions with the Iranian leadership on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual concern. This was the first prime ministerial visit from India to Iran after the Islamic revolution of 1979 and was characterized by President Rafsanjani of Iran as a turning point in bilateral relations. A joint communiqué was issued and two Memorandums of Understanding, on cooperation in science and technology and in surface transport and transit facilities were concluded.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Indian Express, April 16, 1993.

¹⁶³ Pasha, n. 33, p. 228.

¹⁶⁴ The Times of India, September 21, 1993.

¹⁶⁵ Annual Report 1992-93, MEA, Government of India, (New Delhi, 1993), p. 56.

¹⁶⁶ Annual Report, 1993-94, MEA, Government of India, (New Delhi, 1994), p. 35.

Indian External Affairs Minister Dinesh Singh officially visited Iran in March 1994, and Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati visited New Delhi in January 1995.¹⁶⁷

President Rafsanjani of Iran visited India in April 1995 and a wide range of discussions took place.¹⁶⁸ During his visit, he emphasized the need for strategic cooperation to ward off outside interference and domination in the South Asian and Gulf region. He also underlined the significance of co-operation among Iran, Pakistan, India and China, to forestall any pretext by foreign forces to interfere in the region.

Velayati visited India in January 1996 for bilateral discussions on various political and economic issues.¹⁶⁹ Indian Vice-President K . R Narayanan visited Iran in October 1996 and Iranian Majlis speaker Nateq Nouri visited India in November 1996. During this visit, an agreement on the formation of a Joint Business Council (JBC) was signed.¹⁷⁰

The election of Mohammad Khatami as President in 1997 and the appointment of Kamal Kharrazi as Iran's new foreign minister and the favourable statements to expand co-operation on the basis of mutual respect augur well for future Indo-Iranian ties.

As part of India's new diplomatic thrust in the Islamic world, the External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh visited Iran in May 2000. The formal reason for his trip was to attend the 11th meeting of the Indo-Iranian Joint Commission that dealt

¹⁶⁷ Annual Report 1994-95, MEA, Government of India, (New Delhi, 1995), p. 40.

¹⁶⁸ Annual Report, 1995-96, MEA, Government of India, (New Delhi, 1996), p. 44.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 44-45.

¹⁷⁰ Annual Report, 1996-97, MEA, Government of India, (New Delhi, 1997), pp.42-

with bilateral cooperation on a range of issues,¹⁷¹ which covered agriculture, science and technology, industry, communications and transport, energy and trade. Singh's objective would be to go beyond the routine diplomatic chorus to the Joint Commission to lift the Indo-Iranian relations to a higher strategic plane. His overtures to the Islamic world in general and Iran in particular are part of India's national security strategy.

During his visit to Iran, the stage was set for a sustained economic strategic relationship in energy and security. Both the countries looked forward to mutually beneficial areas in economics and politics. Regular foreign office consultations were set in motion. The substance of political relationship cantered on cooperation regarding Afghanistan and Pakistan.

While Khatami told Jaswant Singh that greater interaction between the two countries was important for regional stability, Singh said that India and Iran were natural partners. As India and Iran explore the prospects for a new partnership, defence cooperation is also coming into view. Indian officials here did not respond to a direct question on whether the two sides were looking at enhanced bilateral military engagement. Military diplomacy is now a common feature among major nations and if the two nations agree, it could begin with modest steps¹⁷²

The Iranian leaders felt that there existed great possibilities of co-operation between the two countries and they emphasized on the optimum utilization of these immense possibilities. Through these discussions and consultations, Shah realized

¹⁷¹ The Hindu, May 18, 2000.

¹⁷² The Hindu, May 23, 2000.

that India was certainly marching ahead to a modern age. Shah was greatly impressed by India's achievements in several areas including science and technology.

Subsequent to this high profile visit of the Shah of Iran, the first meeting of the Joint-Indo-Iranian Commission was held in Tehran from 18 to 21 June 1969. The terms and reference of the Joint Commission had a wider range. It discussed the entire gamut of Indo-Iranian economic relations with an open mind. After thorough discussion, the Commission identified three specific projects to work upon. The first one was a joint venture to make ammonia jointly by the Fertilizer Corporation of India and the National Iranian Oil Company. It was proposed that the share of India in ammonia projects of a capacity of 2 to 3 lakh tones per year would be one fifth of the total equity participation in the form of the supply of machinery and equipment for the project and that the major production of ammonia, thus produced in Iran, would be available to the fertilizer projects in India

This joint venture was beneficial to both the countries. For example, Iran had petroleum by products. In abundance, including ammonia, India on the other hand, was in need of fertilizers to take forward her green revolution for food sufficiency.

Another area where Iran wanted Indian technical expertise was the production of railway wagons. Hence, both the countries reached an agreement to explore the possibilities of setting up a plant for making railway wagons in Iran. The third venture was a joint effort for the fabrication of transmission towers in Iran.

Apart from these, a high-level co-coordinating and implementation committee was set up to ensure the effective implementation of the decisions taken from time to time to plan continuous widening of the areas of joint-ventures and co-operation. It

was subsequently decided to set up joint working group and five committees on petrochemicals, petroleum industries, trade, transport and technical co-operation.

In the beginning of 1970, a second meeting of the Indo-Iranian joint commission was held which resulted in the signing of a protocol on long-term trade and joint industrial ventures. The agreement planned the supply of one million tones of liquid ammonia needed for pushing fertilizer production, 54 million worth of phosphoric acid and nearly 90,000 to 100,000 tones of sulphur a year. In return, India was to sell 492 railway wagons. Thus, Indian imports from Iran over seven years period were decided to be worth \$ 120 million while the wagons were to earn nearly \$ 5 million for India. The agreement also provided for a five-year study of Indian railways and a feasibility study for setting up a joint venture to manufacture railway wagons in Iran. It also revealed that joint traffic surveys were to be undertaken to find out whether Indian goods could be transported to Europe and the Soviet Union over the land routes in Iran.

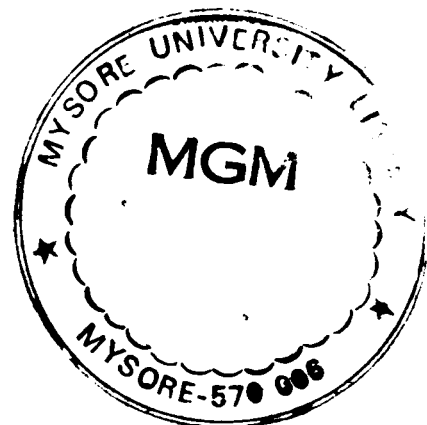
By the end of the same year, a third meeting of the joint commission was held at Tehran. At this meeting, which was held on 28-30 Dec. 1970, it was decided to make an agreement for the import of sulphur and phosphoric acid. The meeting also appreciated the investigation of the possibilities of greater exchange of expertise and components between industries.

During the period from 1966-67 to 1970-71 India's exports to Iran increased from 1,031.09 Lakhs of rupees to 2,663.76 Lakhs rupees. During the same period, India's imports from Iran increased from Rs.3, 049.98 Lakhs to Rs.9, 163.52 Lakhs. Clearly, the trade deficit increased from Rs.2, 018.33 Lakhs to Rs.6,499.76 Lakhs.

Thus the balance of trade was not in favour of India. The following were the items exported to Iran during 1966-67 to 1970-71.

- 1) Iron and Steel
- 2) Engineering goods
- 3) Tea
- 4) Jute manufactures
- 5) Spices and
- 6) Cinematographic Films

The exports of Jute manufactures declined considerably and that of tea also showed a downward trend. The Jute goods were affected by the serious price competition offered by Pakistan. It was in the field of sack material exports that India suffered significantly. India had already reduced the exports duty on sack material exports from Rs.600 to Rs.450 per tone. The resultant advantage had been wiped out by the increase in the rate of bonus voucher from 20 per cent to 30 per cent, announced by the Government of Pakistan in July 1967.



CHAPTER - IV

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF IMAM AYATOLLOH KHOMEINI-A DEBATE ON POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

A Brief Biography of Imam Khomeini

Imam Ayatollah **Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini** on (May 17, 1900 – June 3, 1989) was a Shi'i Muslim cleric and *marja*, and the political leader of the 1979 Islamic Revolution of Iran which saw the overthrow of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran. Following the Revolution, Khomeini became Supreme Leader of Iran -- the paramount figure in the political system of the new Islamic Republic -- until his death.

Khomeini was considered a Marja al-taqlid to many Shi'a Muslims, and in Iran was officially addressed as Imam rather than Grand Ayatollah; his supporters adhere to this convention. Imam Khomeini was also a highly-influential and innovative Islamic political theorist, most noted for his development of the theory of *velayat-e faqih*, the "guardianship of the jurisconsult". He was named *Time's* Man of the Year in 1979.

Family and early years

Young Ayatollah Khomeini

Ruhollah Mousavi was born to Ayatollah Seyed Mostafa Musavi and Hajieh Agha Khanum, also called Hajar, in the town of Khomein, about 300 kilometers (180 miles) south of the capital Tehran, Iran, possibly on May 17, 1900.¹ He was a *seyed* from a religious family that are claimed descendents of Muhammad, through the seventh Imam, (Imam Mousa Kazem). His paternal grandfather, Seyed Ahmad Musavi Hindi, was born in Kintur, a village in the Barabanki District of Uttar Pradesh, India. He came to Iran in 1834 and bought a house in Khomein in 1839. His

¹ Britannica article on Ruhollah Khomeini

third wife, Sakineh, gave birth to Mostafa in 1856. Imam Khomeini's maternal grandfather was Mirza Ahmad Mojtahed-e Khonsari, a high-ranking cleric in central Iran. Following the grant of a monopoly to a British company, he banned the usage of tobacco by Muslims. The shah canceled the concession. The event marked the beginning of the influence of the clergy in Iranian politics.

Imam Khomeini's father was murdered when he was five months old, and he was raised by his mother and one of his aunts. Later, when he was 15, his mother and aunt died in the same year. He received his early education at home and at the local school, under the supervision of Mullah Abdul-Qassem and Sheikh Jaffar, and was under the guardianship of his elder brother, Ayatollah Pasandideh, until he was 18 years old. He is said to have memorized the Quran, the sacred scripture of Islam, by age 6.² Arrangements were made for him to study at the Islamic seminary in Esfahan, but he was attracted, instead, to the seminary in Arak, which was renowned for its scholastic brilliance under the leadership of Ayatollah Sheikh Abdol-Karim Haeri-Yazdi (himself a pupil of some of the greatest scholars of Najaf and Karbala in Iraq).

In 1921, Imam Khomeini commenced his studies in Arak. The following year, Ayatollah Haeri-Yazdi transferred the Islamic seminary to the holy city of Qom, and invited his students to follow. Imam Khomeini accepted the invitation, moved, and took up residence at the Dar al-Shafa school in Qom before being exiled to the holy city of Najaf in Iraq. After graduation, he taught Islamic jurisprudence (*Sharia*), philosophy and mysticism (*Irfan*) for many years and wrote numerous books on these subjects.

Imam Khomeini became a marja` in 1963.

² Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2006. © 1993-2005 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

Early Political Activity

Imam Khomeini first became politically active in 1962, organizing opposition to the Shah's proposed plan to redistribute land owned by the clergy to peasants, allow women the right to vote, and allow non-Muslim to hold local government offices. Following Khomeini's public denunciation of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as a "wretched miserable man" and arrest,³ on June 5, 1963, three days of major riots erupted throughout Iran with nearly 400 killed.⁴ Imam Khomeini was kept under house arrest for 8 months, and upon his release in 1964 made a denunciation of both the Shah and the United States, this time in response to the "capitulations" or diplomatic immunity granted to American military personnel in Iran by the Shah. In Nov. 1964 Imam Khomeini was re-arrested and sent into exile.

Life in exile

Imam Khomeini spent over 14 years in exile, mostly in the holy Shi'i city of Najaf Iraq. Initially he was sent to Turkey on 4 November 1964 where he stayed in the city of Bursa for less than a year. He was hosted by a Turkish Colonel named Ali Cetiner in his own residence, who couldn't find another accommodation alternative for his stay at the time. Later in October 1965 he was allowed to move to Najaf, Iraq, where he stayed until being forced to leave in 1978, after then-Vice President Saddam Hussein forced him out (the two countries would fight a bitter eight year war 1980-1988 only a year after the two reached power in 1979) after which he went to Neauphle-le-Château in France.

³ Moin, *Khomeini*, (2000), p.104

⁴ Moin, *Khomeini*, (2000), p.112

In early 1970 Imam Khomeini gave a lecture series in Najaf on Islamic Government which later was published as a book titled variously *Islamic Government* or *Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists* (velayat al-faqih). This was his most famous and influential work and laid out his ideas on governance (at that time):

- That the laws of society should be made up only of the laws of God (*Shariah*), which cover "all human affairs" and "provide instruction and establish norms" for every "topic" in "human life."⁵
- Since *Sharia*, or Islamic law, is the proper law, those holding government posts should have knowledge of *Sharia* (Islamic jurists are such people), and that the country's ruler should be a *faqih* who "surpasses all others in knowledge" of Islamic law and justice,⁶ as well as having intelligence and administrative ability. Rule by monarchs and/or assemblies of "of those claiming to be representatives of the majority of the people" (i.e. elected parliaments and legislatures) have been proclaimed "wrong" by Islam.⁷
- This system of clerical rule is necessary to prevent injustice: corruption, oppression by the powerful over the poor and weak, innovation and deviation of Islam and Sharia law; and also to destroy anti-Islamic influence and conspiracies by non-Muslim foreign powers.⁸

A modified form of this velayat al-faqih system was adopted after Imam Khomeini and his followers took power, and Imam Khomeini was the Islamic Republic's first "Guardian" or *Supreme Leader*.

⁵ *Islam and Revolution*, (1981), p.29-30

⁶ *Islam and Revolution*, (1981), p.59

⁷ *Islam and Revolution*, (1981), p.31, 56

⁸ *Islam and Revolution* (1981), p.54.

In the mean time, however, Imam Khomeini was careful not to publicize his ideas for clerical rule outside of his Islamic network of opposition to the Shah which he worked to build and strengthen over the next decade. Cassette copies of his lectures fiercely denouncing the Shah as (for example) "... the Jewish agent, the American snake whose head must be smashed with a stone,"⁹ became common items in the markets of Iran, helped to demythologize the power and dignity of the Shah and his reign. Aware of the importance of broadening his base, Imam Khomeini reached out to Islamic reformist and secular enemies of the Shah, despite his long-term ideological incompatibility with them.

Imam Khomeini became perhaps the most influential leader of the opposition to the Shah perceived by many Iranians as the spiritual, if not political, leader of revolt. As protest grew so did his profile and importance. During the last few months of his exile, Imam Khomeini received a constant stream of reporters, supporters, and notables, eager to hear the spiritual leader of the revolution.¹⁰

Supreme leader of Islamic Republic of Iran Return to Iran

Only two weeks after the Shah fled Iran on January 16, 1979, Imam Khomeini returned to Iran triumphantly, on Thursday, February 1, 1979, invited by the anti-Shah revolution which was already in progress.

Conservative estimates put the welcoming crowd of Iranians at least three million.¹¹ When Imam Khomeini was on plane on his way to Iran after many years in exile, a reporter, Peter Jennings asked him: "What do you feel?" and surprisingly Imam Khomeini answered "Nothing!".

⁹ Khomeini on a cassette tape [source: Gozideh Payam-ha Imam Khomeini (Selections of Imam Khomeini's Messages), Tehran, 1979, (Taheri, *The Spirit of Allah*, (1985), p.193)

¹⁰ Moin, *Khomeini*, (2000), p.203

¹¹ Wright, *In the Name of God* (1989), p.37

Establishment of new government

On February 11, Imam Khomeini declared a provisional government. On March 30, 1979, and March 31, 1979, the provisional government asked all Iranians sixteen years of age and older, male and female, to vote in a referendum on the question of accepting an Islamic Republic as the new form of government and constitution. Through the ballot box, over 98% voted in favour of replacing the monarchy with an Islamic republic. Subsequent elections were held to approve of the newly-drafted constitution. Along with the position of the Supreme Leader, the constitution also requires that a president be elected every four years, but only those candidates approved indirectly by the Council of Guardians may run for the office. Imam Khomeini himself became instituted as the Supreme Leader for life, and officially decreed as the "*Leader of the Revolution*." On February 4, 1980, Abolhassan Banisadr was elected as the first president of Iran.

Hostage crisis

On November 4, 1979, a group of students, all of whom were ardent followers of Imam Khomeini, seized the United States embassy in Tehran, and took 63 American citizens as hostage. Three additional hostages were taken at the Iranian Foreign Ministry. Thirteen of the 63 hostages were released (mostly women and black personnel) within two weeks, and one more in July 1980. The remaining fifty men and two women were held for 444 days — an event usually referred to as the Iran hostage crisis. The hostage-takers justified this violation of long-established international law as a reaction to the American refusal to hand over the Shah for trial, for crimes against the Iranian Nation. Supporters of Imam Khomeini named the embassy a "Spy Den", weapons and electronic listening devices and equipment were

found, and fifty volumes of official and secret classified documents were later retrieved from it, after embassy staff were caught shredding and destroying it. Imam Khomeini stated on February 23, 1980, that Iran's Majlis would decide the fate of the American embassy hostages, demanding that the United States hand over the Shah for trial in Iran for crimes against the nation. U.S. President Jimmy Carter launched a commando mission to rescue the hostages, but the attempt was aborted when the helicopters crashed into other aircraft under unexpected desert conditions in Tabas. Many commentators point to this failure as a major cause for Carter's loss to Ronald Reagan in the following presidential election. The hostages were released during Ronald Reagan's inauguration ceremony; Reagan was informed of this upon leaving the podium after taking the oath of office.

After assuming power, Islam was made the basis of Iran's new constitution and obedience to Islamic laws made compulsory.

Relationship with other Islamic nations

He intended to reconstruct Muslim unity and solidarity so he declared the birth week of Prophet of Islam (the week between 12th to 17th of Rabi' al-awwal) as the Unity week. Then he declared the last Friday of Ramazan as International Day of Quds in 1979.

But because of Islamic ideology of Islamic Republic of Iran, most rulers of other Muslim nations turned against him and supported Iraq in the imposed war against Iran, even though most of Islamic parties and organizations supported his idea, especially the Shiite ones.

Iran-Iraq War

Shortly after assuming power, Imam Khomeini began calling for Islamic revolutions across the Muslim world, including Iran's smaller Arab neighbour Iraq,¹² the one large state besides Iran with a Shia majority population. At the same time Saddam Hussein, Iraq's secular Arab nationalist Ba'athist leader, was eager to take advantage of Iran's weakened military and (what he assumed was) revolutionary chaos, and in particular to occupy Iran's adjacent oil-rich province of Khuzestan and undermine attempts by Iranian Islamic revolutionaries to incite the Shi'a majority of his country.

With what many believe was the encouragement of Saudi Arabia and other countries, Iraq soon launched a full scale invasion of Iran, starting what would become the eight-year-long Iran-Iraq War (September 1980 - August 1988). A combination of fierce patriot resistance by Iranians and military incompetence by Iraqi forces soon stalled the Iraqi advance and by early 1982 Iran regained almost all the territory lost to the invasion. The invasion rallied Iranians behind the new regime, enhancing Imam Khomeini's stature and allowed him to consolidate and stabilize his leadership. As their roles reversed, Imam Khomeini refused Iraqis offer of a truce and reparations for war damage and announced the only condition for peace was that "the regime in Baghdad must fall and must be replaced by an Islamic Republic." ¹³

Although outside powers supplied arms to both sides during the war, the West (American in particular) became alarmed by the possibility of the Islamic revolution spreading throughout the oil-exporting Persian Gulf oil and began to supply Iraq with

¹² 1980 April 8 - Broadcast call by Khomeini for the pious of Iraq to overthrow Saddam and his regime. Al-Dawa al-Islamiya party in Iraqi is the hoped for catalyst to start rebellion. From: Mackey, *"Iranians, (1996), p.317*

¹³ Wright, *In the Name of God*, (1989), p.126

whatever help it needed. The war continued for another eight years, with 450,000 to 950,000 casualties on the Iranian side and the use of chemical weaponry by the Iraqi military.

As the costs of the eight-year war mounted, Imam Khomeini, in his words, “drank the cup of poison” and accepted a truce mediated by the United Nations. As the war ended, the struggles among the clergy resumed and Imam Khomeini’s health began to decline.

Rushdie Fatwa

In early 1989, Imam Khomeini issued a fatwa calling for the killing of Salman Rushdie, a India-born British author. Imam Khomeini claimed that Rushdie's murder was a religious duty for Muslims because of his alleged blasphemy against Muhammad in his novel, *The Satanic Verses*. Rushdie's book contains passages that some Muslims – including Ayatollah Khomeini – considered offensive to Islam and the prophet. Though Rushdie public ally apologized the fatwa was not revoked, Imam Khomeini explaining that

Even if Salman Rushdie repents and become the most pious man of all time, it is incumbent on every Muslim to employ everything he has got, his life and wealth, to send him to Hell. ¹⁴

The issuing of the fatwa caused many Westerners, particularly those on the left who had generally been in favor of the Revolution against the Shah, to reconsider their support of Imam Khomeini.

¹⁴ Moin, *Khomeini*, (2000), p.284 Hamid Algar, ‘Development of the Concept of velayat-i faqih since the Islamic

Letter to Mikhail S. Gorbachev

In December 1988 (before the fall of the Berlin Wall), Ayatollah Khomeini sent a letter to USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev predicting the fall of communism and inviting him to study and research Islam. In his historical letter he wrote: *It is clear to everyone that Communism should henceforth be sought in world museums of political history.*

Death and funeral

On June 3, 1989, after eleven days in hospital for an operation to stop internal bleeding, Imam Khomeini lapsed into a critical condition and died. The outpouring of grief was massive and spontaneous, the exact counterpoint to the vast demonstrations of joy that had greeted his return to Iran a little over ten years earlier. Such was the press of mourners, estimated at some nine million, burial to the south of Tehran on the road leading to Qum. A still expanding complex of structures has grown up around the shrine of the Imam, making it likely that it will become the centre of an entire new city devoted to ziyara and religious learning.

The testament of Imam Khomeini was published soon after his death. A lengthy document, it addresses itself principally to the various classes of Iranian society, urging them to do whatever is necessary for the preservation and strengthening of the Islamic Republic. Significantly, however, it begins with an extended meditation on the hadith-i thaqalayn: "I leave among you two great and precious things: the Book of God and my progeny; they will never be separated from each other until they meet me at the pool." The Imam interprets the misfortunes that have befallen Muslims throughout history and more particularly in the present age as the result of efforts precisely to disengage the Qur'an from the progeny of the Prophet

(S.A.W.S.) The legacy of Imam Khomeini was considerable. He had bequeathed to Iran not only a political system enshrining the principles both of religious leadership and of an elected legislature and head of the executive branch, but also a whole new ethos and self-image, a dignified stance of independence vis-vis the West rare in the Muslim world. He was deeply imbued with the traditions and worldview of Shi'i Islam, but he viewed the revolution he had led and the republic he had founded as the nucleus for a worldwide awakening of all Muslims. He had sought to attain this goal by, among other things, issuing proclamations to the hujjaj on a number of occasions and alerting them to the dangers arising from American dominance of the Middle East, the tireless activity of Israel for subverting the Muslim world, and the subservience to America and Israel of numerous Middle Eastern governments. Unity between Shi'is and Sunnis was one of his lasting concerns; he was, indeed, the first Shi'i authority to declare unconditionally valid prayers performed by Shi'is behind a Sunni imam (*Istifta'at*, I, p. 279).

