This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights and duplication or sale of all or part is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for research, private study, criticism/review or educational purposes. Electronic or print copies are for your own personal, non-commercial use and shall not be passed to any other individual. No quotation may be published without proper acknowledgement. For any other use, or to quote extensively from the work, permission must be obtained from the copyright holder/s.

An Exploration of the Security Dilemma in the Middle East:

The Impact of the Transformative Power of Iran's Foreign Policy

ABDULLAH S F AL-MARZOUQ

A thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements for the

degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Keele University

School of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy

October 2016

In the Name of Allah, the Magnificent, the Merciful

DEDICATION

To those who taught me the true meaning of love, patience and sacrifice:

My parents; Sultan and Ruqayyah (of blessed memory) with deepest gratitude and eternal love

to all my teachers, colleagues and friends throughout this journey of knowledge

also dedicated to anyone interested in the subject.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The thesis is the result of several years of hard and intensive work on examining foreign policy, regional and global security systems. First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude and sincere thanks to my supervisor Professor Bulent Gokay, for his heartfelt encouragement, thoughtful guidance and unstinting support during the course of my studies at Keele University. I am very fortunate to have been given the opportunity to study under such a brilliant scholar who has made an unforgettable imprint on my academic development. I would like to give special thanks to my supervisor Professor Christopher Bailey, for his invaluable help, mainly in my darkest times, besides his advice and encouragement in developing ideas, for his great and precise attention to detail and for sharing his expertise and in-depth knowledge. My deepest appreciation is extended to the Director of the PhD, Doctor Elisabeth Carter for her wisdom and patience. She helped me to overcome many obstacles along the way, on my PhD journey. Without her persistent support, this thesis may never have been completed on time, nor would I have survived it.

I also give heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Staff Major General Farhan and Staff Air Major General Pilot, Khamis, for their continued tireless support in providing me with every possible help in my mission and encouragement for accomplishing my ultimate target, irrespective of difficulties and hardship. During my studies, they provided me with advice, while their experience, time and effort enabled me to overcome several obstacles. There are no words to convey my sincere gratitude for the guidance and encouragement that has brought this thesis to fruition. I wish to extend special thanks and deep gratitude to Dr. Lily Hamourtziadou, for proofreading my thesis, which has been memorable. Dr. Lily also has patiently supported me throughout the darkest stage of this thesis and given me

space to develop new ideas and to transform my experiences into a thesis. I thank her from the bottom of my heart. I also give my thanks and appreciation to my colleagues Mohammed AL-Enzi and Alkistis Ntai for their friendship, kindness and assistance during my studies. They are now like family to me and I will never forget our long and interesting discussions on various academic issues that expanded our way of thinking and reshaped the path of our knowledge. I am truly indebted to them for all their efforts to make this thesis better in every way. I am particularly indebted to my colleague Dina Saduova. We shared an office and we also shared all the ups and downs of the research process. During the long hours spent in our many academic discussions, Dina not only encouraged me and gave insightful guidance, but kept asking me to pull myself together to confront all challenges and obstacles. Her strong confidence in me walked me through the darkest time of my Ph.D. I am grateful for her time, interest and unlimited kindness. My sincere thanks also goes to my best friend Mr. Mark J. Sparks for his advice, suggestions, assistance and kindness over the years. I am grateful to my respectful and loving family, to whom this thesis is dedicated. I dedicate this work to all members of my family, especially to my brother Majed who encouraged and supported me fully over the years. Above all, I would like to thank deeply my God who made all this possible.

ABSTRACT

This is a multidisciplinary research project that aims to explore the geopolitical dynamics, in parallel with recent developments in the Middle East, in the period 2003-2013 and beyond, to some extent. The most effective developments can be found in the shifting power relations, alongside regional and international rivalries, that led to instability, security threats and patterns of violence. With these dynamics in mind and power shifts post-2003, interactions between soft power (ideological proxies) vs military power played a crucial role in shaping the political and security landscape of the region. The thesis explores three sides of the security triangle. The first corresponds to Iran's foreign policy, as case study, which is one of the focal actors that used ideology as basis for action. The second is the presence of the US and its allies, particularly its regional allies. The third is the Middle East region as a reference point for examining power structures in light of rivalry relationships, which in turn interconnects some regional key players in the security paradigm.

The objective of this thesis is to broaden the concept of security studies in the field of international relations. The thesis endeavours to incorporate non-state actor violence, sponsored by some nation-states, in this case Iran, as part of a regional strategic agenda. From this vantage point, defensive and offensive approaches will be discussed, in line with Iran's foreign policy, in order to demonstrate how Iran resists regional threats to ensure its survival, and reinforces its influence to maximise its power.

Map 1.1. The Middle East Region

1. Syria 2. Lebanon 3. Jordan 4. Iraq 5. Kuwait 6. Saudi Arabia 7. Bahrain

8. Qatar 9. UAE 10. Oman 11. Yemen 12. Egypt 13. Israel 14. Turkey 15. Iran

www.dolananreadbudwae.blogspot.com

Diagram 1

Triangulation: Mutual Perception among Iran, U.S. and the Arab World

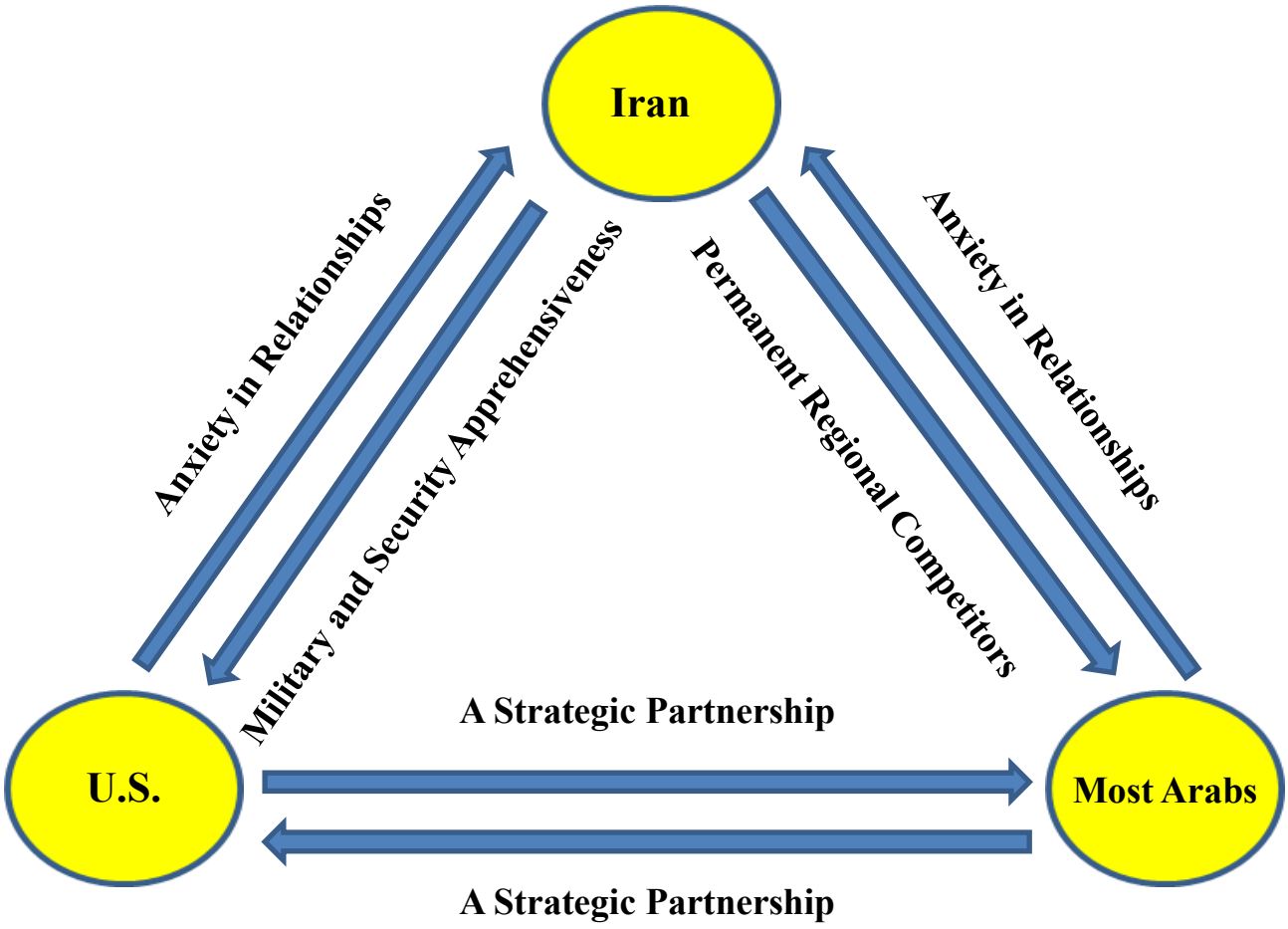
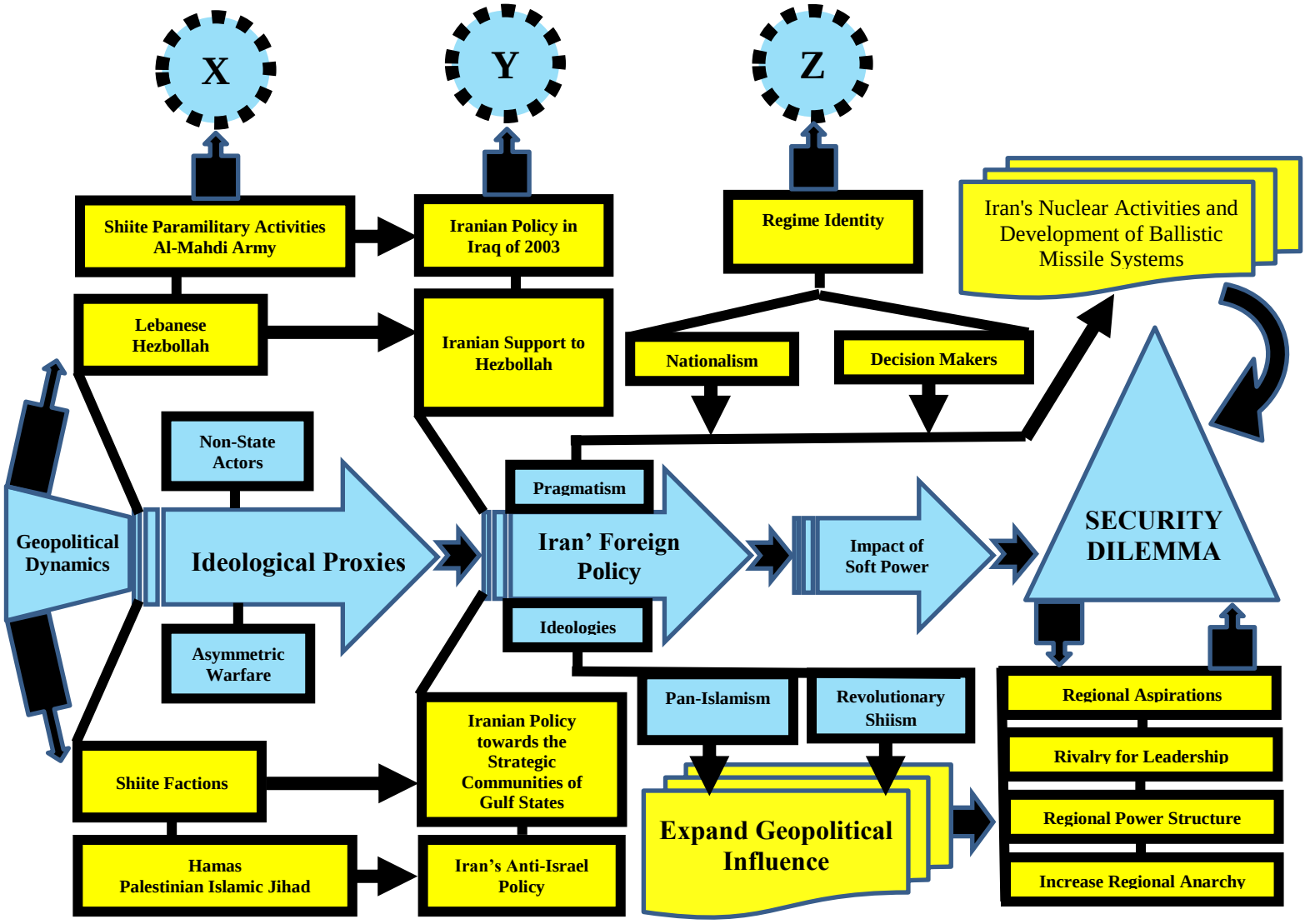


Diagram 2

The Core of the Argument for the Thesis



Keywords:

- 'X' (Independent Variable) - the distribution of soft power, including Iran's use of ideological proxies.
- 'Y' (Dependent Variable) - Iran's foreign policy outcome.
- 'Z' (Intervening Variables) - and of domestic factors, including regime identity, nationalism and decision makers.

Table of Contents

Dedication ii
Acknowledgments iii
Abstract v
Map of the Middle East Region vi
Diagram 1 vii
Diagram 2 viii
Table of Contents ix

Chapter 1. Introduction and Overview 1
1.1. General Introduction 1
1.2. Background to the Study 3
1.3. Outline of Research Problem 4
1.4. Research Questions 5
1.5. Scope and Objectives of Research Project 6
1.6. Significance of the Thesis and its Contribution 8
1.7. Literature Review 9
1.8. Theoretical Framework 23
1.8.1. The Security Dilemma 25
1.8.2. Neoclassical Realism 32
1.8.3. Constructivism 34
1.8.4. Offensive Realism 38
1.8.5. Speech Acts 40
1.9. Research Design 43
1.10. Research Methods 43
1.11. Organization and Structure of the Thesis 51

Chapter 2. Developing the Analytical Framework 53
2.1. Introduction 53
2.2. Building the Analytical Framework 54
2.3. Islamic Perspective and International Relations Theory 54
2.4. The Islamic Political Thought in the view of Iranian Shiite School 57
2.5. The Political Thought of Ayatollah Khomeini 59
2.6. Some Essential Epistemological Aspects of Shiite school 62
2.6.1. Shiite Islam of the Twelver School of Thought 63
2.6.2. Al-Mahdi Al-Montazar (the Awaited) 65
2.6.3. The Theory of the Governance of Jurist (Wilayat Al-Faqih) 66
2.7. A new Revolutionary Paradigm and the Path to Reach Power 69
2.8. Regional Instability and the New Security Dilemma 71
2.9. Conclusion 73

Chapter 3. Internal Structure of Iran's Political System: Key Drivers for Foreign Policy 75
3.1. Introduction 75
3.2. The Pattern of Interactions between Power and Policy: A Theoretical Approach 76
3.2.1. Power Structures of Political System of Iran 84

3.2.2. Domestic Political Factors and the Dynamics of Iran's Foreign Policy 87
3.3. The Extended Arms of the Supreme Leader 92
3.4. The three Intervening Variables 94
3.4.1. A Regime Identity 94
3.4.2. Nationalism 97
3.4.3. Decision Makers 99
3.5. Three Substantial Drivers are being in Line with Instruments of Soft Power 103
3.5.1. Ideologies 103
3.5.2. Pan-Islamism 108
3.5.3. Revolutionary Shiism 110
3.6. Major Security Institutions and their Tasks 112
3.7. Conclusion 115

Chapter 4. Background of the Middle East: Changing Security Structure 118
4.1. Introduction 118
4.2. Modern History and the Geographical Background of the Region 121
4.3. Regional Security in the Middle East 124
4.4. Pre- invasion Iraq in 2003 and Iran's role in the Middle East 126
4.5. Post- invasion Iraq in 2003 and Iran's role in the Middle East 128
4.6. The Arab World in the Face of Regional Challenges: Iran's Role 131
4.7. Conclusion 132

Chapter 5. US, the Regional Players and UN within Iranian Strategic Competition: Triangulating Security Perceptions 135
5.1. Introduction 135
5.2. Historical Perspective: U.S. and Iran and Fluctuation in Relations 137
5.3. Iran's Threat Perception of the U.S. 140
5.3.1. Cultural Dimension 143
5.3.2. Security Dimension 147
5.3.3. Military Dimension 150
5.4. Iran's Threat Perception Towards the Saudi 153
5.5. Iran's Threat Perception Towards Israel 157
5.6. Iran's Threat Perception Towards Radical Sunni Movements 158
5.7. Iran and the UN: Regional Perspectives 160
5.7.1. Iran's Role as an Energy Producer 160
5.7.2. Iran's Nuclear Plans and the Security Concerns 162
5.8. Conclusion 164

Chapter 6. Iranian Foreign Policy and Strategic Interests 167
6.1. Introduction 167
6.2. Iranian Foreign Policy between Ideology and Pragmatism 168
6.3. Iran's Tactical Foreign Policy Rhetoric 171
6.4. Approach of Iran's Foreign Policy during Ahmadinejad's era 174
6.5. Iran and Avenues for Regional Cooperation and Engagement with U.S. Policy 178
6.6. Iran's Nuclear Activities and Development of Ballistic Missile Systems 181
6.7. Iran's Foreign Policy and Non-State Militant Actors 193
6.8. Conclusion 197

Chapter 7. The Four Essential Issues under Study 201
7.1. Introduction 201
7.2. Iranian Policy in Iraq of 2003 203
7.2.1. Iran-Iraq Relations after Saddam 205
7.2.2. The Iranian Interests in Iraq 206
7.2.3. Shiite Crescent between Reality and Illusion 208
7.2.4. Regional Implications of Shiite Revival in Iraq 209
7.2.5. Cycle of Violence in Iraq between Iranian Interests and Regional Threats 211
7.3. Iranian Support to Hezbollah 218
7.3.1. Ideological Relationships between Iran and Hezbollah 222
7.3.2. The Role of Hezbollah in Lebanon Domestic politics 225
7.3.3. Iran's Role in Lebanon and Military Support to the Hezbollah 232
7.3.4. War beyond Israel and Hezbollah 239
7.4. Iran's anti-Israel Policy 242
7.4.1. Hard-line Rhetoric against Israel 244
7.4.2 Adoption the Palestinian Cause 245
7.4.3. Support Hamas and Palestinian Fundamentalist Organisations 248
7.5. Iran's Policy towards the Strategic Communities of Gulf States 251
7.5.1. Mutual Perceptions, Impediment, and Scope of Antagonists: GCC and Iran 254
7.5.2. The Gulf Region: The Security Threat in Post-Invasion Iraq 256
7.5.3. Shiite Posture: Iran's Critical Strategic Role in the Gulf Region 259
7.5.4. U.S. Strategic commitment towards the Regional Security 277
7.6. Conclusion 279

Chapter 8. The Security Dilemma and its Impact upon the Middle East 283
8.1. Introduction 283
8.2. The Origin of the Security Dilemma in the Middle East 284
8.3. Interactions of the Independent, Dependent and Intervening Variables 289
8.4. Consequences of the Security Dilemma in the Middle East 290
8.4.1. Increase Influence of Non-State Actors: Asymmetric Warfare and Unconventional Forces 290
8.4.2. Strait of Hormuz: World Markets and Iranian Threats 298
8.4.3. A Conventional and Unconventional Armaments Race and the Likelihood of Spreading to Non-State Actors across the Region 300
8.5. Regional Ascendance of Iran between Reality and Illusion 302
8.6. The Security Dilemma as an Ongoing Process in the Middle East 304
8.7. Conclusion 308

Chapter 9. Conclusions and Questions for Future Study 310
9.1. Introduction 310
9.2. Summary of the main findings 311
9.3. Thesis Revisited 316
9.3.1. Assessment of Grand Strategy of Iranian Foreign Policy 316
9.3.2. Assessment the Mechanism of the Security Dilemma 319
9.4. Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Research 321

Appendices 324

Appendix 1	List of Discussed Issues at Focus Group	324
Appendix 2	The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran	334
Appendix 3	Image of loyalty	402
Appendix 4	Map of Iran's Declared Nuclear Installations	403
Appendix 5	Satellite Images for Isfahan Facility	404
Appendix 6	Estimates ranges for Iranian Ballistic Missiles	405
Appendix 7	Speech by President Bush	406
Appendix 8	Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq	425
Appendix 9	Image of loyalty	442
Appendix 10	U.S. House of Representatives	443
Appendix 11	Bush: Iran threatens world security	444

Bibliography 448

Chapter One

Introduction and Overview

1.1. General Introduction

The security dilemma in the Middle East was redefined by the remarkable deterioration in the region's security structure starting in 2003 (Salem, 2008). The political and security developments that followed created a political and security vacuum alongside a change in the balance of power in the region. As a consequence, international powers and regional players confront serious challenges and unprecedented threats at all levels (domestic, regional and international). In an anarchic environment of nation-states and violent non-state actors, two opposing groupings have emerged: Iran with its regional allies, such as the Iraqi government, the Syrian regime and the Lebanese Hezbollah, and the U.S. with its regional and international allies. Confrontation between the two groupings is intense as both seek to achieve their geopolitical objectives, on the one hand, and to maintain their security, to reinforce their self-interests and to maximise their power, on the other (Juneau, 2009).

One of the most important developments in political dynamics in the post-2003 Middle East is the rise of Iran, to become a regional great power (Rubin, 2010; www.english.farsnews.com/Newstext.aspx?nn=13940213000238, 2015), not solely because its foreign policy involves religious ideology, or even because it allegedly has developed a nuclear programme, but also due to its geopolitical interests. The rise of Iran

has heightened regional insecurity and provoked further action from the others, particularly, Sunni-led states supported by U.S. administrations. See Diagram 1 on page vii.

The U.S. and its regional and international allies view with suspicion the nature and scope of Iran's behaviour towards others, to attain its geopolitical interests and national/cultural survival (Negroponte, 2006). Hence, there emerges a phenomenon of action and reaction, which leads to the escalation of regional instability, by creating and perpetuating a case of direct and/or indirect confrontation between the parties. All parties are seeking to successfully reinforce their strategic interests through their foreign policies, which are based on diplomatic practices and often severe confrontations (Wright, 2010).

This thesis provides an analysis of the Middle East security system by focusing on the impact of the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy on the security landscape between 2003- 2013. This thesis assesses the interactions between the major players: Iran, the U.S. Saudi Arabia and non-state actors. These interactions will be examined in light of dynamic relationships, to gain a better understanding of the variables, factors and drivers which affect states' behaviour in the pursuit of their regional ambitions and national security. It focuses on the geopolitical dynamics that have influenced the scope of the security dilemma, by examining Iran's behaviour, defensive and offensive.

The transformative power of Iran's foreign policy, which has attempted to fill the political and security vacuum in order to counter the U.S influence after 2003, besides the distribution of soft power across the region within an anarchic environment, has contributed to regional threats and raised tensions in international relations (Juneau, 2009; www.tehrantimes.com/images/pdfs/12158.pdf, 2014; www.mubasher.aljazeera.net, 2015).

The Islamic Republic of Iran is seen by Israel and some officials and analysts (in the West and in the Arab world) as always attempting to maximise its power and expand its ideological influence, through its strategic alliance with proxies of non-state actors, such as Lebanese Hezbullah, for example, and Shiite factions abroad (Levitt, 2012; www.yemeress.com, 2014; www.kayhan.ir, 2015).

1.2. Background to the Study

In recent years, the Middle East has witnessed a number of major developments, the most prominent of which was the war in Iraq in 2003 and the crises surrounding the so-called Arab Spring in late 2010, which led to the deterioration of security in the Arab world. These developments changed Iranian security calculations besides the balance of power in Iran's favour (www.tehrantimes.com/politics/117178-iran-wholeheartedly-supports-syria-iraq-lebanon-palestine-leaders-advisor, 2014). On the one hand, the removal of the traditional threats to Iran's national security (the ideological threat of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the military and Baathist threats of Saddam's regime in Iraq), along with the disintegration of the army in Iraq, together with an increase in national income due to higher oil prices, provided opportunities for the Iranian regime to benefit from all these developments (Hollis in Reissner et al, 2004; Alfoneh, 2011; www.sabq.org/Ydzgde, 2015). However, the old threats to the Iranian national security have been replaced by Western forces, particularly the presence of American troops who created a geopolitical pincer against Iran, with Afghanistan on the eastern flank and in Iraq on the western flank. Saudi Arabia and its Sunni allies posed a further challenge (Russell et al, 2002; Juneau, 2009).

This challenge can be viewed in the light of escalating competition for influence and dominance of the Middle East. This competition has shifted from diplomatic confrontation to material support to their allies of non-state actors in the region, by both parties. Their geopolitical interests differ; Iran supports Shiite factions and groups in Lebanon, Iraq, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Yemen; in contrast, Saudi Arabia and its allies of Arab countries felt the importance of countering the growth of Iran's influence by supporting Sunni clans in Iraq and Syria, for example. Consequently, their confrontation became sectarian (Sunni vs Shiite), which was perhaps inevitable.

The new era of destabilisation has affected the security landscape and political reality in the Middle East, especially after new non-state actors entered the security equation, using their entire instruments of power, such as asymmetric warfare and unconventional capabilities. For instance, the so-called Islamic State (IS) has imposed itself upon the regional and international landscape in an unprecedented way. Furthermore, non-state actors such as Lebanese Hezbollah, Al-Mahdi Army in Iraq, Houthi Rebels in Yemen and Hamas in Gaza strip and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in West Bank have been working as proxies for Iran's foreign policy (www.english.farsnews.com/newstext. as p x? nn =13 930 603000905, 2014; www.aawsat.com/home/article/332481, 2015; www.watanserb.com/ reports/6989, 2015).

1.3. Outline of Research Problem

Iran’s foreign policy is not easy to understand, especially the inner interactions and dynamic processes of decision-making in Tehran. There is a gap between its rhetoric and its actions; between its sense of grievance and its revolutionary behaviour; and between its

ideological and national interests (Takeyh, 2003, 2007). The picture is further complicated by inconsistencies in Iran's foreign policy strategy, which is based on a combination of power structures; firstly, executive authority (the state of Iran), which is represented by the president and minister of foreign affairs; secondly, religious authority (revolutionary Iran), represented by the supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution and backed strongly by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (Al-Nefisy, 2014). The difficulty lies in a lack of clarity regarding the highest power of decision-making in Iran, responsible for directing foreign policy, that is, whether it is the president or the supreme leader. This issue will be discussed in detail in chapters two and three.

1.4. Research Questions

The primary research is:

> **To what extent have the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion of Iraq impacted Iran's foreign policy and, in turn, how did soft power affect the security dilemma?**

Addressing this question requires the exploration of a number of secondary research questions:

1. To what extent does ideology shape Iran's foreign policy?

2. Which events, perceived as security concerns, influence Iranian ideology, identity and foreign policy?

3. What instruments of power does Iran's foreign policy use to increase its power, to ensure its security requirements and meet its strategic interests?

4. To what extent does the perception of the Iranian security threat to and by Middle Eastern states influence the security dilemma?

This thesis is designed to capture the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East, in order to understand the regional security dilemma, by exploring the relationship between the three essential variables. These are:

- 'X' (independent variable) - the distribution of soft power, including Iran's use of ideological proxies.
- 'Y' (dependent variable) - Iran's foreign policy outcome.
- 'Z' (intervening variables) - and of domestic factors, including regime identity, nationalism and decision makers.

1.5. Scope and Objectives of Research Project

The impact of the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy in post-2003 Iraq and the subsequent occupation of that country by the U.S. in leading the Western coalition has shaped the dynamic situation of the regional security system. However, multi-disciplinary studies of the nature and scope of the interactions between regional and international major players interconnecting internal and external variables, and specifically the role of religious ideology (soft power) in states' behaviour (Iran-U.S.), are limited. This thesis

examines the causal links between geopolitical shifts and linkages with regional unstable dynamics in light of Iranian behaviour, especially during Ahmadinejad's presidency.

At the core of this thesis is an examination of four case studies. These are: Iranian policy in Iraq in post-2003; Iranian support to Hezbollah; Iran's anti-Israel policy; and Iran's policy towards the Strategic Communities of Gulf States. The justification for selecting these case studies is that these four interconnected spheres are the key contextual issues that best illustrate the issues that have had a bearing on Iran's behaviour and its foreign policy.

The objective of this thesis is to explore and analyse the geopolitical dynamics, perceptions and policies that have impacted the security dilemma in the Middle East, as seen from regional and international actors, between 2003 and 2013. In order to achieve this objective, the thesis addresses the regional security system by examining the variables, factors and drivers which affect both security dynamics, in general, and perceptions, in particular. This comprises internal, regional and international variables, which will be studied to explore how they contributed to the foreign policy and behaviour patterns of the concerned state, particularly, Iran. As this study highlights, the regional security is highly complex, involving a multiplicity of variables that have interacted at various levels to produce a situation of instability and insecurity. Those geopolitical dynamics, perceptions and diverse policies are amplified by the key players (Iran, U.S., Saudi Arabia, Hezbollah and the so-called Islamic State e.g.) with contradictions of regional interests, making the Middle East security dilemma difficult to overcome.

This thesis develops a comprehensive conceptual research framework by assessing the contemporary geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East, based on relevant theories and

literature. It investigates the impact of the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy on the regional security system, by interpreting the dynamic process of the security dilemma.

1.6. Significance of the Thesis and its Contribution

This thesis combines a new theoretical approach and empirical research. This combination has boosted knowledge in the field of security studies in a number of ways. Firstly, the originality of the thesis lies in that it broadens the focus of security studies beyond conventional debates of purely military focus, in order to better understand the Middle East security dilemma. This includes roles and activities of non-state actors and unconventional forces (asymmetric warfare), including ideological proxies and speech acts as instruments of power in foreign policy. On this basis, rules of engagement and scope of confrontation among diverse actors in light of power relationships, competition for leadership and distribution of power, have been changed. These changes are based on a wide range of tactical approaches of conflict, which includes militias and transnational radical movements. This thesis provides further insight into the nature, form and scope of the confrontation between Iran and its allies, on the one hand, and most regional countries with their Western allies, on the other.

Secondly, this study establishes new avenues for research by connecting religious ideology drivers (e.g. Pan-Islamism and Revolutionary Shiism) and geopolitical forces, by assessing state behaviour and the perceptions towards the impact of the distribution of soft power on the regional security system. By interpreting and explaining these drivers, options become more noticeable, allowing the understanding of patterns and actions. This thesis also

provides scholars, analysts, observers and researchers with valuable insight into the origins and scope of regional security issues, at domestic, regional and international levels.

In addition, this research project is timely and utilises a mix of approaches from both international relations and Middle East studies. Thus, the integration of the theoretical framework and empirical approaches assists in filling the gap in the literature, by understanding the geopolitical dynamics of the security dilemma in the Middle East and by providing reliable outcomes. The hypothesis underpinning the thesis at hand is, in essence, that although most of the available literature is very detailed in terms of the security dilemma, the role of Iran's foreign policy in the Middle East is not clear. To determine whether the role of Iran's foreign policy in the region is constructed on defensive approach or offensive action is very important in understanding drivers and motives in Iran's behaviour. In this context, most of the available literature either takes the form of a narrative that explains an incessant conflict with a chronological approach, or it uses an analytical method that adopts a normative approach to discuss what should happen. There is no clear theoretical underpinning of an empirical approach to ask what has happened, or why events occurred as they did (Bausell, 1986). Furthermore, the central pillar for this thesis is ideas and beliefs (the distribution of soft power), rather than material power (conventional military capabilities). See Diagram 2 on page viii.

1.7. Literature Review

Iran’s foreign policy has been a source of argument among scholars since the establishment of the revolutionary regime in 1979. Iran’s behaviour just like its revolution is still an enigma to many researchers. The current debate on how to respond to Iran's

behaviour is based on two perceptions. From one perspective, Iran's ascent is one of the examples of the tendency of rising powers to alter the regional balance of power in potentially dangerous ways, especially as its ambition is in growth and is guided by religious ideology backed by proxies. From another perspective, Iran's foreign policy behaviour has been shaped by several factors, such as economic sanctions and political isolation and the increasing threats to its national security. All these affect the ways Iran sees itself and is seen by others.

Looking at variables, factors and drivers related to regional anarchy and threats, competition for leadership, changing power relations and power structure, and the distribution of power, we can determine the nature of the geopolitical dynamics and scope of possible outcomes of Iran's behaviour. Iran, like other nation states, holds the essential tools not only to proceed with its foreign policy to achieve its interests, but also to confront threats in the region, especially from the United States' presence (Byman, 2008). It has been argued that Iranian behaviour, with its foreign policy, plays a remarkable role in regional security and also in global issues (Takeyh, 2003; Cordesman, 2007; Al-Rashed, 2015)

As such, the main focus of this thesis is security, which will be explored in light of the geopolitical dynamics alongside Iran's behaviour, in order to understand the nature of international and regional interactions and its implications on the security dilemma. Security studies and foreign policies have been discussed by several scholars who have written about the behaviour of states in the regional and international politics. They can be grouped into two major schools of thought: First, classical realism, neorealism (defensive and offensive, particularly the security dilemma) and neoclassical realism; second, the

constructivist paradigm. In addition, the concept of speech acts will be discussed in this thesis.

For realists, the international system is anarchic by nature, with no central authority to adjust states behaviours (Waltz, 1993). The international system, however, is perceived to be a venue that embraces potential conflicts and enmities among competing actors. Therefore, the state is a unitary actor in international politics, whose voice is that of its capital city and/or its head of state, irrespective of domestic policies, debates, and challenges to the legitimacy of the regime in power (Hollis & Smith, 1990). On this basis, realism theorists believe that all states behave similarly, because they should respond to the international system. The major arguments that support this view can be found in the works of Morgenthau, revised by Kenneth & Clinton (1948, 1993), Waltz (1979) and Collins (2007). This standpoint concentrates on maintaining security, for instance, (Waltz, defensive neorealist) and maximising power (Mearsheimer, offensive neorealist), which is a main foreign policy objective, focusing principally on external structural imperatives as the major determinant of such foreign policies (Waltz, 1993; Mearsheimer, 2001; Collins, 2007). In terms of maximising defense, Kenneth Waltz argues that the anarchical structure of the international system drives states to maintain a moderate policy in order to achieve security (Jervis, 1978). In contrast, offensive realism, John Mearsheimer (1990, 2001) argues that the international system encourages an offensive strategy, because the anarchic environment leads to insecurity, and only by maximising power can the state be secured. In order to illustrate the main theme of structural realism, it is necessary to understand the geopolitical dynamics in light of the complexities of the security dilemma. The main signpost that helps structural realism to find its way on the ground through transition is the concept of interest defined in terms of power. Arguably, the concept is centred on

hegemony and presumes the presence of ongoing balance of power patterns that are inherent in the nature of the regional system. Iran and Saudi Arabia, for example, cannot enjoy friendly relations because they are competing decisively for geopolitical influence in a region that lacks any effective security measures. Consequently, both parties compete in line with a prisoner's dilemma paradigm that cannot be averted (Axelrod, 1984, 1997, 2000; Grieco, 1988).

Despite differences in approaches, however, the views of Waltz and Mearsheimer dominate the field of international relations. However, in the contemporary world arena, it is more problematic than ever that the state remains the main player. It seems that realists (realism and neorealism) were not particularly successful in explaining Iranian-Saudi competition and, more broadly, Shiite-Sunni rivalry, increasingly relevant in several regional crises with the participation of external countries, such as sectarian conflict in Iraq and the Syrian conflict. Moreover, realists have difficulty interpreting threats by transnational radical movements, including the distribution of soft power via ideological proxies.

Constructivist scholars challenge realism when it comes to states' foreign policies. Constructivism emphasises ideology and identity as constructed by political elites as the main determinant of foreign policy (Hopf, 1998). Hence, domestic factors instead of international system are influencing and playing a major role in state behaviour. It is by domestic factors such as regime identity, nationalism, decision makers, religious ideology and constitution, for example, that foreign policies are constituted. Therefore, states most likely respond to their internal factors and behave accordingly. Arguably, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 came as a result of changes during the process of sociocultural

interaction. In this sense, changes in states' behaviour are common, despite similarities in their political systems. Constructivist approaches are adopted by Snyder (1991), Wendt (1992, 1998), Hagan, Neack, Laura, Hey, Jeanne, Haney, Patrick (1995), Hopf (1998), Yaqubi (2009), Juneau (2009), and Nia (2010, 2011), among other scholars. In terms of domestic influences, a lot has been written about Islamic political thought and the Shiite school as a revolutionary paradigm to gain power. After Ayatollah Khomeini came to power in 1979, he stressed the importance of exporting the Islamic Revolution throughout the world. Ayatollah Khomeini indicated that the power of the Islamic movement in Iran liberated the people of Iran from oppression and tyranny. Thus, political movements in line with religious ideologies have barely begun (Khomeini, 1970; Algar, 1981). Article 152-154 of the Iranian constitution of 1979 and revised version on 1989 clarifies Ayatollah Khomeini's approach and his successors (www.parstimes.com, 1979; www.en.parliran.ir, 1989). However, there still remains a gap regarding the link between the intensity of the ideological dispute among Shiites and Sunnis historically, the type and origin of issues in conflict, the nature of relations between the parties, their political dissimilarities, and the relative power of the disputants reflected in the geopolitical dynamics of the region.

Neoclassical realism provides a new paradigm of state actions through three variables: systemic variables (the distribution of power), cognitive variables (threats and perception and misperception of systemic pressures) and domestic variables (identities, state institutions and decision makers). Neoclassical realism is a prominent approach in international relations. It focuses on the interaction between external and internal dynamics constructing state behaviour. Rose (1998), Taliaferro (2006), Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro (2007, 2009) and Juneau (2009) are some neoclassical realist scholars. Thomas Juneau (2009), in his paper 'Power, Perceptions, Identity and Factional Politics: A

neoclassical realist analysis of Iranian foreign policy 2001-2007', discusses Iran's foreign policy assertiveness within a neoclassical realist framework. Juneau has integrated variables and factors successfully in a theoretically-informed manner, to analyse and explain the growing relative power of Iranian foreign policy in the timeframe. According to Juneau (2009: 1), "much has been written on Iranian foreign policy between 2003 and 2007, taking into consideration some of these variables, and even more has been written concerning prior eras".

Although much has been written on Middle East security, little has been written to comprehensively explain the geopolitical dynamic in the Middle East in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, by integrating the impact of the transformative power of Iranian foreign policy and regional security implications. Indeed, this thesis focuses on Iran's foreign policy, geopolitical dynamics in the Middle East, power politics, competition for leadership, security issues, religious ideology and regional anarchy. It uses primary and secondary sources.

To understand Iran's foreign policy, the thesis needs to include the concept of speech acts. Austin's speech act theory (1962) is the best-known in this field. Allwood (1977) and Oishi (2006) also explore this theory. In accordance with the concept of speech acts, the Iranian supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, for example, warned the international community on 04 June 2006 that Iran would disrupt energy supplies from the Gulf region, if Iran were attacked by the United States for its nuclear programme (www.theodoresworld.net/archives, 2006). It is clear that Iran perceives threats from many sides. Repeated U.S. interventions in the Middle East, notably the overthrow of the regimes in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), have provided Iran with good reason to

feel insecure. Furthermore, there is mutual historical hostility between both sides (Iran and the U.S.) which shape their international relationships and also their behaviour towards each other, in line with the geopolitical dynamics of the region (www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940627000603, 2015).

The core argument of this thesis relies on the concept of soft power as a key instrument of the transformative power of the Iran's foreign policy in the Middle East. Soft power can be viewed in the sense of the distribution of ideological proxies, not only to counter external threats, but also to maximise Iran's geopolitical influence in the region. This thesis addresses security issues that are associated mainly with the pattern of interactions in political relationships in line with the geopolitical dynamics after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. A combination of schools of thought, classical realism, constructivism, neoclassical realism, including the concept of speech acts, will provide a basic understanding of how to see the larger picture of the regional landscape by interpreting security events that influence foreign policies.

Soft power and hard power in the literature has been divided into two aspects, effectiveness and usefulness in line with capabilities. Some scholars argue that soft power is effective and it sometimes reinforces and sometimes interferes with hard power, but in any case, soft power does not depend on hard power (Nye, 2004). Joseph Nye formulated the term 'soft power' in 1990, which he described as the ability to shape the preferences of others and getting others to want the outcomes you want. In other words, Nye broadened his concept as a behaviour influence outcome, especially in the post September 11 period (he did so in Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, 2004). Others feel that soft power would be more effective if more money was spent. Jan Melissen is one of them.

One of his famous works is The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations (2005). Yet it could be argued that soft power revolves in the orbit of the conflict in terms of extending ideological influence. Consequently, interaction among states in line with the geopolitical dynamics is most likely to result in a security dilemma.

Why does this happen? How does soft power change events on the ground? The answer to the first question is that soft power makes no noise, unlike hard power, when it is put into action. This is because soft power infiltrates smoothly to the targeted area. In reference to Iran's case, ideological linkage (Wilayat Al-Faqih theory, see section 2.6.3.) between Tehran and its proxies of non-state actors and Shiite factions which are spread around the region (e.g. in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait) provides a supportive approach for Iran's foreign policy.

Lily Hamourtziadou (2016) answers the second question by stressing the importance of wars of ideas, discourse wars and most importantly, wars of ideology to promote the geopolitical interests of states abroad without launching a military campaign (the air, land and maritime components). Hamourtziadou argues that the effects of soft power are often felt for much longer than those of hard wars, being passed on from one generation to the next, and can be revived at any time.

The literature shows that some scholars find that Iran's foreign policy has adopted different approaches in dealing with its neighbours and foreign powers, especially the U.S., as a result of some domestic factors, such as regime identity and religious elites who control the power (e.g. Kinzer, 2006; Jawada, 2007; Takeyh, 2007; Al-Nefisy & Abdullah, 2008; Rakel, 2008). These studies assume that during Ayatollah Khomeini’s rule (1979-1989)

and president Ahmadinejad's (2005-2013), Iranian foreign policy was controlled by hard liners, close to the radical groups (e.g. Al-Ghareib, 2005; Bergman, 2008; Takeyh, 2009, 2010). Despite the pragmatism of president Rafsanjani (1989-1997), and a moderate leader, president Khatami (1997-2005), the Iranian regime was unable to end its international and regional isolation. On the other hand, several studies claim that the international system has driven some Iranian foreign decisions since the Islamic revolution of 1979, which means that the changes in Iran's policies have come in response to international factors (e.g., Robert Jervis, 1988, 2005; Ehteshami, 1998, 2003; Graham Fuller, 2003, 2006; Bulent Gokay, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2012; Jan Melissen, 2005; Anthony Cordesman and Martin Kleiber, 2007; Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri, 2008, 2010; Sir Lawrence Freedman, 2008).

Other scholars have discussed international security studies and the phenomenon of conflict in the Middle East by focusing on various dimensions, including Gulf security and political violence (e.g. Thomas Schelling, 1958, 1980; Roger Myerson, 1997; Buzan & Wæver, 2003; Kayhan Barzegar, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010; Ken Booth & Nicholas Wheeler, 2008; Mohammad Mousavi & Yasser Norouzi, 2010; Jelle Puelings, 2010; Bruno, 2011; Adel El-Gogary, 2013). However, it is still a challenge to capture all variables to connect Iran's behaviour with drivers of soft power (ideologies, pan-Islamism and revolutionary Shiism) that impact upon the geopolitical dynamics, which in turn lead to the security dilemma in the Middle East. This thesis interprets Middle East security issues, particularly Iran's behaviour, in the context of the complex regional security system.

Scholars like Kayhan Barzegar (2009, 2010) believe that Iran's foreign policy is driven by pragmatism in line with the complexities of national security stances. Others like Abdullah

Al-Nefisy (2008, 2013) argue that policy is driven by religious imperatives, or by both ideology and pragmatism, as, for instance, Mahjoob Zweiri (2007).