It must finally be stressed that despite the amplitude of his political achievements, Imam Khomeini's personality was essentially that of a Gnostic for whom political activity was but the natural outgrowth of an intense inner life of devotion. The comprehensive vision of Islam that he both articulated and exemplified is, indeed, his most significant legacy.

Successor ship

Imam Khomeini denounced Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a letter in 1988, for criticizing human rights abuses by the regime. As a result Ayatollah Ali Khamenei came to be selected by the Assembly of Experts to be Khomeini's successor, in accordance with the constitution. Later on, in 1997 Grand Ayatollah .

Political thought and legacy

Throughout his many writings and speeches, Imam Khomeini's views on governance evolved. Originally declaring rule by monarchs or others permissible so long as sharia law was followed Khomeini later adamantly opposed monarchy, arguing that only rule by a leading Islamic jurist would insure Sharia was properly followed (velayat al-faqih),¹⁵ before finally insisting Sharia rule could be overruled by jurists if necessary to serve the interests of Islam and the "divine government" of the Islamic state.¹⁶

Imam Khomeini was strongly against close relations with Western and East bloc nations, and he believed that Iran should strive towards self-reliance. He viewed certain elements of Western culture as being inherently decadent and a corrupting influence upon the youth. As such, he often advocated the banning of popular Western fashions, music, cinema, and literature. His ultimate vision was for Islamic nations to converge together into a single unified power, in order to avoid alignment with either side (the West or the East), and he believed that this would happen at some point in the near future.

Imam Khomeini expressed support for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; in Sahifeh Nour (Vol.2 Page 242), he states: "We would like to act according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We would like to be free. We would like independence." However, Iran adopted an alternative human rights declaration, the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, in 1990, which diverges in key respects from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

¹⁵ 1942 book/pamphlet *Kashf al-Asrar* quoted in *Islam and Revolution*

¹⁶ *Taheri, the spirit of Allah*, (1985), p.241.

Khomeini's ideas did not originally find favor amongst some of the orthodox Iranian Shi'i clergy of the time, some of whom did not oppose the monarchy. While such clerics generally adhered to widely-accepted conservative theological schools of thought, Imam Khomeini believed that interpretations should change and evolve, even if such changes were to differ radically from tradition, and that a cleric should be moved by divinely inspired guidance. In contrast with clerical mores of the day, he led an ascetic lifestyle, being deeply interested in Irfan. Towards the 1979 Revolution, many clerics gradually became disillusioned with the rule of the Shah, and began supporting Khomeini's vision of an Islamic Republic.

Many of Imam Khomeini's political and religious ideas were considered to be progressive and reformist by leftist intellectuals and activists prior to the Revolution. However, they did not support many of his other views which conflicted with their own, in particular those that dealt with issues of secularism, women's rights, freedom of religion, and the concept of velayat al-faqih.

Imam Khomeini often stated that the Islamic Revolution would not be complete until Iran becomes a truly Islamic nation in every aspect, and that democracy and freedom would then come about "as a natural result of such a transformation". Imam Khomeini's definition of democracy existed within an Islamic framework, his reasoning being that since Islam is the religion of the majority, anything that contradicted Islam would consequently be against democratic rule. His last will and testament largely focuses on this line of thought, encouraging both the general Iranian populace, the lower economic classes in particular, and the clergy to maintain their commitment to fulfilling Islamic revolutionary ideals.

Family and descendants

In 1929, Khomeini married Batol Saqafi Khomeini, the daughter of a cleric in Tehran. They had seven children, though only five survived infancy. His daughters all married into either merchant or clerical families, and both his sons entered into religious life. The elder son, Mostafa, was murdered in 1977 while in exile with his father in Najaf, Iraq and SAVAK (the Imperial-era secret police) was accused of his death by Imam Khomeini. Ahmad Khomeini, the younger son, died in 1995, under mysterious circumstances.

Khomeini's granddaughter, Zahra Eshraghi, is married to Mohammad Reza Khatami, head of the Islamic Iran Participation Front, the main reformist party in the country, and is considered a pro-reform character herself.

Imam Khomeini's grandson Seyed Hassan Khomeini, son of the late Seyed Ahmad Khomeini, is also a cleric and the trustee of Khomeini's shrine. Khomeini's grandson Hussein Khomeini, son of Seyed Mustafa Khomeini.

Works

- *Velayat al-Faqih*
- *Forty Hadith* (Forty Traditions)
- *Adab as Salat* (The Disciplines of Prayers)
- *Jihade Akbar* (The Greater Struggle)

See also

- Grand Ayatollah Hussein-Ali Montazeri
- Hezbollah

- Islamic Cultural Revolution
- Islamic scholars
- Iran
- Politics of Iran
- Mahmoud Taleghani
- People's Mujahedin of Iran (an active adversary of the Islamic Republic)

Indo-Iran Relation under Imam Khomeini period

In the case of India any ideology based on religion, race, etc, did not constitute a determining factor in its foreign policy. It played a subsequent role not only in the Indo-Iran relationship but also with other system – African countries. Moreover, the relationship between the countries was influenced by the international situation and the political development of contemporary times. In a statement, former member of the Rajya Sabha (Congress I), D.P. Singh said: “Islam is part of India’s heritage. In sheers numbers, citizens of India are professing the Islamic faith now total more than 700 million. In terms of our historical experiences, we found that the imperialist powers, at first Britain and now the United States of America, have always raised platform of pan-Islamism and Zionism as a means of dividing the anti imperialist and national forces. Our approach to the international relations, relations between states and structuring of a new international order are not motivated by any ideology expressed in rigid terms. Our thinking and politics are secular.”

Iran’s decision to withdraw from the CENTO and its attitude of anti west, anti colonialism and anti imperialism sent a wave of jubilation in India. India hopes that the new regime in Iran under Khomeini would join the non-aligned community.

Explaining the government stand during the question hour in the Lok Sabha Atal Behari Vajpayee, Minister of external Affairs, said that India also appreciated Iran's intention to keep away from military blocks. "We are waiting for the day when we can welcome Iran in the non-aligned movement. These developments in Iran were positive."¹⁷ These hopes were realized as the new government withdraws itself from CENTO on March 1979, subsequently it applied for membership in the non-aligned movement (NAM).¹⁸ Apart from this, Iran seemed determined to break away from its isolation in international politics that followed the taking of American hostages. Iran also abrogated the bilateral defence pact with the USA and articles 5 and 6 of the 1921 treaty with the Soviet Union in November 1979.¹⁹ It stopped selling of oil to Israel and broke off diplomatic relation with Egypt. In the meantime, Ayatollah Khomeini declared that Iran would summon a conference of Islamic countries to devise ways and means of liberating the holy city of Jerusalem. Yasser Arafat was given a state reception in Tehran and received assurances of full support in the Palestinian struggle.²⁰ Besides Javeed Mansoori, Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, was sent to India with a letter to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, requesting Iran support for Iran's more to expel Israel from the United Nations.²¹

India made all efforts to keep good relations with the new regime in Iran. In a message to Ayatollah Khomeini the Prime Minister, Morarji Desai said, "the people of India and Iran are linked by age old friendship rooted in history and culture and a prosperous Iran is a guarantee for the peace and stability of the entire region."²² In the

¹⁷ Ok Sabha Debate, March 19, 1979, Vol. 30, p.

¹⁸ Islamic Republic: Future parts of the Nations, No. 21, pp. 128-129.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The Hindu, 20 September 1984.

²² Indian Express (New Delhi), 13 February 1979.

meantime, Ashoka Mehta (a Janata Party leader) was sent to Iran, during his visit, he called on Ayatollah Khomeini of his residence.²³

India considered that the Iranian revolution was popular and genuine uprising which cantered against the Shah's autocratic and undemocratic system subservient to foreign control. D.P. Singh (Former Member of Rajya Sabha and Congress I), said: "we recognize that the revolution in Iran under the inspiring leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini his motivated by high ideals of freeing this great and ancient country of Iran from the tentacles of American imperialism. We have no doubt that the government of Iran will consistently defend the gains of its revolution and not barter it away. It is therefore normal and natural for us in India to view with sympathy and support the aspirations of the Iranian people for freedom, for equality and a new economic order at home and abroad."

He also expressed hope that "the government and the people of Iran will look upon their struggle as part and parcel of the wide struggle for freedom, independence and not in any narrow terms."²⁴

The Communist Party of India described the victory of the Iranian people as a big blow to the global US imperialism and said that the victory of the Iranian people gave strength to the anti imperialistic and democratic forces in India. In this regard, a resolution was also issued which hailed the resounding victory of the heroic people and the patriotic, democratic forces of Iran over the Shah" hated autocracy and the US imperialism.²⁵ In addition to this, in November 1978, Moulana Ali nazir Saveed

²³ Hindustan Time (New Delhi), 19 March 1979.

²⁴ Singh, n. 34, P. 10.

²⁵ Indian Express, 13 February 1979.

Abaquti, a young leader from Lucknow, visited Paris where Ayatollah Khomeini was still leading the struggle against the Shah of Iran.²⁶

The Ameer of Jama'at-e-Islami-e-Hind wired congratulations to Allama Khomeini on Iran becoming the Islamic Republic. In a message Moulana Mohammed Yusuf, the Chief of the Jama'at, expressed hope that the divine law would fulfill his Islamic mission in the light of Kitab and Sunnah on an 1st April. The day the result of referendum was made known would go down in the world history as an epoch making day. In an identical message to Dr. Mehdi Bazargan, Dr. Ibrahim Yazdi and Karim Sanjabi, he hoped relations of Iran with Islamic world in particular would go from strength to strength. Meanwhile, the Uttar Pradesh Minister to grant immediate recognition to the government, which was proposed to be set up by Ayatollah Khomeini. He also urged central government to invite Ayatollah Khomeini to India.

The Shia Council of India expressed full confidence in the spiritual and religious leadership of the Iranian leader, Ayatollah Khomeini. It assured him full co-operation of the community of this country. In a resolution adopted in its annual conference the Council expressed the hope that Iran would emerge victorious in the war between "good and evil."²⁷

In an editorial radiance, wrote: In Iran, Islamists have won a great battle under the religious leadership of Moulana Ayatollah Khomeini. The great movement launched by him successfully was purely in the name of the religion which enthusiast millions of young and old, woman and children to the extent that they finally overthrew a strong regime which was backed and supported by powerful western allies from without and by strong and well equipped military from within." It wrote in

²⁶ Keyhan International, 15 March 1979.

²⁷ Times of India (New Delhi), 13 March 1979.

another editorial that Allama Khomeini, brought spectacular political revolution in Iran purely in the name of religion.²⁸

Imam Khomeini's rise was widely admired in India. This is because he was pre-occupied with the liquidation of the Pahlavi dynasty. His anti-Shah posture and unusual consistency won him enormous respect of the various strata of society. For India, Imam Khomeini was a great revolutionary and strong religious leader. Ayatollah Khomeini also sent Ayatollah Hussein Nooria special envoy to India. He was the highest Iranian dignitary to visit India since the success of the Iranian revolution in Iran in 1979. In Iran he had held the highest rank among Iranian clergy and was one of the architects of the Iranian revolution. He was a teacher of philosophy and theology in the holy city of Qom. He was reported to have told that he had been deputed by Ayatollah Khomeini "to study the conditions of Muslims" in India and report back to him. He also said that the Muslims are not confined to any geographic unit and that they should be united no matter where they live."²⁹

Religion is an important social category. It can play an influential role in politics. The Imam Khomeini movement in Iran was against the social and political evils in the Shah's regime. The establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran was a dynamic proclamation of the victory of Islam as a political and religious power.³⁰

With establishment of the Republic of Iran, domestic as well as foreign policies changed drastically. The draft constitution for the Islam i.e. Republic was published on 18 June 1979. It was submitted to Council of Experts, elected by popular

²⁸ Radiance (Delhi), 18 February 1979.

²⁹ Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 19 January 1980.

³⁰ Islamic Revolution, Future path of the Nations, n. 21, p. 99.

vote on August 1979, to debate the various clauses and to propose amendments. The amended constitution was approved by a referendum on 23 December 1979.

The essential difference existing between republican form of governments in the world and the Islamic Republic as exemplified in Iran is in the type of leadership, i.e. Velayet-e-Faqih. The leader of the Vali-e-Faqih is one who supervises and correlates governments, policies with divine decrees and Islamic precepts. In this way, he is responsible for this concord both before God and the people.

There was absorption of the old Pahlavi institutions with some modifications like the Pahlavi State; the Islamic Republic is an insistent on a united state and on the use of Persian as the national language. All the major institutions of the Pahlavi State have been retained. These include parliament, ministers, bureaucracy, secret police and army, controlled press and media; revitalized guild system for taxation and control.³¹ In addition, there is now parallel institutional structure of the party and revolutionary organizations, revolutionary courts. Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran) Basij, Reconstruction Guasade (Jihad-e-Sazandegi), Housing Foundation, Martyrs Foundation, Foundation for the oppressed, workers, councils, peasants, councils, guides exclusively on the format Government in the Islamic Republic of Iran divine precepts which are available to the people through the teachings of Islam. But the Islamic Revolution form of governments has same similarities and some differences with other republics of the world, as far as its forms and structures are concerned. The constitution recognizes three organs of power namely legislature, executive and judiciary. In this respect it is similar to whether government. It is different from other governments in that there are some organizations in addition to the three organs,

³¹ Michael M.J. Fisher, "Repetition in the Iranian Revolution," in Martin Kramer Ed, Shi'ism Resistance and Revolution (West view Press, London, 1987), p. 129.

which supervise the functioning of these three institutions. These organizations form the major differences between the Islamic Republic of Iran and other governments of the world. These other organizations consist of the Guardian Council, the Supreme Judicial council and leadership or Valeyuet-e-faqih.

Islamic government of 1979 was propelled by a powerful egalitarian thrust or, at the very least, by a powerful commitment to social, political and economic justice. Within the framework of the Islamic Republican system existent in Iran and accepted by the people, everything must be done according to Islamic precepts and laws. No laws or regulations can be proposed or implemented that are contrary to the precepts of the divine religion.

The form of government in the Islamic Republic of Iran is responsible for this concord both before God and the people. In constitution it is explained as to how the leader or leadership is chosen, what attributes he should have and what power and jurisdiction he has, Article 107 of the constitution, concerning the choosing of the leadership council states: “wherever any theologian meets the conditions set out in Article five of this constitution, and according to the majority of the people is recognized and accepted as the major and leader, as it as with the distinguished marja and the leader of the revolution. The great Ayatollah Imam Khomeini. This leader has the sanctity of command and all responsibilities emanating there from. Otherwise, experts elected by the people will revive and consult each other about the competency of all candidates for leadership. Wherever one is found to be above will be introduced to the people as the leader. Otherwise three or five competent religious authorities who meet the conditions of leadership will be appointed to the post of leadership council and they will be introduced to the people.

Iran's Foreign policy under the Khomeini period

In Iran under Imam Khomeini, the perception of foreign policy changed drastically. The core message of the new regimes foreign policy was 'neither East, nor west, Islam is the best.'³² "The super powers" Khomeini told, "Are responsible for all world corruption." For this reason Muslims "should mobilize the oppressed and chained nations so that the super powers can be pushed out of the scene and the governments can be handed over to the oppressed."³³

But this must be done in a way that teaches the super powers a lesson. They must be both humiliated and punished for the wrongs. They have done to the Muslims. They must be "slapped in the face" or "punched in the mouth" through violence, the satanic majority will be made to submit to the righteous few. The main guiding principles for the conduct of Iranian foreign policy were:

1. Rejection of dependence on either the west or east.
2. Identification of the United States as the Principal enemy of the Islamic Revolution.
3. Struggle against superpower and the "Zionist Power."
4. Close relations with all oppressed peoples, especially those in Muslim countries.
5. Liberation of Jerusalem and opposition to pro Israel states.
6. Anti imperialism and
7. Support everywhere the oppressed people

³² Islamic Revolution: Future path of the Nations, n. 21, p. 101.

³³ FIBS, June 20, 1983.

The new regime's foreign policy has been clearly outlined in Articles 152, 153 and 154 and part ten of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Article 152 says: "The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on the negation of all forms of domination or submission there to, the preservation of the independence and territorial integrity of the country. The defence of the rights of all Muslims, non-alignment before dominating powers and mutual peaceful relations with non aggressive states."³⁴

Article 153 states

"No contract is to be concluded involving foreign domination over the natural or economic resources, the culture, the army of other domains of Iranian nation"³⁵.

Article 154 asserts

"The Islamic Republic of Iran aspires for the property of man in the whole human society and recognizes independence, liberty and the rule of justice and truth as rights for all people of the world. Hence, while refraining from any kind of intervention in other nations internal affairs. The Islamic Republic of Iran supports the truth seeking struggles of the oppressed against the oppressors in every part of the world."³⁶

Apart from this, the export of its revolution also became the cordial principle of Iran's foreign policy. The doctrine of the expert of the Islamic Revolution aims simultaneously at three inter connected goals in Iran's foreign policy namely paving the way for the establishment of the world government of the messiah, promoting populist, independent Islamic governments in other states and protecting the first and

³⁴ Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Islamic Propagation, Tehran), p. 70.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

only such state and government in Iran.³⁷ At the same time, Iran also made it clear that the “export of the Islamic Revolution” must be accomplished by example of and propaganda. For example, Imam Khomeini told a group of ambassadors and charge ‘d’ affairs who had been recalled to Tehran for consultation.

“It does not take swords the export this ideology. The export of ideas by force is no export. We shall have exported Islam only when we have helped Islam and Islamic ethics grow in those countries. This is your responsibility and it is a task, which you must fulfill. You should promote this idea by adopting a conduct conducive to the propagation’s in your countries of assignment. This is a must. You must have publications, you must publish journals. Such journals should be primitive and their contents and pictures should be consistent with the Islamic Republic so that by proper publicity campaigns you may pave the way for the spread of Islam in those areas.³⁸

Khomeini’s Doctrine of Velayat al-Faqih

It would be impossible to assert that Imam Khomeini’s years in Najaf did not directly contribute to the formation of his ideology, as Najaf is the site at Shi’ism’s most received holy shrine and there undoubtedly existed numerous people who felt similarly as Khomeini. In this location, Imam Khomeini already had earned himself a reputation as a charismatic Islamic scholar, in Najaf Khomeini could study and engage in active debate with many of Shi’ism’s most distinguished Ulama and scholars. However, his time in Najaf provided more than ideological ammunition for Imam Khomeini, current events ultimately supplied most of the impetus for

³⁷ R.K. Ramazani, “Iran’s Islamic Revolution and the Persian Gulf,” *Current History* (Philadelphia), Vol. 84, No. 48, January 1985, p. 5.

³⁸ Quoted in Ramazani, n. 5, p. 19.

Khomeini's call to action. It was in Najaf that Khomeini heard through his network of emissaries, messengers, and followers that the Shah had embarked on a patriotic program intended to emphasize Iran's Persian legacy. Imam Khomeini interpreted these actions as direct attempts to subvert Islam in the name of aggrandizing the symbols of secular state power. Ayatollah Khomeini found this situation intolerable. However, having already let this idea be known, Khomeini had seized the ideological and strategic initiative.

The concept of Velayat al faqih itself was not necessarily an original concept to the Ulama, nor was it an easy one for them to accept at the time. Under the theory of the "Imamate". The creation of the Islamic state must await the return of the Hidden Imam, since the true word of God (and hence all sources of legitimacy) flows through the Imams. Therefore, no jurist, no matter how knowledgeable or influential, can rule an Islamic state since any direct legislative or exclusive authority can be derived in the absence of the true legitimizing authority of the Imam. The key issue here was one of infallibility. The line of legitimate Imams was considered infallible, as was Hidden Imam himself.

In order to serve in the place of the Hidden Imam, a Mujtahid would need to possess such infallibility.³⁹

Ayatollah Khomeini's lectures in 1969 and 1970 were based partly on what he felt were the necessity of the times as well as his belief that a divinely inspired elite class of Muslim jurists would be in the best position to guide the community of believers. Like Qutb before him, Imam Khomeini held that the Quran and the Sunna of the prophet contain all the laws and ordinances that man needs in order to attain

³⁹ Brumbeg, pp. 32-33.

personal harmony and the perfection of the state. “The laws of the Shari’a embrace a divine body of laws and regulations, “Khomeini proclaims “which amount to a complete social system. In this system of laws, all the needs of man have been met. “Khomeini interprets “⁴⁰ these needs to include the need for divine government.

For the purpose of justifying the mandate of the jurist, Khomeini states what may appear obvious to some Muslims. Islamic law exists in the form of the Sharia Law requires structures to enforce it such structures would be required. Such government requires legitimacy, or a mandate, in order to compel others to follow the law. The answer to the legitimacy questions, Imam Khomeini maintains, lies in the purpose of such a government. The purpose of Imam follows the will of God, and then there should be no reason to suspend legitimacy completely in the absence of the twelfth Imam. Ayatollah Khomeini takes a dramatic step forward for a Mujtahid in asserting that in the absence of the twelfth Imam, Ali intended for temporal authority be extended to qualified jurists.⁴¹ Using deductive logic as well as numerous Quaranic verses and examples of hadith, Khomeini asserts that a governing jurist must know the law, be morally just, and must be an Imam (in the common Arabic meaning, a religious leader). Without actually attributing these characteristics to his own person or proclaiming any kind of title for himself, Imam Khomeini states that when such a person emerges, he will effectively wield legitimate to authority commensurate to that of the prophet Mohammad and the Muslim community will be duty bound to obey him.

⁴⁰ Ayatollah Ruholahe Khomeini, Governance of Jurist: Islamic Government, Tehran: Institute for the compilation and publication of Imam Khomeini ‘s works ,2000,p.20.

⁴¹ Brumberg ,pp.32-34.

Ayatollah Khomeini later clarified his standpoint on the issue of the infallibility requirement of a governing jurist by expanding an ascetic struggles as the means to attain the qualifications (i.e. spiritual infallibility) required to become such a jurist. Because ascetic struggle involves the revolves the renouncing of material possessions and aspirations and allows oneself to serve “higher” ideas, Khomeini asserts, it is possible for a Mujahid to achieve perfect faith and thereby attain spiritual infallibility.⁴² In spite of imperfections in his reasoning namely that he had done little to refute traditionalist arguments that the Mujtahid’s mandate did not extend to the active governance of the state regardless of his spiritual infallibility.⁴³ His ideas caught on, and many of his followers believed that Imam Khomeini himself should fill the position of such a jurist. The ideological stage was set for a dramatic transformation of the state.⁴⁴

⁴² Ibid pp, 34-35.

⁴³ Viorst ,p.191.

⁴⁴ Brumberg, p.35.