In order to understand the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy alongside its strategic interests and the reflections on security affairs in the Middle East, including the threat of transnational radical movements, one must become familiar with works by Pinar Bilgin (2005), Regional Security in the Middle East: A critical perspective; Mahjoob Zweiri (2007), Iranian Foreign Policy: Between Ideology and Pragmatism; Michael Connell, Alireza Nader and Jacob Boyars (2007), Iran's Strategic Interests in the Middle East: A Project Iran Workshop; Paul Williams (2008), Security Studies: An Introduction; and Anthony Cordesman, Arleigh Burke and Adam Seitz (2009), Iran and the Challenges to Middle East Security. All contributed significantly to the conception and analysis of chapters four and six.

Barry Buzan (1991: 19) in People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era, developed the concept of security and described it as "the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity". Buzan (1991) argues that, since the state is basically an idea, the essential security task of the state is to reinforce this idea. In line with the theoretical approaches of constructivism and neo-classical realism, a number of studies have expanded the discussion and debate on the concept of security studies, to move beyond the traditional focus on military power. This has, in turn, altered the meaning and content of national security perceptions.

Rosemary Hollis discusses the nature of interactions between the U.S. and Iran, besides the phenomenon of terrorism, the Middle East peace process and the Iraq crisis. Hollis explores the Iraq crisis on domestic, regional and international levels by focusing on interactions between leaderships, security issues, arms control, cultural aspects and the concept of neo-imperialism. Her work includes What Price Renewed Conflict in the Middle East (1992); Gulf Security: No Consensus (1993); Getting out of the Iraq trap (2003); The U.S. Role: Helpful or Harmful (2004); Iran and the United States: Terrorism, peace in the Middle East and Iraq (2004). Hollis writes about Gulf security as being connected with a variety of factors, which prevent all efforts to establish a collective security arrangement. Instead, Western intervention plays a prominent role in maintaining the balance of power in the Gulf region.

Bulent Gokay has also published a wide range of books and articles on U.S. foreign policy and hegemony, particularly in the Middle East and Central Asia. Among his contributions are: 11 September 2001: War, Terror and Judgement, in collaboration with Walker (2002); Ghost Dance: The U.S. and Illusions of Power in the 21st Century, in collaboration with Whitman (2004); and the Fall of the US Empire: Global Fault-Lines and the Shifting Imperial Order, in collaboration with Fouskas (2012). Gokay (2012) has a new angle on the conflict, which is based on American hegemony over the global system and its perspective on the Iranian risk to regional and world security as a pretext to justify taking military action against Iran, on the one hand, and to assist interest groups in American politics due to a relative economic downturn, on the other.

Kinzer's work (2006) has contributed to the understanding of the integration of religion and state in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This was essential in helping me to assess the

approaches of those conservatives who seemed to have a hostile attitude towards the West, but also to ideas of progress and modernity. This has led me to focus on speech acts between Iran and its allies of non-state actors, on the one hand, and Western countries, especially the U.S., on the other, in order to understand part of the struggle for power, hostilities, and mutual threats between two different cultures and nations, in a volatile area. However, in Kinzer literature, there was no discussion of the implications and impact of Iran's behaviour on the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East.

Paul Rogers has written many books and articles on Iranian affairs and Middle East politics and security. Some of his distinguished works are: Iran: Consequences of a War (2006); A War Too Far: Iran, Iraq, and the New American Century (2006); Why We're Losing the War on Terror (2007); Global Security after the War on Terror (2009); and Losing Control: Global Security in the 21st Century (2010). Rogers has addressed the major global challenges with a focus on security issues and the real cause of global insecurity. The war on terror and the threat of transnational radical movements are central to this thesis.

Ray Takeyh in his book Hidden Iran: Paradox and Power in the Islamic Republic (2007, 2010) provides a comprehensive analysis of Iranian behaviour. Takeyh writes of the power structures of the political system, Islamist movements and Middle Eastern politics. Takeyh (2007) provides great insight and analysis of internal political interactions and explains why Iran has so often confounded American expectations and inspired a long series of misguided U.S. policies that continue to this day. Takeyh illustrates how the game of political chess is played in Iran. He gives the Iranian view of the world, which transcends political affiliation, and the prominent role the country seeks to play in the Gulf region, in

the wider Muslim world, and in relation to its neighbours in Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent (Takeyh, 2007). He asserts that Americans have grossly misunderstood the complex realities of Iranian political life.

Madeleine Albright (2007), in her book The Mighty and the Almighty, in association with Bill Clinton, discussed the role of religion in shaping George W. Bush's thinking and the impact on American foreign policy. The book provides insight into the American approach to Islamist extremists. As a result, Iran considers its national security under threat from the U.S. and Israel. As the U.S. is deemed a source of instability in the Middle East, Iran attempts to play the role of protector of the regional security and value system against the foreign players (Mansharof & Savyon, 2010). In this sense, the mechanism of the security dilemma in the Middle East continues in this framework of uncertainty between Iran and its allies, on the one hand, and the U.S. and its allies, on the other, as long as each party assumes the role of protector and defender of higher values of righteousness and freedom, while rgarding the other party as wicked and roguish (Kemp, 2005; Bahgat, 2007).

This thesis has built on works by Arabic scholars such as Abdullah Al-Nafisi and Abdullah Adel (2008), by developing their core argument concerning the development of Shiite doctrine throughout history. In their book Drives of Persian Policy in the Arabian Gulf Region, Al-Nafisi et al argue that throughout modern history, at the external level, Iran's foreign policy has adopted a regional proactive approach. The Iranian regime has attempted to pursue its foreign agenda based mainly on the Shiite paradigm of struggle for social justice, in line with principles of Islamic revolution (for more details see chapter 2). In addition, Al-Nafisi et al argue that Iran's foreign policy reinforces its regional influence and survivability through its faith to reach the Arab street and Shiite minorities. Abdullah

Al-Ghareib (2005), however, argues that Shiism began as a political movement rather than a truly religious ideology.

This thesis uses sources on Iran's nuclear activities, as they are an essential part of regional dynamics and deterrence (discussed in chapters five and six). The major and most concise analysis and model for current trends are The Nuclear Option in the Middle East (2001) by Muhammad Mansour; Iran's Ballistic Missile Capabilities: A Net Assessment (2010) by John Chipman. Moreover, Sir Lawrence Freedman has written on the cold war era and nuclear strategy, such as The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy (2004) and Deterrence (2004). Despite the many books and articles on deterrence, in this important and groundbreaking book Freedman has developed a distinctive approach to the evaluation of deterrence, as both a state of mind and a strategic option. The contemporary concept of deterrence has been developed by Freedman, who discusses whether and how it still has relevance in today's world, in the context of constructivist and realist approaches. For realists, Iran's nuclear activities are an attempt to support its national security interests as a form of strategic deterrent. The constructivist perspective stresses a broader concept for Iranian nuclear capabilities which exports the revolution and captures Arab audiences.

One must bear in mind that international relations theory is a huge field and there are many different ways to analyse issues and explain variables under studies. This thesis builds on the current literature of security studies by looking at variables related to the instability alongside Iran's behaviour and integrates both contextual and process factors into the analysis. Through a review of previous literature, it is suggested that it is not sufficient to deal with material power as the only factor in explaining the mechanism of the security dilemma. We also need to include soft power instruments in Iranian foreign affairs, via

non-state actors and asymmetric warfare, within the framework of religious ideology to reinforce its national security, by maximising its power in the region and beyond. The above discussions provided a framework which can be used as a basis to explore the theme of this thesis, to fill the gap in the literature.

1.8. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theories that explain issues relevant to the research question by investigating the impact of the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy on regional security system to explore the dynamic process of the security dilemma. This can be seen by interpreting the distribution of soft power, including Iran's use of ideological proxies. This thesis with the use of theories is simply contributed to fill the gap in research by interpreting different drivers and motives of Iran's actions through its foreign policy. The core drivers and motives are based upon geopolitical interests and Shiite Islamic doctrine in line with ideologically strategic link between Tehran and its aligned groups around the region. The theoretical framework is divided into five sections, which will cover the theoretical approaches namely: firstly, the concept of the security dilemma, secondly, neo-classical realism, thirdly, constructivism, fourthly, neorealism, especially offensive realism, and lastly, the concept of speech acts.

The study of international relations relies on a wide range of theoretical approaches (Savigny et al, 2011). Each approach rests on certain assumptions and epistemologies, where it is constrained within certain specified conditions, and seeks to obtain its own analytic goal. There are diverse schools of thought and none are right or wrong; indeed, each has its own approach that can be used to explore multi-causal phenomena and analyse

variables, to explain assumptions under study. Arguably, state behaviour cannot be explained without looking at both international system and domestic factors, on the one hand, and ideational influence and material power on the other.

The objective of this section is to develop a theoretical framework for the empirical analysis of Iran's actions through its foreign policy, to delineate the security dilemma from its traditional realist confines (chapters seven and eight for more details). Traditionally, foreign policy analysis is often done within the realist paradigm, by depending on military power as a central variable, while the thesis at hand seeks to cover also ideational influence on state behaviour (Berridge, 1992). On this basis, I will limit my hypotheses to three intervening variables (regime identity, nationalism and decision-makers) next to three other substantial drivers of soft power (ideologies, pan-Islamism and revolutionary shiism), to explain Iran's foreign policy. In the case of intervening variables, this thesis will attempt to explore patterns of procedural complexities and interactions between the rings of power of Iranian structure in domestic politics impacting on behaviour and action. Equally, the importance of substantial drivers of soft power play crucial roles in guiding Iran's objectives and interests abroad. These variables and drivers have been used not only to counter external threats, but also to broaden Iranian growth ambitions and garner support from minority communities of Arab and Islamic streets who are looking for a champion (www.ar.farsnews.com/iran/news/13940918001252, 2015).

According to neorealism, foreign policy may be understood as a product of rational choice. Hence, states usually act rationally through a process of self-help in the competition for material gains. This takes the form of armament policies, intervention and mutual rivalry (Waltz, 1979).

In contrast, constructivism rejects the basic assumption of neorealism about the effect of anarchy on the behaviour of states. Alexander Wendt (1992) argues that anarchy is the consequence of an ongoing dynamic process in line with the rules, norms, values, beliefs, ideas and identities that govern the interaction of states. According to social constructivists, identities and interests are central determinants of foreign policy which rely on ideational factors to interpret the international structure and foreign policy, rather than the material capabilities.

In the case of the distribution of soft power, including Iran's use of ideological proxies, this thesis stresses the importance of values as a major factor in Iran's foreign policy. Since the 1979 Islamic revolution, a new set of revolutionary values has dominated Iran's foreign policy. This can be seen in the overthrow of the Shah's regime, the Iran–Iraq War, in addition to exacerbating conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and Bahrain (www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940717000218, 2015; www.aljomhoor.net/content/9444, 2015).

1.8.1. The Security Dilemma

The question of whether or not Iran has affected, or has been affected by, the major security events and phenomena (acceleration of geopolitical dynamics within unstable security environment), or by religious ideology, cultures, values and identities that have taken place in the Middle East in 2003-2013, is examined within the framework of the security dilemma. The term security dilemma is often used by realists, who argue that its fundamental cause is uncertainty. The security dilemma can lead to war and destabilisation, but is not the cause of all wars. The security dilemma plays a focal role in theories that

interpret international rivalry as a result of interaction between states. The main challenge confronting neorealism (structural realism) is to demonstrate how rational states that are focused only on security can nevertheless end up in intense rivalry or may even go to war.

Robert Jervis, a defensive realist, contributed to the development of the concept of the security dilemma in his article "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma". Jervis explained a security dilemma as the result of the interaction between two states, where the gain of one is the loss of the other, which leads to uncertainty between the two states (Jervis, 1978). Kenneth Waltz (1979) argues that the international system provides incentives for expansion due to the anarchic environment (the absence of a universal government), which creates a situation where any security action plan decreases the security of other states. Arguing for offensive realism, John Mearsheimer (2001) claims that anarchy provides strong incentives for expansion, because only the powerful states can guarantee their survival. On the other hand, states attempt to maximise their power in order to expand influence and hegemony over others, which may harm or conquer them. The case study (Iran's foreign policy) will be discussed using the defensive and the offensive approaches, to identify the forces driving Iran's behaviour (in chapters 3 and 5).

Booth et al (2008: 9) argue that "a security paradox is a situation in which two or more actors, seeking only to improve their own security, provoke through their words or actions an increase in mutual tension, resulting in less security all round". In other words, the security dilemma is a brilliant concept to describe a situation where the actions of one state, in attempting to increase its security, cause a reaction in another, which in the end decreases the security of both states (Collins, 2004). Thus, the security dilemma or spiral

model used in international relations refers to a situation in which uncertainty, change in power status and mistrust can create conflict, even when neither side desires it.

In defining the security dilemma, however, Booth et al (2008) move away from the mainstream definition found in the academic literature that focuses on the process of paradoxical security competition between defensive states. Booth et al (2008: 7) argue that "Security dilemma sensibility is an actor's intention and capacity to perceive the motives behind, and to show responsiveness towards, the potential complexity of the military intentions of others. In particular, it refers to the ability to understand the role that fear might play in their attitudes and behaviour, including, crucially, the role that one's own actions may play in provoking that fear". Booth et al (2008: 2) further argue that "according to most security dilemma theorists, permanent insecurity between nations and states is the inescapable lot of the living in a condition of anarchy". Hence, in order to understand the dynamic process of the security dilemma, it is better to discuss material and ideational factors to clarify all the semantic, political, historical and epistemological difficulties.

On the other hand, the patterns of regional unstable dynamics in a certain region, such as the Middle East, can be a basic and ongoing process within the framework of the security dilemma, which consists of contradictions. These contradictions are not only based on material power, but also consist of ideational views of beliefs and values (Alfoneh, 2011). The Islamic Republic of Iran possesses a unique combination of religious/ideological beliefs, along with unconventional power and asymmetric warfare directed through its proxies of non-state actors and Shiite factions (Cordesman, 2007). These religious beliefs

and ideological values are derived from spiritual unquestioned concepts according to Islamic Revolution norms (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008).

A security paradox in the Middle East is a situation in which some actors (state and non-state) seek not only to improve their own security, by enhancing their material power (conventional and non-conventional), or by entering into a strategic alliance, but also to provide a prominent power status in the region, by using an ideational doctrine (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008). A root cause of the security problems in the Middle East lies in the condition of uncertainty about the intentions of other states (Iran in 2003, for example), a 'dilemma of interpretation' as a result of anarchy in international politics (Booth et al, 2008: 4). Anarchy creates difficulties in communication between states, because it is difficult for the decision-makers in one state to understand or predict the intentions of those in the other. Uncertainty and the anarchic structure of the international system have led to a dilemma of response among states and non-state actors in the Middle East. The so-called the Islamic state, for instance, has broadened its scope from terrorist activities, assassinations and bombings, to efforts to build states, in Mosul and Ramadi in Iraq, Al Raqqah governorate in Syria, Hadhramaut governorate in Yemen, and Sirte in Libya.

Game theory and the prisoner's dilemma are useful to this research. Rubinstein (2013) pointed out that the essence of game theory is not the empirical approach, because it focuses on how people will react and behave in the vastly complicated situation of real life, rather than on how people actually behave in strategic situations. This thesis analyses the best strategic decisions that have been taken by major players in terms of costs and gains, where a state's success in making rational choices depends on the choices of others.

Game theory is a model for sophisticated mathematical analysis to find the best way to make decisions that lead to the desired result, in conflicts of interest (Gelman, 2008). As such, game theory provides powerful insight into the nature of conflict and cooperation among players in the scope of competition and interaction, shaped by interests, values and beliefs, by taking into account all rational choices and possible outcomes (Myerson, 1997). Furthermore, game theory offers a realistic paradigm for political differences.

Robert Axelrod's works are relevant to the central argument of this thesis. The prisoner's dilemma game has become an important paradigm for researchers to analyse a wide variety of strategic situations (Axelrod, 1997). The main argument of Robert Axelrod is based on a central research question in his book, The Evolution of Cooperation (1984), which is: under what conditions will cooperation emerge in a world of egoists without central authority? Axelrod discusses the role of factors and variables such as the number of players, the scope of possible choices, variation in the payoff structure, noise, and the population structure that led to a deeper understanding of the evolution of cooperation (Axelrod et al, 1988). Axelrod provides a model of analysis that shows how cooperative behaviour could construct and thrive in a hostile environment (Axelrod, 1984). It is a collection of concepts and paradigms about rational human behaviour in strategic situations, where how a rational player acts affects the way other players will behave. This paradigm could apply to warfare or other conflict issues, such as the regional conflict of the Middle East, in particular Iran and its allies, and the U.S. with regional Arab allies.

To understand Axelrod's impact on game theory, we must first review some fundamental ideas of game theory. The prisoner's dilemma paradigm is the core of game theory and is related to the problem of collaboration and uncertainty among players towards each other

while taking decisions (Axelrod et al, 1985). Tit-for-tat is a well-known strategy in game theory in the context of the prisoner's dilemma (Axelrod, 2000). In this context, each participant in the prisoner's dilemma will follow both policies of cooperation and retaliation, depending on provocation by any player towards another (Axelrod et al, 1988). Tit-for-tat is based on reciprocity and allows more room for the development of cooperation. Despite that, in some situations individuals and states do not cooperate, even if it appears that it is in their best interest to do so (Axelrod, 1997). The Iran nuclear crisis is an example of this, as the Iranian regime was penalised with a series of sanctions, yet Iran insisted on continuing its nuclear programme and enrichment-related activities (Albright et al, 2006, 2012).

In such a situation, each player's decision has short-term and long-term repercussions, risks, costs and gains for both players, as well as third parties. Axelrod et al (1985) argue that the strategy of game theory is based on reciprocity and can yield relatively high payoffs to a party against the other. Such a strategy assists the majority of states by punishing players who carry out uncooperative strategies and act irrationally. Iran, for example, may in the long run reach its goal of acquiring its own nuclear industries, while in the short run the scenario to end the Iranian nuclear project through political or even military means is still possible and under discussion (Mousavi et al, 2010).

Tit-for-tat starts by collaborating and then diverts to retaliation by the other player, in case any defection leads to excessive retaliation within the principle of aggressive reciprocity, that perhaps encourages other players to exploit the situation (Axelrod et al, 1985). Over a wide range of historical regional cases, Iran's strategic challenges related to its nuclear programme have driven the UN to impose further sanctions and encouraged other players,

such as the U.S. and Israel, to exploit the situation and move forward with their own self-interest, to the point of nearly reaching the edge of war (Katzman, 2004).

In zero-sum game, conflict and competitiveness among players often result in a zero sum. Any gain for any party is a loss for the other party, therefore, conflicting interests between parties are irreconcilable, and all opportunities to cooperate would vanish (Axelrod, 2000). Shoamanesh (2012) argues that in a cooperative security paradigm, in lieu of seeing each other as threats, countries would often view the existing regional security dilemma as the core issue which needs to be seriously tackled, in order to minimise the cycle of violence and conflict. Schelling (1958, 1980) pointed out that a non–zero sum game is useful when applied to wars and threats, unrest, negotiations, civil wars and blackmail.

Game theory has met with some criticism. Firstly, there is no scale to measure rational behaviour in political-security phenomena and international relations, as in economic interactions (the largest amount of benefit at the lowest possible cost). Secondly, it seems that the Middle East suffers from continuous fluctuations and overlapping of several variables, such as ideological trends, communications systems, the rules and objectives of the game, the general environment, payoff, mainstream values and the growing roles of the masses in international politics, that affect the decision-making process. Thirdly, in contemporary warfare, whether conventional or unconventional, the scope of operations often extends beyond territories of participants, including the victors, where regional security and international economy will be affected as well. Fourthly, proponents of game theory do not provide a standard of ethical behaviour. In addition, this theory does not provide an empirical framework for human behaviour in real life. Despite this, game theory remains a useful analytical tool in the field of international politics and also

contributes to aspects of decision-making in cases of cooperation and conflict, or the adoption of a systematic strategy to resolve political conflicts and security problems. Game theory attempts to provide alternative options for decision-makers, but it does not have immediate solutions for some complex cases.

Above all, the security dilemma is a comprehensive framework for exploring and understanding the anarchical state in the shadow of uncertainty, mistrust, misunderstanding, threat, risk, danger, fear, mutual insecurity, cooperation in international relations that has taken place over half a century. After the end of the Cold War, security has expanded from a military understanding to political, economic, social, cultural. As a result, international security studies have reflected the security dilemma in a number of fields: military, political, economic, social, cultural and psychological.

1.8.2. Neoclassical Realism

Neoclassical realism emphasises the causal primacy of variables of international/regional structure, essentially the relative distribution of power, domestic policies and foreign policy outcomes (Taliaferro, 2006). In other words, neoclassical realism has advantages in terms of multi-level analysis of the link between systemic factors and internal factors, in order to reach an explanation for state behaviour and its foreign policy outcome (Lobell et al, Vol 11, 2009). Thus, domestic, foreign and security policies are interconnected. This thesis connects systemic pressures, on the one hand, and domestic and foreign policies, on the other, in order to determine factors behind Iran's behaviour and to identify the nature of interactions between variables which increase its relative power, by providing an inclusive framework to measure all variables and drivers related to outcomes (Juneau, 2009). It

could be argued that neoclassical realism can explain the origins of conflict, tension and crisis in the absence of war (material power).

Neoclassical realism has its roots in classical realists such as Hans Morgenthau, Henry Kissinger, and Arnold Wolfers, who understand foreign policy and statecraft within the anarchic and uncertain environment that exists in the absence of a universal government. As a result, international conflicts occur (Lobell, et al, Press, 322, 2009: 1-4). Neoclassical realism "carries with it a distinct methodological preference for theoretically informed narratives, ideally supplemented by explicit counterfactual analysis, that trace the ways different factors combine to yield particular foreign policies" (Rose, 1998: 153). In addition, Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro (2009: 1-6) argue that supporters of neoclassical realism based their arguments on the theoretical insights of the neorealism (structural realism) of Kenneth Waltz, Robert Gilpin, and others. However, Gideon Rose, a neoclassical realist, emphasises that the influence of international/regional structure is not always clear, because decisions are made by individual state leaders according to the uncertainty of their relative position of power.