CHAPTER - V

**THE FOREIGN POLICY OF
INDIA AND IRAN BETWEEN
1979 TO 1990**

The Islamic revolution in Iran

The Iranian Revolution actually started in early 1970, when civil rights protests by writers and lawyers began to demand more freedom. As always, the intelligentsia is a highly sensitive barometer, reflecting the moods of discontent that are silently accumulating in the deep recesses of society. Sensing danger, American imperialism put pressure on the Shah to carry out reforms and liberalization. The pressure from below at a certain stage produces a split in the ruling class. There can be no doubting about the centrality of Imam Khomeini's role and the integrally Islamic nature of the revolution he led physically removed from his country men for fourteen years, he had an unfailing sense at the revolutionary potential that had surfaced and was able to mobilize the broad masses of the Iranian people for the attainment of what seemed to many inside the country (including his chosen premier, Bazargain) a distant and excessive ambitious goal. His role, pertained, moreover, not merely to moral inspiration and symbolic leadership, he was also the operational leader of the revolution. Occasionally he accepted advice on details of strategy from persons in Iran, but he took all key decisions himself, silencing early on all advocates at compromise with the Shah. It was the mosques that were the organizational units of the revolution and mass prayers, demonstrations and martyrdom that were until the very last stage – its principal weapons.

During the period of struggle against the Shah the mass movement steadily increased and the working class became increasingly radicalised. The culmination of this process was the revolutionary events of 1979. Revolution is an open measurement of strength between contending social forces in the struggle for power. In revolution

of 1979, the colossal power of the proletariat was immediately revealed. Three million people came into the streets in the biggest mass mobilization in Iranian history.

Islam played a significant role in events in Iran during 1978 and 1979 is hardly in question. What is much less clear is the nature and significance of that role. For many observe the Iranian revolution was an upsurge of religious revivalism against materialism and corruption in high places. Others saw it as a rejection by the common people of the economic benefits of modernization and westernization. For some it was a spontaneous reaction by a democratic faith against tyranny and absolutism. Yet others attributed to the most prominent of its leaders, the Ayatollah Khomeini, almost supernatural, messianic powers.¹

Islamic Revolution in Iran, 1978-79, swept away the most powerful monarch and trumpeted 2,500 old institution of monarchy. It shook the very roots of Iran's political and social structure, and changed entirely the political, social economic landscape of the country.

Indo-Iran relations after revolution 1979

Islamic Republic of Iran's relations with India may be divided into two periods 1979-81 and 1984-90. The first period was characterized by militant enthusiasm and intimidation and the second period, by contrast, has been a greater emphasis on Iran's own situation stemming from the stalemate in the war and Iran's need to escape from a form of self-inflicted isolation.²

¹ L.P. Elwell, Sutton, "The Iranian revolution: 2, July, 1976

² Sharam Chubin, "Iran and Persian Gulf States," in David Menashri ed. *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim world* (Westview Special Studies on the Middle East, Boulder, 1990), p. 73

Relations between Iran and India in the early 80s had been dictated solely by revolutionary hard-line which presumed that Iran attitude towards the world is dictated by a policy of “neither East nor West”, only Islamic Republic.³ In a statement in 1979, the Iranian Foreign Minister Ibrahim Yazdi, said that if India is interested in joining the RCD it must improve its relations with Pakistan.⁴ But, the quest for regime as well as national security led Iran to improve it relations with India. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Iraqi invasion of Iran, hostage crisis and economic embargo by the West had posed a serious threat to the existence at the Islamic Republic of Iran. As this critical juncture, Iran emphasized on relations with India as a true non-aligned country. Banisadr, the President of Iran said, “India could play an important role in protecting Afghanistan from foreign intervention.”⁵

A concrete step was taken with regard to strengthening areas of bilateral relationship with India during the visit of Iranian commerce Minister, Reza Sadr, to India at the head of a high level delegation in June 1980. This was the first big delegation sent out by Iran after the revolution Reza Sadr said, “Iran had chosen to send the delegation to India not by accident but by design.” The high level visiting delegation included seven deputy ministers dealing with various economic subjects, this mission also had a meeting with the Engineering Export Promotion Council and visited certain industrial units manufacturing tractors, diesel engines and electronic motors. The delegation kept an open mind and tried to identify the areas where it could safely depend on supplies form Indian source. Massoud the Deputy Minister of Industries and Mines said that, "delegation was looking around for new source of

³ Iranian Revolution: Future paths of the Nations (The Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran, 1985), p. 101.

⁴ An Interview to impact international (London), 25 October 8, November 1979, also see Hindu, 12 July 1979.

⁵ Hindustan Times, 29 February 1980.

supply for components and raw materials. It would also welcome technical know-how for setting up small scale industries".⁶ In this regard, the visiting delegation identified a number of sectors where Indian collaboration might be needed for the implementation of Iran's developmental plans. These ranged from Indian consultancy arrangements to the employment of Indian technical personnel for training schemes in Iran. At the same time, Iran also presented a long list of items ranging from food to cement drugs and spare parts. It also specified exhaustively the list of goods and services that Iran was willing to procure from India.⁷ India also expressed its desire to expand the area of collaboration with Iran.

Iran turned to India for its political support to face super power influence in the region as well as economic embargo by the west. Ali Akbar Velayati, the Foreign Minister, said that strengthening of political relations between Iran and India would ensure stability in the region and keep super power influence out of this.⁸ In fact unlike Pakistan and India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, Iran and the Soviet Union, they had a number of perception with India. They had a number of perceptual similarities in terms of foreign policy as well as policy towards the Asia-Africa countries. The new Iranian dispensation was well disposed towards India as discussed earlier.⁹

Iran regarded India as one of the important non-aligned countries in the region, which could challenge the West. Abolhasan Banisadr, The President of Iran, said: "India and Iran could co-operate and help each other reversing the dependence

⁶ Indian Express, 10 June 1980.

⁷ Hindustan Times, 16 June 1980.

⁸ Hindustan Times, 2 May 1982.

⁹ V.P. Dutt, "India's Foreign policy (Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1984), p. 338.

on the west.¹⁰ India became a model in its struggle against imperialism and colonialism. India looked upon itself and the rest of the emerged Africa-Asia as a force for peace and not as plaything and instrument of power politics in the hands of great powers. Apart from this, India is also one of the most advanced countries in the developing world having its own highly developed atomic power project, space satellite programmes and foreign investments in Africa, South Asia and elsewhere while contributing its own technology and manufacturing skills.¹¹ India's progress in the field of agriculture, industry and technology, space and oceanic research was well known. It has developed its own technical know-how and intermediate technology, which is ideally suited for the rapid industrialization of other developing countries. In return, Iran assured India to continue supply of oil production; from six million barrels to about three million barrels a day of that it needed one million barrels for domestic consumption. Regarding India, Ali Akbar Mainfar, Oil Minister, said that India is high on our priority list for oil supplies and will always get special consideration. He also said that because of our good relations with our Indian friends, we kept a reasonable amount (five million tones) for India this year.¹²

There was marked shift in Iran's foreign policies and attitude towards India particularly, after 1980. Ali Akbar Velayati, the Foreign Minister of Iran, said in an interview on 15 February with Pakistan's mass circulated Urdu daily Jangi that his country was prepared to mediate between India and Pakistan on Kashmir. In the meantime he also praised Pakistan's offer at a war pact to India.¹³ Iran's offer of mediation can be interpreted only as a goodwill gesture on its part. Iran's gesture

¹⁰ Hindustan Times, 11 June 1980.

¹¹ P.G. Salvi, *India in World Affairs*, (B.R. Publishing Corporations, Delhi, 1985), p. 1-6.

¹² Times of India, 1 March 1980.

¹³ Quoted in Indian express, 13 February 1983.

nevertheless goes to prove the extent of friendly image it had been able to build in the India, despite Iran's close links with Pakistan; the offer was also a manifestation of Iran's policy based not on a total commitment either to India or to Pakistan but "on the idea of promoting peace and tranquillity in the India."¹⁴

The visit of Velayati to India served to create an impression of development of mature bilateral relationship between Iran and India. Ali Akbar Velayati himself in this regard expressed the Iranian view. He said that Iran wished to expand and consolidate relations with India. Further, he added that Iranian leaders had found that conditions in India were favourable for India's co-operation in the reconstruction of the Iranian economy.¹⁵ He made a frank appraisal of Iran's policy, and noted with satisfaction the Iranian effort to expand further relations with India. Besides, a great degree of identity of views was reflected between the two governments on international matters. On regional questions and on bilateral issue the statement was issued after Velayati's talks with P.V. Narasimha Rao, then Minister for External Affairs. Both sides expressed "great concern" over the situation in Afghanistan and urged all concerned to work towards such a settlement which could ensure that the afghan people would determine their own destiny free from outside interference.¹⁶ They also emphasized the need to reassert the role of the non-alignment movement as an independence, non-book factor and a positive force to strengthen peace and security in the world. They also called for the urgent need to remove super power presence from the Indian Ocean region, which constituted a threat to peace and increased tension in the region. They wanted implementation of the 1971 UN

¹⁴ Indian Express, 2 May 1982.

¹⁵ Hindustan times, 2 May 1982.

¹⁶ Statesman, 3 May 1982.

declaration declaring the Indian Ocean as a peace. They also condemned the illegal annexation of Al-Gods and the Golan Heights that constituted a serious threat to world peace and a violation of international law.¹⁷ On the Iran-Iraq war; the statement said that the Iranian side had briefed the Indian side of their views. The Indian side had expressed the hope for a just solution of the dispute in the near future.¹⁸

A major breakthrough was achieved the indo-Iranian bilateral relations with visit to the Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, to India towards the end of April 1982. His visit to India proved to be a genuine starting point of fruitful co-operation between India and Iran, Velayati said that India and Iran had agreed on the need to strengthen their political relations for greater stability in the region as well as to eliminate the influence of super powers. On bilateral relations, he said that Iran wanted increasingly to seek Indian assistance in the fields of science, technology and industry to free his country from aligning with the West for cooperation. He also said that his wide-ranging talks here had paved the way for considerable expanding economic and commercial relations between the countries.¹⁹

In their bid to strengthen to mutual co-operation, both sides decided to set up a new Joint Commission to expand their bilateral co-operation in the fields of economy, trade, industry culture, science and technology. The decision formed part of Joint Commission at the end of the Iranian Foreign Ministers visit to India on 2 May 1982. The two countries laid particular emphasis on the maintenance and development of cultural and educational relations between them. Both sides also agreed that cultural agreement should be signed at an early date to put such contacts on an institutional

¹⁷ Times of India, 3 May 1982.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Times of India, 2 May 1982.

and regular basis. The Iranian Foreign Minister at the end further added that Iran had considerable expertise in the field of oil and it was prepared to help India.²⁰ As Raza Shah Pahlavi's dynastic rule succumbed to the Islamic Revolution in Iran, a new phase of estrangement in Iran-India relations set in. Although the Revolution was greeted favourably in India and was viewed as a "reflection of Iran's quest for identity and national self-assertion,"²¹ there were new and persistent differences between the two countries regarding various regional and international issues.²² It was due to these differences that relations between the two states remained inhibited, notwithstanding the fact that India was among the first countries to recognize the revolutionary government of Ayatollah Khomeini.²³ The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was the one issue where Iran and India had diametrically opposed positions. Iran, which had always felt threatened by Soviet Communism, was much more critical of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan than was India,²⁴ which traditionally had very close relations with the Soviets.

In addition, with the establishment of clerical rule in Iran, the country veered off the path of secularism and the new dispensation in Tehran felt little motivation to cultivate ties with a secular country. Iran's clerical regime's penchant to take up Islamic causes, its stand on the Kashmir issue and the condition of Indian Muslims led to strains in Indo-Iranian ties.²⁵ India was also apprehensive of Iran's revolutionary regime's policy of exporting the Revolution and destabilizing the Persian Gulf regimes.²⁶ The 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war added yet another irritant to the already

²⁰ Tribune, 20 July 1983.

²¹ Farah Naaz. Op.cit.

²² John Calabrese, op.cit.p. 63.

²³ J.N. Dixit, "Shift in India's Ties with Iran". The Hindu, July 18, 2000.

²⁴ John Calabrese, op. cit. p. 63

²⁵ Farah Naaz. op.cit.

²⁶ John Calabrese op.cit.p.63.

complicated Iran-India relations, as India struggled to protect its oil interests in Iraq while preserving its oil supply relationship with Iran.²⁷

However, it is important to note that despite these numerous challenges and significant sources of political difference, the two states continued to co-operate with each other economically in the 1980s, and to a lesser extent in the industrial sector.²⁸ one aspect of this interaction was the less-publicized cooperation in the nuclear field. After West Germany halted work on Iran's Bushehr nuclear reactor project in 1980, Iran asked for India's help in completing this project. Indian radio reported on October 1, 1982, that India would send a group of nuclear engineers and scientists to Iran in November, who would inspect the Bushehr nuclear power plant to study the problems.²⁹ This pragmatic and careful balancing of interests seems to have helped pave the way for the progress in their relations that was to start in the early years of the 1990s.

P.V. Narasimha Rao visiting to Iran 1983

The Indian side also reiterated its desire to restore old bands and to further strengthen the area of bilateral relations. Recalling the age-old ties between the two countries P.V. Narasimha Rao, the Minister for External affairs said: "the great achievements of the past should make us humble and little aware of our responsibilities to ourselves today and to our history. We have to build on the sound foundation laid by previous generations."³⁰ P.V. Narasimha Rao next paid an official visit to Iran from July 18 to 22 1983. He was accompanied by a high level delegation

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ At www.nti.org/e_research/profiles/1825_1826.html

³⁰ Tribune, 20 July 1983.

consisting of K. Natwar Singh, Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs and other officials of that ministry, as well as the Ministries of Information and Broadcasting, Steel and mines, Finance, Commerce, Education, Culture and Industry. During his visit to Iran P.V. Narasimha Rao called on Syed Ali Khomeini, the President of Iran, Hussein Mussavi, the Prime Minister, Hashemi Rafsanjani, the Speaker of the Majlis, Asgar-Owladi, the Minister of Commerce, Behzad Nabavi, Minister of Heavy Industries and Dr. Ghafari Ford, the Minister of Energy.³¹

Visit of P.V. Narasimha Rao to Iran in July 1983 was an important step towards strengthening and furthering bilateral relations between Iran and India. He and the Indian delegation were accorded warm reception. The two foreign ministers had several rounds of talks, which were held in an atmosphere of friendship, and mutual understand. They also referred to the deep historical and cultural relations between the people of Iran and India and emphasized their anti imperialist and anti colonialist freedom struggles.³² At the same time, both ministers agreed to the similarities in political approaches and views formed a firm basis for establishing on institutional frame work for intensifying economic, trade, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation between two countries and giving them practical shape. In addition to this, both sides also emphasized their firm belief in the continuing relevance and significant role, at the non-aligned movement in the establishment and strengthening of the international peace and the need for further consolidating and strengthening in this movement. They called that the non-aligned movement which has its origins in the desire of newly independent states to steer clear of military

³¹ P.V. Narasimhama Rao concludes visit, "press information bureau (Government of India, New Delhi), July 23, 1983. Pp. 1-4.

³² Ibid.

alliance, great power rivalry, and East West confrontation, has important part to play is safe guarding non-aligned countries from foreign inference and enables them to concert their economic efforts for their economic and social developments. Ali Akbar Velayati, the Foreign Minister, appreciated India's contribution towards consolidating unity of the non-aligned movement and initiatives it was taking to make the seventh summit a success.

The visit resulted in forging closer bonds and in widening the areas of co-operation between the two countries. The two countries agreed to expand bilateral economic relations and signed an agreement on 19 July 1983 setting up the Iran-India joint commission.³³ Besides, the modalities had been worked out in details for cooperation in the field of education, the exchanges of films and radio programmes for cooperation between the national information media of two countries and provision of Visa and accreditation facilities for media representations on reciprocal bases.³⁴ A detailed time schedule for the implementation of the cultural exchange programme for 1983-84 had been worked out. P.V. Narasimha Rao's visit to Iran also paved the way for lifting iron ore from the Kudremukh plant, talking to reporters on his return from Iran, P.V. Narasimha Rao said that there had been some progress regarding the Kudremukh project, though some issues remained to be finalized.³⁵

Indo-Iranian relations took a new shift in 1984. In December 1984 the second session of the Indo-Iranian Joint Commission was held. Both Iran and India, reiterated their firm belief in the important role of the non-aligned movement in the establishment and consolidation of international peace and security. In this regard, a

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Foreign Affairs Records (Government of India, New Delhi), July 1983, pp. 140-142.

³⁵ Times of India, 22 July 1983.

joint statement was also issued at the conclusion of the second session of the Indo-Iranian Joint Commission.³⁶ At the outset the statement recorded the deep regret of the government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the association of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Dr. Velayati expressed the confidence that the new government in India would continue to follow her ideals in the policies of independence and modernization. The statement also recorded appreciation of the Indian Government for the Iranian sympathy.³⁷

Many efforts were made by both sides to accelerate the two way understanding and cooperation. The rapprochement, however, was limited. In April 1984, both India and Iran discussed the possibility of expanding bilateral trade and taking the total turnover too much higher level. This was highlighted when Sheikh-ul-Islam, Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, visited India in 1984 as special emissary of the Iranian President and called on the Minister emphasized that better economic and commercial relations between the two countries would contribute to the economic independence of India and Iran. He also pointed out that it was Iran's policy to purchase as much as possible from India.

Indo-Iranian bilateral relations reached a new height in January 1985. A comprehensive agreement was signed between Iran and India in further intensifying the area of co-operation. According to the agreement, India would assist Iran in various fields including setting up of job intensive rural industries, satellite communication, textile and agricultural implements factories. This was agreed upon

³⁶ Hindustan Times, 1 December 1984.

³⁷ Ibid.

in a document signed at Tehran on 7 January at the end of four day meeting of the Joint Commission of the two countries.

The emphasis was an industrial co-operation, the commission also agreed to set up joint ventures in the two countries to tap their domestic and international markets.³⁸ At the same time, Iran invited Indian companies to help to set up cement and textiles plants. The Iranian government was also keen on import substitution by setting up 18 large cement plants each with a capacity of 2,000 tones per day, besides several small plants. India accepted an Iranian suggestion to buy cement produced at Indian assisted plants, the agreement was silent on oil related trade but it said this would be governed by market trends and that a petroleum delegation was scheduled to visit Tehran by March to renew India's contract for oil purchase from Iran, a traditional supplier.³⁹

The high level contacts between the two countries were also stepped up. The visit of Dr. Velayati to India in august 1986 at the invitation of P. Shivshankar, Minister for External Affairs, further intensified the abiding Indo-Iranian ties. This was the third visit of Velayati to India after assuming office as Foreign Minister.⁴⁰ He was accompanied by high level Iranian delegation. The two ministers reviewed activities at the Joint Commission and prospects for co-operation in the future. During their talks the following agreements on bilateral cooperation were reached. 1) It was decided that the fourth session of the Indo-Iranian Joint Commission would be held in Delhi at the end of 1986 or early 1987 as per mutually convenient dates to be finalized through diplomatic channels. 2) A high level and comprehensive Iranian economic

³⁸ Financial Express, January 14, 1986, also Tribune January 14, 1986.

³⁹ Asian Recorder, Vol. XXXII, No. 7, February 12-18, pp. 18759

⁴⁰ Ibid

delegation will visit India in early September to negotiate an oil linked trade deal and to work out banking arrangements to facilitate lifting of Iranian oil by India and counter purchase of India's goods by Iran. 3) Iranian side expressed interest in the import of commodities in the import of commodities, meat corn and different types of steel. Indian sides took note of the request and it was agreed that the list of commodities will be provided in advance and finalized during the visit of the economic delegation to India. 4) Secretary (Steel will visit Iran in September 1986 to review progress relating to Kudremukh iron ore project.) 5) Both sides agreed that there are good prospects for industrial collaboration and cooperation between the two countries particularly in the fields of power, steel, transport, telecommunications and railways. An Iranian delegation would visit India to explore cooperation in cement industry. Meanwhile, projects and Equipment Corporation of India had made a proposal for supply of passenger rail coaches to Iran in pursuance of earlier discussions in the joint commission. The Iranian side also took note to give sympathetic consideration to this offer. 6) Both sides reviewed media coverage of events in each other's country. It was agreed that the official media should project events in each other's country in constructive and positive manner.⁴¹

In December 1987 a high level Iranian industrial delegation led by Minister for Heavy Industry, Behzad Nabavi, visited India. During the visit he held wide-ranging discussions with the Union Industry Minister J. Vengal Rao, and Narayana Datt Tiwari, the Finance Minister. This was also instrumental in the further enlargement of cooperation especially in the field of industrial cooperation between two countries. Vengal Rao expressed hope that the discussion would not only

⁴¹ "Foreign Minister of Iran visits India: The Text of Agreed Talks", Foreign affairs Record (Government of India, New Delhi), Vol. XXXIV, No. 8 August 1986, p. 224.

consolidate existing economic relations but also open up new visits for cooperation in the heavy industrial sector. A memorandum of understanding was signed at the Indo-Iranian talks on industrial cooperation, transaction research and training. This cooperation would include transfer of technology and supply of equipment and machinery, consultancy and technical services in the areas of utilization of spare capacity in Iran, casting machine building, diesel engine manufacturing and vehicle parts, manufacturing of equipment for refineries, power plants, cement and sugar. Besides, the Iranian side also discussed with various Indian organizations in the public and private sectors, the areas covered were automobiles and component, machine tools, power engines castings, equipment, manufacturing, forging and foundry items.⁴²

Various efforts were made from time to time which contributed to the restoration and strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries. In September 1989, a memorandum of understanding was signed to overcome consular and visa related problems. The document was signed by External affairs Joint Secretary, Naresh Dayal and the Iranian Ambassador, Ibrahim Rahimpur, as a follow up to the discussion held on August 29 between the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, Javad Mansoori, and Foreign Secretary S.K. Singh. The new arrangement included steps to ensure speedily grant of visas to Iranian students who take admission to recognized Universities.⁴³

In change of Government of India, under National Front, made also no difference to the continuity of Indo-Iranian ties. In January 1990, on the occasion of

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ "India and Iran to set up trade and industrial corporation", Foreign Affairs Record, Government of India, New Delhi), Vol. XXXIII, No. 2, December 1987, Business Standard, December 21, 1987.

11th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, the fine arts and crafts society of India organized an exhibition of Iranian handicraft in New Delhi.⁴⁴ Apart from this, the people of India contributed generously towards the earthquake relief and sent a large number of condolence messages, and many Iranian companies sent medicines to Iran.⁴⁵ The Government of India while expressing assistance of rupees one crore and airlifted medicines and blankets for the victims of the earthquake. The Uttar Pradesh government provided a relief worth Rs. 35 lakhs. India also paid rich homage to Ayatollah Khomeini by acknowledging his great revolutionary achievements aimed at destroying imperialist's aspirations of the Western countries in Iran.

Bilateral activity further accelerated the visit of Saeed Rajai Khorassani, the Chairman, Foreign Relations committee of the Iranian Majlis (Parliament) to India in the last week of October 1990, further contributed significantly to the advancement of the bilateral relations as well as the intensification of bilateral cooperation in the fields of economic, technical know-how culture. In an interview with IRNA before learning for Tehran, Saeed Rajai Khorassani said: "India should take keen interest to improve bilateral economic, technical and cultural relations."⁴⁶ He was accompanied by a high-ranking parliamentary delegation. During his five day official visit to India, Saeed Raja Khorassani held meetings with the then Vice President, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, V.P. Singh, the Prime Minister I.K. Gujral, the Foreign Minister, George Fernandez, the Railways Minister and Shivraj Patil, the Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Ibid., December 26, 1987.