It has been argued that although neoclassical realists embrace the assumption that internal politics are a major factor in understanding state behaviour and foreign policy outcome, they do not provide the analytical inclusive framework for dealing with the actual process of implementing its policies. Thus, neoclassical realists need to take methodological issues into consideration in qualitative studies (Lobell, et al 2009: 800, 803). Therefore, this thesis covers the two major approaches in international relations theory, which consist of geopolitical interests (pragmatism) and ideational issues, within the framework of state identity, interests, ideologies and beliefs, in order to explain Iran's foreign policy, which is

based on countering foreign threats alongside expanding its geopolitical influence, and the consequences on the regional security system.

1.8.3. Constructivism

Constructivism is an empirical approach to the study of international relations which could be used to understand the socio-political construction of reality. It concentrates on intersubjective beliefs, identities, thoughts and discourses of understanding and meaning. These intersubjective beliefs interact among people on the level of individuals, states, non-state actors and nations, and the structures of their external environment (Jackson et al, 2007). Thus, "structures do constrain actors, but actors can also transform structures by thinking about them and acting on them in new ways" (Jackson et al, 2007: 163). The key debate between neorealism and constructivism is: “do changes in ideas always come before changes in material conditions? Do ideas guide policy or are they justifications for policy”? (Jackson et al, 2007: 175).

Alexander Wendt is perhaps the most distinguished constructivist of the “middle ground” in international relations theory (in Griffiths et al 2009: 124). Wendt (in Jackson et al, 2007: 168) argues that, within processes of interaction, identities and interests of states are created, and “structure has no existence or causal powers apart from process”. On the contrary, in the view of neorealists, identities and interests are given, because states already know who they are and what they need in advance, before they initiate interaction with other states. However, neorealists and constructivists both agree that states need to maintain their security and survivability. The question is how far are they required to go to ensure it? Wendt emphasises the identities and interests as they are shaped in the

interaction between states; he disregards the role of domestic factors. He shares the same point of view regarding the concept of anarchy with Waltz, regarding interaction between states in an anarchic system (Jackson et al, 2007). However, Wendt argues that, “anarchy is what states make of it” (in Jackson et al, 2007: 162). Wendt rejected the views of neorealists that "anarchy must necessarily lead to self-help", and that war, enmity, and arms races are inevitable outcomes (Jackson et al, 2007: 168). Wendt (in Jackson et al, 2007: 169) argues that, “material power and state interests are fundamentally formed by ideas and social interaction”.

Martha Finnemore focuses on the norms of international society that impact on states’ identities, interests and interaction. She argues that state behaviour is shaped by identity and interests that are influenced by international norms and forces (Jackson et al, 2007). Finnemore and Wendt emphasise how vital the international environment is in forming state identities. There are some constructivists who concentrate more on the internal environment (regime identity, ideologies and decision-makers). Peter Katzenstein stresses the role of culture, identity and domestic norms in the realm of national security structure, and how these norms construct state interests and guide external policies (Jackson et al, 2007). In other words, Katzenstein (in Jackson et al, 2007: 176) argues that “the internal make-up of states affects their international behavior”.

Iran is a revolutionary state. It was founded by a Shiite movement (soft power), not material power. Since the 1979 Islamic revolution, Iran's foreign policy has adopted a new set of revolutionary values. Revolutionary Shiism, for instance, is one of the most prominent approaches in Iran' foreign policy, especially towards Sunni Arab states. Iran’s behaviour was constructed on the doctrine of Islamic supra-nationalism, which places its

emphasis on the unity of the international Muslim community. Arguably, such a doctrine is incompatible with the principle of world order and international relations. Yet it could be argued that, "the current foreign policy dialogue is focusing on what is commonly referred to as 'soft power.' The concept has an important role to play in an integrated national security strategy" (www.asymmetricthreat.net, 2009). The U.S., for example, used a rich portfolio of soft power tools and established organisations to promote democratic values and ideals, during the Cold War era. Examples included cultural tours of foreign capitals, Voice of America, and the Peace Corps. In the light of asymmetrically current challenges of non-state actors to national security, the U.S. has found itself at a "strategic inflection point" where it must reassess its institutions, processes and resources to defeat violence and threats, and promote freedom, development and social justice around the world (www.asymmetricthreat.net, 2009).

Ted Hopf concentrates on the domestic formation of identities of key decision-makers. Hopt's approach attempts to explore the causal link between the scope of national interests and outcomes of foreign policies (Jackson et al, 2007). In the case of Iran, when the political and military landscape remarkably changed after the fall of Saddam's regime in 2003, the regional balance of power swang in Iran's favour. Iran's regime interests were based on maximising its influence and power over the region, by expanding revolutionary Shiite ideology to its neighbouring states, particularly to Arab Sunni states (Jones 2003). These geopolitical interests were based on ideology which derived from the values, beliefs and norms of the Islamic Shiite doctrine, reinforced by the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008).

In Iran, it is the supreme leader, not the president, who is the commander of the armed forces (Rakel, 2008). The constitution empowers the supreme leader alongside the Council of Guardians, half of whose members are appointed by the supreme leader, to disqualify potential presidential candidates. Finally, the constitution empowers the supreme leader's office to oversee directly different agencies, including the executive branch (www.parstimes.com, 1979; Sadjadpour, 2009; www.iranprimer.usip.org, 2014). It could be argued that the Iranian political system was devised in such a way as to ensure that no person or institution could monopolise power and use it against the religious authority of the supreme leader.

An ongoing debate between constructivism and neorealism concerns "the core relationship between truth and power" (Jackson et al, 2007: 167). Constructivists reject the notion of objective truth, because there is no neutral ground from which to start and decide what is true. Therefore, constructivism and neorealism consider the world in different ways. Neorealism focuses on how the structure of anarchy constrains state actors. The constructivist critique of realists is that they ignore the contradiction between identity and sovereignty, also between nation and state; thus, realism shows its shortcomings in both exploring interactions between variables and explaining the causes of conflict. Therefore, it is essential for this thesis to explore the ideas and beliefs in the minds of the elites (Iranian nation and state) to understand regime identity, ideology, and values in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Constructivism explores how interests are developed through interaction with wider environments. According to constructivist philosophy (in Jackson et al, 2007: 164) “there are no natural laws of society or economics or politics”. Hence, constructivists have

attempted to diagnose the core causal links between truth and power, to reach a deeper understanding of the meaning of interaction and conflict. Ideas and material power are the key elements which have driven Iran to undertake assertive action in its foreign policy.

1.8.4. Offensive Realism

Although the Middle East is a suitable region to adopt both constructivism and neorealism in an extensive debate, offensive realism is a compatible approach in explaining the security dilemma in the context of the dynamics of the structural forces in international politics. In an anarchic environment, the state needs to maximise its power in order to be prominent and maintain its position in the system (Booth et al, 2008). Iran is no exception.

There are two essential debates among neorealist scholars. The offensive version of the theory holds that the international system fosters conflict and aggression. Security is scarce, making international competition intense and war likely. Rational states are often compelled to adopt offensive strategies in their search for security. Defensive realists, on the other hand, argue that the international system does not necessarily generate intense conflict and war. States that understand the international system will realise that security is often plentiful and that defensive strategies are the best route to security (Snyder, 1999: 62). Offensive realism argues that states are innately aggressive; however, other powers deny them expansion of their territorial influence (Booth et al, 2008). These interactions, lead to the creation of a security dilemma through the escalation of instability.

As a result, uncertainty, arms race and military/security alliances will continue and security becomes either a non-zero sum game (both sides have to win) which allows for some

cooperation between the conflicting parties through achieving only relative gains (Collins, 2007); or a zero-sum game (one winner and one loser-- total loss or total victory) which probably pushes the situation into further escalation of conflict in a never-ending cycle (Cordesman et al, 2006; Connell et al, 2007). This thesis argues that Iran's foreign policy conducts a non-zero sum game when it deals with the U.S. administration, however, it adopts a zero-sum game towards its neighbouring states, especially the Arab Sunni states. According to Mearsheimer, conflict over power is unavoidable; hence, every state seeks to become a powerful state in the target region (Jackson et al, 2007).

Mearsheimer argues that the "security issue requires a state to have more power to harm another, and the ultimate safety comes only from being the most powerful state in the system" (Williams 2008: 23). In the case of the Iranian regime, due to the acceleration in rebuilding a massive conventional and non-conventional power, the security dilemma has arisen. Thus, regional hegemony became the ultimate goal for Iran. According to Mearsheimer, conflict over power is unavoidable. Offensive realist theory assumes that uncertainty in international politics can never be reduced; it is never possible for policymakers to fully understand or allay the security fears of other states. In spite of their defensive intentions, it is never possible for states to control paradoxical security competition. Offensive realist theory suggests that states are driven by the fatalist logic of insecurity (Sutch et al, 2008).

The biggest criticism of neorealism is that it focuses on great powers and hegemony at the international level, by adopting political and security realms for analysing the structure of the international system, but has neglected other factors, such as the influence of religious ideology.

Most scholars, including neorealist theorists, would agree that no single theory can explain all the details of international politics (Snyder et al, 1999). Neorealism (offensive realism) can explain the origin of conflict, tension and crisis in the absence of violence. It is a visionary approach, as it can explore security issues and phenomena by focusing upon regional structure and international system.

1.8.5. Speech Acts

The Speech Act theory was developed in 1962 by a British philosopher of language, John Langshaw Austin. In his distinguished work "How to do Things with Words," he describes his theory of speech acts and the conception of performative language, in which to say something is to do something (Oishi, 2006). Austin offers an empirical analysis of linguistic structure for a general theory of communication goals and of human action. In other words, Austin has attempted to find a causal relationship between action and communication, in order to interpret the impact of linguistic phenomena on reality (Allwood, 1977).

The speech act theory can be used to understand links between actions, phenomena and events according to rhetoric and the behaviour of a state in its international relations. It has been argued that people use language to apply their ideas and beliefs by making things happen in reality, in the shadow of communicative actions (Levinson 1980). Most of the time, the political rhetoric of the Iranian regime is based on threats from Iranian elites. In adopting such aggressive discourses and hardline rhetoric, speech acts are used as an instrument of power by Iran's foreign policy, either to deter regional and international threats, or to attain its interests and political agenda by imposing its ideologies, beliefs and

ideas on others (Takeyh, 2007). Acute discourse, speech acts and hardline rhetoric for both the supreme leader and Ahmadinejad go hand-in-hand with processes and actions in Iran's foreign policy. Ahmadinejad, for instance, in October 2005, restated Khomeini's "Israel should be wiped off the map" (Ahmadinejad, 2005). This statement was made in front of more than 3,000 students at a conference in Tehran. Ahmadinejad further referred to the state of Israel as a “disgraceful blot” (Ahmadinejad, 2005).

Ahmadinejad was at the time an unknown politician with no great influence, and Iran was a theocracy controlled by the clerical revolutionary leaders (mullahs), yet he became the most influential figure in the Middle East, when he came to power in 2005, with a hard-line rhetoric against the U.S., in particular, and the West, in general. Additionally, Ahmadinejad made one of the strongest statements, when he referred to the eradication of Israel and that reflects the importance of radical political discourse (Takeyh, 2007). Such harsh language has been used by both the Iranian regime and its proxies of non-state actors and Shiite factions and is one of the notable elements in Iran's foreign policy (Bilgin, 2005). The Iranian regime and its proxies reject any effort for peace in the region. This can be seen through "Iranian support for peace process rejectionists such as Hamas and Hezbollah" (Fawcett 2009: 298). The secretary general of Hezbollah, for instance, Hassan Nasrallah, in his speech on the sixth anniversary of the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon on May 25, 2006, broadcast by Al-Manar TV, "calls upon the Palestinians to continue the confrontation with Israel, stressing that Hezbollah started using suicide bombing attacks as the main means of subduing Israel" (www.intelligence.org, 2006). Ahmadinejad, referring to Israel at a press conference on May 13, 2008, stated that: “This terrorist and criminal state is backed by foreign powers, but this regime would soon be swept away by the Palestinians” (Teitelbaum, 2008: 10). Al-Nefisy et al (2008) argue that the presidential

phase of Ahmadinejad is a stage for enhancing influence and enabling power for the Islamic Republic of Iran, by comparison with the presidential era of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Muhammad Khatami.

Iran's foreign policy through aggressive speech acts and actions via its proxies have severely affected the core of the regional security system and the security dilemma. On the other hand, this has created a favourable environment for Iran's foreign policy and non-state actors to confront their adversaries with their speech acts and actions, as an essential resistance to any aggression in the region. Speech acts and hardline statements go hand-in-hand with processes and actions of Iran's foreign policy, especially on the basis of anti-western, anti-Israel and anti-peace processes, leading to regional tension (Zalman et al, 2009; Cilluffo, 2013).

Speech acts theory does not provide solutions, but only enables one to understand the conditions behind the specific problem—the deep, ideological roots of the issue. It can be applied in various institutional settings or on various social, political and critical issues, by paying attention to what exactly people say and do (Van Dijk, 1999). Speech acts challenges us to move from seeing language as abstract to seeing our words as having meaning in particular historical, social, and political conditions. Our words (written or oral) are used to inform a broad sense of meanings and the meaning we convey with those words is identified by our immediate social, political, and historical conditions. Our words are politicised, even if we are not aware of it, because they reflect the interests of those who speak.

1.9. Research Design

The research design is a case study approach which is the favoured strategy when ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are being posed, and when the research involves geopolitics and foreign affairs which contain several variables, factors and drivers and power relationships, and are difficult to explain a state’s behaviour within the geopolitical dynamics in the light of power struggle and anarchic situation. This method of case study is useful for testing whether theoretical paradigms work in the real world situations. In other words, it is a useful tool to investigate security events and interpret state's behaviours in order to gain a better understanding of specific complex situations. Basically, a case study is an in depth study of a certain situation by narrowing down a very broad field of research into specific topic. Therefore, the scope of this thesis focuses on the four well documented historical issues, under test, which are interconnected with Iran's behaviour during 2003-2013. (See Chapter 7 for further details). This thesis is based on the security situation by examining how major actors such as Iran and its proxies (e.g. Hezbollah in Lebanon and Shiite factions), have responded in a dynamic security situation.

1.10. Research Methods

This thesis adopts a qualitative approach, asking what happened and why. Qualitative research with analytical methods depends on exploration of phenomena and examining of variables in order to explain the assumptions under study and seek logical and reliable answers for the research questions. To answer the research question, a theoretical lens and empirical approach will interpret state behaviour and explain the development of events. Hancock (1998) demonstrated his concerns about developing explanations of social

phenomena. Hancock argued that qualitative research aimed to address questions concerned with developing an understanding "the world in which we live and why things are the way they are" (Hancock 1998: 2). Thus, this thesis seeks to address the following topics:

1. Why states behave the way they do.
2. How opinions and attitudes are formed.
3. How events are affected due to the state's interaction within an anarchic environment.
4. How and why cultures have developed in the way they have.
5. The differences between religious groups.

Merriam (2009: 4) refers to the so-called "action research", which has an objective to interpret a specific issue within a certain scope. This kind of research often covers, for example, geopolitical dynamics, states' behaviour and turn of complicated events. In this research project, my aim is to gain an in-depth understanding of states' behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour, in order to explore the mechanism of the security dilemma in the Middle East. In reference to the methods of collecting qualitative data, this thesis relies on a library-based research method and document analysis. Interviews, surveys and questionnaires were not used, as policy makers are not willing to say much more than what they actually put in documents, especially on such a sensitive topic related to security issues and regional conflicts.

The materials studied are based on two sources of evidence gathered. First, primary source documents. These documents were gathered from official websites and newspapers such as

Fars news agency, Pars Times, Kayhan daily, English Fars News, the Middle East Newspaper, BBC, CNN and Reuters; foreign policy papers, international and regional organisation reports, national security archives, press interviews, archival material concerning security strategic issues; and government reports, testimonies of senate and congress, official statements and presidential speeches.

Speeches of Iranian and U.S. leaders and decision-makers are among the sources. Such primary sources can be found on the following sites:

1. Farda News Persian (www.fardanews.com/)
2. Fars News Agency (http://en.farsnews.com/)
3. Mehr News Agency owned by the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization (http://en.mehrnews.com/)
4. The Iran Primer, United States Institute of Peace (http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/timeline-irans-foreign-relations)
5. Mashregh News Agency, Persian (http://www.mashreghnews.ir/)
6. Azad News Agency, Persian (http://www.ana.ir/)
7. Iranian Cultural Heritage News Agency (http://chnpress.ir/)
8. Iranian Labour News Agency (http://www.ilna.ir/)
9. Iranian Students' News Agency (http://isna.ir/en)
10. Islamic Republic News Agency (http://www.irna.ir/en/)
11. Rasa News Agency (http://www.rasanews.ir/En/)
12. Tasnim News Agency (http://www.tasnimnews.com/en)
13. Presidential Rhetoric (www.presidentialrhetoric.com)
14. Central Intelligence Agency (www.cia.gov/index.html)

15. The Library of Congress (www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html)
16. United Nations (www.un.org/en/)
17. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (www.fbi.gov/)
18. The American Presidency Project (www.presidency.ucsb.edu/)
19. The White House (www.whitehouse.gov/)
20. Anti-Defamation League (www.archive.adl.org/)
21. The National Security Archive: The George Washington University (www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/)
22. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (www.iaea.org)
23. Federation of American Scientists (FAS) (www.fas.org/)
24. U.S. Department of State: Diplomacy in Action (www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/)

Secondary sources were also a source of empirical data, and included reports compiled by academics and representatives of international and regional organisations, research centres for strategic and security studies, books, journals and articles in the academic literature. The aim of data collection was to generate facts, provide evidence and build a sense of rationality to interpret foreign policy decision-making, incidents and phenomena, such as:

1. The importance and influence of ideology as a key instrument of soft power in the regional and world politics.

2. The impact of regime identity, nationalism and decision makers on Iran's foreign policy.

3. The leverage of soft power and the validation of Pan-Islamism and Revolutionary Shiism, including ideologies as leading drivers of Iranian foreign policy that play crucial roles in determining interests, likely behaviour and actions.

4. The impact of Iran’s strategic goals upon the security dilemma.

5. The security dilemma and its impact on the Middle East.

The outcomes of the theses are the research findings that related to actual reality. These findings were synthesised from the discussions and results taken from the primary and secondary data. After each stage to analyse assumptions and findings, they are tested within the process of verification which is a part of the analysis process. During January 2013, I discussed assumptions, evidences and findings related Iran's involvement in the Middle East issues such as Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. Professor Anoushiravan Ehteshami at Durham University and Professor Ali Ansari at St. Andrews University, for example have helped in enhancing my perception of regional security threats and the impact on the geopolitical dynamics. Both believe that soft power can be regarded as important element that motivate the movement to be involved in international and regional activities in general and in Iran's foreign policy in particular.

I have evaluated the findings and outcomes of the thesis relative to the objective, assumptions and research questions. This evaluation depends on two approaches: first, the collective perspective. This means confirming a specific issue with more than one source. For example, agreement about Iranian support to Hezbollah and, in turn, the role of

Hezbollah in attacking Israel. Second, examining the Iranian perception and justification of its foreign policy through Persian sources: what has been written, spoken and observed. Examples of testing assumptions and research findings in line with the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East are as follows: the motivational factors that influence the behaviour of states, the great importance of ideology in regional conflicts, speech acts and hardline rhetoric, the growing danger posed by militant groups, expansion of the scope of crises, increase the external threats towards Iran, Iranian responses in accordance with the general principles of Imam Khomeini's political thought. In order to explain the hypotheses and assumptions, this thesis follows ten steps before conducting the fieldwork:

1. Studies theories, models and approaches related to the topic under study.

2. Surveys major events and crises and assessed whether they threatened Iran’s national security or not during 2003 and 2013, and beyond to some extent, particularly focusing on the four issues under study.

3. Examines the impact of ideological proxies through using asymmetric warfare in line with the distribution of soft power in Iran’s foreign policy.

4. Explores the impact of intervening variables, especially regime identity, nationalism and decision makers on Iran’s foreign policy.

5. Reviews statements and political/ideological rhetoric in international relations, particularly in the peace process.

6. Explores Iran's tools and methods in engaging with the major Middle East issues and assesses the consequences of such engagement.

7. Determines the role of non-state actors and especially Shiite factions on the security landscape and geopolitical dynamics.

8. Clarifies the strategic alliance between Iran, non-state actors and Shiite factions abroad.

9. Identifies and discusses the link between the geopolitical dynamics and power shift in the Middle East and Iran's national interests.

10. Evaluates the interaction of values, interests and policies related to both Iran with its allies, and U.S. with its regional and international allies.

This research project discusses contemporary topics that still have strong implications for regional security and world politics. Current conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Lebanon, Egypt, for instance, have taken place within the timeframe of my research project.

The particular period of time (2003-2013) has been chosen as a critical period for Iran's foreign policy. It is a time that includes the removal of Saddam's regime in 2003 and the reinforcement of conservative authority through the election and re-election of Ahmadinejad in 2005 and 2009-2013, a follower of the Islamic Revolution and loyal to the clerical leaders (Takeyh, 2010).

Several trips to the Middle East were conducted for the fieldwork, to Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and the UK, from 22 May 2013 to 11 August 2013. The fieldwork involved data collection and a focus group discussion. See Appendix 1 (on page 324). All material collected was in the public domain with free access. I visited several Persian bookshops during my fieldwork, Security Affairs of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf in Saudi Arabia, the Centre for Research and Studies on Kuwait and the Centre of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies in Kuwait, the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research in the United Arab Emirates, the department of National Security Affairs in the Arab League in Egypt, Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies in Egypt, Middle East Newspaper Published in London, and the British Library.