⁴⁵ Asian Recorder, Vol. XXXV, No. 45, November 1989, p. 20850.

⁴⁶ Patriot, 12 February 1991.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Influence of Regional issues in Indo-Iranian Relations after 1979

It would be useful to look at the bilateral relations between Iran and India in the context of certain local and regional issues such as the hostage crisis: Soviet invasion of Afghanistan 1979, Iraqi invasion of Iran 1980, Kashmir issues. In the midst of changed regional environment and demands of politics as well as the revival of the cold war in the South West Asia, both Iran and India faced a challenge and threat perception. India was only immediate country with which Iran's interest did not clash seriously from beginning.

The hostage crisis

For several decades the United States of America had been the primary backer of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah. During World War II, the Allies had occupied ostensibly neutral Iran to keep it from joining the Axis, and had forced the reigning monarch, Reza Shah, to abdicate in favor of his son. Eight U.S. presidents provided the Shah with military and economic aid in exchange for a continuous oil supply and a strategic presence in the Middle East, bordering the Persian Gulf as well as the Soviet Union.

In 1953, emerging democracy led to the election of reformist Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh; under Operation Ajax, the CIA helped the Shah and conservative elements in Iran remove Mossadegh in what was widely seen as a coup d'état. Those opposed to the Shah, because he did not grant them freedoms and reforms he promised in the early 1960s, greatly resented this action by the Americans. Moreover, the Shah and his elite supporters were seen as enriching themselves and living an opulent Western lifestyle; this particularly bothered religious conservatives.

The social and religious opposition combined to topple the Shah's regime in the Iranian revolution, and the Shah fled the country in January 1979.

The U.S. attempted to mitigate the damage by finding a new relationship with the de facto Iranian government, but in October of 1979, the Shah, ailing from lymphoma, was admitted to the U.S. for medical treatment. This caused widespread Iranian suspicion it was part of a plan to re-enact the 1953 coup, and enraged the revolutionary movement.

On November 1, 1979 Iran's new leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini urged his people to demonstrate against United States and Israeli interests. Khomeini was anti-American in his rhetoric, denouncing the American government as the "Great Shiatan" and "Enemies of Islam".

Thousands of people gathered around the U.S. embassy in Tehran, protesting. The embassy grounds had been briefly occupied before, during the revolution, and protest crowds outside the fence were common. Iranian police were less and less helpful. On November 3 Radio Turkey aired an analysis predicting a Coup within weeks, conducted by CIA agents in a similar fashion as Operation Ajax to re-install the Shah. On November 4, amid another chaotic occupation of the grounds, a mob of around 500 Iranian students (although reported numbers vary from 300 to 2000) calling themselves the Muslim Students Following the Line of the Imam seized the main embassy building. The guard of Marines was thoroughly outnumbered, and staff rushed to destroy communications equipment and sensitive documents. Out of 90 occupants, 66 were taken captive, including three who were taken from the Iranian Foreign Ministry. The hostage takers, wishing to demonstrate their solidarity with other oppressed minorities and the special place of women in Islam, released 13

women and African Americans in the middle of that November. One more hostage, Richard Queen, was released in July 1980 after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. The remaining 52 hostages were held captive until January 1981. Ayatollah Khomeini claimed he was not aware of the students' plan, but he applauded the action afterwards. Supposedly, the Ayatollah had been informed on November 3.

During the hostage crisis, several foreign government diplomats and ambassadors came to visit the American hostages. Ken Taylor of Canada was one of the ambassadors who visited the hostages. The foreign diplomats and ambassadors helped the American government stay in contact with the American hostages and vice versa. Through these meetings with foreign governments, the "Laingen dispatches" occurred. The "Laingen dispatches" were dispatches made by the hostage Bruce Laingen to the American government. The Canadian parliament, in 1979, held a secret session for the first time since World War II in order to pass special legislation allowing Canadian passports to be issued to some American citizens in order to allow the Canadian government to help six American diplomats escape Iran in an event that became known as the Canadian Caper.

The students justified taking the hostages as retaliation for the admission of the Shah into the U.S., and demanded the Shah be returned to Iran for a trial. The new Iranian regime believed the Shah was in the U.S. so that the U.S. could carry out another coup d'état in Iran. The U.S. claimed he had come there only to seek medical attention; the Shah was suffering from cancer, which led to his death in 1980. Iranian students demanded that the U.S. government apologize for its interference in the internal affairs of Iran and for the overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh. They also demanded that Iran's assets in the U.S. be released. The assets

had been frozen by the U.S. government in response to the hostage taking. Revolutionary teams displayed secret documents taken from the embassy, sometimes painstakingly reconstructed after shredding, to buttress their claim that U.S. intelligence was trying to destabilize the new regime.⁴⁸

Rejecting the Iranian demands, Carter approved an ill-fated secret rescue mission, Operation Eagle Claw. On the night of April 24, 1980, as the first part of the operation, a number of C-130 transport airplanes rendezvoused with eight RH-53 helicopters at an airstrip in the Great Salt Desert of Eastern Iran, near Tabas. Two helicopters broke down in a sandstorm and a third one was damaged on landing. The mission was aborted, but as the aircraft took off again one helicopter clipped a C-130 and crashed, killing eight U.S. servicemen and injuring more than four.

A second rescue attempt was planned using highly modified YMC-130H Hercules aircraft. Outfitted with rocket thrusters fore and aft to allow an extremely short landing and take-off in a soccer stadium, three aircraft were modified under a rushed super-secret program known as Credible Sport. One aircraft crashed during a demonstration at Duke Field, Florida (Eglin Air Force Base Auxiliary Field 3) on October 29, 1980 when the landing braking rockets were fired too soon causing a hard touchdown that tore off the starboard wing and started a fire. All on board survived. The impending change in the White House led to an abandonment of this project. The two surviving airframes were returned to regular duty with the rocket packages removed. One is now on display at the Museum of Aviation located next to Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.

⁴⁸ <http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/iran-hostage-crisis>.

Iran's government did not take responsibility for the crisis and Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan along with his cabinet resigned just after the event. The hostages were often shown blindfolded to local crowds and television cameras. The crisis led to daily (yet seemingly unchanging) news updates; the ABC late-night program *America Held Hostage*, anchored by Ted Koppel, would later become the stalwart news magazine "Nightline".

The U.S. President at that time, Jimmy Carter, immediately applied economic and diplomatic pressure on Iran: oil imports from Iran were ended on November 12, 1979, a number of Iranians in the U.S. were expelled (some of whom were unrelated to the crisis or the new Iranian government), and around US\$ 8 billion of Iranian assets in the U.S. were frozen on November 14, 1979

The death of the Shah on July 27 and the invasion of Iran by Iraq in September, 1980 made Iran more receptive to resolve the hostage crisis, while Carter lost the November 1980 presidential election to Ronald Reagan. Shortly after the election, but before the inauguration of President Reagan, the Carter administration, with the assistance of intermediaries such as Algerian diplomat Abdulkarim Ghuraib, opened fruitful negotiations between the U.S. and Iran. This resulted in the "Algiers Accords" of January 19, 1981, committing Iran to free the hostages immediately. Essential to the Algiers Accords and reportedly a non-negotiable requirement of Iran that the Carter Administration reluctantly conceded was Point I: Non-Intervention in Iranian Affairs. It reads "The United States pledges that it is and from now on will be the policy of the United States not to intervene, directly or indirectly, politically or militarily, in Iran's internal affairs." Other provisions of the Algiers Accords were the unfreezing of 8 billion dollars worth of Iranian assets and immunity from lawsuits

Iran might have faced. On January 20, 1981, twenty minutes after President Reagan's inaugural address, the hostages were formally released into U.S. custody, having spent 444 days in captivity. The hostages were flown to Algeria as a symbolic gesture for the help of that government in resolving the crisis, where former President Carter, acting as an emissary for the Reagan administration, received them. The flight continued to Rhein-Main Air Base in West Germany. After medical check-ups and debriefings they took a second flight to Stewart Air Force Base in Newburgh, New York and a bus ride to the United States Military Academy, receiving a hero's welcome all along the route.

The hostage crisis in Iran put India into an uncomfortable position. This was because the hostage crisis raised two important questions. First the question of commitment to international law was conventions and the second, the anti-US sentiment. Imam Khomeini considered the USA as the Master mind behind all exploitation, sorrow and tragedies in Iran and the Shah as a mere puppet in the hands of the USA. One writer pointed out that “the United states had itself been the cause of the hostage crisis. It conspired to destabilize Iran. Apart from successive tactics; the USA annoyed the Iranian Government and people when it allowed Muhammad Reza Shah into the United States, consequently, the Iranians had to find a means of preventing it. Taking Americans in Embassy in Tehran as hostage secured an effective means to counter US moves.”⁴⁹ On 4th November 1979 some agitated Iranian students occupied the US Embassy in Tehran and held fifty-two Americans as hostages. “The Islamic regime demanded the return of Mohammad Reza Shah to

⁴⁹ Kayhan International, 3 November 1990.

stand trial for his crimes, as well as the return of Iranian funds deposited in US banks.”⁵⁰

India adopted a correct and balanced position following the seizure of the United States Embassy in Tehran in 1979 and holding of American hostages for 444 days and economic sanctions against Iran by the West.

India expressed its deep concern over the hostage crisis in Iran. It also urged Iran to release diplomatic personnel held in Iran according to the principles of International law and convention. India’s view was expressed in UN Security Council that “continued occupation of United states Embassy in Tehran and detention of its personnel constituted a serious support violation of the fundamental principles of International law and diplomatic practice.”⁵¹ India also did not support the West sponsored economic sanctions against Iran.

Afghanistan Crisis and Soviet Invasion

Soviet invasion of in Afghanistan constituted a watershed in the political history of this region. Afghanistan, a land locked country in Central Asia, covering an area of 250,000 square miles and sharing international frontiers with some of the important countries of the region.⁵² It borders with USSR, the two communist giants in the North West and North east respectively and is flanked by Iran, one of the strategically important areas of the world in the West and Pakistan in the east. Geographically, the USSR, China, Iran and Pakistan are the immediate neighbours of Afghanistan. However, beyond this perimeter is also to be included the potential

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Asaf Hussain, *Islamic Iran, Revolution and Counter Revolution* (London, 1985), p. 173.

⁵² Ibid.

countries like India⁵³ in the East and the Islamic countries in the West as second door neighbours of Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that all the neighbours recognized Afghanistan as a viable entity with its own values and dynamics that exerted its own influence on them through ages. Afghanistan's peculiar location and its strategic importance bore special significance for her neighbours. Throughout its chequered history, Afghanistan has continued to survive as an independent state interacting vigorously with neighbours. The interaction of the neighbours also goes back to centuries revealing continuity and consistency in each of the neighbouring country's policy towards Afghanistan.

Iran voiced strong protests

Iran voiced strong protests and gathered support from virtually all non-aligned members and major powers. More significantly for Pakistan, the Islamic Conference meeting in Islamabad in January 1980, protested with almost one voice, against Soviet presence in Afghanistan only Syria, Libya and South Yemen dissented.⁵⁴

Iran denounced the Babrak Karmal government and did not recognize it. The newly established Islamic Revolutionary regime in Iran openly opposed the pro-Communist government in Afghanistan, the Iranian policy made no socket of its sympathy for those elements that had waged a war of resistance against the Kabul regime. The Iranian government, on 19th September 1979, issued a statement in which President Hafez Amin was warned for his close links with the Soviet Union. The

⁵³ Year book of the United Nations 1979, No. 4, p. 309, Times of India, December 1979.

⁵⁴ S.V. Nair, "Afghanistan perspectives for Reconciliation and peace (Panchsheel Publisher, New Delhi, 1988), 00. 1-2.

statement further said that if the Government of Afghanistan continued to fight against “Islam and the Islamic Revolution”, they were bound to be overthrown.⁵⁵

The Iranian government condemned the Russian invasion in the strongest possible terms. The Iranian President while condemning the Soviet presence in Afghanistan said that the Soviet invasion is a “brutal intervention by looters and occupiers and a threat to Iran.”⁵⁶

In its first major political four point plan in November 1981, the Iranian government convened a major international conference on “the future of Afghanistan” in mid January in Tehran preceding the conference, the Iranians, on 4 January, sent five plane loads of humanitarian assistance to Peshawar. The consignment was then passed on to the 7 party alliance of the Mujahideen for distribution to the afghan refugees.⁵⁷ The conference was unique in that it was probably the most representative gathering of leaders and numbers of both the 7 party alliance based in Peshawar and 8 party alliance based in Tehran, plus prominent Afghan intellectuals living in Europe, Inaugurating the conference, President Khomeini set the pace by focusing on four essential themes of the current Iranian approach to the Afghan issue. First he welcomed the direct talks between Mujahideen and the Soviet Union as a “positive development” and urged the Mujahideen leaders, who had subsequently developed some reservations on the efficacy of such a dialogue, that “continuation of the dialogue will be useful.” Second, President Khomeini underlined the need for Sectarian Unity, saying, “Sawing discord among the Mujahideen and Afghan people

⁵⁵ H.S.A. Jafri, *Indo-Afghan Relations, 1947-67* Sterling Pvt. New Delhi, 1976), p.1.

⁵⁶ Keesing Contemporary Archives, May 1980, p. 340241.

⁵⁷ Keesing Contemporary Archives, January 11, 1980, p. 300032.

under religious, cultural and ethnic pretexts is one of the objectives of foreign powers.”

Third, he urged the Mujahideen “not to allow any foreign power to penetrate the country, so that Afghanistan will start the new era with its Islamic identity and non aligned character.” Finally, the Iranian President stressed that “from now on Iran, with all its power, will remain on the side of the Afghan Muslims and will did them in different fields.”⁵⁸

Iran’s policy makers visualized the Afghanistan situation from a different perspective than that of Pakistan. There had been no generous flow of aid and assistance to the guerrillas from Iran like that from Pakistan. It is relevant here to mention that Iran from time to time made many statements supportive of the resistance and even refused to become involved in the UN. Sponsored negotiations conducted by Diego Cordovez so long as the Afghan guerrillas were absent.⁵⁹

Indian policy towards Afghanistan remained relatively vague. The Indian foreign policy makers have always desired a major role for India in international and regional affairs, the Afghan crisis put in India a very difficult and perplexing situation in view of its special relationship with the USSR and antagonistic relations with both China and Pakistan. The crisis had great significance for India’s strategic environment and impinged on its relations with the super powers as well.

In this context an evaluation of India’s foreign policy after the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan on December 25, 1979 is an interesting exercise. At the time of Soviet Military intervention in Afghanistan, Indian Prime Minister Charan

⁵⁸ Guardian, March 22, 1980.

⁵⁹ Tribune, 12 November 1981.

Singh's caretaker government was involved in the campaign for general election to be held in January 1980. In a surprising move and confused state, the Indian Foreign Ministry issued a statement on December 28, 1979 saying "consistent with the government of India's Commitment to principles of non-alignment, it supports the sovereign right of the afghan people to determine their own destiny free from foreign interference. The Government of India's attitude to such situation is well known; India has always opposed any outside interference in the internal affairs of one country by another. It is also the Government of India's earnest hope that no country or external power would take steps which might aggravate the situation and that normally would be restored there early."⁶⁰

India justified its dissociation with member states of the UN General Assembly to discuss withdrawal of USSR from Afghanistan. This was done through a statement in the Lok Sabha during the question hour. Then Minister for External Affairs, P.V. Narasimha Rao said, ". Government is not convinced raising this issue at the UN would be conducive to defusing the situation in our neighbourhood."⁶¹

This was the new major Indian response to the Afghan crisis in an international forum. This statement was a virtual endorsement of the Soviet intervention, which was not at all in tune with the reaction of a large majority of nations. One aspect of the stand taken by India was that it was not prepared to condemn the Soviet Union's action in international forum. The other aspect was that it abstained from voting in the General Assembly on the issue. The purpose was to avoid taking sides. On October 3, Narasimha Rao made a statement at 35th session of

⁶⁰ Mushahid Hussian, "The afghan issue", "Middle East International (Washington D.C.) No. 344, 17 February 1989, p. 17.

⁶¹ Asia yearbook 1983, p. 222.

the General Assembly. Regarding Afghanistan he stressed the need for a dialogue among the parties concerned, without pre-conditioning.⁶² Besides on September 26, 1981 speaking in the General Assembly Narasimha Rao, in his address pointed to the emerging threat of cold war that would exert pressure on the non-aligned movement. He expressed India's "disapproval of all kinds of outside intervention in any country" and mentioned that India always avoided "condemnatory polemics" and preferred a political solution.⁶³

On November 17, R.D. Sathe, Secretary in India's External Affairs Ministry in his speech in the General Assembly said that the effort of Kurt Waldheim, U.N. Secretary General, to bring about dialogue between Pakistan and Afghanistan had been set back by contrived technicalities presumably because of Pakistan's intransigence to recognize the regime in Kabul.⁶⁴

He advocated a peaceful solution in accordance with the formulation adopted in the New Delhi Declaration in February by the Foreign Ministers of non-aligned countries. It was also at the New Delhi conference, he said that the secretary General had designated his personal representative to engage in efforts aimed at facilitating negotiation among the parties concerned so as to achieve political solution.

Speaking at common wealth heads of Government meeting at Melbourne on September 30, 1981, Indira Gandhi expressed India's grave concern "at the use of Afghanistan as a pretext for a massive externally funded and encouraged

⁶² Foreign Affairs Record (New Delhi), Vol. XXV, No. 12, December 1979, p. 217.

⁶³ Iranian's Dissociation with Members, State of UN General Assembly to Discuss withdrawal of USSR from Afghanistan 7 August 1980," Lok Sabha Debate (New Delhi), Vol. VIII, No. 45-48, August 1980, p. 120.

⁶⁴ Ministry of External Affairs, government of India, India's views on the Afghanistan Situation (external Publicity Division, New Delhi, 1980), p. 35.

militarization in our neighbourhood” and remarked that Afghanistan had become embroiled in a trial of strength between the super powers.⁶⁵

She, therefore, advised regional cooperation among the countries concerned without the intrusion of outside interests. In fact, as time passed, the Afghan crisis grew intractable. India's effort towards crisis diffusion did not make headway. Narasimha Rao's speech at the plenary meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of non-aligned countries to the 37th Session of the General Assembly on October 14, 1982, reflected this there was no mention of the Afghan question but he stated the interference and intervention. In the internal affairs of non-aligned countries had increased. The non aligned countries had realized that military alliance and interlocking arrangements did not guarantee peace but served as a potential invitation to involvement in strategic conflict.⁶⁶ These utterances were mainly purported against the US-Pakistan military linkage. As the various peace proposals sponsored at various times did not make headway, India pinned its faith on UN initiative to solve the Afghan problem. On October 10, 1982, in his address to the 37th session of UN General Assembly, Narasimha Rao welcomed the UN Secretary General's search for a political solution, which in fact vindicated India's policy of defusing the Afghan crisis.⁶⁷

India made significant departure from the policy and response of other nations by recognizing the Babrak Karmal Government as legal one and maintained full diplomatic relations with the regime. In May 1982, the Indo-Afghan Joint economic commission, dormant since the 1978 Marxist coup in Afghanistan, met in Kabul. At

⁶⁵ Foreign Affairs Record, New Delhi, Vol XXVII, No. 9, September 1981, p. 252.

⁶⁶ Ibid. Vol. XXVIII, No. 11, November 1981, pp. 31-12.

⁶⁷ Ibid. Vol. XXVII, No. 10 October 1982, pp. 270-71.

this meeting India pledged economic and to expand hospital facilities in the Afghan capital and to assist in developing small scale industries.⁶⁸

The rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan in recent years has drawn India and Iran closer in their assessment of the new threats to regional security. Both the countries view the growth of the fundamentalist Taliban as a threat to the entire region. Iran is worried by Kabul's role in drug trafficking and its harsh treatment of the Shia minority. The Taliban offensive in Afghanistan has also generated legitimate apprehensions in Iran as it can affect Iranian interests in Central Asia. Iran's media, in the past, has also accused Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the US of raising this armed Islamist force to encircle Iran.⁶⁹ India, too, has made no secret of the Pakistan-Afghanistan nexus in the so-called Kashmir militancy. Neither India nor Iran recognized the administration of the Taliban fundamentalist Islamic militia, which swept Afghanistan in 1996 and ousted the government of then President Burhanuddin Rabbani. Both countries are backing the moderate forces represented by the government-in-exile of President Rabbani and favour a peaceful settlement through the establishment of a broad-based government with the representation of all ethnic groups in Afghanistan.⁷⁰

In a major diplomatic initiative, Iran convened a conference of the "Friends of Afghanistan" on October 28 and 29, 1996, to help resolve the crisis. India was also invited to the first regional Asian move of its type. According to Velayati, the proposed conference was intended to be guided by three general principles-non-interference of foreign powers in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, the invalidity

⁶⁸ Ibid. p 263.

⁶⁹ The News, November 21, 1999.

⁷⁰ The Times of India, May 18, 2000; www.Afgaha.com/EN/Mews/afp2007002html.

of a military solution and the desirability of a broad-based government in Kabul.⁷¹

Pakistan wanted the Afghanistan initiative to be confined to itself and Iran. Iran however, did not go by Pakistan's view.

Afghanistan was among the many issues of mutual interest that Jaswant Singh discussed with his Iranian counterpart during his visit to Iran in May 2000. President Khatami said that greater interaction between the two countries was important for regional stability. Jaswant Singh replied that India and Iran were natural partners.⁷² The emerging relationship is of considerable significance.

Recently, Iran's relations with Afghanistan have shown signs of improvement. An agreement was reached between Iran and Afghanistan in 1999 to reopen their official border at Doghuran-Islam Qala for trade purposes. In that agreement, Iran had placed no conditions while agreeing to reopen its border with Afghanistan.⁷³

Relations between Iran and the Taliban improved further following Tehran's decision to send a two-member delegation to Afghanistan to ameliorate the situation.⁷⁴ The frequent tours by the Iranian officials were welcomed by the Taliban and the Afghans living inside as well as outside Afghanistan. This also suggested that Iran could influence the Taliban militia to an extent. It is to be recalled that Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi recently issued a statement that his country was interested in initiating a dialogue with all the Afghan factions

⁷¹ K.K. Katyal, *The Hindu*, October 25, 1996.

⁷² *The Hindu*, May 23, 2000.

⁷³ *The News*, November 21, 1999; the border had been closed the previous year when the already tense relations between the two countries worsened and Iran deployed thousands of troops on its border with Afghanistan. The killing of several Iranian diplomats in Mazar-I-Sharif, northern Afghanistan, when the Taliban captured the city in August 1998, triggered widespread protests in Iran. Though war was avoided, the dispute remained unresolved.