The focus group discussion had nine participants. Three participants were experts in international politics, the Middle East, terrorism and radical movements, and Shiite ideology. Abdullah Al-Nafisi is a specialist in Iranian affairs and the security issues of the Middle East. Sami Al-Faraj is President of Centre for Strategic Studies and national security advisor to the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. Dr. Abdullah Yousef Sahar is a university professor in International Relations, and Director General, Central Statistical Bureau. There were two specialists on Islamic sects: Sheikh Othman Al-Khamees and Dr. Jasem Al-Fahad. Osamah Alsayegh is a professor in nuclear energy, and director of science and technological energy. Two military experts, especially in the deployment of American land and air forces in the region, Staff Air Major General Pilot, Khamis and Staff Major General Farhan. Mr. Askar Al-Enezi is a member of the Kuwaiti parliament.

1.11. Organisation and Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into three sections, and ultimately consists of nine chapters. The first includes a general introduction to the thesis, the development of the analytical framework and the internal political system structure of Iran. This is done in chapters one, two and three. This section answers the question: To what extent does ideology shape Iran's foreign policy?

The second section focuses on the establishment of the political/security background, which is based on an analytical overview of recent events of the Middle East, as a turbulent regional system controlled by various security dynamics. It will also discuss U.S., UN and Iranian strategic competition from an ideological and security perspective, and the foreign policies of Iran and its strategic political and security interests in the Middle East. These issues are covered in chapters four, five and six. This section addresses the second research question, which is: Which events, perceived as security concerns, influence Iranian ideology, identity and foreign policy? In addition, this section deals with the third research question which is: What instruments of power does Iran's foreign policy use to increase its power, to ensure its security requirements and meet its strategic interests?

The concluding section includes chapters seven, eight and nine. This section examines the four documented issues under test in the shadow of security threats, and includes an analysis of the security dilemma and its impact upon the Middle East, while considering its links with Iran's foreign policy. This phase is analysed in depth via the primary research question, which is: To what extent have the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion of Iraq impacted Iran's foreign policy and, in turn, how

did soft power affect the security dilemma? Furthermore, this stage is discussed through the fourth research question which is: To what extent does the perception of the Iranian security threat to and by Middle Eastern states influence the security dilemma? The final chapter summarises the main findings and conclusions. It also points out the distinct contribution of this thesis to academic debates and some directions for future study.

Chapter Two

Developing the Analytical Framework

2.1. Introduction

Chapter two sets out a standardised analytical framework for exploring the factors and drivers that shape a state's behaviour (in this case, Iran's foreign policy) in the regional security system. Particularly, it focuses on epistemological methods and takes a jurisprudential approach, incorporating historical descriptions, to understand the Islamic doctrine, especially the Shiite doctrine that defines the Iranian regime. Building on earlier studies in this area, the purpose of this framework is twofold. Firstly, it seeks to develop an epistemological conceptual framework in the context of positivism. It considers the interactions of regional states and post-positivist epistemology in the shadow of social relationships and regulative constitutive functions of norms and behaviours (Lapid, 1989). Secondly, it demonstrates how the security dilemma works in the Middle East.

The chapter focuses on the three structural questions, 'What?', 'How?' and 'Why?', in order to elucidate the relationship between concepts and variables as follows: the question of 'what' will clarify Islamic political thought from the perspective of Iran's regime. The question 'how' aims to understand the creative path of Iran's external agenda to maximise power and expand influence on others. The purpose of 'why' is to investigate the existing approach of Iran's foreign policy to establish a new revolutionary paradigm (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008; Juneau, 2009). Equally important is the clarification of concepts and the link between variables: the independent variables, the intervening variables at the domestic-level, and the dependent variables.

The chapter is divided into four main parts. The first outlines the analytical framework. The second discusses an overview of the Islamic perspective, in view of international relations theory. The third provides more detail on the Islamic political thought from the point of view of the Iranian Shiite School, by focusing upon Ayatollah Khomeini's thoughts and beliefs, and the epistemological aspects of the Shiite School, particularly Twelver, who are followers of the Twelfth Imam. The final section analyses the new revolutionary paradigm of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the creative path to acquire power. It then considers the aftermath, by looking at regional instability and the nature and scope of the security dilemma in the Middle East.

2.2. Building the Analytical Framework

The intention of the framework is not to provide a predictive model, but to provide a means of understanding complex events. This chapter gives a review of what should be considered, especially taking into account the issues of interactions within the social construction of reality, the relationship between ideational factors and identities, and the materialistic view of states (Jackson et al, 2007). It is essential to look for an effective procedure to determine what is relevant in relation to state behaviour (Iranian regime) in light of its regional interactions and security issues.

2.3. Islamic Perspective and International Relations Theory

For a long time, the question of cultural, religious and identity factors has been neglected in international relations theory. However, these values are deemed a cornerstone in the decision making process and foreign policy behaviour for most Muslim countries (Acharya

& Buzan 2010). Constructivism provides a conceptual framework to assess ideational factors of norms, values, identities and ideologies. A constructivist approach is appropriate to understand intervening variables such as behaviour, among Islamic states, regarding regime identity, nationalism and decision-making. According to constructivism, a state may seek to attain its material interests; however, essentially it needs to legitimise its policy in accordance with norms and identities (Barnett 1998 in Acharya et al, 2010).

Debates between Western and non-Western theorists have centred on whether Islam is a religion and whether the Islamic world is better as a region or a territorial nation state (Said et al, 2002). These debates have mainly focused on discrepancies between the foundation of truth and the quest for a good life (Acharya, et al 2010). Debates among Muslims have also taken place between Islamic traditionalists/ fundamentalists and Islamic modernists (AL-Sayyed, 1997). Tadjbakhsh (in Acharya et al, 2010: 180) urges Islamic modernism to open the door to dialogue and connection with the West, while the Islamic traditionalists reject "ijtihad (the exercise of reason in the reinterpretation of religious sources) and tajdid (innovation)". In addition, the Islamic traditionalists believe in the importance of Islamic movements for changing the status quo, and Islamic ideologies such as beliefs and values for expanding power through imposing ideas on others, as part of their duty in life (Said et al, 2002).

In this sense, Tadjbakhsh (in Acharya et al, 2010) argues that some classical schools of Muslim jurists formulated a paradigm of international relations which was based on two main conceptual divisions of the world, Dar al Islam/Salam (house of Islam, justice and peace), and Dar al Harb (house of war, injustice and oppression). Tadjbakhsh (in Acharya et al, 2010: 184) states that "they take as the point of departure the fact that the divisions of

the world were not found in the Qur'an (the central religious texts of Islam, and the verbatim words from God) and Sunna (or Sunnah, the exemplary practice of the prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon him); and, for Ithna ashari Shiite, that of the Imam), but were instead human attempts to make sense of relations between states". Tadjbakhsh (2010: 178) stated that the ultimate aim of Islam is "to establish the Umma (Islamic community), where the Sharia rules and defines the duties of Muslims". According to this point of view, Tadjbakhsh (2010: 178) conceives that "the concept of power lies in the heart of such interpretation of Islam".

Iran's regime has attempted through its foreign policy to export its ideologies, Islamic identity and revolutionary values derived from religiously inspired political movements (AL-Sayyed, 1997; Al-Nefisy et al, 2008). Most importantly, Owen (2007: 154) argues that "the study of religion in politics is not the study of religion per se, but of its influences on the policies and the distribution of power within a modern state. It follows that an examination of particular theories or systems of religious law is only relevant to the extent that these provide motives and programmes for political action". Anoush Ehteshami argues that Iran's foreign policies have adopted clear principles since the Islamic Revolution in 1979 (www.mideasti.org, 2009). Ehteshami (2009: 128) mentioned that "these principles have been stated in the Iranian constitution and at the same time have been defined by Iran's approaches since the revolution". This can be seen through speeches of the supreme leader, Iranian clergy and political elites, relating to the concept of justice. Such principles and notions, which derive from a set of values and beliefs, have influenced Iran's macro policies on its foreign issues. Ehteshami (2009: 127) indicates that "like other revolutionary regimes, Tehran was determined to encourage the growth of its ideology and 'export' it wherever possible". Constructivism and realism/neorealism, however, capture

the nature of Iran's foreign policy, both in theory and in practice: in its speech acts, the behaviour of the state and its elites, ideas, faith, justice, identity and religious morality, as well as material interests (Acharya, et al 2010).

2.4. The Islamic Political Thought in the view of Iranian Shiite School

Shiism is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and a wide field of knowledge (Shams al-Din, 1992). In essence, Imamah is a fundamental principle of the Shiite doctrine which is based on religious, spiritual and political leadership of the Islamic world "Ummah" (Shams al-Din, 1985: 92). Hence, the role of Shiites to reform domestic affairs in countries where do they reside is a step to for the dissemination of experiences derived from the Islamic political school of Shiite to reconstruct of Islamic societies (Said et al, 2002). The Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979 reinforced political Shiism, to become the manifestation of political movements, where the Iranian constitution stresses on the Muslim world to mobilize against the domineering system, as Shiite Islam is the starting point to reach Islamic dignity.

This section considers research regarding Islamic political thought within the framework of the Shiite school, which is one of the main Islamic sources and provides the philosophy of Islamic thought, particularly by focusing on the largest and more active branch of Shiite called the Twelvers, or Ithna' Ashari, also known as Ahlal Bayt. This branch of the Shiite sect believes strongly in recognising the legitimacy of the Twelvers, divinely ordained Imams, beginning with Ali (the cousin and son-in law of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), who was the fourth ruler of the Islamic Caliphate and the eleven successors of his sons and grandsons. The Islamic Republic of Iran represents this largest subdivision of

the Shiite sect in the Islamic world. In other words, Iran is an overwhelmingly Shiite state (Kinzer, 2006).

Svetla Ben-ITzhak (in Ishiyama & Breuning 2011), argues that Islamic political thought has been developing enormously over the last one thousand four hundred years, in terms of the relationship to religious affairs and Islamic concepts, as well as the role of government and nature of leadership. ITzhak (2011) writes that although social and political developments of Islamic thought have taken place throughout history, the theoretical and intellectual framework in Islamic thought has confronted obstacles regarding the perception of Islam as a static rather than a dynamic system of thought. In this context, ITzhak (in Ishiyama et al, 2011), argues that Islamic political thought sets a framework that is based on Islam, in which people derive knowledge and daily practices from the main sources of Islam: the Qur'an (the holy book) and appended by the Hadiths (words and deeds about prophet Muhammad for understanding the Qur'an and in matters of jurisprudence). However, the death of Muhammad (Peace be upon him) in 632 CE was a starting point for disagreement over political and religious leadership for the Umma (Shams al-Din, 1985). The rebellion against Uthman, the third Caliphate, and the following battles between Ali's supporters (shiites) against the Umayyad dynasty (Sunnis), loyal to Uthman, and the violent death of Ali's son, Hussein, caused political conflicts and major divisions between Sunni and Shiite towards religious thought and political practices in the Islamic world (Ishiyama et al, 2011; Molavi, 2005).

Bergman (2008: 7) argues that "the Shiite faith was born out of a deep feeling of deprivation and grievance". Since then, "the Shiite developed the doctrine of the Imamah (the successor to Muhammad-Peace be upon him), which gave both religious and political

dimensions to the rules" (Itzhak, in Ishiyama et al, 2011: 569). A closer look at this doctrine discloses that the supreme leader, Khomeini, referred to himself as "the missing Imam, who had returned as a messiah or Mahdi" (Bergman, 2008). When Khomeini came to power, he advocated the revival of 'pure Islam' (Khomeini, 1985). It seems that this call was revolutionary in order to reshape Iranian identity, particularly Shiite political thought, by changing reality to favour Iran. Thus, political struggles and security tensions escalated as a consequence. It has been argued that Shiites believe in the legitimacy of power for political movement, especially the defense of the rights of all Muslims who are struggling against oppression and tyranny (www.parstimes.com, 1987). This can be seen in the attempts of Iran's regime to legitimise its political power using religious ideology, especially its efforts "to export revolution", which "typically led to military disasters" (Hinnebusch et al, 2002: 20).

2.5. The Political Thought of Ayatollah Khomeini

In order to clearly demonstrate the contemporary distribution of soft power, including ideological proxies, as an independent variable, Iran's foreign policy outcome as a dependent variable, and the domestic-level in terms of regime identity, nationalism and decision-makers as intervening variables, the following research discusses the political thought of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and his influence on decision-making.

In the initial stages of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Imam/Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini (May 17, 1900 – June 3, 1989), a prominent Shiite Muslim cleric who became the political and spiritual leader of the Islamic Revolution beside the supreme leader and the paramount figure in the political system, had declared Iran an Islamic republic

(Khomeini, 1970). See for more details to abridged version of the original film after the return Ayatollah Khomeini from exile to Tehran in February 1979, and his attempt to turn Iran into an Islamic republic (www.news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front_page/newsid_8083000/8083525.stm, 1981). In accordance with this, the Iranian revolution occurred in the centre of the Shiite world (Iran) on the basis of "seeking greater equality and on the more ideologically motivated movements committed to the overthrow of existing Arab regimes and the immediate establishment of an Islamic state" (Owen, 2007: 170). Khomeini stated that “the government should be in the hands of the sages themselves” (Bergman, 2008: 9). Khomeini attempted to define the source of authority in a government under the control of the religious establishment. Khomeini extended his influence over the internal affairs of the country and became directly involved in foreign policy, including later policies regarding the war with Iraq (AL-Suwaidi, 2005). Khomeini also argued that the need to overthrow regimes is not only against the monarchical regimes which were no longer acceptable, but also any regimes who did not rule by religious authority (Khomeini, 1970). As a result, Khomeini's thought affected not only the national security of neighbouring countries, but also the regional security system. Khomeini’s thought, therefore, was based on the confrontation between good and evil, where evil must be destroyed by good, and good must apply justice (Khomeini, 1987). In this regard, Khomeini regarded the Islamic Republic of Iran as the axis of the Islamic world and the leader of the resistance and liberation movements in the Middle East and the Muslim world (Khomeini, 1981; www.parstimes.com, 1987).

Hollis (1993) points out that Iran is held responsible for "funding, training and generally encouraging Islamic militants set upon overthrowing governments across the Middle East". It is "accused of supporting the Islamist government in Sudan, seeking influence with

Islamist groups in Ethiopia and Muslim extremists in Egypt, managing Hezbollah in Lebanon and sponsoring Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement, in the Israeli Occupied Territories. Added to this, Iranian support for mujaheddin groups in Afghanistan continues and Iran is depicted as Turkey's rival for influence in the newly independent republics of Central Asia" (Hollis, 1993; www.watanserb.com/news/7005, 2015).

The Islamic revolutionary movements across the region have taken place while trumpeting support to revive Pan-Islamism, most notably support of Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Al-Mahdi Army in Iraq and Hamas in Gaza (Barzegar, 2007; Cordesman, 2007; Al-Nefisy et al, 2008; Bergman, 2008). However, the essential theory of Khomeini's idea concerning Islamic government is the jurisprudent rule (Wilayat Al-Faqih), which is based on government by the religious jurist. This concept was developed by Khomeini and is embodied in articles of the Iranian constitution which uphold juristic authority (www.en.parliran.ir, 1989). In the following section, this concept will be discussed in more detail.

Shiites believe in their right to defend tyranny and injustice in the world, even by force (Khomeini, 1985). The questions therefore arise: What is the definition of tyranny and the criterion of injustice, and who are the enemies and adversaries? Above all, in practice, who gives Iran the right to reform the world? It has been argued that the problem of Iran's revolutionary regime is that Iran has an external agenda that goes beyond its boundaries and territories, in accordance with the political mainstream of the Islamic Revolution of Iran (Takeyh, 2006). On the other hand, more importantly, the Islamic Republic of Iran reacts in an anarchic environment to confront any possible threats to safeguard its

geopolitical interests and to maximise its regional influence, by using all its instruments of power, whether conventional or unconventional.

In this context, the ideological concept as one of the core instruments of soft power is thought to derive from God, because he (Ayatollah Khomeini) is acting on behalf of the missing Imam (Twelver) who has a spiritual link with the sky. This view is supported by Iran's constitution (Al-Theyabi, 2011). However, Khomeini's vision of Islamic international relations is based on the oppressed 'mustadafun' (Khomeini, 1970, 1987). This term lies in the Qur'an as the main source for the Islamic world which includes all mankind, and engages with the spirit of religion and the episteme of Islam (www.parstimes.com, 1987). It has been argued that the cause behind adopting the term mustadafun is to give Iran's foreign policy legitimacy in countering its opponents and expanding its influence and power on others, but also to gain more domestic, regional and international support, especially from the Islamic world (Acharya et al, 2010). In light of the above, the thesis discussed the intervening variables for the political thought of Khomeini which shapes decision-making and influences state behaviour and its foreign policy. The epistemology of Khomeini's thought concerning political movements is mainly grounded upon responsibility and righteousness, according to the Shiism perspective.

2.6. Essential Epistemological Aspects of the Shiite school (Twelver)

This section discusses the important issues of the religious doctrine for the Shiite school (Twelver), in terms of theological and philosophical sources, which formulate the Shiite laws and approach. In order to demonstrate how the Iranian regime works, this research analyses the epistemological jurisprudential framework in the context of contemporary

Islamic political movements. One must bear in mind that this thesis uses ‘Twelver-Imams’ in order to avoid confusion with other Shiite schools (Armanios, 2004).

2.6.1. Shiite Islam of the Twelver School of Thought (the Twelver Imams)

Shiite Muslims represent the majority of Iran’s Muslims and also in Iraq, Lebanon and Bahrain. Shiite is one of the main strands and second largest branch of Islam after the Sunni strand (Fuller, 2006); however, the focus of this thesis is the Twelver's Shiite. Shiite (Twelver) is stated in Iran’s constitution of 1979 ‘details of the Iranian constitution are given in Appendix 2 (on page 334)’ the official religion of Iran, it is crucial to give a brief introduction to the Twelver's Shiite.

Shiites believe that they are the group that has the full support of God (Jawada, 2007). The power of Ali (the fourth Caliph) is supported fully by the Shiite political faction. Shiites recognise the legitimacy of a succession of twelve, beginning with Ali himself, who are known as imams (Armanios, 2004). Shiites believe strongly in the Twelve Imams, with legitimacy of political and spiritual power from God, who are the successors to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), and the last Imam is “Muhammad al-Mahdi, who is believed by the Twelvers to be actually alive and in hiding” (Ben-ITzhak in Ishiyama et al, 2011:571). Thus, Shiites claim that in the absence of the Imam Twelver (a thousand years ago), elite clergies such as Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Haajj Sayyid Ali Khamenei (the previous and current supreme leaders of the Iranian revolution), have the ability to understand fully Sharia Law, Islamic jurisprudential doctrine and the history of Shiite Islam (Al-Theyabi, 2011). AL-Sader et al (2004) for instance, argue that elite

clergies claim that Sharia Law, which is based on the teachings of Qur'an and the Twelver Infallible Imam, must be executed in its entirety.

In contrast, throughout history these twelve Imams have not practised the rule of Islamic government with the exception of two, the first being Ali (the fourth Caliph), who was murdered in 661 AD while attempting to maintain his authority, and the second being his son Hassan, who ruled for just six months and then gave up power to the Sunni (Umayyad) (Jawada, 2007). For approximately one thousand three hundred and fifty years there was a major split between the Muslim strands. Most importantly, the battle of Karbala (south Baghdad) on 10 Muharram in the year 61 AH (October 10, 680 AD) was and still is considered one of the prominent events for Shiite Twelver (Shams al-Din, 1996). Ali's son, Hussein, the third Imam, was killed by the Caliph's soldiers, after Hussein's refusal to recognise the Caliph's legitimacy of Yazid, and his attempt to overthrow Yazid's power and reform the path of Twelver Imam (Kinzer, 2006). Since then, Kinzer (2006: 187) noted that "the city of Karbala' is now a pilgrimage spot for Shiites". Furthermore, Hussein's killing is remembered every year, and the day is called 'Ashura' (the tenth of Muharram in the Islamic calendar). "It is said by Shiites that every day is Ashura and every land is Karbala" (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008: 35). It has been argued that Hussein, Shiite Twelver, and Khomeini, for instance, adopt the same belief, which is based on radical change and a revolutionary approach against illegitimate regimes, tyranny and oppression (Shams al-Din, 1996).

Much like Hussein, Khomeini, the supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, considers the Islamic Republic of Iran the axis of the Islamic world and himself the leader of the resistance and liberation movements (Puelings, 2010). There are some similarities

between Khomeini and Hussein, as they both adopted the revolutionary approach to social change and political reform and gave themselves religious legitimacy for establishing better societies based on justice, dignity, freedom and salvation (Jawada, 2007). Al-Nefisy et al (2008) argue that the myth of Hussein will remain as a revolutionary symbol against all tyrants and oppressors and he will continue as a symbol of dignity and freedom for all mankind, not only for the Shiites. Shiites have been protesting against all Muslim rulers, particularly the Arab governors, whose authority has not been legitimised (Bergman 2008). These protests and movements demonstrate the nature of the geopolitical dynamics in light of Iran's efforts to maximise its regional influence which in turn might bring security to Iran in the long run. Most importantly, Ben-ITzhak (in Ishiyama et al, 2011:571) writes that "Shiite political thought focused mainly on the nature and origins of power during the Imam's absence". The Shiite approach is to look forward to the usurping of power in the name of Islamic Law, exporting ideological thought into other states.

2.6.2. Al-Mahdi Al-Montazar (the Awaited)

Imam Al-Mahdi Al-Montazar (Awaited) is the last Imam, number twelve of the Twelve Imams, according to the Shiite Twelve doctrine (AL-Sader et al, 2004). The Shiite clergy elite insist upon Imam Al-Mahdi as a leader of social and political movement who derives his legitimate political and spiritual power directly from God (Jawada, 2007). Indeed, Shiites strongly believe that the Al-Mahdi is an infallible Imam, and he will solve the world's problems by fighting decisively injustice, oppression and ignorance, in order to fill this earth with righteousness, justice, and fairness. Theoretically, this principle is commensurate with Imam Khomeini's thought and Shiite doctrine. Hence, empirically, the Iranian regime adopts this doctrine because the supreme leader acts on behalf of Imam Al-

Mahdi, until he comes to power, and puts this doctrine into practice through the establishment of an Islamic government (Al-Theyabi, 2011). It has widely been argued that Iran's foreign policy has derived its legitimacy from spiritual guidance via the doctrinal aspects of the Imam Al-Mahdi concerning confronting injustice and oppression, and for establishing a better life (AL-Sader et al, 2004).