⁷⁴ *The Nation*, January 18, 2000.

aimed at restoring peace in Afghanistan.⁷⁵ Iran and the Taliban also signed a cooperation accord to monitor the joint border for preventing drug trafficking in the Iranian city of Mashad. According to Afghan sources, the visit took place at the initiation of Iran.⁷⁶ Iran, however, ruled out establishing diplomatic ties with the Taliban and clarified that Iran was following up talks with the Taliban as an Afghan group, on topics such as checking smuggling of narcotic drugs, Afghan refugees and border security.⁷⁷

Iran and Pakistan agreed to make joint efforts for peace in Afghanistan. In the latest developments, Pakistan has taken the initiative to mend fences with Iran and remove any misgivings and misunderstanding between the two 'brotherly' countries. Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmed's visit to Tehran as the special envoy of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was principally aimed to achieve this objective. The talks mainly focused on the Afghanistan issue and both countries agreed to work together for the restoration of durable peace and stability in the war-torn country. A statement issued at the end of Shamshad's visit said that both countries agreed to support the formation of a broad-based multi-ethnic government in Afghanistan. The Iranian side also repeated its traditional support for the Kashmir cause and called for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations (UN) resolutions.⁷⁸

This, however, does not suggest that there are no differences between Iran and Pakistan. First of all, Pakistan has recognized the Taliban administration. Iran, however, still recognizes the Rabbani regime, which controls northern

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Business Recorder, April 25, 2000.

⁷⁷ The Nation, January 24, 2000.

⁷⁸ Persian Gulf News, January 11, 1999.

Afghanistan. During Shamshad Ahmed's visit to Tehran, the Iranian hosts singled out terrorist activities as the major irritant in Pakistan-Iran relations and asked Islamabad to take practical steps to bring to justice those involved in the killing of several Iranian diplomats and others. The sectarian violence in Pakistan has specially been viewed with concern by Tehran.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, it is not easy to bridge the divergent positions taken by the two countries on Afghanistan. Apparently, both countries have the common goal of negotiated settlement and a broad-based government in Afghanistan, but their linkages with rival Afghan forces make them see the problem from entirely different perspectives.

Reportedly, Pakistan after going through a series of meetings with the regional countries and the Western capitals, has decided to launch a fresh diplomatic offensive for the establishment of a broad-based government in Afghanistan. This virtually amounts to reviewing the country's Afghan policy. Pakistan has established links with the Rabbani and Masood forces. A number of meetings have been held secretly between Pakistani officials and Afghan leaders in which Pakistan has showed willingness to initiate the process of setting up of a broad-based government. Pakistan has already started discussions with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan over the question of lasting peace in Afghanistan.⁸⁰ The current round of talks with regional countries shows that it is still Pakistan, which holds the key to Afghan peace.

Recently, the Taliban's diplomatic mission issued a statement in Islamabad urging the Islamic Republic of Iran to reciprocate its goodwill gesture for

⁷⁹ Khaleej Times, June 3, 1999; Persian Gulf News, *ibid*.

⁸⁰ Persian Gulf News, *Ibid*.

resolving the Afghan tangle. In response, the editorial in Tehran Times, on October 28, 2000, observed, "If the ruling militia are really sincere about the statement they issued in Islamabad, they should invite all the ethnic and religious groups in Afghanistan to the negotiating table and prepare the ground for the formation of a broad-based government in that country."⁸¹ Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi said "that the issue of Afghanistan can only be resolved through negotiations aimed at forming a broad-based government in which all Afghan ethnic and religious groups may participate."⁸²

Hectic activities are going on at the regional and international levels to decide about the future of Afghanistan to put an end to the perplexing labyrinthine situation in the country. The US is seemingly playing a key role in these activities with some of the regional countries.⁸³ Iran being an important regional country has a very good chance of playing a crucial role in the future of Afghanistan.

Threatened by the forces of destabilization radiating out of Afghanistan, India and Iran have a common objective in limiting the domination of the Taliban and in ensuring that peace and stability return to the war-torn nation. Both want to contribute to international efforts aimed at establishing a government in Kabul that fully represents the ethnic and cultural diversity of Afghanistan.

⁸¹ POT (Iran), Vol. 6, No. 3, January 9, 2001, p. 20.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ POT (Iran), vol. 6, no.1., January 3, 2001, p.7.

The Iran-Iraq war crisis

Although the Iran-Iraq war of 1980–1988 was a war over dominance of the Persian Gulf region, the roots of the war go back many centuries. There has always been a rivalry between various kingdoms of Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) and Persia (Iran).

Before the Ottoman empire, Iraq was part of Persia ruled under the Aq Qoyunlu dynasty.. The border disputes between Persia and the Ottomans never ended however. Between 1555 and 1918, Persia and the Ottoman empire signed no less than 18 treaties re-addressing their disputed borders. Modern Iraq was created with the British involvement in the region and the final collapse of the Ottoman empire, hence inheriting all the disputes with Persia.

More precisely, the origins of the Iran-Iraq war of 1980–1988 go back to the question of sovereignty over the resource-rich province of Khuzestan. Khuzestan, home to Iran's Elamite Empire, was an independent non-Semitic and non-Indo-European speaking kingdom whose capital was Susa. Khuzestan has, however, been attacked and occupied by various kingdoms of Mesopotamia (the precursors of modern Iraq) many times.

On 18 December 1959, `Abd al-Karīm Qāsim, who had just taken control over Iraq by a coup d'état, openly declared: "We do not wish to refer to the history of Arab tribes residing in Al-Ahwaz and Mohammareh [Khorramshahr]. The Ottomans handed over Mohammareh, which was part of Iraqi territory, to Iran." The Iraqi regime's dissatisfaction over Iran's possession of oil-rich Khuzestan province was not limited to rhetorical statements; Iraq started supporting secessionist movements in

Khuzestan, and even raised the issue of its territorial claims in the next meeting of the Arab League, without any success. Iraq showed reluctance in fulfilling existing agreements with Iran, especially after the death of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser and the rise of the Ba'ath Party, when Iraq decided to take on the role of "leader of the Arab world".

In 1969, the deputy prime minister of Iraq openly declared: "Iraq's dispute with Iran is in connection with Arabistan (Khuzestan) which is part of Iraq's soil and was annexed to Iran during foreign rule." Soon Iraqi radio stations began exclusively broadcasting into "Arabistan", encouraging Arabs living in Iran and even Balūchīs to revolt against Iran's central government. Basra TV stations even started showing Iran's Khuzestan province as part of Iraq's new province called 'Nasiriyyah', renaming all Iranian cities with Arabic names.

In 1971, Iraq broke off diplomatic relations with Iran after claiming sovereignty rights over the islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb in the Persian Gulf, following the withdrawal of the British. Iraq then illegally expropriated the properties of 70,000 Iranians and expelled them from its territory after complaining to the Arab League, and the UN, without any success.

One of the factors contributing to hostility between the two powers was a dispute over full control of the Arvandrud/Shatt al-Arab waterway at the head of the Persian Gulf, an important channel for the oil exports of both countries. In 1975, United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had sanctioned that Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran, attack Iraq over the waterway, which was under Iraqi control at the time; soon afterward both nations signed the Algiers Accord, in which

Iraq made territorial concessions, including the waterway, in exchange for normalized relations.

Iraq had staged a battle against Iranian forces a year earlier in 1974, resulting in heavy casualties on both sides. Iran attempted to destabilize Iraq and encouraged Kurdish nationalists to break up the country, in answer to Iraq's similar activities in Iran's Khuzestan province.

However, the relationship between Iranian and Iraqi governments briefly improved in 1978, when Iranian agents in Iraq discovered a pro-Soviet coup d'etat against the Iraqi government. When informed of this plot, Saddam Hussein, who was Vice President at the time, ordered the execution of dozens of his army officers, and to return the favor, expelled Ruhollah Khomeini, an exiled leader of clerical opposition to the Shah, from Iraq.

Iran's embassy in London was subsequently attacked by Iraqi-sponsored terrorist forces a few months prior to the war in 1980, in what came to be known as the Iranian Embassy Siege.

Saddam Hussein was eagerly interested in elevating Iraq to a strong regional power. A successful invasion of Iran would make Iraq the dominant power in the Persian Gulf region and strengthen its lucrative oil trade. Such lofty ambitions were not that far-fetched. Severe officer purges (including several executions ordered by Sadegh Khalkhali, the post-revolution sharia ruler) and spare part shortages for Iran's American-made equipment had crippled Iran's once mighty military. The bulk of the Iranian military was made up of poorly armed, though committed, militias. Iran had minimal defenses in the Arvand/Shatt al-'Arab river.

Saddām on numerous occasions alluded to the Islamic conquest of Iran in propagating his anti-Persian position against Iran. For example, on 02 April 1980, a half-year before the outbreak of the war, in a visit by Saddām to al-Mustansiriyyah University in Baghdad, drawing parallels to the 7th-Century defeat of Persia in the Battle of al-Qādisiyyah he announced:

"In your name, brothers, and on behalf of the Iraqis and Arabs everywhere we tell those [Persian] cowards and dwarfs who try to avenge Al-Qadisiyah that the spirit of Al-Qadisiyah as well as the blood and honor of the people of Al-Qadisiyah who carried the message on their spearheads are greater than their attempts."⁸⁴

The aftermath of the Iranian Revolution of 1979 was central to the conflict. The Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was threatening to export Islamic revolution to the rest of the Middle East, even though Iran was hardly in any position to do so militarily, for most of the Shah's army had already been disbanded. The Khomeinist camp despised Iraq's Ba'athist secularism in particular, and believed that the oppressed Shias in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait could follow the Iranian example and turn against their governments. At the same time the revolution in Iran, the destabilization of the country and its alienation from the West made it a tempting target to the expansionist Saddam Hussein. In particular he felt that Iranian Sunni citizens would rather join a powerful Sunni-led Iraq than remain in the Shia dominated Iran.

Thus Iraq started the war believing that Sunnis of Iran would join the opposing forces. It seems that Saddam had not fully appreciated the powers of nationalism over

⁸⁴ <http://www.wikipedia.iraniragwar.html> .

historically clan-centered differences, nor the power of the central state apparatus who controlled the press. Although some of the ethnic Arabs of Khuzestan collaborated with Iraqis, most of the Sunnis of Iran turned against the Iraqi forces.

The UN Secretary General report dated 9 December 1991 (S/23273) explicitly cites "Iraq's aggression against Iran" in starting the war and breaching International security and peace.⁸⁵

This was an issue in which Iran itself was a party in conflict. Therefore, the issue had peculiar ramifications. As members of Islamic peace committed to end the Iran-Iraq war and in their individual capacity, Islamabad and Dhaka continued to support an end to hostilities. India did so at the unilateral level as well as through the forum of UN and NAM.

In the wake of Iran-Iraq war, India was put in an inevitable and delicate position on issues like naming and condemning the aggressor. The first official reaction was pronounced by the Government spokesman when he described the conflict as "an unfortunate development" on two counts – it was between two countries with which India had very friendly relations and both of them were non aligned. An Indian scholar pointed out "India's dilemma at this time was in a sense comparable to the Soviet predicament way back in 1962 on the India-China border war."⁸⁶ India was the only country to which the emissaries of the two Governments rushed. It was a measure of trust and faith in India that both Iran and Iraq turned to

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Amstutz, n. 41, p. 1565.

her to seek support for their position. Special envoys of both Iran and Iraq visited India on 28 September 1980 and 8 October 1980 respectively.⁸⁷

Although India expressed its deep concern over the Iran-Iraq conflict, it avoided spelling out its judgment. P.V. Narasimha Rao, the then Minister for external affairs, said, "... India made it clear that it has not taken and will not take sides and has expressed its anguish at the loss of life and property being suffered by both sides." He also said that prolongation or escalation of the present conflict could have grave implications on both regional and global peace and security. Besides, at the UN General assembly on 3 October 1980, P.V. Narasimha Rao said that the continuing conflict between the two countries would "only weaken the solidarity of the non aligned and developing countries.

India's policy and attitude were indicated through a collective forum, the joint communiqué issued by the conference of the Foreign Ministers of the non-aligned states in February 1981. India reiterated and emphasized the implementation of the principles of non-aligned countries as outlined in Para 26 of the final declaration, which dealt with the Iran-Iraq war issue. During the question hour in Rajya Sabha the Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs, Shivshankar said: "No state should acquire or occupy territories by the use of force, and whatever territories have been acquired in this way should be returned, that no act of aggression should be committed against any state, that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states should be respected, that no state should try to interfere or intervene in the internal affairs of other states. That all differences or claims which may exist between states

⁸⁷ A.H.H. Abidi, Iran-Iraq war and India: Some Key factors "Mainstream (New Delhi), Vol. 37, May 16, 1981, p. 23-24.

should be settled by peaceful means with a view that powerful relations should prevail among members of states.⁸⁸

India also tried its best to end this war through peaceful means, the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi urged King Fahad of Saudi Arabia to intensify efforts to end the Iran-Iraq war. In a letter to the Saudi monarch, which was delivered by a three member Indian good will delegation to the kingdom, Mrs. Indira Gandhi said that the prolonged war between the non-aligned countries had threatened the Security of Asia as some forces were keen to take advantage of the situation.⁸⁹ On March 29, 1985 India's new Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi in one of the biggest diplomatic offensives, sent the Minister of state for foreign affairs, Khurshid Alam Khan and Foreign secretary, Ramesh Bhandari to Iran. They tried to persuade the two adversaries not to bombard the civilian areas. The Indian peace team returned on March 31, 1985 and Khurshid Alam Khan described his discussions in Tehran as useful and said that India's approach to bring the Gulf War to an end was very much appreciated by Iran.⁹⁰

As the Chairman of NAM, India made considerable efforts to stop the tragic war on 18 February 1988 the official spokesman of the Government of India issued a statement on behalf of the Chairman expressing concern and anguish at the renewed escalation of conflict. It noted that as Chairman of the NAM, India had consistently endeavoured through many initiatives to bring about an end to the Iran-Iraq conflict and to promote peaceful settlement in the interests of both countries as well as for

⁸⁸ Iran-Iraq Conflict, Statement by minister of External Affairs, P.V. Narasimha Rao" Rajya Sabha debate (New Delhi), vol. XXVII, No. 1-7, 18 November 1980, pp. 293-302.

⁸⁹ "India's role in lessening Tension arising out of Iran-Iraq war", Rajya Sabha Debate (New Delhi), Vol. XVII, No. 1-7, 20 February 1989, pp. 87-88.

⁹⁰ Amrita Bazar Patrika, September 27, 1984.

stability and peace in the region. The statement stated that "... India was ready to assist them in a sincere and constructive manner in evolving a phased programme at de-escalation leading to a just, comprehensive and honourable solution of the differences that that had divided the two countries."⁹¹

Regarding the devastating Gulf War, India's concern was genuine. But it could not use the NAM as an exclusive platform for sorting out the dispute. In fact both Iran-Iraq's were firm on their decision not to budge an inch from their rigid positions. Professor A.H.H. Abidi rightly pointed out: "The Gulf War presents an interesting spectacle of international diploma demarcates as regards issues and mediation... This was the first occasion when the international community made diplomatic efforts at three different levels, UN, non-aligned and AIC to bring about peace. However, although the decision in these forums ranged from occupied territories, the aggressor was not named. The belligerent themselves adopted rigid positions."⁹²

India's stand on the war was seen by Iranians as partisan and pro-Arab. The mediation efforts in the Iran-Iraq conflict had been hampered for various reasons. India had also cultivated close relations with Iraq since the mid sixties. In the economic terms 52 percent of all the construction projects being executed by India in foreign countries were located in Iraq and this significantly influenced the Indian attitude. Besides favourable economic relations with Iraq, other factors also determined India's response to the Iraq-Iran conflict. These were: the presence of a large number of Indian workers and professionals in Arab Gulf states, Indian

⁹¹ Tulsi Ram, *Persia to Iran: One step forward to steps Backward* (Mahajan Pub, New Delhi, 1988), p. 124.

⁹² *Non-aligned under India's Chairmanship* (published under the auspices of Indian Institute for non-aligned studies, New Delhi, 1986), pp. 32-33.

participation in civil construction in that region and the fact that the majority of the Arab world supported Iraq. These constraints led to the Arab world supporting Iraq. These Iraq wars had been partisan and pro Arab.⁹³

Iran always suspected that India had a military training team in Iraq that predated the Gulf war. On occasions Iranian officials voiced their apprehension that some of the Indian teams were specifically positioned in Iraq to help maintain combat aircraft of Soviet manufacture.⁹⁴

India lost an opportunity to win Iran's confidence when the latter was looking for support in its criticisms of Iraq's use of chemical weapons. In April 1988, Iranian Ambassador Ebrahim Behnam Dehkordy, said that Iran would like India to lead the members of non-aligned movement in condemning Iraq for using chemical weapons in the Gulf war. This was a humanitarian issue. He further said that as leader of the NAM and its Chairman, India was expected to "take an appropriate position" on chemical weapons and other issues of humanitarian nature. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Indian peace initiative did not achieve any breakthrough during the non-aligned summit held at New Delhi in March 1983.

Iran also accused the UN of having failed to take the necessary steps to prohibit Iraq's 'aggressive act,' Iran had exhausted all appeals to reason and logic.⁹⁵

India's policy has always been to condemn all aggressions and to deny the fruit of aggression in any part of the world. But India did not condemn Iraq's use of chemical weapons. In January 1981, Iran alleged that chemical weapons had been

⁹³ A.H.H. Abidi, "The Iran-Iraq War: A Balance sheet" in R.C. Sharma, ed: *Perspective on Iraq-Iran Conflict* (Rajesh publication, New Delhi, 1984), p. 88.

⁹⁴ *Yearbook on India's foreign policy 1985-86* (New Delhi, 1987), p. 114.

⁹⁵ *The Hindu*, August 17, 1989.

used by Iraq during the fighting around Ahwaz in Khusistan. More detailed allegations came late in 1982. India could have examined all these developments and issued a statement condemning the use of chemical weapons. Since India was one of the signatories of the Geneva protocol of 1925 which outlaws the use of asphyxiating, positions or other gas and of all-analogous liquid materials and devices.⁹⁶

The Kashmir Crisis

Iran is one of the most important country in the West Asian region, with India has maintained fairly extensive relations in diverse fields especially after New Delhi signed a treaty of friendship with Iran and Mureh 1950. But relations never matured and in fact remained cool and at times strained due to a number of factors like Pakistan, Nasser's Egypt, Iran's membership in CENTO and the Shah's pro-West policies which mostly conflicted with India's non aligned policy. Despite differing perceptions on number of issues several high level visits took place with the Shah of Iran visiting India in February 1956 and Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru making a return visit to Tehran in September 1959.

Pakistan defeat in the 1971 war, emergence of Bangladesh, steep increase in Iran's income from oil, Arab unity during the 1973 Arab Israeli war, Pakistan tilt towards the Arab countries and India's growing ties with Iraq, persuaded the Shah to reassess Iran's ties with India. New Delhi also realized the significance of strengthening ties with Tehran. Under these circumstances Mrs. Indira Gandhi visited Tehran in April 1974 and the Shah of Iran paid a return visit to India in October 1974. The Shah again visited India in February 1978 when the Janata Party was ruling at the centre as Prime Minister Mr. Morarji Desai had visited Iran in June 1977.

⁹⁶ Velayati, n. 43, p.9.

Kashmir issue has remained a bone of conception between India and Pakistan in the sub-continent since the partition in 1947. Both have fought over Kashmir. The issue has largely influenced the international outlook of the two countries, and has caused embarrassing situations for the friends and “allies” of the two countries. Support for Pakistan’s position on the Kashmir issue was the Yardstick used by Pakistan to measure the friendship of at other nations.

Iran extended diplomatic support to Pakistan. The Iranian television carried a special programme on Jammu and Kashmir in July 1982. The programme clearly upheld Pakistan point of view on the Kashmir issue and referred to the Indian State of the Kashmir as “Indian-held Kashmir.” The programme traced the history of Muslim population of Jammu and Kashmir and the Indian failure to grant them the right of self-determination. This reflected Iran’s position on Jammu and Kashmir. The first time since the Islamic revolution in Iran that publicly supported Pakistan’s position on Kashmir issue.⁹⁷

India co-ordinated its policy with Iran, but at the same time by tracking every delegation and monitoring their response on a day to day basis on a specially prepared score sheet, India was confident of defeating the Pakistan resolution if it was put to voting. The cooperation between India and Iran made it possible for India to show grace and avoid embarrassment to its friends while achieving its goal. In this connection an ailing Mr. Dinesh Singh, India’s External Affairs Minister travelled to Tehran to meet Iranian leaders on the UNHRC meet in Geneva. He also met the Chinese foreign minister in Tehran who was visiting Iran. There was considerable

⁹⁷ Hindustan Times, 6 April 1983.

speculation of a China-India-Iran axis, which had been advocated by Iranian president Hashemi Rafsanjani while on an official visit to China.

Iranian Parliament (Majlis) discussed the Kashmir issue. In the opening session of Majlis on March 4, 1990, speaker Karrubi focused his remarks on the events in Jammu and Kashmir and condemned the Indian Government for violent confrontation against the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir province. He termed the Indian Government's treatment of the Kashmir Muslims as irrational and injudicious and expressed his regret and sorrow. Karrubi also warned the Indian Government to deal with the case of the Jammu and Kashmir in a rational and judicious killings and violence. While expressing his condolence to the bereaved Kashmir families, the Majlis speaker called on the Iranian Foreign Minister to do its utmost in order to end the massacre of the Kashmir Muslims.⁹⁸

Iranians have always said their diplomacy is aimed at doing what was best for India-Pakistan and to the people of Kashmir. One might add that in the ultimate analysis what Iran was doing was to safeguard further its own national interest.

Iranian media took note of prevailing developments in Jammu and Kashmir. A morning daily Republic of Iran stressed that the aggressive attitude of the Indian Government towards Muslims in Kashmir would have no outcome but increase scope of furious protest of Muslims. In a weekly commentary on recent bloody clashes in Kashmir, the Islamic Republic of Iran noted that the attitude of Indian government would also make the Muslims in Kashmir more determined to settle their dispute with the Government once and for all. Demands of Muslims in Kashmir are clear to the

⁹⁸ The Muslim, August 1, 1982.

Government, the commentary said, “adding that they were determined to regain their rights.”⁹⁹

Iranian government offered to mediate between the India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue. The Iranian ambassador in Islamabad Javad Mansuri, on April 14, disclosed that the Islamic Republic and other countries had offered to mediate on the issue. Indian government would forego its use of force in Jammu and Kashmir, and work towards peaceful solution of the issue.¹⁰⁰

Kashmir had been the main point of friction between India and Iran, as Iran supported Pakistan, both within the UN and outside throughout the period of active consideration of the Kashmir issue (1950-1965). Tehran's material support to Islamabad during the Indo-Pakistan Wars of 1965 and 1971 brought the relationship to a low point. During the Khomeini period too New Delhi and Tehran differed on many issues.

The 1979 revolution had a favourable impact on the Kashmiri Muslims. Among the organizations, the Jamaat-i-Islami not only welcomed the change in Iran, but came out openly to support the new Islamic Iranian leadership. The Jamaat-i-Islami dominated the Muslim United Front (MUF) which came to the fore during the March 1987 Assembly elections. It was suspected that the MUF was getting financial and other assistance from Iran and the latter also had a hand in the formation of MUF, whose leaders regularly received invitations to attend religious

⁹⁹ FBISNES, 24 May 1980.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in FIBS/NES, March 8, 1980

conferences. The MUF's political philosophy clearly reflected the teachings of Ayatollah Khomeini.¹⁰¹

In early 1990, Iran in an apparent snub to India cancelled the visit of India's External Affairs Minister I.K. Gujral to Tehran to highlight Iran's concern over developments in Kashmir.¹⁰² But in the aftermath of the 1990-91 Iraq Kuwait crisis, and due to sustained Western pressure, Iran was isolated and so was compelled to normalize ties with regional countries including India.

In 1991, India's External Affairs Minister Madhav Singh Solanki said that Iran had made it clear that Kashmir was an integral part of India.¹⁰³ While this was true, President Rafsanjani during his visit to Pakistan in September 1992, voiced support for the right of self-determination of the Muslims in Kashmir. When Indian Foreign Secretary J.N. Dixit visited Iran in July 1993, Velayati told him that Iran would not back separatists in Kashmir and expressed full support for the territorial integrity of India.¹⁰⁴ Even during Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's visit to Iran, Iran assured India that it had no desire to interfere in India's internal affairs, including Kashmir.¹⁰⁵ It supported India stating that there should not be any interference in the internal affairs of other countries and called upon all states to eschew support to terrorism and subversion. However, Rafsanjani pleaded for a peaceful solution of the Kashmir issue to be negotiated by India and Pakistan. In an interview to The Hindustan Times, Rafsanjani said, "We do not like the existing situation in that

¹⁰¹ A.K. Pasha, "Indo-Iranian Relations: The Kashmir Issue", in A.K. Pasha, ed., *India, Iran and the GCC States: Political Strategy and Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2000), p.267.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 268.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

¹⁰⁴ *National Herald*, July 15, 1993

¹⁰⁵ Pasha, N. 44, pp 269-271; *National Herald*, July 15, 1993.

area. It is not in the interest of the people of Kashmir. We do not want to interfere. We only want talks so that a solution can be found."¹⁰⁶

During the UN Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva in February-March 1994, Iran played a crucial role in persuading Pakistan to withdraw the resolution the latter had tabled on Kashmir. This shows that Iran's stand was responsive to India's concerns. While this was true, in early 1999, during the Pakistan foreign secretary's visit to Tehran, the Iranian government repeated its traditional support for the Kashmir cause and called for the peaceful settlement of the Kashmir problem.¹⁰⁷

The 9th summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) was held at Doha in November 2000. The summit declared that the OIC should not remain content with just the inclusion of the Kashmir issue in its resolution, but make India understand that the Islamic world cannot be indifferent to the fate of the Muslims in Kashmir. Condemning India for its high-handed suppression of the Kashmiri Muslims' rightful demand "to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination", the OIC in its resolution called on member states, "To take all necessary measures to convince India to put an immediate end to violence in Kashmir."¹⁰⁸

It was pointed out at the summit that apart from the OIC, the international community too must intervene in the Kashmir conflict. It was emphasized that many of the OIC members are "in a position to put political as well as economic pressure on India to end the brutalities . . . Bilateral trade between India and several

¹⁰⁶ T.R. Ramachandran, *The Times of India*, July 23, 1993; Inder Malhotra, *Newstime*, March 10, 1994; "Rafsanjani Seeks Better Relations with India", *Strategic Digest*, vol. 23, no. 12, December 1993, p. 2011.

¹⁰⁷ Pasha, n. 44. p 229; *Persian Gulf News*, January 11, 1999.

¹⁰⁸ *POT (Iran)*, vol. 6, no. 7, January 22, 2001, pp. 52-53.

Muslim states, including Iran, is improving", implying that Iran can put pressure on India also.¹⁰⁹

On November 15, India rejected a call by the OIC to end violence in Kashmir, saying it was an internal matter. "We reject all such resolutions outright of the OIC. The OIC has no locus standing on matters relating to India's internal affairs," an Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman said.¹¹⁰

The duality in Iran's policy is well illustrated. On the one hand, it emphasized non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, but, on the other, it is ready to support Muslims anywhere and provide support based on humanitarian aspects.

Improvement of Iran-India Relations in the Early 1990s

During the early years of the 1990s, due to emerging parallelism in political interests, the complementary economic and technological interests, and a shared perception about evolving geo-strategic environment,¹¹¹ relations between India and Iran started improving.

However, the real impetus for improvement in their bilateral relations was provided by the post-Mujahideen situation in Afghanistan. The consolidation of power by the Taliban (whom both India and Iran thought to be backed by Pakistan) in Afghanistan was a major source of anxiety for New Delhi and Tehran, which drew them closer as both found their interests being threatened by the Taliban. In fact, India used the strong Iranian reservations about Taliban as a means of policy convergence

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ POT (Iran), Vol. 6, no. 6, January 17, 2001, O. 46.

¹¹¹ J.N. Dixit, op. cit.

on Afghanistan.¹¹² India and Iran both backed Afghanistan's Northern Alliance for several years in an effort to dismantle the Taliban regime.¹¹³ Incidentally, during the 1990s, Pak-Iran relations started deteriorating, due to their perceived varying interests in Afghanistan, conflicting attitudes towards the Taliban, economic rivalry over opportunities in Central Asia, and the rise of sectarian terrorism in Pakistan.¹¹⁴ This removed the "Pakistan factor" in Iran-India ties.

The convergence of interests in Afghanistan created a goodwill that was built upon by various high level visits between India and Iran during the early years of the last decade that provided them with an opportunity to have consultations on important strategic issues, and thus helped them come closer. The first of such visits was the visit to India by the then Foreign Minister of Iran, Ali Akbar Velayati, in November 1992. Indian Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao, paid a visit to Iran in September 1993, which was followed by Iranian President, Hashemi Rafsanjani's visit to India in April 1995.¹¹⁵

However, the real breakthrough in Iran-India relations was achieved during the Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee's high profile four-day visit to Tehran in April 2001, which was described by the Iranian President, Syed Muhammad Khatami, as "a new chapter in the field of human and international relations,"¹¹⁶ and by the Iranian Foreign Minister, Kamal Kharrazi, as a "turning point" in the "excellent ties" between the two countries.¹¹⁷ Mr. Vajpayee affirmed that the depth of Indo-Iranian relations gives India "a very special position" in Tehran.

¹¹² Mahdi Maud, "A New Chapter in Ties with Iran", Dawn, January 4, 2003.

¹¹³ Sudha Ramachandran, "The Glue That Binds India, Iran", at www.atimes.com.pk

¹¹⁴ Mahdi Masud, "Changing Indo-Iranian Ties", Dawn, April 19, 2001.

¹¹⁵ John Calabrese, op. cit. p. 69.

¹¹⁶ Afzaal Mahmood, "Iran's Strategic Handshake", Dawn, April 23, 2001.

¹¹⁷ Dr. Riffat Hussain, "The Changing Indo-Iran Relations", at www.afghan-web.com

During the visit, the two sides signed the Tehran Declaration in which, “both sides agreed to launch a new phase of constructive and mutually beneficial cooperation, covering in particular, the areas of energy, transit and transport, industry, agriculture and service sector. The sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen transport and transit cooperation. They also agreed to actively promote scientific and technological cooperation, including among others, joint research projects, short and long-term training courses and exchange of related information on regular bases.”¹¹⁸ The Declaration stressed the importance of a compressed the importance of a comprrnational terrorism at the United Nations, an initiative taken by New Delhi.¹¹⁹ the two sides also agreed to work more closely in restoring peace to the war-torn Afghanistan.¹²⁰

The then Iranian President, Seyed Muhammad Khatami, reciprocated the visit in January 2003. Muhammad Khatami was the Chief Guest at India’s Republic Day’s parade, showing the remarkable degree of warmth in Indo-Iranian relations. It was a clear signal of the high importance India attached to its relations with Iran and its assessment that Iran was a vital player in regional inter-state relations and security arrangements.¹²¹ During the visit, the two countries signed the “New Delhi Declaration” and the “Road Map to Strategic Cooperation”, which promulgated a plan for the evolving partnership between them.¹²² The two sides signed seven agreements pertaining to economic exchanges, science and technology, information technology,

¹¹⁸ “Foreign Secretary’s Remarks at Discussion Session” India-Iran: From Dialogue to a Convergence of Views” at the India Economic Summit (New Delhi, December 4, 2001)”, Strategic Digest, Vol. XXXI, No. 12, December 2001. p. 1624.

¹¹⁹ Sujit Chatterjee, “India, Iran sign Tehran Declaration”, at www.rediff.com/news/2001/apr/11iran.htm.

¹²⁰ “Iran and India to Cooperate on Afghanistan”, at www.iran-PressService.com/articles_2001/apr_2001/iran_india_11401.htm.

¹²¹ J.N. Dixit, “Iran has a Pivotal Role in India’s Middle East Policies”, Daily Times, February 2, 2003.

¹²² C. Christine Fair, “Indo-Iranian Relations: Prospects for Bilateral Cooperation Post 9/11”, at www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/asia_rpt_120rev.pdf.

educational training, reconstruction of Afghanistan, and anti-terrorism. Besides, they agreed to explore opportunities for cooperation in defence, including training and exchange of visits.¹²³

The bonhomie accompanying the visit showed the great strides that India and Iran had made in their bilateral relations since the early days of the 1990s when an annual report published by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs had referred to Iran as a threat to India.¹²⁴ This improvement in Indo-Iranian relations was the result of determined, though cautious, efforts by New Delhi and Tehran to improve and expand the scope of their bilateral relations. In addition to the Afghanistan factor, which provided the initial impetus for the upward trend in Iran-India relations and which remains there even after the ouster of the Taliban regime, as both continue to support the new dispensation in Kabul, certain other factors have been there, pushing the two countries closer to each other.

India – Iran Relations and vital factors during the 1990s

The vital factors that governed their relations during the 1990s were: energy, and Central Asia, where both the countries are concerned for security reasons as well as for economic interaction.

Both shared the view that the wider dimensions of Indo-Iran relations were more important than the fundamental difference of views on Kashmir and emphasized on consolidating relations with each other.

¹²³ Maqsd ul Hasan Nuri, "India and Iran: Emerging Strategic Co-operation?", *IPRI JOURNAL*, Vol. III, No. 2, Summer 2003, p. 49.

¹²⁴ Mahdi Masud, *op. cit.*

The end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union signified the collapse of the world order, which was in existence since World War II and heralded a new era characterized by the univocal world. The Gulf War undoubtedly transformed the world scene. It marginalized the erstwhile Soviet Union and confirmed that the US alone had the requisite military and economic power to operate on a global scale. There were attempts to impose a preconceived order on the countries in the South, a temptation to reorder the affairs of all regions outside Europe. The new military doctrine of the US assumed that the major threat would come not from Russia, but from the Third World.¹²⁵

Under the altered circumstances, the world faced a new situation and so did India. Hence, India had to evolve suitable responses. The regional situation, the threats to India's security, the nuclearisation around India's borders, the state sponsored terrorism from across the frontiers-all these factors continued to engage India's concerns and prompted India's vigil, compelling it to function in accordance with these realities. Besides this, the economic imperative was no less than the security imperative. In the new international era, without economic development India would find itself marginalized and hence had to keep in view its external economic relations. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao himself acknowledged that changes in the international situation had come with bewildering rapidity and that the government stood ready to reorient policy in alignment with the changed situation. The leitmotif of India's foreign policy was to structure a regional and international order based on harmony and a willingness to strive for peace and readiness to converge on basic issues and needs of mankind. The overriding

¹²⁵ V.P. Dutt, *India's Foreign Policy in a changing World* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1999), p. 4.

priorities were: preventing any threat to India's unity and territorial integrity, ensuring geopolitical security by creating a durable environment of stability and peace in the region, creating a framework conducive to the economic well-being of the people by encouraging a healthy external economic environment and trying to restore internationally, the centrality and criticality of development in the evolution of political and economic policies all over the world.¹²⁶ Narasimha Rao's visits to Central Asia, Iran, Oman and other places were steps in this direction.

Thus, the first task of foreign policy was to take measures to alleviate the economic crunch. India needed immediate access to substantial amounts of foreign exchange to tide over the crisis and this assistance was available on less than forbidding terms only from the international financial institutions like the World Bank with their large American presence.

Although there was vast improvement in Indo-American ties, there were some abrasive issues that remained. The US kept pressurizing India to either sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), or a South Asian declaration of nuclear renunciation, criticized the perceived abuse of human rights by Indian security forces in Kashmir, kept up its pressure on India to open completely its markets, its insurance and banking, and on patents and intellectual property rights. Washington also increased pressure on India to control its nuclear capabilities. It warned Russia against the supply of cryogenic engines and their technology to India on pain of US sanctions.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 22-23.

Thus, the main security concerns of India during the post-Cold War period arose from regional rivalries and international pressures. The main focus of its diplomacy was more on economic and political matters, which gave India enough reason to expand relations with the Islamic world. The limitation of the US domination of the Persian Gulf would be of considerable strategic advantage to India, as this would make the region less susceptible to superpower pressures.

Viewed from Iran, the new international environment was a hostile one. The US emerged as a primary actor pursuing its interests unopposed. Iran's loss of strategic leverage was compounded by its economic weakness and poor relations with the US. From Iran's perspective the situation in the south was not much better. Two wars in the Persian Gulf had consolidated US ties with the Arab states and increased the US military presence there, which consequently diluted Tehran's inherent regional influence. The US remained a hostile adversary seeking to undo the Iranian regime and contain its Islamic revolutionary message. Iran saw the US behind efforts in the north and south to encircle it militarily. US Secretary of State James Baker on his first visit to Central Asia in February 1992 admitted that a prime motivation behind US policy there was a need to counter Iran. In May 1993, the US articulated a "dual containment" policy that appeared to equate Iran with Iraq and threatened to impede Iran's economic development.¹²⁷ Encirclement of Iran in the north and south, economic and technological strangulation and the tightening of US controls on trade created considerable difficulties for Iran.

¹²⁷ Shahrām Chubin, *Iran's National Security Policy* (Washington : The Carnegie Endowment for International peace, 1994) pp. 3-5.

Moreover, the states to the north of Iran were politically unstable, at odds with their neighbours. Besides the possibility of getting entangled in their disputes with each other, Iran was concerned about ethnic conflicts, which could spill over into its territory and pit its minorities against each other. Iran's relations with Russia and the Persian Gulf states were also central to Iranian interests.¹²⁸ It was because of these changed dynamics in the region that Iran wanted to promote regional ties and consolidate its relations with the countries of the region.

The end of the Cold War and the consequent emergence of "Pan-Americana" in the West Asian region and the security threat perceptions of India and Iran brought them closer. India and Iran shared some correspondence in their perception and pursuit of security and both sought a certain degree of autonomy in the conduct of their international relations. This trait was characterized by a certain degree of tension in their interface with the post-Cold War world, dominated by the US. Both countries were trying to grapple with the inequities in their own manner and realized that they had little choice, but to relate to these international trends in the most prudent manner.¹²⁹ The considerations of India and Iran led to the convergence of their interests. The vital factors that governed their relations during the 1990s were dominated by three issues-energy, Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Energy Co-operation

Energy cooperation between Iran and India has been the major incentive for two states to come closer. According to the New Delhi Declaration (January 2003),

¹²⁸ Ibid., pp-3-11

¹²⁹ C. Uday Bhaskar, "Trends in the International Environment", paper presented at the seminar on India-Iran Strategic Dialogue organized by Institute for political and International Studies (Iran) and Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (India) on August 28-29, 1999.

“India and Iran have a complementarity of interests in the energy sector which should develop as a strategic area of their future relationship. Iran with its abundant energy resources and India with its growing energy needs as a rapidly developing economy are natural partners.”¹³⁰ This complementarity of interests was recognized even in the Tehran Declaration, which stated, “The geographical situation of Iran and its abundant energy resources along with the rapidly expanding Indian economy and energy market on the other create a unique complementarity which the sides agree to harness for mutual benefit.”¹³¹ This energy cooperation between Iran and India is, at its core, a producer-consumer relationship that promises to serve both countries’ immediate and long-term needs.

India, in recent years, has emerged as one of world’s largest consumers and importers of petroleum products. It has experienced a growing energy supply-demand gap as its domestic production of oil and gas has failed to keep pace with rising consumption needs. Estimates suggest that India’s demand for natural gas will increase fourfold by the year 2010, as share of natural gas in India’s energy basket is expected to increase sharply and, with this increase, dependence on imported natural gas will grow as well. To be precise, India’s gas import dependency is expected to jump from 53 percent in 2001 to 91 percent by 2025, while the oil import dependency is expected to reach 78 percent in the same period.¹³² For India, energy relations are even more vital in that energy security is seen as absolutely essential if India is to achieve great power status. Hence, India quest to diversify its foreign sources of supply.

¹³⁰ For the text of the New Delhi Declaration see <http://meaindia.nic.in/event/2003/01/25/events01.htm>.

¹³¹ “Text of the Tehran Declaration”, at http://pib.nic.in/archive/pmvisit/pm_visit_iran/pm_iran_re14.html

¹³² Charles Recknagel, “Iran: India Deepens Strategic Partnership”, at www.rferl.org/nca/features/2001/04/13042001120322.asp.



Iran, on the other hand, is endowed with enormous energy resources, and is therefore keenly interested in exporting its surplus natural gas to India. Iran has 5 percent of world's crude oil and 14 percent of world's natural gas reserves. In fact, it has the second largest natural gas reserves in the world after Russia, estimated at 23 trillion cubic meters.¹³³ Therefore, Iran has figured prominently in India's strategy to establish and expand its energy relationship with the Gulf countries.

As far as the practical dimension of cooperation in this regard is considered, the two sides established a Joint Working Group (JWG) on energy transport in 1999, with a view to determining how to make this complementarily work to the advantage of both sides.¹³⁴ An important development to that end took place in June 2005, when India and Iran signed a multi-billion dollar deal under which Iran will supply India with 7.5 million tons of liquefied natural gas annually for 25 years beginning 2009. The deal also envisaged Indian participation in the development of the Yadavaran and Jufeyr oilfields in Iran.¹³⁵

Besides, India and Iran have been discussing the construction of a gas pipeline via Pakistan since early 1990s. However, the idea has not come to fruition, initially due to India's reluctance to have the pipeline pass through Pakistani territory, Pakistan's assurances regarding the security of the pipeline notwithstanding. More recently, Indian interest in the project seems to have waned, which many attribute to the US offer of civil nuclear energy to India. The US is believed to have demanded the abandonment of the project as one of the quid pro quos for the civil nuclear deal. The Indian stance has led Pakistan and Iran to decide to go ahead with the project

¹³³ Maqsd ul Hasan Nuri, op.cit. p. 52.

¹³⁴ John Calabrese, op. cit. p. 71.

¹³⁵ Sudha Ramachandran, op. cit.

even without India.¹³⁶ Although India still maintains that it is determined to implement the pipeline project and will continue efforts to reach a tripartite agreement on the project,¹³⁷ there is a perception that India does not want to categorically abandon the project until the Indo-US nuclear deal is passed by the US Congress. India, therefore, participated in the Iran-Pakistan-India Joint Working Group's meeting in Islamabad from May 22-23, 2006.¹³⁸

Iran holds the largest gas reserves after Russia and is a large reservoir of oil. It is, therefore, keen to find export markets. India which is now emerged as one of the world's biggest consumers and importers of petroleum products was best positioned to receive this natural largesse. As India has to ensure its energy security, it is looking for long-term partnerships and it is because of this that energy cooperation is top on the agenda between India and Iran. India's interest has been whetted with the recent discovery of Iran's largest known gas field, Tabnak, with estimated reserves of more than 400 billion cubic meters.¹³⁹

Both the countries have three broad options for transporting gas from Iran to India. The first, the cheapest and easiest, is to build an overland pipeline between India and Iran via Pakistan (from Iran's Abousaliyeh facilities to Gujarat, through the deserts of Baluchistan). Iran has been seeking Indian cooperation in building an overland pipeline; second, is the shallow water pipeline running along the continental shelf of Pakistan and India. According to the Law of the Sea, pipelines on the edge of the continental shelf only require delineation permission from

¹³⁶ haleeq Kiani, "Pakistan To Get 33pc More Gas: India Almost out of Iran Pipeline Project", Dawn, May 1, 2006.

¹³⁷ "India Determined to implement IPI Gas line: Manmohan", Daily Times, April 30, 2006.

¹³⁸ Khaleeq Kiani, 'No Headway in IPI Talks', Dawn, May 24, 2006.

¹³⁹ The Economic Times, May 17, 2000.

Pakistan. The third option is to lay pipelines on the sea bed from the Straits of Hormuz to the Arabian Sea. This is the most expensive option. There is a fourth option, which is already in place-transporting the liquefied natural gas (LNG) by tankers. This is currently in operation. But while the LNG option sounds safer, the expenses are considerable. Going by 1999 prices, it is in the range of \$2 billion for a liquefaction unit, \$200 million for an LNG tanker and \$500 million for a re-gasification facility, plus inland pipelines.¹⁴⁰

Both countries are currently engaged in negotiating an Iranian project for a gas pipeline to India. It was in 1993 that they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the pipeline project.¹⁴¹ The project was first made public during the Benazir Bhutto government, which had strongly opposed the idea of allowing the gas pipeline to India using Pakistani territory. Successive Pakistani governments since then have been opposed to the project¹⁴² mainly because it would benefit its archrival India, which was likely thereby to meet the shortage of gas for domestic and industrial usage. Pakistan refused to allow a feasibility study to be conducted in 1995 in its exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The \$5 billion gas pipeline project had been lingering on for the past several years initially because of Pakistan's inability to take a firm political decision to allow the pipeline to India through its territory. Tehran, however, believed that an overland pipeline would also provide a viable means to transport the natural gas resources of Central Asia to the subcontinent through an interconnected grid of pipelines through Iran.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Indrani Bagchi, "Jaswant has pipe Dream", *The Economic Times*, July 12, 2000.

¹⁴¹ *The Economic Times*, May 22, 2000.

¹⁴² *Business Recorder*, March 21, 2000.

¹⁴³ *The Hindu*, May 22, 2000.

Soon after the military takeover, Pakistan conveyed to the Iranian government its consent to extend the pipeline onwards to India. According to Pakistan's Petroleum Secretary Abdullah Yousaf, the proposal was revived again in December 1999.¹⁴⁴ Federal Minister Usman Aminuddin had pledged to review the stance of the previous government in the best national interests. He stated that the government could earn \$500 to 700 million just by offering transit facility for Iranian gas to India and some other neighbouring countries from multinational gas pipeline projects. The announcement to support the pipeline project came at the conclusion of the technical level talks between Pakistani and Iranian Petroleum Ministry officials when detailed discussions were held on the gas pipeline from Iran to India, which was to be routed on land through Pakistan. The Pakistani delegation assured the Iranians of its full support to the pipeline going across Pakistani territory to India.¹⁴⁵

For India, running a pipeline through Pakistan has its own security considerations. The Indian policy makers were deeply concerned, apprehending that Pakistan might cut off the supplies during any military or diplomatic tension between the two countries. But then there are others who say that the pipeline could be used to tie Pakistan to international guarantees.¹⁴⁶

As part of the diplomatic thrust, Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh visited Iran in May 2000. The formal reason for his trip was to attend the 11th meeting of the Indo-Iranian Joint Commission that dealt with bilateral

¹⁴⁴ "India Iran Gas Pipeline May Soon Be a Reality", Public Opinion Trends (POT), (Pakistan Series), February 19, 2001; The Hindu, June 22, 2000.

¹⁴⁵ Business Recorder, March 21, 2000.