2.6.3. The Theory of the Governance of Jurist (Wilayat Al-Faqih)

The theory of Wilayat Al-Faqih (guardianship of the Islamic jurist) is central to the Iranian Islamic Revolution, particularly towards the supreme leader and elite clergies "to strengthen the pillars of their rule" (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008: 28). Equally important, it denies the temporal ruler this authority. The preamble to the Iranian constitution defines the powers of the authority of Al-Faqih. In accordance with Article 5, the Faqih is the just and pious jurist who is recognised by the majority of political and clerical elites as best qualified to lead the nation. In both Articles 5 and 107, the constitution shows the process for succession of the position of Wilayat Al-Faqih, and Articles 108 to 112 specifies the qualifications, duties and the powers of the Faqih (www.parstimes.com, 1987).

This section analyses the ideological authority of the Faqih (supreme leader) to run the state practically in accordance with political thought in Shiism. The issue of Wilayat Al-Faqih holds two theoretical and practical dimensions. In terms of the theoretical account, Al-Nefisy & Abdullah (2008) argue that the supreme leader, as a religious and political authority, holds the reins of all branches of Iranian government institutions and other authority necessary to run a government internally and externally. Khomeini, for instance, claimed that Faqih (a jurisprudent) has power derived from the infallible Imam (Al-Mahdi)

who is accredited by God and, as such, can interpret Islamic law and hold the highest authority over others (Khomeini, 1981). It is clear, therefore, that the legitimacy of power for the supreme leader is dependent upon a religious factor rather than public opinion, although he is elected by 'ulama' (plural of the U'lim, people with the highest standard in the Islamic law and its sources) in the Assembly of Experts (Majles-e Khobregan) (Kinzer, 2006: 146).

The theory of Wilayat Al-Faqih originates from the idea that the prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was not chosen by the people, and his power was given directly from God. This means Faqih is not subject to parliamentary and legal accountability, although he exercises political tasks beside religious matters. In this sense, the theory of Wilayat Al-Faqih causes some confusion for Muslims concerning the sources of legitimacy in Islam (Al-Husseini, 2015).

Indeed, the supreme leader's authority and his power “was enshrined in the Iranian constitution” (Kinzer, 2006: 146). In this regard, the Iranian constitution gives the supreme leader full right to intervene in all aspects of the political system, by directing government policies when he is asked, or according to his wishes. Ideologically, however, the supreme leader has the top rank in Shiite sects and factions. This rank gives him absolute power to direct Shiites (Twelvers) in the Middle East states and elsewhere, via the guidance of Iran's foreign policy (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008: 28; Kagan, 2009). Despite the fact that Iran's political system is a multi-polar system that affects foreign policy, the supreme leader is the highest in the hierarchy of the political system and the office of State, and the strongest institution among decision-making powers on Iran's foreign policy. This stems from the theory of "Wilayat Al-Faqih" (Takeyh, 2007: 26). According to this theory, the supreme

leader takes over on behalf of the Hidden Imam (Al-Mahdi Al-montazar- the Awaited) in the management of affairs of the Muslims and this means that obedience is obligatory. This distinguished authority for the supreme leader is derived from the Iranian constitution according to articles 5, 107 and 110 (Takeyh, 2007: 26).

The concept of Walayat Al-Faqih has influenced Shiite factions that live in the Middle East. It has been argued that the socio-political movements in the region, particularly after the removal of Saddam regime from power in 2003, have been guided by Wilayat Al-Faqih in Tehran and his idea of Islamic government (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008). The attempts of Iran's regime, through the theory of Wilayat Al-Faqih, to influence different Shiite movements to attain Iran's ideological agenda and geostrategic goals of imposing its hegemony over the region are a regional concern.

In practical terms, the framework of government functions, administration, and execution of laws are a grave responsibility, rather than talk on Faqih's status. Such huge and complicated responsibilities can neither practically nor realistically be handled and managed by one person (Faqih). The Faqih, as an ordinary person, is likely to be forgetful and mistaken. In most Islamic states, leaders exercise their political duties, while the religious elites practise their ideological/religious tasks and most people have accepted this division. In contrast, the Shiite traditionalists accept the theory of Wilayat Al-Faqih, by which the supreme leader acquires a high Islamic qualification to execute correctly all Islamic laws through the government (Al-Theyabi, 2011).

Some people argue that the theory of Wilayat Al-Faqih is aimed at protecting the Islamic revolution, via controlling the government domestically, and imposing power and

influence on other countries regionally, under the legitimacy of Islamic law. However, others argue that it is not imperative that the government be under the control of Faqih, because anyone can rule, but he has to have the permission of Wali Al-Faqih to dispense his authority. Wilayat Al-Faqih came as a result of an attempt to legitimise the Iranian Revolution in 1979, aimed at replacing a previous regime (Shah's regime) with a legitimate regime, and at influencing the Islamic world, resulting in increasing uncertainty among the Middle Eastern states.

2.7. A new Revolutionary Paradigm and the Creative Path to Reach Power

In order to demonstrate how the security dilemma works in Iran's external affairs, this thesis analyses and discusses religious and political theories, to explain and understand the power of Iranian ideology and rhetoric legitimised by Islamic law. This approach allows interactions between variables (physical and intellectual) to be explored in the context of the Iranian foreign policy strategy and its impact on the entire Middle East region, through its ideological paradigm.

In this sense, the thesis links the normative approach related to Iran's regime identity and religious ideology, by asking what should happen and how people/state will behave, to the empirical approach, in accordance with Iran's foreign policy outcomes and the impact of its transformative power on the regional security system. This will be achieved by asking what has happened or why events occurred as they did, according to the four issues under analysis.

Owen (2007: 154) argues that since the Islamic Republic of Iran was established, "religiously inspired political movements" have escalated. Moreover, Owen (2007) writes that religious ideology, along with Islamic identity and revolutionary values, played a crucial role, not only during the process for rebuilding state and nation, but also in shaping policies and distributing power. Thus, the combination of ideology and power is an appropriate approach to explore motives and understand political actions (Owen, 2007; www.dohainstitute.org, 2010). Iran's regime has elements of a revolutionary approach and a religious/ideological approach, in order to attain its political/ religious agenda of defending the rights of all Muslims and expanding its influence into neighbouring states. Iran's regime uses Shiite factions, where they reside, and non-state actors, to achieve its goals (Al-Ghareib, 2005).

To understand Iran's foreign policy, it is essential that the era of Ahmadinejad (2005-2009 and 2009-2013), one of the most conservative leaders and believer in Khomeini's principles and the Islamic Revolution, is discussed. Takeyh (2003, 2007) stresses that Ahmadinejad is an Islamic revolutionist, who continuously looks to the Middle East region as if it were a battlefield between the forces of secular evil and those who adhere to the Islamic identity. In order for Iran to achieve its ideological/political strategic agenda, domestic and external organisations and parties have been established as proxies for Iran's foreign policy to export principles of the Islamic revolution. As a result, "several socio-political movements and asymmetric warfare have occurred, for instance, Iraq, Lebanon, Israel, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait" (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008: 51). Hezbollah is a clear example of Shiite movements and Islamic resistance units (militia) that direct and manage the Iranian regime in Tehran (Fuller, 2006; Levitt, 2012). The Islamic Republic of Iran has always sought to improve transnational ties with Shiite groups in the Middle

Eastern countries, and the consequences of this relationship have escalated political domestic conflicts and regional security tensions, such as in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and elsewhere.

2.8. Regional Instability and the New Security Dilemma

Although the security dilemma lies at the heart of structural realist theory, this thesis takes religious ideology, Islamic identity and revolutionary values into consideration according to constructivism, to explore how the security dilemma works in the Middle East. Due to the fact that the Iranian regime uses an ideological agenda, domestically and internationally, Iran's foreign policy has sought to spread this ideology by using proxies, non-state actors and Shiite factions that exist in other Middle Eastern states (www.fas.org, 2006). Indeed, ideology and power play a decisive role, by maintaining the strategic interests of Iran's foreign policy and expanding its influence, as well as providing legitimacy to its policies (Barzegar, 2008). In this context, the strategic interests of Iran are based on the expansion of its influence on the Middle East region, by using all of its security means and unconventional capabilities (Shoamanesh, 2012; www.kayhan.ir, 2015). Debate on Iran's strategic role in the region, particularly from the perspective of the Iraqi Shiite thinker, Sabah Alkhozai, was shown on Al-Mustakillah TV on 27 June 2008 and 24 January 2009; (see www.almustakillah.com/, 2008, 2009) video in Arabic language.

Power does not always mean military force. Kagan et al (2012) argue that there are other dimensions of power such as economies, politics and ideology. Ideology is a cornerstone in Iran's foreign policy and is considered one of the most powerful methods to cross all Shiite sects and factions, not only in the Middle East, but also around the world (Jawada, 2007).

Since 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran has continued to pursue coordinated strategies which combine both offensive and defensive strategies by using instruments of soft power, along with unconventional warfare through its ideological proxies to promote its geopolitical agenda and consolidate Tehran's position in the region (Kagan et al, 2012). The ideological factor is a strong instrument of power that links the Supreme Leader with Shiite sects. The expansion of Shiite ideology in post-invasion Iraq provides Iran, especially after the fall of the barrier of Baathist ideology and pan-Arabism and Saddam's influence and power, with the purpose of preparing for the arrival of the Imam AL-Mahdi (AL-Sader et al, 2004). Until Imam AL-Mahdi comes to power, clergies take the leadership to exercise the rule on behalf of the Imam (Jawada, 2007).

The existing regional security dilemma reflects the interactions among states within an anarchic environment, present as a result of the absence of an active international system that controls the political relationships among its members (Leuprecht, 2010). Accordingly, each country seeks to protect and enhance its security needs and requirements, which creates more chaos regionally and internationally, especially for neighbouring countries, in terms of attaining a balance of power and counterbalance with each other (Griffiths et al, 2008). As a result, an action-reaction dynamic between states creates a gap of uncertainty and mutual mistrust, which turns the security dilemma into an unending cycle (Booth et al, 2008: 4-5).

On the other hand, the existing regional security dilemma in the Middle East is not only based on relative distribution of conventional power in the structural dynamic of the international system; it also creates a fundamentalist mainstream among certain people and sects (believers in the Shiism of the Islamic Revolution of Iran). This situation leads to

intra-state divisions according to ideological/ religious faiths, and identities (Puelings, 2010). Bilgin (2005: 125) argues that some fundamentalist groups and parties, such as Hezbollah, have attempted "to capture the state mechanism". Hezbollah is not under the control of the Lebanese Government. Indeed, Lebanon and Hezbollah are the best examples by which to assess the influence of Iran's foreign policy in the region.

After 2003, new players have provided non-state actors and Shiite factions with unconventional and asymmetric capabilities in most Middle East countries, such as Iraq, Lebanon, Israel, the Gulf States, Egypt, and Yemen, for instance (Puelings, 2010; www.yemeress.com, 2014). A new player, the so-called Islamic state (IS), has its own leader with no control by other states on its action and behaviour, as in the case with Iran and Hezbollah. Sunni Islamic jihadist movements such as al-Qaeda have droven the security situation into more complexity by attacking civilian targets across the world (e.g. U.S., UK, Indonesia, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen, for instance) (Nemer, 2003; Hoffman, 2006; Al- Oraibi, 2006).

2.9. Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed formulation of the underlying Islamic epistemological approach of the Shiite school, which is one of the main Islamic sources and philosophies in Islamic political thought, by focusing on the largest branch of Shiite Twelvers. The Shiites Twelver School provides legitimacy to the Islamic movement (AL-Sader et al, 2004; Jawada, 2007; Al-Nefisy et al, 2008). Most importantly, the issue of leadership (caliphate) in the Islamic world has been a major point of conflict between two main approaches (Sunnis and Shiites) in the Arab nation and the Islamic world (Kamrava, 2005). In this

sense, the central conflict of the issue of leadership and the ideological power struggle was based on Iran's legacy and Khomeini's political theology that shaped its foreign policy in line with the revolutionary values and the Imam's idea. Ideas do not move and evolve in a vacuum, but rather grow and develop in the context of historical and social reality (Mahfouz, 2006). Hence, the chapter stressed the history of ideas in Iranian politics, in the shadow of social, natural and cultural factors, and provided the analytical framework to explore the laws of intellectual development and regeneration as cultural factors.

The chapter attempted to link concepts, variables and assumptions within an analytical framework of Positivist and Post-positivist theories. In the realm of Positivist/rationalist approaches, neo-realism, for instance, the thesis discussed causal explanations in terms of why and how power is exercised. Post-positivist theories such as constructivism came to play a significant role, stressing the importance of cultural determinants, national and religious heritage. Post-positivism asks fundamental questions: What is power? How it is experienced? How is it reproduced?

The next chapter will focus on the domestic hierarchy of the Iranian political system and the dynamic interactions among intervening variables, clerical institutions and governmental institutions, that shape Iran's foreign policy.

Chapter Three

Internal Structure of Iran's Political System: Key Drivers for Foreign Policy

3.1. Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to give an insight into the domestic structure of Iran's political system in the context of power politics and different power centres, formal institutions and informal networks. This chapter discusses patterns of procedural complexities of Iranian institutions and the interactions between the rings of power dominated by clerical institutions. This chapter, therefore, explores the interactions in the power structure through the broad authority of the supreme leader. It will attempt to explain the interaction between governmental authorities that run the country internally and externally, and the enormous authority derived from the Iranian constitution, acting on behalf of the supreme leader, sometimes causing conflict between conservatives and reformers. The pragmatic policy of Rafsanjani's presidency and moderate Khatami Presidency will be discussed, as well as the decision structure, domestic opposition groups, and interest groups, in order to explain the patterns of change in Iran's foreign policy.

Moreover, regime identity, nationalism and decision-makers that make up the intervening variables will be examined closely. Beside the pivotal role of the intervening variables, the religious dimension of three substantial drivers such as Ideologies, Pan-Islamism and Revolutionary Shiism play crucial roles in the decision-making process to determine interests, likely behaviour and actions. These three substantial drivers will be assessed within the framework of Iran’s deployment of its main instruments of soft power, in order to understand Iranian political system catalysts, which may also be perceived as key

catalysts and drivers behind Iran's foreign policy. Soft power as a main tool could be used to garner support from minority communities in the region, in particular, and the Islamic street, in general, who are looking for a champion.

3.2. The Pattern of Interactions Between Power and Policy: A Theoretical Approach

In order to understand the theoretical principles behind state behaviour, the black box of internal political system needs to be opened, to explore patterns of interactions between domestic actors. States behave differently due to differences in the internal structure of the political system. For example, while democratic systems stress equality of rights under the law among all actors, and institutionalise participation in the political process, especially in the decision making process, the leader's orientations play a strong role in shaping decisions and directing foreign policy in other, non-democratic, systems (AL-Suwaidi, 2014). The question of whether the Iranian regime, run by the supreme leader with clerics and the Revolutionary Guard, is based on institutional rationality goes to the very heart of the debate. This debate is about which institution in Iran's power structure runs the foreign policy. This section will use neorealism (structural realism) to explain the influence of international/regional system on state behaviour; in addition, neoclassical realism combined with constructivism will be applied to explain domestic political factors and religious ideology, when examining the mechanism of decision making.

Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran's foreign policy has shifted from radical to pragmatic, and back to radical. It is important to explain the four different historical periods of Iran's modern history. These historical periods are: Firstly, radical in 1980s during Imam Khomeini's leadership; secondly, pragmatic in late 1980s and most of the

1990s during Rafsanjani's Presidency; thirdly, moderate in late 1990s and early 2000s during Khatami's Presidency; lastly, radical from 2005 to 2013 during Ahmadinejad's Presidency.

During the first period (1980s), Iranian behaviour was radical and revolutionary. Iran did what it could to accomplish its strategic objectives through a radical foreign policy. The Islamic Republic of Iran endeavoured to export its revolution to its Arab neighbours, especially the Gulf oil states (Hinnebusch et al, 2002). The Iranian regime also rejected any proposal to stop the eight years of war with Iraq, when Iraq was eager to do so. This is due to its effort to overthrow the Ba'ath regime in Baghdad, which would help achieve its major objective, to spread the revolutionary doctrine across the region. Furthermore, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a fatwa (legal opinion) on 14 February 1989, ordering Muslims to kill Salman Rushdie, due to the publication of his novel, *The Satanic Verses*, as well as his publishers. Such radical discourses and actions led to a political isolation and economic sanctions on the Iranian regime.

According to neorealism, changes in Iran's foreign policy came in response to the development of the international/regional events. On this basis, the state responds to regional threats, international challenges and the uncertainties of regional anarchy (Morgenthau, revised by Kenneth & Clinton, 1948, 1993; Waltz, 1979; Collins, 2007). This response may be in the form of defence, for security, or offensive, for more influence abroad. Thus, when Iran is at war with its neighbours, its foreign policy will be radical. However, in times of peace, Iran behaves pragmatically (for example, towards Caspian and Central Asian states).

After the 1979 revolution, Iran became a radical state, as a result of the Iraqi attack and the support of some Arab states and Western countries given to Iraq (Ansari, 2006). Iran took a strategic rational decision and behaved radically, in order to restore its dignity.

Why did Iran behave radically after Khomeini came to power in 1979? It is hard to argue that the structure of the international system drove Iran to the radicalisation, as neorealists would maintain. While neorealism can provide a logical explanation for why Iran became more radical in the 1980s, it cannot explain why Iran's regime became radical initially. In other words, despite the war with Iraq and the increase in oil prices, Iran's foreign policy was radical before these international/regional events occurred. The Iranian hostage crisis (04 November 1979, to 20 January 1981), for example, had taken place before Iraq attacked Iran. Iran adopted a religious ideology in order to achieve geopolitical objectives through exporting the Islamic revolution to the regional states, before the increase in oil prices. It could be argued that these international/regional factors did not give rise to radicalism, as much as provided reasons for Iran's leaders to enhance their radical orientations and redefine Iran's behaviour.

During the second period (late 1980s and the most of the 1990s), however, Iran's foreign policy shifted from radical to pragmatic. After Khomeini's death in 1989, pragmatism became an approach for Iran's foreign policy during the administration of President Rafsanjani 1989 – 1997, which led to prominent changes in Iran's foreign affairs, towards being more open to the world, including Western countries. This change in foreign affairs was to combine economic change and balance realism and ideology (Yaqubi, 2009).

Rafsanjani began to refashion the role of religious ideology and revolutionary ideals, particularly in Iran's state identity. He realised that Iran could not modify the region's political map. He attempted to adjust Iran's foreign policy to deal with a new balance of power in the region, where the U.S. had been playing an important role in creating this balance of power. He endeavoured to initiate relations with Iran's neighbours, such as the Gulf states, notably Saudi Arabia. However, the Islamic revolution's principles remained present in the orientation of Iran's foreign policy.

Neorealism can explain why Iran's regime agreed to stop the war with Iraq in 1988 and why it became less radical and more pragmatic in the late 1980s. The neorealist would argue that Iranian leadership had agreed to stop the war with Iraq due to the pressure of the international/regional system to do so, especially after the military support to Iraq by the U.S., alongside some regional and international powers (e.g. the Gulf states and France). Therefore, Iranian leaders took a rational decision to stop the war, in order to conserve their regime and their revolution. Otherwise, Iran would confront serious challenges and unexpected repercussions.

On the other hand, neorealism cannot provide a precise explanation for the shift in Iranian orientation from radical to pragmatic after Khomeini's death in mid-1989, because there was no significant change in the international system that might affect Iran directly. The question that needs to be asked is: why did Iran not establish good relations with its immediate neighbours, to mitigate its political isolation, neutralise them, and/ or to protect itself from acquiring more enemies?

During the third period (late 1990s and early 2000s), Mohammad Khatami was elected (1997 to 2005). He adopted a reformist approach, alongside the policies of a pragmatist approach. However, these policies encountered a number of political differences in domestic issues. These political differences led to the decline of the reformist component within the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran (Majles). The hard-line offensive against the reformists was part of a campaign to frustrate Khatami and his cabinet, and it was also a tactic used to weaken the pro-Khatami wing of the government, ahead of his presidential re-election in 2001. Despite the conservative wing's campaign against reformists, Khatami was re-elected with an overwhelming 77 percent of the vote. Internally, Khatami's government adopted some new values, such as civil society, freedom of speech, the rule of law and pluralism (Muhafaza, 2013).

In addition, Iran tried to improve its reputation in international society, so the focus of Iran's foreign policy was on detente, dialogue of civilisations, besides the normalisation of Iran's relations with most other countries, including the U.S., but excluding Israel. Moreover, Khatami sought to reshape Iran's identity into one that adhered to international norms and acted in accordance with international institutions and conventions. He also stressed the importance of mutual respect and the need for peaceful coexistence, despite differences among states within international relations. This marked a departure from the state identity of the Khomeini era. This reformist approach with its new perspective brought about conflict between reformists (who sought to reduce the absolute authority of the Supreme Leader) and conservatives (who aimed to maintain religious power, revolutionary guards and political hegemony through repression and manipulation of the electoral process).

According to the neorealist explanation, U.S. military presence in the region made the Iranian leadership anxious not to antagonise the U.S., as the balance of power was/is on the side of the U.S. A military confrontation would bring defeat and humiliation to Iran. It could also be argued that Iran's political elites thought that reducing regional tensions and building good relations with the Gulf states, for instance, would force U.S. troops to leave the region. Otherwise, any radical policy towards regional states would escalate the tension, and drive some regional states to reinforce their security and military relations with the U.S., to secure themselves from the Iranian threat. However, as the U.S. military presence in the region has not changed since the 1990s, and oil prices did not change significantly since the mid-1980s, neorealism cannot provide a clear explanation why Iran shifted its behaviour from pragmatic to moderate in the late 1990s.