¹⁴⁶ The Economic Times, May 17, 2000; The Economic Times, May 22, 2000.

cooperation on a range of issues.¹⁴⁷ Although India was hesitant about the entire gas pipeline question, it was a strong undercurrent to Jaswant Singh's visit. Jaswant Singh had turned down the offer to include Pakistan in the project. He said, "It is a bilateral agreement between India and Iran. The assumption that it is a trilateral agreement (involving Pakistan) by Iran is an over simplification.... There is no way we can agree to it unless the fundamentals are addressed."¹⁴⁸

The setting up of the Indo-Iranian Joint Working Group (JWG) was a part of Jaswant Singh's energy diplomacy aimed at leveraging India's huge dependence on imported petroleum products to transform relations with the oil rich nations. The JWG was to be headed by the respective foreign ministers and its mandate would be to explore all aspects of energy supplies to India. This included the onshore, offshore and LNG options to move natural gas from Iran to India. As the Pakistan factor is at the heart of many difficulties, the JWG would study the political and technical hurdles in the way of transporting gas to India.¹⁴⁹ It could also accelerate long pending decisions on mega projects that could lead to enduring economic and political bonds between India and her petroleum rich neighbour.

When Pakistan gave a green signal to the project, India as a result of increased hostility in the post-Kargil scenario, became reluctant to carry its supplies through Pakistan fearing that these could be stopped in case of any emergency. Finally, Iran told India that its proposal for laying a deep sea pipeline for the transportation of Iranian gas to India was unviable technically and commercially and the only viable option was an overland route through Pakistan. As a result, the

¹⁴⁷ The Hindu, May 18, 2000.

¹⁴⁸ The Telegraph, July 20, 2000; The Hindu, May 24, 2000.

¹⁴⁹ The Economic Times, May 24, 2000; The Hindu, May 24, 2000.

Indian government asked the Iranian government to ensure the commitment of Pakistan to the project. This assurance came from General Parviz Musharraf who assured the Iranian government that Pakistan would guarantee the security for the gas pipeline and its smooth running through Pakistan. In a letter from the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Resources Usman Aminuddin, to his Iranian counterpart, it was assured that "Pakistan was prepared to address all concerns of the Indian government in this regard and extend all guarantees they required".¹⁵⁰ Also, while addressing the first ever Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) energy conference in Pakistan in November 2000, President Mohammad Rafiq Tarrar repeated Pakistan's commitment of allowing uninterrupted gas supply to neighbouring India through a pipeline from Iran.¹⁵¹

According to recent reports, the India-Iran gas pipeline is to be revived soon as all the three parties i.e. Iran, India and Pakistan have at last agreed to form a multinational consortium to implement the \$3 billion pipeline project which would carry Iranian gas to India's northern states via Pakistan.¹⁵² The plan outlined by Tehran envisaged a foreign consortium being the link between the two countries-buying gas from Tehran and selling it to India for a period of 30 years. The foreign consortium would also accept any responsibility for the possible disruption of the supplies by the transit state (Pakistan).

Jaswant Singh expressed his happiness at the laying of the India-Iran gas pipeline and told the visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs, Mohammed Hossein Adeli, in New Delhi on November 24, 2000, "Regarding

¹⁵⁰ Shamim Ahmed Rizvi, "\$3b Project of Iran, Pakistan and India Gas Pipeline", *Pakistan and Gulf Economist*, December 25-31, 2000, p. 39. Back.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

India's dire and increasing need for natural gas and Iran's rich gas resources we appreciate laying of the India-Iran gas pipeline. . . I do not waver in my support for the expansion of relations with Iran and to this end I will spare no efforts."¹⁵³ Adeli's response was well in tune with the Indian mood, "This is not a political project. It is one based on commercial merits. The main parties here are Iran and India and no third party."¹⁵⁴

As New Delhi demanded sovereign guarantees from the Iranian government, Iran also agreed to furnish state-to-state guarantees in favour of Pakistan. According to the new proposal, the Iranian government will give an undertaking to the Indian government that if Pakistan at any point of time cuts off gas supplies to India, Tehran will supply an equal amount of LNG to India at the same price. Iran has also assured the Indian government that it will immediately cut off gas supplies to Pakistan if Islamabad cuts off gas to India. The two assurances are not only very strong, but have been made after obtaining necessary documentary consent from Pakistan.¹⁵⁵ The officials in Pakistan too furnished an undertaking to the Iranian government that Pakistan would always honour its international commitments irrespective of political or security conditions of the region. The chief executive of Pakistan, during his visit to Iran, told the Iranian leadership that the historical Pakistan-Iran relations were more precious than unpredictable cross-border relations with India and that Pakistan could not afford to lose a friend like Iran by sabotaging the gas pipeline project for petty political or diplomatic interests.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ "India Pleased with Gas Pipeline From Iran: Jaswant Singh", POT (Iran), vol. 6, no. 9, January 29, 2001, p. 68.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid

¹⁵⁵ POT (Pakistan) Vol. 29, no. 42, February 19, 2001, p. 693.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

Central Asia Factor

The emergence of new independent entities in Central Asia has wide implications for the whole of Asia. The region's centrality is now being restored with its gates opening up in all directions.

The collapse of the Soviet state and the emergence of fragile independent states along Iran's 1,600-mile frontier east and west of the Caspian Sea theoretically reversed the power polarity. Iran was arguably stronger and more stable than its new neighbours and was no longer vulnerable to conventional threats from that direction. Still, Iran was not entirely comfortable with the sudden reversal of fortunes.

Tehran acted on the assumption that its national security interests and its aspirations for long-term influence in Northwest Asia could best be served by contributing to regional stability and a network of bilateral and multilateral ties. Iran had been particularly sensitive to outbreaks of ethnic conflict on or near its northern frontiers. The Iranian policy makers took into consideration the ethnic minorities within their own borders. The dominant thrust of Iranian policy towards the new states of Northwest Asia had been directed towards the creation of economic and infrastructure relationships. By late 1991, Iran had begun to reach out to these emerging republics, signing a series of MOU for bilateral co-operation in a number of fields.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ W. Nathaniel Howell, "Iran's Policy in Northwest Asia: Opportunities, Challenges and Implications", in Jamal -al Suwaidi, ed., *Iran and the Gulf* (Abu Dhabi: The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, 1996), p. 182.

The direction of Iranian policy had been firmly established. Iran's pursuit of concrete links with these republics was pivoted on its relationship with Turkmenistan, Iran's gateway to Central Asia. It was expected that growing transport and communication links with Turkmenistan would give it greater access to the republics with which it enjoyed no direct land border. Regimes as far away as Kazakhstan have shown interest in Iran as an alternative route for their exports to the rest of the world as they seek to develop their independent economic relationships.

A key element of Tehran's overall strategy has been to strengthen regional economic cooperation through the existing ECO. Iran was instrumental in expanding the ECO in 1992, to include Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Stan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Afghanistan.¹⁵⁸ The clear objective of such multilateral measures is not only to bolster Iran's relations with the governments and economies of Northwest Asia, but also to establish Iran as the lynchpin, geographically and organizationally.

The most striking feature of Iranian policy since the Soviet collapse was the relative absence of efforts to promote its vision of Islam in Northwest Asia. It was expected by many countries that Tehran would seize upon the fragility of the new states and the emerging societies to destabilize the region and proselytize its inhabitants. On the contrary, Iran has demonstrated a readiness to further its national security and economic interests with regional governments, irrespective of their domestic orientation or attitude towards Islamic activism.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 182-83.

Unquestionably, the necessity for increased activism in Northwest Asia will impact on Tehran's appreciation of its strategic situation and its relationships in other areas. The Gulf remains a major priority for Iran, as its primary access routes to markets are concentrated there. Iran wants to consolidate its position as a major entrance for the landlocked republics. The new republics also want to diversify to the outside world as is evident by their involvement regarding pipelines, rail connections, roads and other infrastructure links. Iran, hence, needs to convince them that it offers convenient and reliable transit.

India's interest in Central Asia should be seen in the context of stabilizing the new regional politico-economic order. Indo-Central Asian ties need to be reconfigured in the changed geopolitical situation, which offers immense opportunities for their future relationship besides the challenges. India's strategic concerns are tied up with the regions bordering its north and northwest and, hence, its interests lie in having cordial and friendly relations with its extended neighbourhoods. Pakistan continues to be antagonistic towards India, and instability in Afghanistan has adversely affected the security of the region.

Pakistan is now eyeing Central Asia with the same intentions, both to revive its strategic relevance for the West and to boost its politico-military strength vis-à-vis India. In the light of this, India's long-term strategic interest in forging closer cooperation with the Central Asian states should be obvious. Furthermore, both the US and China have stakes in Central Asia because of oil. All these objectives are being sought to be achieved by undermining the Russian and Iranian legitimacy in the region.

India's approach to Central Asia would be that of positive engagement with the region, considering the vast opportunities for India to attend to the issues that might challenge its vital interests. Therefore, economic diplomacy will remain India's basic policy thrust towards the region. In the face of its increasing energy requirements, India should be willing to participate in oil and gas projects in the region. On the other hand, India is also willing to share its expertise with the Central Asian states in crucial sectors such as banking, transportation, services, infrastructure, industry etc.

For long-term political stability, it is important that India and Iran work together to curb external influences as well as adverse regional influences. India and Iran along with the Central Asian states can cooperate in dealing with other non-military threats that take the form of guerrilla warfare and terrorism. As is well known Pakistan has become a breeding ground for terrorism. Iran, India and the Central Asian states (for example Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) have protested to Pakistan against the origin of terrorist activities from its territory.¹⁵⁹

The incidence of weapons proliferation and narco-trafficking keeps increasing in the region of the Golden Crescent (Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Iran frontier). The Central Asian states too are getting caught in the web of Asian narco-trafficking. India faces a drug trafficking problem not only from the west, but also from the east (Golden Triangle).¹⁶⁰ India, Iran and the Central Asian states can work on a mechanism to control this at the regional level.

¹⁵⁹ P. Stobdan, "India and Central Asia: Imperatives for Regional Cooperation", in Jasjit Singh, *Peace and Security in Central Asia* (New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 2000) p. 103. Uzbekistan has accused three Pakistani organizations of training clandestinely about 400 Central Asians in Pakistan with the task of carrying out terrorist attacks and overthrowing the governments in Central Asia.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

Regarding the Afghanistan problem, the Central Asian states share a similar view along with Iran and India. This also provides good scope for regional cooperation among these countries.

The region of Central Asia has been a captive market for Indian products. Iran is India's best gateway to Central Asia. Access for Indian goods in the emerging markets of Central Asia was among the issues that were discussed between Jaswant Singh and the Iranian leadership.¹⁶¹

In the economic field also, there is vast potential for comparative economic advantages. The Central Asian states are landlocked and are at a disadvantage in terms of global competition.

Cooperation with Central Asia is important for stabilizing the new regional politico-economic order. Both India and Iran's concern towards the region has been for security reasons as well as for economic interaction. Both could provide support to the Central Asian countries in developing their necessary infrastructure, access to the outside world, and promoting their external trade.

Another area where interests of India and Iran coincide is Central Asia. Prior to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, all business between India and Central Asia was conducted through Moscow. However, India no longer enjoys that privileged access to Central Asia, and its overland trade with Central Asia has remained effectively sealed off due to the state of its hostile relations with Pakistan and uncertainties in Afghanistan. Consequently, Iran, by virtue of its close proximity to

¹⁶¹ The Economic Times, May 22, 2000.

Central Asia has emerged as India's main gateway to the region ¹⁶² through which it can establish close economic, technological, and cultural relations with the Central Asian Republics.

On its part, Iran also stands to gain through these contacts. Giving transit trade facilities to India to reach out to Central Asia would benefit Tehran, particularly through the development of its infrastructure capacities in surface and maritime transportations. In this regard, many significant steps have already been taken by the two countries. In April 1995, India, Iran, and Turkmenistan signed an agreement aimed at establishing a "transport corridor; linking Central Asia to India through the Iranian road-railway network and the port of Bandar Khomeini." ¹⁶³

Both sides have agreed to jointly take up transport projects that would facilitate and expedite the movement of Indian goods to the Central Asian region, including Afghanistan. India has already agreed to cooperate with Iran in the development of a new port complex on Chahbahar on the coast of Iran. India will help lay a track to connect Chahbahar to the Iranian railway system, which is linked to Central Asia and Europe.¹⁶⁴ India has also agreed to help construct a network from Zaranj on the Iran-Afghan border to Delaram on the garland road that leads to all major cities in Afghanistan.¹⁶⁵ The construction of these road and railway links will make it possible for India to bypass Pakistani land route and yet reach out to Central Asia.

¹⁶² John calabrese, op. cit. p. 70.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ John Cherian, "An Entente with Iran", FRONTLINE, February 1, 2003.

¹⁶⁵ "Garland of Gains", the Telegraph, January 29, 2003.

Another area of Indo-Iranian cooperation is the North-South Transportation Corridor. The North-South Corridor project, the result of an agreement among India, Iran, and Russia in 2000, is intended to link Mumbai in India – via Bandar Abbas in Iran – with St. Petersburg and thus the Indian Ocean with the Baltic Sea and Europe. When it becomes functional, the trade among the participating countries will increase substantially.¹⁶⁶ The corridor will not only boost India's trade with Iran and Central Asia, but also with Russia, as it will reduce transit time and the cost of transportation of goods, which will make Indian goods cheaper and therefore more competitive in these markets.

Defence Co-operation

Defence cooperation between Iran and India has increased over the years. So far, the two governments have held preliminary discussions aimed at institutionalizing contacts between their respective armed forces, establishing a security dialogue, and exploring the possibility of arms sales to Iran.¹⁶⁷ Though Indian policymakers tend to downplay military relations with Iran, the “strategic relations” with Tehran have a significant military dimension. The “Road Map to Strategic Cooperation” signed during President Khatami's January 2003 visit to India stated that India and Iran would explore opportunities for cooperation in defence in agreed areas.¹⁶⁸

India is steadily acquiring the capability to manufacture under license, a wide range of Russian military hardware. India views Iran as a major buyer which could defray the costs of this programme. Meanwhile, a large share of Soviet/Russian

¹⁶⁶ Donald L. Berlin, “India-Iran Relations: A Deepening Entente”, at <http://www.apcss.org/Publications/SAS/AsiaBilateralRelations/India-IranRelationsBerlin.pdf>.

¹⁶⁷ John Calabrese, op. cit. p. 75.

¹⁶⁸ Donald L. Berlin, op. cit.

conventional weaponry in the Iranian inventory coupled with Tehran's aim of diversifying its arms suppliers makes India an attractive option.¹⁶⁹ Also, India is keen to promote military sales to the Middle East and defence cooperation with Iran is part of that strategy. According to Indian Defence Ministry spokesman, Pradip to Bandopadhyay, "Defence cooperation with Iran is part of India's efforts to boost military exports to the Middle East, and Iran is very important for us in view of the geopolitics of the Middle East."¹⁷⁰

With respect to arms sale to Iran, an important meeting was held in March 2001, between Indian Defence Secretary and his Iranian counterpart.¹⁷¹ Iran and India held the first-ever strategic dialogue on October 16, 2001, focusing on regional and international security matters.¹⁷² The discussions also covered the security and defence policies of the two countries. Earlier, the Iranian Defence Minister had said on the eve of Indian Prime Minister's visit to Tehran in April 2001, that military cooperation between Iran and India was "a must."¹⁷³

The most important breakthrough in Indo-Iranian defence cooperation, however, was achieved on January 19, 2003, when the India-Iran Defence Cooperation Agreement was signed in Tehran. The Iranian Defence Attaché in India, Brig General Ali Motaghi called the agreement a milestone in defence ties between the two countries, and declared, "We need India's help in all military aspects."¹⁷⁴ The defence agreement envisaged, inter alias, Indian support for the construction of

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ "Iran Signs Unprecedented Strategic Alliance", Daily Times, January 26, 2003.

¹⁷¹ John Calabrese, op. cit. p. 75.

¹⁷² http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/Foreign_Policy/2002/2002/pdf.

¹⁷³ Mahdi Masud, op. cit.

¹⁷⁴ Rizwan Zeb, "The Emerging Indo-Iranian Strategic Alliance and Pakistan", at www.casianalyst.org/2003-02-12/20030212_INDO_IRAN_PAKISTAN.htm.

REFERENCE ONLY

warship repair facilities at Iran's new port at Chahbahar, stationing of Indian aeronautical engineers at Iranian military bases to maintain and provide mid-life upgrades for Iran's MIG-29 fighters, and sending Indian engineers to Iran.¹⁷⁵

India and Iran held joint naval exercises in March 2003.¹⁷⁶ Iran is also reported to have sought India's help to service its naval and air force equipment and in developing batteries for its submarines, which are more suitable for the warm waters of the Gulf than those supplied by Russia.¹⁷⁷

Diplomatic and Political Considerations

Iran has been isolated from the mainstream of the international community since its 1979 Islamic Revolution, primarily due to the persistent hostility of the US towards the current dispensation in Iran. The Iranian regime has long been seeking to break out of the political and economic quarantine sought to be enforced by the US against it, and to that end, the importance of economic and political cooperation with a country of India's size and importance cannot be overemphasized. This was exactly what the former Iranian President, Hashemi Rafsanjani, sought when he propounded the idea of "Asian cooperation" involving India, China, and Iran.¹⁷⁸ India's value in this regard has only expanded in recent years as India has forged key relations with the United States, Israel, the European Union, and the states of Southeast and Northeast Asia.¹⁷⁹ As Iran wants to escape the US-imposed stigma of "axis of evil", it stands to gain by tilting towards a democratic India at this point.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Beryl Anand, "Iran Oil, US Spoil, India Foil: Burgeoning India-Iran Relations", at www.ipcs.org.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Mahdi Masud, op. cit.

¹⁷⁹ Sudha Ramachandran, op. cit.

As far as India is concerned, it has always sought influential friends in the Muslim world to counter-balance Pakistan's influence. In fact, the present Indian drive to befriend Tehran is part of New Delhi's long-standing desire to "cast its net westward in search of economic and political allies in the Muslim world"¹⁸⁰ as a durable relationship with Iran will enhance India's credibility with other Islamic countries and help India overcome the "Pakistan problem" in dealing with key Muslim states. Iran can also be of help in making the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), of which it is an influential member, more perceptive about India's political and security concerns. India also needs better relations with Iran due to domestic political considerations. India's friendly relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran could convey a signal to its increasingly disenchanted and marginalized Muslim population that it has Muslim interests in mind.

Technology & Trade

As an emerging Information Technology superpower, Tehran views India as an alternative source to western technology that has long been denied to Iran due to US sanctions. For Iran, India could also be a source of industrial goods, and foreign investment. India has the potential of cooperating with Iran in building up Iran's infrastructure capacities in surface and maritime transportation, power, and manufacturing sectors of its economy.¹⁸¹ Tehran also looks at India as a huge emerging market for Iranian goods.

For India, on the other hand, Iran's seventy million populations could offer a lucrative export market. The technological advancements made by India in recent

¹⁸⁰ Dr. Riffat Hussain, op. cit.

¹⁸¹ J.N. Dixit, "PM Visit Can Consolidate Indo-Iran Ties", at news. Indianfo.com/2001/04/21/21col.html.

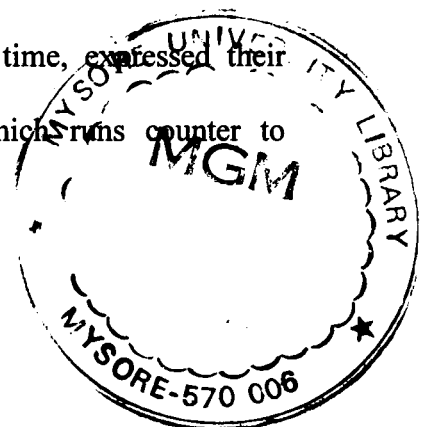
years appear to have made it even more attractive an option for Iran. As former Indian Foreign Minister, Yashwant Sinha, once said, "Iranian business and industry must look to its east, to India, in areas where Iran has traditionally depended on the West for technology, equipment, machinery, and industrial projects. The Iranian manufacturing sector should take note of the progress made by Indian industry in the manufacturing sector."¹⁸² The importance that the two countries assign to this aspect of their bilateral relation is evident from the fact that both in the "Tehran Declaration" and the "New Delhi Declaration" the agreements MOU pertaining to cooperation in Information Technology and cooperation in technical fields were included.

Limitations of Iran-India Relations

All the aforementioned complementarities notwithstanding, there are certain factors that are bound to pose serious challenges for the further consolidation of Iran-India ties. The increasingly close ties that have been developing between India and the United States of America are one of the factors which are going to have a profound bearing upon India's relations with Iran. It is ironical that as India and Iran were coming closer, India's relations with the US, archenemy of the Iranian regime, were also improving. This was bound to make India walk a tightrope to maintain close relations with both the countries simultaneously. This became even more awkward after 9/11, when the US President, George W. Bush, included Iran in his "axis of evil" list.

Since then, US officials have, on many occasions a time, expressed their unease over the growing Indian engagement with Iran which runs counter to

¹⁸² Donald L. Berlin, op. cit.



Washington's efforts to isolate the Iranian government. Delhi's growing defence cooperation with Iran has particularly irked the US. However, the first clear sign of the impact of the "US factor" became evident on September 24, 2005, when India sided with the West in voting for a resolution at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that brought Iran's nuclear issue to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).¹⁸³ Although the Indian government was at pains to explain that its decision was dictated by its own "national interests" and not by the US pressure,¹⁸⁴ it was generally perceived that the Indian vote was an effort to please the Americans and save the nuclear deal.

Although the resolution was a disappointment and surprise for Iran, which was banking on support from countries like India, it would be wrong to assume that India's strategic closeness with Iran got whittled down, as their mutual ties are based on pragmatic considerations and mutual needs.¹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Iran-India relations have definitely taken a hit by the Indian vote at the IAEA, which has also revealed how important the "US factor" would be in their future relationship.

India's increasingly close relations with Israel pose another challenge for Iran-India relations. Iran is the staunchest opponent of Israel, and a vociferous protagonist of the Palestinian cause in Middle East. Its President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, recently described Israel as a "disgraceful blot" that should be "wiped off the face of the earth."¹⁸⁶ India, on the other hand, has strengthened and consolidated a wide range

¹⁸³ Dr. Maqsood ul Hasan Nuri, "India Iran Row After the IAEA Resolution", *The News*, October 1, 2005.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Ewen MacAskill and Chris McGreal, "Israel Should Be Wiped Off Map, Says Iran's President", *the Guardian*, October 27, 2005.

of political, economic, cultural and above all strategic cooperation with Israel.¹⁸⁷ In fact, Israel has emerged as India's second largest arms supplier.¹⁸⁸ So far, Iran has remained indifferent towards the emerging Indo-Israeli closeness, but Israel has been apprehensive of India's close cooperation with Iran. Israel is particularly apprehensive of Israeli defence technology reaching Iran via India. During his September 2003 visit to India, Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, demanded explicit guarantees from Indian leaders that the latter would not transfer any acquired technology to a third country, especially Iran.¹⁸⁹ How India manages competing pulls from Tehran and Tel Aviv is going to determine, to a great extent, the contours of its future relations with Iran.

Yet another factor that can adversely impact upon the further strengthening of Iran-India relations is India's emerging closeness with Saudi Arabia, resulting from Saudi Arabia's new "Look East" policy. After 50 years of limited engagement, both India and Saudi Arabia appear to have decided to give a new and more vibrant direction to their bilateral relationship. An important step in this direction was the Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz's visit to India in January 2006. King Abdullah was the chief guest at India's Republic Day parade on January 26 – the same honour bestowed on Iran's President, Muhammad Khatami, and three years earlier. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia's relations with Iran are far from friendly. They have a history of mutual distrust and suspicion. Though there was some tangible improvement in Iran-Saudi relations after President Khatami's coming to power in Iran in 1997, the election of a hard-line President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and Iran's

¹⁸⁷ P.R. Kumaraswamy, "Indo-Iranian Ties: The Israeli Dimension", at www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/asia_rpt_120rev.pdf.

¹⁸⁸ "Israel is India's Second Largest Arms Supplier", Daily times, September 10, 2003.

¹⁸⁹ P.R. KUMARASWAMY, op. cit.

insistence on pursuing its nuclear programme have cast a shadow over Iran's relations with all the Gulf Arab states, particularly with Saudi Arabia.

Though, at this stage, to some, it may seem premature to reckon Indo-Saudi ties as a factor that could retard the progress in Iran-India relations, it can be said that if India and Saudi Arabia succeed in building on the successful visit of Saudi King by forging closer ties, India will feel less motivated to build on its relation with Iran at the expense of its ties with Saudi Arabia as the latter being the world's largest producer of oil is better positioned to satiate India's ever increasing energy needs. Also, ties with Saudi Arabia will be of far more use than those with Iran for securing India's better standing in the Muslim world.

Implications for Pakistan

The burgeoning cooperation between Iran and India, particularly in the defence field, does have certain implications for Pakistan. Any Indian presence on Iranian military bases, as has been provided for in the India-Iran Defence Co-operation Agreement, even if it is solely for the purpose of training the Iranians, would allow India a more subtle operational use of early warning, intelligence gathering, and other facilities against Pakistan.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, the 80-person strong Indian consulate in Zahidan, a town that borders Pakistan but has less than 100 Indian families, and the establishment of the Indian consulate at Bandar Abbas in May 2002, has caused concerns among Pakistani official circles. Pakistan complains that the Bandar Abbas Consulate, through monitoring devices, will be able to follow movement of ships through the Persian Gulf.

¹⁹⁰ Rizwan Zeb. Op. cit.

But, there is another side to the coin too, and that is Iran having good relations with both India and Pakistan can exert a moderating influence on their policies towards each other. It has already been urging the two South Asian neighbours to resolve their outstanding differences through negotiations. In fact, Iran was the first country to contact India and Pakistan at the time of rising tensions between them in late 2001. The then Iranian Foreign Minister, Kamal Kharazi, called for “restraint” and “early dialogue” in order to break the “vicious cycle” in the Indo-Pak subcontinent.¹⁹¹ President Muhammad Khatami said during his visit to Pakistan in December 2002, that he was willing to help reduce tensions between India and Pakistan.¹⁹² Besides, the improvement in relations between Iran and India on the one hand, and between India and Pakistan can lead to enhanced cooperation between ECO and SAARC, which could bring about greater economic interdependence between the two regional blocks.

Indo-Iran relations and Economic ties

Economics is an important component of Iran’s relations with the India, prior to 1964, Iran’s economic relations with India were limited to trade, its foreign trade objectives during the period being to achieve a balance of trade and raise revenues.¹⁹³

It was only in 1964, that Iran’s economic ties with the India started diversifying when Iran, along with Pakistan and Turkey, established the regional cooperation for Development (RCD). A comprehensive trade agreement (the treaty of commerce and navigation) was signed on 15 December 1964. An agreement for construction of Madras oil refinery was signed with India in 1965. In the wake of the

¹⁹¹ Maqsd ul Hassan Nuri, “India and Iran: Emerging Strategic Co-operation?” op. cit.

¹⁹² “Iran and Pakistan Boost Ties”, at news.bbc.co.uk. December 25, 2002.

¹⁹³ FIBS NES May 6, 1990.

spectacular increase in Iran's oil revenues as a result of the price hike in 1970s, Iran, India showed a strong desire to further broaden the scope of their mutual economic relationship.

The economic relations between Iran and India further improved. In May 1984 India and Iran discussed the possibilities of expanding bilateral trade taking the total turnover to a much higher level. This was highlighted when Sheikul-Islam, Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, called on the Minister for Commerce, N.R. Lashker in New Delhi. The Iranian side indicated that it would like to replace the agreement, which was signed in 1974. Drafts were exchanged for this purpose. In the meantime, Iranian Government also requested India for allowing them to open a trade office in India. India conveyed its acceptance of proposal principle and the Iranian were to supply India with a detailed proposal in this matter.¹⁹⁴

Iran also indicated its interest in importing technology from India in area such as development of water resources and reconstruction of dams, are refining, manufacture, steel through direct reduction process, agricultural machinery and implements, development of small scale industry, rural areas, casting and forging railways locomotives, heat treatment of steel and exploitation and concentration of mining materials.¹⁹⁵

In 1987, Iran offered to sell India crude oil directly on term contract basis. India underlined the need for balanced trade through increased export, while expressing its willingness to import Iranian crude oil. The bilateral trade turnover in

¹⁹⁴ Jane W. Jacq ed., *Iran: Past present and future* (New York, 1979), p. 341

¹⁹⁵ "India and Iran for Boosting bilateral trade" *Foreign Affairs Record* (New Delhi), Vol. XXXIII, No. 4, April 1984, pp. 138-39.

1985-86 amounted to Rs. 1018.¹⁹⁶ crores, while exports from India were only Rs. 94.67 crores, its imports mainly of crude oil were placed at Rs. 924.10 crores.¹⁹⁷ In this regard, India and Iran agreed to concentrate on a few specific projects of economic cooperation so as to give a boost to trade exchanges. In February 1987, the Iranian Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, called on commerce minister, P. Shiva Shanker in New Delhi and expressed his country's desire to strengthen commercial and economic relations with India. Drawing Velayati's attention to India's adverse trade balance, Shivashankar suggested that Iran could import several other commodities from India besides the bulk of tea and spices.¹⁹⁸ Indo-Iranian economic relations reached another important milestone when Behzad Nabavi, the Minister for Heavy industry, visited India in December 1987. During the visit, he held wide ranging discussions with the Union Industry Minister, Vengal Rao, and Finance Minister, Narayan Dutt Tiwari.¹⁹⁹ Both sides expressed their keenness to strengthen bilateral trade and economic ties, particularly in industrial field. In the meantime Nabavi expressed his country's keenness to strengthen mutual cooperation in the field of petroleum as a traditional supplier of crude oil to India, which accounts for the bulk of Indian imports from Iran. He said that Iran would also be interested in diversifying its purchases from India.

In August 1979, India and Iran signed an accord to resolve their differences over return of partial Iranian investment under a 1978 agreement in Kudremukh Iron

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Tribune, 20 February 1987.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ "Iran and India to set up trade and Industrial cooperation" Foreign Affairs Record (New Delhi), Vol. XXXIII, No. 12, December 1987, pp. 384-85.

ore project. It was believed that Iran would start lifting of iron ore from India when it Ahwaz Steel plant started production later in 1989 or early 1990.²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ Financial Express, August 5, 1989.

CHAPTER – VI

CONCLUSION

As foreign policy is a group of principles determined by the states, these principles involve the interests, which influence the behaviour of the states. They intend to establish their relations with other countries for further promoting the relationship. This policy includes not only the general principles, but also means necessary to implement them. Thus, these principles are those broader interests, which states should endeavour to achieve in international relationship.

Down through the History and civilization India and Iran enjoyed coexistence with amicable relations for at least 3500 years. It is because of their abundant cultural affinities played an active role in developing human civilization without considering themselves as “marginal civilizations”.

In fact, the civilization's commonalities are found unique and the frequent exchanges of visits by both countries' educated people as well as common people have intensified a close relationship between the two nations. Though both nations share the same racial origin descending from the Aryan tribes and Aryan civilization their separation at a particular juncture is itself the greatest unexamined anthropological and social event in the history of nations.

In recent centuries both nations relatively in the same period have suffered a departure due to internal and external political and geographical dictatorships. However, none of these elements have broken the two nations' ties or caused the civilizations to vanish like that of the Iranian expansion from the time of Darius the Great until the Sassanid Dynasty (224-652 C.E.) which did not cause the nations ties to decline as there were strong cultural and political relations maintained between the Iranian court and Indian kings.

The present study has traced and explored the relations between Iran and India from the age old historic ties to 1947. This relation is continued and maintained through wide range of co-operation and co-existence in different fields of political and cultural aspects. The ties are retained from the period of the Indus-Valley civilization to consider the Indo-Persian relations most ancient of its kind by being the two important cultural centres in their respective regions in the world. Along with their commercial and cultural interactions they precede the beginning of Indo-Aryan civilization as well. Thus during the medieval times Iran was the chief channel of Islam and the Islamic civilization in India and Persia where the court language and the principle vehicle of literary and intellectual expressions carried for seven centuries of Muslim rule in the India.

By all these examinations India and Iran are not found just as two nations but rather two civilizations with more than three thousand years of contact and interaction from political, cultural, literary and even linguistic point of view. On these bases the present study has discussed not only the details of these contacts and interactions over the centuries, but also extended to consider and discuss the contemporary condition of their existence from political point of view especially their relationship between themselves.

Accordingly the study considered the post-independence period of India and examined its relationship developed and influenced under new system of government with Iran. It is because the rise and growth of British power in the India in the Eighteenth century brought India to the age of political importance with Iran for the defence of the India to add a strategic factor in their age old relationship. The commercial relations were not disrupted with the establishment of the British rule in

India because these relations were in the interest of Britain and more to their needs. But the political and cultural ties between Iran and India were considerably subdued during the British period as India submitted itself to a rigorous influence from British culture and political system.

The advent of British in India consolidated their position through their wise and cracked political devises. The former USSR emerged as supreme power in Eastern Europe passed serious threat to British interest in India. Both Britain and Russia fought against each other to establish their supremacy over Iran. According to 1907 Treaty Russia declared Iran's northern and central province as "Russia zones" and British claimed southern province as its "zone". All these developments have an incredible influence on the relationship between India and Iran which made to be considered to analyse the bilateral relationship with Iran in post-independence period of India.

This bilateral relation between Iran and India took a new roll when Pakistan and Bangladesh became independent in 1947 and 1971 respectively. The cordial relationship between Iran and Pakistan on the one hand and the almost consistent temper of hostility pervading the relations between India and Pakistan on the other hand, was the pivotal instrument in the emerging pattern of relationship between Iran and India. During the period, when Iran diverted from its nebulous policy of negative equilibrium and joined the west-sponsored system at regional alliance like Baghdad Pact to which Pakistan was a party, Iran's bilateral relations with India continued to develop slowly and steadily despite India's critical stand over the nationalization of Anglo-Iranian company by Iran in 1951 and the difference over the military alliance. In midst of this condition Iran continued to remain well disposed in its relations

towards India which was already demonstrated by conclusion of the treaty of perpetual peace and friendship between India and Iran in March 1950. In 1956, when the Shah of Iran visited India he talked of differences between the two countries while emphasizing the traditional relations. Shah expressed his opinion about both the countries at Bombay as “our community of thoughts and sentiments have been expressed many times in same language, sometimes in different language, but having always the same meaning. Having so many plans in common and having both peaces, fraternity in your country in this part of world. We have in Iran slightly different geographical situation. I am sure, we are trying to do the same things to preserve and continue the legacy of our ancestors¹.

Politically, India's support was required in Shah's regime to defend Iran's interest and pre-eminence in the Persian Gulf when certain political developments took place in the late sixties and especially in the early seventies. The climate was constructive for the achievement of the Shah's long cherished ambitions in the establishment of bilateral relationship with India. On the other hand the defeat of Nasser and the doctrine of Nasserism after the Arab-Israeli war of 1987 and subsequent oil price hike encouraged the Shah to pursue his ambition earnestly with India.

It is necessary to put together the major trends that emerged from the interactions and perceptions of interests in the relationship between Iran and India. From the analysis of Indo-Iranian and Iran-Pakistan relationships there can hardly be any doubt that in international relations state interests dominate the relationship between nations, apart from ideological and other factors. The steady growth of

¹ The Patriot (New Delhi), 16, July 1962.

relationship between Iran and India was facilitated by the realistic approach of the leaders of both Iran and India. Their relationships were further strengthened with the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. When the Shah of Iran was ousted by the Islamic revolution India promptly recognized the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran and 'reiterated' their relations with Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran also expressed its earnest desire to strengthen its solidarity with India.

With change of regime in Iran, its previous foreign policy also changed. Since then the Iranian Government started to emphasize on solidarity among all Muslim countries on the basis of Islamic ideology and it actively upheld the export of Islamic revolution into other countries. Consequently, most of its neighbouring states felt threatened as a consequence Iran's relations with these countries deteriorated considerably. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the devastating Iran-Iraq war also took place at the same time. Moreover, in this period the US was a close ally during the Shah's regime with Iran. In the Islamic Republic of Iran's judgment it was the United States which was responsible for all the miseries in Iran, India's right stand helped Iran somewhat to overcome the crisis when the US put pressure following the hostage crisis and the economic embargo imposed by the west. During this period, the relationship between Iran and India was one of unities that were essential towards overcoming the different problems and difficulties faced by the third world countries.

India considered the Islamic Revolution in Iran as a progressive revolution in the region as well as in the Islamic countries. In 1979, in separate statements, Indian leaders said that the changes that occurred in Iran were very important and would

pave the way for the progress of Iranian people. One significant impact of political changes in Iran was her withdrawal from the CENTO and her entry into the NAM.

Iran's relation with the superpowers came to be governed by perceptions of national security. Whereas the new leadership of Iran considered the USA and the USSR as evil powers and threatened the Iranian security and state system. However, the process of Islamization in Iran is entirely different in nature and scope. As a result in Iran's post revolutionary era, the regime sought to transform the fundamental basis of unity between the state and society from a secular nationalist ideology to that of an Islamic ideology which covered every sphere of political, economic, social and cultural life of the people. Islam was seen as a prevailing ideology and a strong bond between the state and the people on the one hand, and a fortifying factor binding all segments of the populace on the other.

Imam Khomeini has played a considerable role in the bilateral relationship of these countries. Soon after the revolution in Iran Imam Khomeini declared his foreign policy as "Neither west, nor East, Islam is the best". Thus the foreign policy of Iran was drastically altered. Imam Khomeini appealed all Muslim countries to fight the Eastern and Western influences, which are corrupting the world.

The foreign policy of Islamic Republic of Iran is based on the negotiation of all forms of domination or submission thereto. It includes the preservation of the independence of territorial integrity of the country, the defence of the rights of all Muslims, and to remain as non-aggressive states. Imam Khomeini and his followers believed that revolution in Iran is unique among all the revolutions in the world. Seventy two years old constitution was wholly changed in accordance with the needs, demands and sentiments of Iranian people. A new clause was added to Article 25

dealing with external relations. It expressed solidarity with the fraternal Islamic countries. In the case of India, any ideology based on religion, race, etc. was not a determining factor in its foreign policy. It played subservient role not only in the Indo-Iran relations but also with other Asian and African countries based on secular political principles, namely anti-colonialism, opposition to military blocks and solidarity among Afro-Asian nations as well as promoting deep historical, economic, cultural and political bonds. Because of India's cultural, political and economic stakes in the region west Asia occupies a position of major importance for India's total foreign policy. Indian Muslim population has shown deep concern in West Asian developments because of their religious learning or faith.

India viewed the Islamic revolution in Iran as a genuine and popular uprising against the Shah's autocratic, undemocratic system subservient to foreign control. India hailed the victory of the heroic people and democratic forces of Iran over the Shah's autocracy. At the same time, India appreciated Iran's intention to keep away from military blocks and welcomed Iran's decision to join the non-alignment movement. Apart from this, India made all efforts to keep good relations with the new regime under Ayatollah Khomeini. Imam Khomeini's success in Iran was widely admired in India by all sections of society.

Leaving aside Indo-Iranian cultural, religious and political relations going back two millennia, international developments since 1991 have generated new trends in Indo-Iranian cooperation. The attempt of United States to isolate Iran, Iran's complete relations with ruling power structures in the Gulf, the dilution of the assertive religious fervour of Iran after the revered Imam Khomeini's demise, and the emergence of Central Asian Republics have created new politico-strategic

circumstances leading to a convergence of interests between India and Iran. This turn has resulted for more frequent and close interaction between the two countries. Iran needed friends as well as cooperation with other countries to break out its isolation. India can play an important role in helping Iran to join the mainstream of world polity. India needed influential friends in the Islamic world to temper Pakistani hostilities and to preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity in the content of Pakistan's claim on Kashmir. Both the countries realized that Indo-Iranian relations were determined not only by the issue of Islam and Kashmir and that they extend much further. The mutual desire for friendship and cooperation lessened the misunderstanding that had developed between the two countries in the wake at the destruction of the Babri Masjid and Turmoil in Kashmir. Both the countries can now look forward for further stable relationship.

As Iran's relations with India continued to grow Iran found India as one of the important countries in the Asia as well as in the third world. The Government of Iran continued to remain well disposed towards India, which was clearly demonstrated by the visit of Iranian Commerce Minister as the head of high-level delegation in 1980. It brought a new serious effort in the revival of economic relationship. The visit of Iranian Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati towards the end of April 1982 further boosted relations as two sides decided to set up a new joint commission to expand their bilateral cooperation in the fields of economy, trade industry culture, science and technology. The decision formed part of the joint statement of the end of Iranian Foreign Minister's visit to India. A more concrete step was taken when the Commerce Minister of the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding on 26 August 1982, for cooperation in wide ranging trade and industrial collaboration with each

other. It was agreed by the two sides that Iran would identify and intimate specific areas and items in which it would need technical know-how from India.

It may be noted that the relationship between India and Iran was expressed predominantly in economic rather than in political terms. However, Indo-Iranian relations during the last revolutionary period cannot be described as very warm. It was due to different foreign policy postures. For instance, India's position on the Soviet's invasion on Afghanistan, use of chemical weapons by Iraq against Iran and Iran's critical stand on the Kashmir issues. On the Iranian side, the Kashmir issue did not prove to be a factor in any concrete and positive way in stopping the process of Indo-Iranian understanding. It is true that the Indo-Iranian relations were tempered in 1990 to some extent by the stand of Iran on the Kashmir issue. Iranian critical stand over this issue could be seen in the content of Iran's consistent policy in expressing solidarity with the oppressed Muslims everywhere be. They are in Palestine, Eritrea, Southern Philippines or Western Sahara. However, it would be wrong to conclude that the Kashmir issue alone was the most important irritant to be considered. Moreover this irritant was short lived.

On the other hand Indian mediation effort in the Iran-Iraq's war was hampered for various reasons. Main reason for this was that India's policy has always been condemned by all aggressions and denies the fruit of aggression in many part of the world. It did not identify the aggressor or condemn Iraq for using chemical weapons against Iran whereas Pakistan intervened to do so. Since India was one of the signatories of Geneva protocol of 1925 it lost an opportunity to win Iran's confidence when the latter was looking for support against Iraq's use of chemical weapons.

Iran pursued a policy of uniting the various Afghan Mujahedin groups operating in Iran and Pakistan. This was clear when it convened a major international conference on the future of Afghanistan in 1981. The conference contributed to achieve Iranian key political objectives. It provided a meeting ground between the Eight Party Alliance based in Tehran, and helped to develop a dialogue and a new political and military relationship between Iran and three moderate parties of Peshawar based Seven Party Alliance. Iran continuously emphasized the necessity of politically solving the intra-Afghan conflict, India's policy towards Afghanistan remained relatively vague and sharply contrasted with policies of its other neighbours (Iran, Pakistan and Bangladesh). India's position in the UN General Assembly caused shock and surprise among a large number of non-aligned countries. At the same time, India justified its dissociation from member states of the UN General Assembly to discuss withdrawal of the USSR from Afghanistan.

The Indo-Iranian equation is a significant evolving factor affecting regional politics in South and West Asia. On a bilateral level, the most promising area of cooperation belongs to the oil and gas sector in which Iran is an important partner. India should use its market for energy resources and build a lasting partnership with Iran. The laying down of a gas pipeline from Iran to Pakistan and onwards to India may soon become a reality with the Iranian government finally agreeing to establish state-to-state guarantees to India that Pakistan will always abide by its contractual obligations for the smooth supplies of gas. There are reasons to believe that the long awaited plan will soon be implemented, as there is a strong will and determination on both sides to go ahead with the project. The

proposal of the gas pipeline between India and Iran if successfully executed would open a new vista of cooperation and collaboration.

Iran would be interested in India's technological know-how and Indian cooperation in developing its surface transportation facilities and ports. Given India's hostile relations with Pakistan and the tensions in Afghanistan, Iran is the only conduit through which India can establish closer relations with the Central Asian Republics where both countries are interested in nurturing closer economic, political and technological relations. Both countries share similar concerns about the current developments in Afghanistan. While Pakistan is making all efforts to exclude India from talks on Afghanistan, it is assumed that Iran would not like to do the same. The logic of mutual interests, therefore, provides a firm basis for Indo-Iranian cooperation.

Both India and Iran shared the view that wider dimensions of Indo-Iranian relations were more important to both countries than the fundamental differences of views on Kashmir. However, one should not make the mistake of reading too much into the Iranian actions. Though it is clear that Iran wants good relations with India, it also wants to retain its close ties with Pakistan. Despite the fact that Iran keeps showing concern on Kashmir, India has made it clear that it does not want Iran's mediation or interference in the Kashmir issue.

Pakistan's role in Indo-Iranian relations cannot be minimized because Iran has special ties with Pakistan and Iran also shares a long border with Pakistan. But that does not mean Pakistan will be a decisive factor in defining the Indo-Iranian relationship. Iran did not let Pakistan come in the way of its relations with India, as it was apparent from Iran's political firmness which resulted in Indian

participation in the conference on Afghanistan in Tehran, despite Pakistan's insistent opposition to India joining these discussions. It was Iran's attitude, which neutralized Pakistan's attempts to isolate India from Central Asia and Afghanistan. Pakistan does not want India and Iran to come close and is making all efforts of reversing the pro-India stand taken by the Khatami government. Its initiative to cooperate with Iran for the formation of a broad-based government in Afghanistan shows that it does not want to give leverage to India in solving the Afghanistan problem.

India and Iran have great potential for cooperation in many areas such as the political, economic, cultural and intellectual spheres. They can work together to analyze the unfolding of events since the collapse of the Soviet Union and its ramifications for them, work towards preserving their Asian identity, and build a firm relationship based on mutual respect and understanding, giving stability to their bilateral ties. Keeping in view Iran-Pakistan relations, and Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, the main focus of India's foreign policy should be secured relations with Iran.

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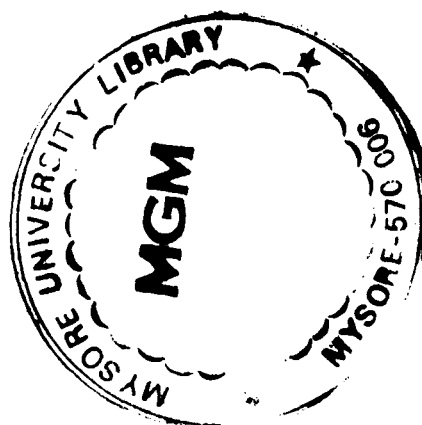
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