Lastly, the 2004 parliamentary and 2005 presidential elections heralded the advent of a new era of Khomeinist ideologues, who aimed to revive the militant values of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, which were a setback to Khatami's achievements. Ahmadinejad (2005-2013) stressed the importance of clerical government and gave credence to a strategy to expand the role of ideologues, especially the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), in the country's economic and political activities, and, more importantly, curtail the progress of the reform movement in the electoral process.

Iran's foreign policy shifted and became radical again between 2005 and 2013 (Takeyh, 2007; www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940626000405, 2015). This can be seen in three prominent changes: Firstly, support for revolutionary groups of non-state actors in the Middle East region, in order to act for Iran as proxies of its foreign policy. Secondly, a revival in hardline rhetoric in Iran's international relations, by targeting some

countries in the Middle East as well as outside the region, particularly the U.S. administration and Israel. Thirdly, a challenge to the Western superpowers by following-up its nuclear programme, which led to increased skepticism and suspicion over Iran's behaviour.

For Ahmadinejad, Islam was the only option for Iran's regime across all components of society, in accordance with the political-religious thoughts of Khomeini (Takeyh, 2010: 37). Arguably, Iranian foreign policy has continuously been advancing Khomeini's political and Shiite religious thought, and implementing the Islamic Revolution principles since 1979. Tension between Iran and its Arab neighbours has escalated. Terrorist incidents in Iraq, political disturbance in Lebanon, chaos in Yemen, and most importantly the sectarian violence in the region, have been seen as evidence of renewed rivalry between major players (Iran with its regional allies e.g. Iraq, Syria and Lebanese Hezbollah, against most of Arab states and in particular, the Gulf states, Jordan, Egypt and Yemen).

Neorealism can explain to some extent why Iran has become radical again. The presence of U.S. military forces in Afghanistan and in Iraq, including in the Gulf region, in addition to threats of a military attack against Iran's nuclear facilities, have led Iranian leaders to behave radically, in order to protect its national security and strategic interests. Therefore, neorealism would justify the assertive foreign policy of Iran's regime and its approach towards nuclear power, and even to acquire weapons of mass destruction (Booth et al, 2008). Additionally, the increase of oil prices supports Iran's budget and reinforces its economy. This has given Iran's leaders the instrument to follow an assertive policy and

develop the country’s military power, which might include developing Iran's nuclear activities and the development of ballistic missile systems.

However, while neorealism argues that the structure of the international system and regional situation in the Gulf area, and the U.S. threats against Iran, have led and forced Iran to behave radically since 2005, the threats against Iran did not start in 2005. The anarchic situation in the region and sources of ongoing instability has existed for decades. Why did Iran not adopt a radical strategy 2001–2002?

Realists argue that rational state actors pursue their national interests in accumulating power to ensure security in an anarchic world. Hence, the state needs to obtain material resources and reinforce its power capabilities in anticipation of any possible confrontation (Jackson et al, 2007). Neoclassical realists argue that the actions of states in the international system can be explained in accordance with several variables. These variables include the distribution of power capabilities, perception towards other states' intentions, and domestic factors such as state institutions, elites and societal actors.

In contrast, a constructivist perspective sees the international system as composed of the social interactions, regime identity, and the meanings or ideas, rather than material power (Hopf, 1998). From this perspective, beliefs, ideologies and a leader’s personality may guide leaders’ decisions in line with personal history. The revolutionary tendencies of some Iranian leaders, such as Ayatollah Imam Khomeini, Ayatollah Imam Khamenei and Ahmadinejad, for example, may have taught them that certain values and religious ideology are the way of handling problems and dealing with other states.

3.2.1. Power Structures of the Political System of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The political regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a mix of presidential democracy and theocracy, underpinned in religious and revolutionary principles, in accordance with syncretic politics guided by an Islamist ideology (Al-Ghareib, 2005; Al-Nefisy et al, 2008). In other words, its political system is based upon the timeless sovereignty of political-religious authority, according to the Iranian constitution, which granted the highest authority in the political hierarchy to the supreme leader, in Article 107 (Takeyh, 2007).

The institutional structure of the Iranian regime is based on the post-revolutionary constitution, which accommodates a wide range of clerical views, particularly Khomeini's. Rakel (2008) however, argues that in the power circle of Iran's political system there is an ideological rivalry between the political elites and the clerical elites, which has led to critical debates concerning the power of the supreme leader, according to Wilayat Al-Faqih's theory. The question of what role Islam has and the scope of clerical authority in the political arena have resulted in significant problems between conservatives and reformers (Takeyh, 2010).

Moslem (2002: 33-34 in Rakel, 2008: 52) stated that "the formal political power structure of the Islamic republic of Iran is composed of the supreme leader and three sets of institutions, which are the religious supervisory bodies, the republican institutions and the religious foundations". The Iranian constitution and the doctrine of Wilayat Al-Faqih provide the supreme leader with broad powers for expanding his authority over political and religious institutions, by allowing him to engage in the process of decision-making (Nemani, 1998).

The republic's legislative, judicial and executive branches operate within a modern democratic system, but they face constraints and challenges, particularly the influence of religious foundations upon the mechanism of the decision-making process. In this context, the religious foundations play a crucial role in propagating the ideology of the Iranian regime and have become one of the major actors in the power struggle among clerical and political elites, especially for supporting conservatives financially (Takeyh, 2010). Notwithstanding the fact that such institutions claim to be charities and act with the official governmental institutions, they are responsible for the supreme leader and his local representatives, and the government has no control over their activities (Kagan, 2009). On the other hand, due to the absence of legal political parties within the structure of the power system in Iran, the informal power structure including political and clerical factions, and by virtue of their status in state's institutions which represent various segments of Iranian society, they exercise their influence on the political decision-makers and political discourse, directly or indirectly.

Accordingly, the political system of Iran combines elements of Islamic ideology with elements of democracy. The Iranian governmental philosophy is torn between the influence of religion upon domestic and external political processes and the framework of parliamentary democracy. The process of political elections, for instance, takes place within legal, political, and religious structures of the executive branches of the government and is overseen by three bodies that are dominated by clergy: the Assembly of Experts, the Expediency Council, and the Council of Guardians. This process serves the status quo of the conservative regime, in order to maintain the theological power structure.

In this context, the political structure of the Iranian regime has two main aspects: Islamic law and the peoples' will. Elections point to the rule of the people, religious doctrine confers legitimacy to religious practices and ensures the role of the clergy and thus undermines the role of the people. The Iranian constitution in Article 4 mentions "All civil, penal, financial, economic, administrative, cultural, military, political, and other laws and regulations must be based on Islamic criteria. This principle applies absolutely and generally to all articles of the constitution as well as to all other laws and regulations, and the fuqaha' of the Guardian Council are judges in this matter" (Alamdari, 2009). It is important to note that, although parliament (majlis) is elected directly by the people for four years, all parliamentary candidates shall be subject to the approval of the Guardians Council, and this even applies to the selection of the president. Rakel (2008: 54) said of the Guardian Council that it has "supreme oversight of the elections for the majlis, the Assembly of Experts and the presidency". The distinct role of the supreme leader is clearly reflected in his control of the Guardians Council, through the appointment of half of the Council's members (six clerical), while the other half are appointed by the parliament, but after the recommendation of the head of the judiciary appointed by the supreme leader (article 110 [6] [b] constitution Iran), which eventually means that the supreme leader controls the composition of the Guardians Council (www.parstimes.com, 1979). Takeyh (2007), hence, argues that the function of the Guardians Council undermines the parliament's elected authorities, as long as the parliament does not have full sovereignty over its decisions without the presence of the Guardians Council.

The Iranian constitution of 1979, and an amendment in 1989, established the country as an Islamic Republic and put into place a mixed system of government, in which the executive, parliament, and judiciary are overseen by several bodies dominated by the clergy (Takeyh,

2007). Kinzer (2006) argues that the justification for the mixed system in Iran's regime can be found in Wilayat Al-Faqih's theory, which gives the supreme leader the duty and extended authority in politics and religion. Therefore, at the head of the state and overseeing all institutions is the supreme leader, and the president is the second most powerful person of the political elite who exercises executive powers, except in matters relating to the supreme leader (Takeyh, 2010). More importantly, foreign policy and the armed forces are not under the president's control, but rather they are under the control of the supreme leader (Sadjadpour, 2009).

3.2.2. Domestic Political Factors and the Dynamics of Iran's Foreign Policy

The domestic structure of Iran's political system has different power centres of religio-political elites. Leaders' orientations, the decision structure, domestic opposition groups, and interest groups are factors that can help explain the changes in Iran's foreign policy since 1979.

These domestic factors will be used to answer the following questions: do leaders' orientations cause these changes, and if so, how? Does Iran's decision structure allow diverse actors to participate in decision making? If so, how can that shape and affect Iran's foreign policy? Is there an active domestic opposition? If so, how much pressure do these groups exert on foreign policy-makers? Moreover, do interest groups play a role in determining the final decision? If so, how can these groups press on political agendas? And finally, how much power does Iran's government have?

As to the patterns of leaders' orientations, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, is not only a pillar of Iran's political system, but also left a legacy in the form of the Iranian constitution and a powerful foreign policy doctrine (Khomeini, 1970). For example, Khomeini's thoughts shaped Iran's foreign policy while he was in power. As a consequence, Iran started its radical policy by exporting its revolution to its neighbors, such as Iraq and the Gulf States, as well as supporting revolutionary groups in some countries in the region, which became part of Iran's foreign policy. After Rafsanjani came to power with a pragmatic perspective, Iranian foreign policy attempted to reform by solving internal problems, as well as emerge from international isolation and economic sanctions (Kinzer, 2006). President Khatami adopted a new approach reflected in Iran's moderate foreign policy. This new approach aimed to reduce tensions and start a dialogue with the world, except the US and Israel (Ansari, 2006). As Ahmadinejad, he immediately brought Iran's foreign policy back to the old days of Khomeini (Takeyh, 2003, 2007). He expressed his radical approach in his speech acts against Israel and the U.S., as well as in his foreign policy, through supporting non-state actors of revolutionary groups in the region.

The decision structure is a very important factor in demonstrating how different domestic groups are dealt with and in understanding the scope of participation in decision making. Furthermore, it helps to assess structures of authority and state behaviour over different periods. It indicates who has the ultimate authority and the power to employ the economic resources of the state, as well as material forces towards a particular course of action in foreign policy.

The decision structure in Iran authorises specific domestic actors to intervene and participate in foreign policy. Although opposition in parliament, for example, did not play

a major role during Khomeini's era, they played a strong role during the periods of Rafsanjani and Khatami (Kinzer, 2006). This can be seen in the opposition of conservatives in parliament towards Rafsanjani's foreign and economic policies, especially towards the U.S. Conservatives exercised their power to stop Khatami's moderate policy in the peace process between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, as well as towards the U.S. One must bear in mind that, despite the activity of domestic actors and political institutions in the decision process, the Iranian constitution grants the supreme leader a major role and ultimate authority in the decision process and in directing Iran's foreign policy.

Participation in decision making does not necessary mean that decisions will be implemented. Despite the fact that the constitution of Iran allows the Islamic Republic's body politic to practise its role, and shows different actors their roles in decision making to some extent, these actors still need to follow the articles of the Constitution, revolutionary principles and the supreme leader's orientations. For example, whereas the president is elected by the people democratically, to be at the head of the executive branch (the head of the state), the supreme leader has the last word in any decision that the president takes. Thus, the president who is elected directly by the public is the second most powerful man, after the supreme leader (Sadjadpour, 2010). In accordance to the Iranian constitution of 1979 and after revising the constitution in 1989, the supreme leader is given overwhelming power in making state policy.

The influence of domestic opposition groups also needs to be discussed. It has been argued that "there are three areas of oppositions that make them very strong: first, divisions within the leadership itself, second, organised groups operating within (or having access to) state

and party institutions, third, mass-level activity in the wider political environment" (Hagan et al, 1995: 135).

Two issues need to be addressed when discussing political domestic opposition. First, is the division within the ruling party? Is the central leadership fragmented? If so, there is strong opposition to the leadership. Second, we need to look at types of domestic opposition outside the ruling party and see how much they challenge the leadership. There is military opposition, opposition actors in parliament, and/or other political parties and/or groups. Moreover, how does the leadership respond to opposition inside and outside the ruling party? If opposition groups are very powerful in affecting foreign policy, the leader needs to find a middle ground solution in the decision making process. Otherwise, political opposition may play a strong role by constraining the domestic politics of the leadership, which could affect the direction of foreign policy.

Indeed, domestic opposition groups who were amongst ruling elites in Iran played a strong role in the decision making process, which impacted Iran's foreign policy. The hostage crisis in 1979 and the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) are good examples. Rafsanjani was confronted by radical opposition groups in parliament, during his first term, and he also faced strong opposition from conservative figures and groups inside and outside parliament, during his second term (Rakel, 2008). As a consequence, Rafsanjani found it difficult to implement his integrated domestic and foreign policies. Furthermore, Khatami faced a severe challenge from conservative figures and groups inside and outside parliament, especially from the armed forces, which affected the outcomes of his plans, in terms of Iran's foreign policy.

While there is opposition inside and outside parliament, opposition also comes from the armed forces. The armed forces played an important role in the late 1990s in opposing Khatami's moderate policy. Commanders (all of whom are appointed by the supreme leader, not the president) warned Khatami about his moderate foreign and economic policies. In addition, the armed forces played an active role in supporting Ahmadinejad's radical policy, which is fundamental for him to propel and show his visions. He used the armed forces to show the world the Iranian capability to confront its challengers.

Of the greatest importance is the role and authority of the supreme leader (Sadjadpour, 2010). The supreme leader can draw and direct the general policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and then the president and his cabinet implement it. Rafsanjani received strong support from Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader, for his pragmatic policy after Khomeini's death. Without this strong support, he would have found it very hard to implement his pragmatic policy. In contrast, the supreme leader prevented Rafsanjani and then Khatami from advancing their policies towards the United States. Therefore, the role of the supreme leader within the Iranian decision structure cannot be ignored, since he is the number one figure in Iranian foreign policy.

Finally, the role of interest groups needs to be considered. Iranian society has experienced active relations among the major socio-economic interest groups, such as bazaars (marketplaces), as well as conservative clerics, before and after the revolution. Before the revolution, the bazaars, for example, assisted the Islamic Revolution and continued to be staunch supporters of the regime. In addition to bazaars, some economic groups and organisations, such as the Dispossessed Foundation, supported by conservative clerics, also played a role in shaping Iran's foreign policy in accordance with principles of the Islamic

Revolution. Since the early 1990s, Iranian bazaars, guilds and the Dispossessed Foundation have played central roles in the economic and political history of the country. By having close relations with different groups inside parliament, these interest groups could stop Rafsanjani and then Khatami from opening the door to foreign investment that might go against their interests and reduce their benefits.

Scholars such as Snyder (1991) argue that socio-economic interest groups can direct foreign policies. Since each community has interest groups, these groups seek to get their own business done. However, because each group has a different agenda, sometimes they compete with each other, which weakens them and prevents them from pursuing their objectives. These groups need to strengthen their positions by seeking to unify their goals.

These domestic factors help explain the changes in Iran's foreign policy since 1979. They explain why Iran was radical in the 1980s, pragmatic in the late 1980s and the most of the 1990s, moderate in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and radical again between 2005 and 2013. Domestic factors can demonstrate why the state changes its policy from time to time, even though the regime structure stays the same.

3.3. The Extended Arms of the Supreme Leader

As supreme leader, Khamenei exercises both direct and indirect control over the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the Iranian regime, as well as the military sector (Sadjadpour, 2010). He also transformed the Revolutionary Guard Corps into a pivotal player in the spheres of political, economic, educational, media cultural, religious, military, and security. This transformation reinforced Ayatollah Khamenei's authority. This

authority gives him influence on others (Shiite sects) even when they reside in other states and communities. The supreme leader is appointed for life by the Assembly of Experts, "there are no limits on the leader's term in office, but the Assembly of Experts may remove the leader from office if they find that he is unable to execute his duties" (Kinzer, 2006: 146). Although the constitutional reforms in 1989 gave the president more powers in the field of Foreign Affairs, through the abolition of the post of Prime Minister, the Iranian constitution of 1979, and the power structure of Iran, gives tremendous power to the supreme leader, as he is the ultimate source of political power and spiritual authority in the country (Smyth, 2012). Besides his authority to guide and control general policies (internal and external) for the Islamic Republic of Iran and to have supreme command of the Armed Forces, there are other informal bodies under his authority, although they have no legal status in the constitution (Nemani, 1998).

These institutions are "the Office of the Representatives of the Supreme Leader, the Association of Friday Prayer Leaders, and the Special Court for the Clergy". Their responsibility is to ensure that the path of the Islamic revolution remains undisturbed. These institutions penetrate all aspects of Iranian society, civilian and military institutions (Rakel, 2008:54). Rakel (2008: 55) argues that "the Friday Prayers have been very influential in setting the tone on important political issues, especially foreign policy issues". Thus, the Association of Friday Prayer Leaders carries out crucial duties to determine the speech acts of Iran's foreign policy.

3.4. The Three Intervening Variables

Neoclassical realists argue that the nature of the power structure of domestic politics has an impact on Iran's foreign policy (Lobell et al, 2007, 2009: 1-4). They propose three intervening variables as essential factors to identify the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy. As mentioned earlier, these intervening variables (control variables) are regime identity, nationalism, and decision-makers. These variables help explain the relationship between two variables which follow an independent variable (Iran's use of ideological proxies), but precede the dependent variable (the foreign policy outcome) in a causal sequence. In order to explore Iran's behaviour and outcomes of its transformative power, Zakaria (in Taliaferro, 2006) argues that we need to analyse regime identity in terms of its ability to use legitimate power resources available, such as ideologies, and implement these through its foreign policy after decision-making. Religion has been used as a political tool to gain power. Religious ideology has been used to gain authority, expand internal influence and maximise regional and international power (Bashiriyeh in www.mideasti.org, 2009).

3.4.1. A Regime Identity

The concept of identity is at the centre of constructivist theory, which is crucial in both domestic and international politics. In Hopf's words, (1998: 71) "identity performs three necessary functions in society: they tell you and others who you are and they tell you who others are". Hence, each version of 'you' is a product of your relationships with others (Hopf, 1998). The word identity refers to a person's purpose within a social relationship. The bottom line is, we have different identities based on who we are with, where we are,

the situation (socially and politically) we are in. In this sense, identity and politics are interconnected. As with other drivers, such as religious ideology, state identity implies its preferences and consequent actions. A state understands others and perceives threats to its security in line with the individual characteristics of identity, including cultural values, the nature of ideologies, and motivations that reflect behaviour and actions. In this sense, regime identity is the build-up of principles that determine the state's foreign policy orientation. In this thesis, the term state identity indicates the state's perception and understanding of the role it should play and its status among other states.

In the case of Iran, regime identity is derived from its cultural and authentic identity as an Islamic nation. Initially, after the Islamic Revolution, Iranian leaders self-consciously pursued Islamic objectives in foreign policy. In a similar vein, Iran is a self-professed revolutionary state. Regime identity, however, refers to a particular set of ideas about a certain political society in which policy-makers use and drawn on to legitimate the general orientation of foreign policy in line with national interests (Aggestam, 1999). Ray Takeyh explains Iran's provocative foreign policy that helps it sustain an ideological identity. This can be found in the National Public Radio, 28 August 2012 (in www.npr. org/2012/08/28/160185199/ op-ed-irans-foreign-policy-driven-by-identity?ft= 1& f=1009, 2012).

Regime identity is a core variable between systemic pressures and foreign policy outcomes. Lobell et al (2009: 1-6) argue that regime identity is crucial in creating perceptions that determine state behaviour. Juneau (2009) argues that the process for the expansion of external interests came as a result of the regime's perception of its necessities and capabilities to increase power; therefore, the regime's identity determines interests by

prioritising alternatives. Juneau (2009) proposes a typology that is based on two key issues: state intentions and aspirations. In terms of intentions, the state may be content with the status quo, or have other inclinations and goals. As for aspirations, the state has options to be a small regional, or a great power.

Iranian identity is both Persian nationalist, integrating all ethno-cultural peoples under one centralised authority, and Islamic Shiite, a universal political movement for socio-political reformation (Al-Ghareib, 2005; Al-Nefisy et al, 2008). These basic criteria of Persian nationalism and Islamic Shiite identity are derived from historical interactions between Iran's foreign activities with the surrounding environment that reconstructed Iran's identity today. Wendt Alezander (1992) argues that the historical framework of the nation constructs national identities. Accordingly, identities and actions come as a result of the way in which actors define their situations.

The Persian Empire was defeated militarily by Greeks, Arabs, Mongols and Turks (Dake, 2010). However, Iran, as other nations and states have done, has attempted to turn its military defeats into cultural victories. The cultural victories throughout history refer to the expansion of fundamentalist mainstream of Islamic Shiite, which provides legitimacy to Iran's actions towards other states, by using spiritual control over Arab and Islamic peoples to reinforce the Iranian regional role. Jamshid Amuzegar, the former Prime Minister of the Shah (in Forbis William, 1980), stated that Iran never lost its originality, despite the military and political collapses that confronted others throughout history. The Iranian regime with two identities, Persian and Islamist, demonstrates that interaction between state identity and conflict dictates Iran's position in the international-regional system, its alliances with non-states actors, and its foreign policy.

In this context, Al-Ghareib (2005) argues that the Persian heritage of cultural practices and the practices of Islamic Shiite ideology impacted upon regime identity and actions, placing it on the front line of confrontation with regional and international adversaries. Juneau (2009: 11), for instance, stated that "Iran's is a Shia, Persian, and religious government, living face to face and often in tension with Sunni, Arab, and conservative governments, many of which are monarchies". The bottom line is, every country has its own values and identity that constructs its foreign policy and provides legitimacy to its actions and behaviour. The Islamic Republic of Iran is no exception.

It has been widely argued that, since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran's foreign policy has played and still plays an essential role in shaping the regime's identity (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008; Al-Rashed, 2015). This can be seen through the nature and scope of the international relations between Iran and the rest of regional Arab countries (except Syrian and Iraqi regimes who share the same Shiite identity), as well as the U.S. and Israel (Fawcett, 2009). Most speech acts and hardline rhetoric of political and clerical Iranian elites challenge mutual interests between neighbouring states and the great power which reflects the role of Iran's regime identity upon state behaviour (Bilgin, 2005).

3.4.2. Nationalism

Cottam (1979: 3) defines nationalism as "a belief on the part of a large group of people that they comprise a political community, a nation, that is entitled to independent statehood, and a willingness of this group to grant their community a primary and the terminal loyalty". Accordingly, nationalism refers to independence and dignity, and deep sentiments for the history, culture and values of the nation, as well as the desire to protect and

preserve a national identity. Thus, the privilege of having Persian ethnicity and Islamic identities, being an ancient noble and imperial nation that controlled wide regions of the Middle East, and provided the world with a range of artistic, scientific, and architectural treasures (even before Islam came on the scene), created the Iranian self-image (Bar, 2004). On top of that, Iranian national identity reflects a sense of superiority over its Arab neighbours and pride in its pre- Islamic imperial past. In this context, Hinnebusch et al (2002) discuss Iran's external role as an Islamic actor in terms of its identity, which is derived from its historical importance and cultural superiority that has led Iran's foreign policy to a quest for regional supremacy. Iran regards itself as one of the oldest civilisations in the Middle East, which "can and should have influence beyond its borders" (Hinnebusch et al, 2002: 286). Al-Ghareib (2005) argues that, in order to explain the influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the scope of its foreign policy, national identity should be considered part of the religion, ideology, and culture. Persian roots stretch back thousands of years, maintaining a strong connection to the past.

Thaler et al (2010) argue that Iran's regime has used a sense of patriotism to gain greater support to reinforce its foreign policy. Indeed, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani used nationalist and Islamist ideology to justify Iran's right to name the region the Persian Gulf instead of the Arabian Gulf. This can be seen in the statement of Rafsanjani (in Thaler et al 2010) that "there are valid documents about the Persian Gulf in religious and historical books, especially commentaries on the Holy Quran; therefore, no country has the right to alter the name". Nationalism, along with ideology, however, became a catalyst in Iran's external affairs to pursue its strategic interests and objectives in the Middle East, when the distribution of power swung in Iran's favour, after the removal of Saddam's regime. Thus, the nature of interaction of Iran's political behaviour with its neighbors and other nations

(in particular, the U.S.) is, first and foremost, influenced by a deep continuous tension between Persian and Islamic identities, and between conflicting self–images of national superiority and subjugation.

Iran's regime attempts to interconnect revolutionary movements and Shiite groups present in its historical areas of interest, such as Central Asia, Iraq and the Gulf region, (www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940518000828, 2015). These attempts reinforce Iran's leadership in the region. Iran's nationalism, however, is strongly fueled by foreign interventions throughout history, manipulation, and exploitation of the country by superpowers. Hence, Iran stresses excessively the importance of independence and self-reliance. Iran bases its claim for dominance in the Middle East on a highly accentuated Islamic-Shiite identity, on the one hand, and on a highly exclusive Iranian nationalism, on the other.

3.4.3. Decision-Makers

It has been argued that it is important to combine the domestic, regional and international environments into the same conceptual framework within a complex paradigm of international politics, in order to explain all the potential factors, determinants, dimensions, and drivers in foreign policies (Mason, 2015). In other words, the overall balance among drivers, such as economic capabilities, the domestic environment, state structures, geopolitical imperatives, transnational identity of ideology (soft power), and the leadership's role, including external threats and constraints, are included in the process of foreign policy decision-making.

In order to understand decision-making in the Iranian regime, one must interconnect this issue with three fundamental drivers. These drivers are: firstly, the central principle of the Islamic Revolution of Iran (1979), which is based on independence from superpowers. Under this general principle, the priority of Iran is to reinforce unity among the Muslim world, by supporting the oppressed nations against the oppression of the existing international system. In light of this priority, the main driver of the Iranian foreign policy after the revolution, particularly during Imam Khomeini's leadership and Ahmadinejad's presidency, was the export of revolution abroad.

Ayatollah Khamenei disavowed the policies of former presidents Rafsanjani and Khatami. Khamenei claimed that he was not responsible for soft policies that may encourage Iran's enemies to make bolder concessions. Furthermore, "Khamenei allowed the judiciary, intelligence, and media apparatuses to accuse various people in Ahmadinejad's circle of economic or moral corruption, connection with opposition movements, or links with Western governments" (www.iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2014/apr/11/report-how-khamenei-makes-decisions, 2014). In contrast, initial signs demonstrate that there is a reasonable relationship between the supreme leader and president Hassan Rouhani, who was elected president in June 2013 (www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-22886729, 2013). The supreme leader has been remarkably supportive of Rouhani's efforts during the nuclear talks.

The supreme leader has other governmental institutes under his authority. Ayatollah Khamenei frequently intervenes in legislative decisions, whether directly through letters to the speaker of parliament, or indirectly through his speeches. More importantly, Ayatollah Khamenei dominates the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), which has

responsibility for drawing Iran's defence and security policies and responding to internal and external threats. Despite the fact that Iran's president is the council's titular head, Khamenei's personal representative is the one who truly leads its deliberations, and most of the other members are his appointees (www.iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2014/apr/11/report-how-Khamenei-makes-decisions, 2014).

Secondly, Articles 152 and 154 of the Iranian Constitution provide full support to Iran's foreign policy to achieve its strategic objectives (www.parstimes.com, 1979; Nia, 2011). Thirdly, the evolution of the situation in the Middle East region in line with the geopolitical dynamics, particularly the ongoing crises in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen, for example, drove Iran's regime to take hard decisions to deal with conflict situations. Policymakers are often forced to utilise every available instruments of power (conventional and unconventional) to respond and survive in an anarchic environment.

In reference to the complicated motivational factors and nature of foreign policy decision-making, the position of the supreme leader as the 'balancer-in-chief' authorises him to find compromises between competing power centres. However, the supreme leader is not an individual decision-maker; he is rather a consensus-builder who makes his final decisions in accordance with compromises reached on the various views of the Iranian institutions, in line with the principles of the Islamic Revolution. In this sense, because the Iranian political system is a mix of religious hierarchy and parliamentary democracy, the decision-making process reflects interactions in the power structure of the Iranian regime. In other words, even though Iran is an autocratic system (Sadjadpour, 2009), its decision-making process is dependent upon consensus-building and political negotiation, within the complex formal structure of a theocratic democracy. However, there is no open political

process with procedural checks to limit the ruling elite’s options, except the supreme leader.

Maleki (2008: 6) writes that the origin of multifaceted interactions in the circle of decision-making reflects the nature of conflict in two trends. The first trend emphasises the enhancement of Islamic Revolution principles and the return to Islamic values, to "the retain the Muslim masses as faithful allies; to create close relations with Islamic countries; and to refrain from rapprochement with the United States, as the leader of the power bloc most responsible for the humiliations of the Islamic Ummah". The second trend, in contrast, urges the decision-makers to concentrate on state interests, and play a better role in international relations and world events. However, some argue that there is no incongruity between Islamic values and Iranian interests, whereas the Islamic identity is part and parcel of Iran's national interests. It is important to note that there are various political, clerical elites and security institutions that play decisive roles in making external decisions, such as the Supreme Leader, the Presidency, the Head of the Expediency Council, and the Foreign Ministry, the High Council for National Security, and the Revolutionary Guards. Nashat, Barzegar and Saghafi-Ameri (in www.mideasti.org, 2009) argue that for Iran's foreign policy and international relations, the choices between alternatives in the decision-making process are derived from ideological-religious factors along with pragmatism, to attain its interests and objectives.

3.5. Three Substantial Drivers in line with Instruments of Soft Power

Three driving forces constitute the basic pillars of the Iranian regime in its external affairs, ideologies, Pan-Islamism, and Revolutionary Shiism, all of which contribute to Iran's foreign policy and go hand-in-hand with the pragmatic approach, to reflect the mechanism of geopolitical realities. Al-Nefisy et al (2008: 16) and Al-Ghareib (2005) write that the three core drivers guide Iran's foreign policy in its strategic objectives.

The Commander General of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari, in a speech to journalists on the anniversary of the founding of the three forces of the Revolutionary Guard on 17 September 2012, stressed the values of the revolution, which urge to defend against injustice and tyranny (www.persiangulfnetwork.com, 2012). However, these principles and values of the revolution are derived from the Iranian Constitution in Article 2. Jafari added that today's wars were different, taking a different course towards soft wars (acts such as cultural invasions and psychological operations, which can influence all social and security aspects of a political system and the fundamental values and identities of a society); he stated that the Revolutionary Guards were ready to confront such wars. This statement by Jafari goes hand-in-hand with the core argument of this thesis that attempts to broaden the focus of the security studies away from the traditional and purely military aspect (www.persiangulfnetwork.com, 2012).

3.5.1. Ideologies

An ideology is a set of cultural beliefs, values, and attitudes that dominate the mentality of a group of people and justify their discourses and legitimise their behaviour and actions

(Van Dijk, 2006). Hence, in human cultures and communities, ideology becomes an essential part of life that serves to explain and justify its own existence as a way of life. In this context, the Iranian regime is constructed upon Shiite ideology from the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Ideologies, loosely conceived as all-embracing, universalistic political doctrines, are alluring because they provide simple explanations of the human plight together with route maps designed to guide the chosen out of it. Chief among these ideologies are communism, liberalism, nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism. The view that such doctrines are a major source of conflict between states derives great strength from the turbulence which shook the Middle East following the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, notably in the Iran-Iraq war (Berridge, 1992: 66). Significantly, the aftermath of the 2003 invasion of Iraq was factual proof of the importance of ideology in the geopolitical dynamics.

The Iranian regime's intervention in regional affairs aims to garner support for its foreign policy from minority communities that are looking for a champion, by showing Iran as the main defender against Zionism and imperialism. This intervention was implemented through transnational ideological networks (Shiite factions), as one of the central soft powers driving Iran's behaviour, in line with its active role (in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen) to defend its security and to maximise its geopolitical interests, as explained in 6.7. and 8.4.1.

Shiite-Islamist ideology became the cornerstone of Iran's foreign policy. It is crucial in the Iranian regime identity vs Sunni Arab identity struggle (Al-Rashed, 2015). Since 1979, religious ideology has imposed its philosophy on Iran’s political and strategic decision-

making, on Iran's leaders and its foreign policy. In this context, ideology serves as a political instrument to mobilise material and political support for Iranian allies, such as the Syrian regime, Lebanese Hezbollah and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and Jihad movements, particularly the Shiite factions. Arguably, Iranian foreign policy depends on its religious ideology to support Shiism and its spread across the region. Given the many evolving security challenges in the Middle East, the Iranian ruling elites endeavour to achieve their geopolitical interests through adopting both approaches, ideology and pragmatism. These two approaches have provided some remarkable successes for Iran's foreign policy, in terms of practical application, especially after the inefficient foreign policy during the eight-year war with Iraq (1980-1988), during which it relied on hard power, which did not achieve its objectives.

When Ayatollah Khomeini came to power in 1979, he stated,

> *We must strive to export our revolution throughout the world, and must abandon all idea of not doing so, for not only does Islam refuse to recognize any difference between Muslim countries, it is the champion of all oppressed people. Moreover, all the powers are intent on destroying us, and if we remain surrounded in a closed circle, we shall certainly be defeated. We must make plain our stance toward the powers and the superpowers and demonstrate to them that despite the arduous problems that burden us, our attitude to the world is dictated by our beliefs... What is certain is that the Islamic movements in Iran has released the power of the people of Iran as no other "ideology" or nationalist emotion could have done. The Islamic revolution is far from over; in*

some ways, it is just beginning. The work of leveling the social order has barely begun

(Algar, 1981: 49).

Neoclassical realists such as Schweller (in Lobell et al 2009: 1-4) integrate state ideology in their approaches. Rakel (2008) argues that Iran's foreign policy is usually described as a politicised religion and ideological factors play a crucial role in Iran's external affairs. Barzegar (in www.mideasti.org, 2009), however, is a pragmatic thinker and argues that, although Iran's regional foreign policy in the initial stage of the Revolution was defined as an ideological perspective, more recently, when security challenges and geopolitical factors predominated in the Middle East, Iran's foreign policy adopted a pragmatic approach based on an ideological current to serve the national interests of Iran's regime. Al-Nefisy et al (2008) argue that the Iranian regime has a tremendous ideological project to be applied onto other Middle Eastern states. The Shiite mainstream, however, forms one of the main branches of Islam which depends upon ideological faith as a universal concept and which uses an ideological discourse to expand the Islamic Shiite thoughts on the Arab and Muslim worlds. Barzegar (2008: 93) stated that "ideological forces do, of course, act as a stimulus in connecting people morally and in winning hearts and minds, as well as in obtaining their occasional mutual political support".

Indeed, the Iranian Revolution began with a popular movement and ended with the establishment of an Islamic state, which has played a prominent role in the geopolitical landscape, in regional and international events. In other words, religious ideology became political reality, and Islam still possesses enormous attraction. The reverberation of Islamic ideology impacted on Arab societies. Indeed, the Arab street viewed Islam as the only

hope and solution to problems. Those problems were seen as being due to the weakness of Arab-Muslims, the loss of pride, identity, dignity, freedom, and the lack of democracy, equality and justice.

Religious ideology has become an inspiration and tool against oppression, or counter-hegemonic. In contrast, regional governments and the U.S. administration strongly oppose the Iranian activities that seek to change the status quo and to mobilise opposition to the West. The Islamic revolution, however, provided motives and programmes for political action in the framework of politico-religious movements.

Al-Nefisy et al (2008) argue that Iran's foreign policy has attempted to exploit ideology (soft power) since the revolution to build a bridge between the Arab nation and the Islamic world, to serve the ultimate Islamic purpose of integrating the Islamic world under a true Islamic regime, the Islamic Republic of Iran. Puelings (2010) observes that the Iranian regime has attempted to export its revolutionary ideology to the regional countries through bolstering armed groups, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Iran’s support for non-state actors via its foreign policy has played a significant role in attaining their mutual strategic interests in the Middle East. Hinnebusch et al (2002) argue that, as a result of exporting ideological revolutionary thoughts to neighbouring states, the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq (1980-1988) broke out.

Al-Nefisy et al (2008) argue that it is essential to explore the role of ideology as a core drive of Iran's foreign policy, in order to analyse the four specific issues under study (Iranian policy in Iraq of 2003, Iranian support to Hezbollah, Iran's anti-Israel policy, and

Iran's policy towards the strategic communities of Gulf states). Much of what has been argued here is that the Shiite doctrine was and still perhaps represents one of the most remarkable political movements, along with several fundamentalist movements in Sunni Islam. Sunni movements, such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), or Islamic State (IS), have emerged with a fundamentalist ideology aiming to impose their extremist ideas on the ground by force, not only to counter Shiite expansion and Western values, but also to maximise their own power.

3.5.2. Pan-Islamism

Pan-Islamism is the second substantial driver, and it is a product of the Iranian Revolution and one of the main currents of soft power (Connell et al, 2007). The call for Islamic unity is a central issue for both the Iranian Revolution and the survival of Iran's regime. The promotion of the idea of Pan-Islamism is a universal call that has reverberated across the Arab nations and the Islamic world. Bilgin (2005) refers to Khomeini and Hezbollah as Islamist actors who use the global Islamic rhetoric as a practical tool to capture the Muslim masses.

One must bear in mind that this thesis concentrates on the doctrine of Shiite Islam within the framework of calls for Pan-Islamic unity. According to Fawcett (2009), this is the most effective approach for Iran’s foreign policy to raise its relative strength in the region, especially for the call for Pan-Islamism which comes from the heart of the Islamic religion. It has been argued that the masses in the Middle East are religious and support any sincere call to revive religious values. Feste (1996: 11) argues that "both Pan-Arabism and Islamic fundamentalism have promoted a vision for the Middle East of empowerment, pride, and

independence. The dominance of these ideas has meant that domestic politics has always been interwoven with foreign policy".

As previously mentioned, the impact of Pan-Islamism appeared in regional politics during the 1970s, after the decline of Pan-Arab nationalism and the arrival of Khomeini to power in 1979, with the theory of faqih for the application of true Islam, according to Shiite beliefs (Hinnebusch et al, 2002). According to the neoclassical realist Juneau (2009), the regional distribution of power between 2001 and 2007 proved to the benefit of Iran. In this context, Judith Yaphe writes that Iran is an "undisputed regional superpower" (Yaphe, 2010). Fuller (2003) claims that Islamist movements are the main and growing force in the Muslim world today; Islamist parties in the region are the dominant movement in the political system and decision-making. Iran's foreign policy has attempted to reach out to political movements that have mutual interests with the Islamic Revolution, and share the same extremist approach to dealing with others. Hezbollah and Hamas, for instance, receive practical and political support from Iran, according to the Iranian constitution that states that "the defense of the rights of all Muslims" is its aim and duty and that Iran "supports the just struggles of the oppressed against the oppressors in every corner of the global" (Connell et al, 2007: 2).

Bidjan Nashat (in www.mideasti.org, 2009) notes that the call for pan-Islamism goes hand-in-hand with anti-Israeli discourse, an effective tool to gain public support, in order to spread its ideas to Arab and Muslim streets.

3.5.3. Revolutionary Shiism

Contemporary debates among Muslim scholars and the West, with regard to the Islamic Revolution, refer to an essential issue regarding Iran's regime: whether it is a Shiite, rather than a Muslim state (Connell et al, 2007; Al-Nefisy et al, 2008).

Historically, the revival of Shiism is older than the power shift during the Ahmadinejad era and older than the Iranian Revolution. Therefore, since the Shiite branch (Twelver's Shiite) broke away from the Muslim community approximately 1,400 years ago, the revolutionary Shiite movement has become one of the most powerful political models against the majority of Sunni Islamic states. The principles of Shiite Islamic Revolution exceed Iranian borders to the demographic trend of the population in the region. Shiites are found in almost all Middle Eastern states and elsewhere as an Islamic minority, except Iraq, Bahrain and Lebanon, "until the start of the 16th century, when the Iranian Safavid dynasty under Shah Isma'il made it the sole legal faith of their empire, which then embraced the Persians of Iran, the Turks of Azerbaijan, and many of the Arabs of Iraq proper" (Gelvin, 2005: 10; Kinzer, 2006: 187).

After the Islamic revolution, overwhelmingly the people came to believe in the Ithna Ashari rite (the Twelver Imams), as a main source of epistemological philosophy and as an ideological revolutionary approach, based upon the spiritual power and political legitimacy of the Twelve Imams and their representative to lead the Islamic world (Al-Ghareib, 2005; Jawada, 2007; Al-Nefisy et al, 2008). Indeed, a critical question was raised by clerics in Iran, concerning the nationality of the supreme leader and the successors who represent Imam Al-Mahdi Al-Montazar (Awaited), the absent infallible Imam, to lead the Islamic

world. Ahmad Khomeini, son of Ayatollah Khomeini, raised a sensitive issue (in Al-Gharib, 2005) supported by Jawada (2007) and AL-Sader et al (2004), and with almost unanimous agreement from senior clergies, that the Islamic government and the calls for Pan-Islamic unity should be based on the doctrine of Shiite Islam, and the Shiite leader must be an Iranian. In reality, Islam knows no nationality, no borders, no discrimination; it does not distinguish among human beings, whatever their colour, gender or ethnicity (Kennedy, 2010).

This thesis argues that the issue of Revolutionary Shiism is not limited to the question of war and peace in a particular target region, but it is a combination of the geopolitical agenda and national identity. This claim is supported by Hojjatoleslam Kazzem Seddiqi, the senior cleric in Iran who stated,

> *"The Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei has always declared the Revolution as being dynamic and it is an ethical, religious, and cultural revolution. He addressed those who claim that the Islamic Revolution has come to an end and said that the young generation has stepped into the path of progress and prosperity"*
>
> Hojjatoleslam Seddiqi (the leader of Friday prayers in Tehran, Friday prayer on 18 September 2015)
>
> (www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940627000603, 2015).

On this basis, Iran openly announces its sponsorship and support for Islamic revolutionary groups in Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Yemen. The Iranian regime also denounced regional governments with pro-Western affiliations and ideas, as corrupt and un-Islamic, directly challenging their legitimacy.

Iran's revolutionary aspirations reflect broader territorial ambitions, which often drove Iran into confrontations with its neighbours, with the superpowers, and with a host of Islamic governments and broader world. The three substantial factors (ideology, pan-Islamism and revolutionary Shiism) as instruments of soft power still play a crucial role in Iran, particularly among key sectors of the clerical elite.

3.6. Major Security Institutions and their Tasks

The Islamic Republic of Iran depends essentially upon the major security institutions, aside from its military, not only to ensure its national security, but also to counter regional threats and to implement its strategic ideological goals and interests abroad (Cordesman, 2007; Bergman, 2008; Burgess, 2010). Although there are major security and military institutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran, such as the intelligent services, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, paramilitary militia known as the Basij and the regular armed forces, or Artesh, this thesis concentrates on the fundamental security institutions that serve the Iranian foreign policy and support its strategic goals abroad (Kagan, 2009). The essential security institutions of the intelligence services, and the al Quds (Jerusalem) forces, a security-military branch of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps known as the Pasdaran (Persian for Guards), are considered core components of the political power structure linking the Iranian regime and its proxies of non-states actors and Shiite factions

in the region, via the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy (Cordesman et al, 2006; www.whitehouse.gov, 2013). In other words, recognising the role of the security services, one must bear in mind that the intelligence services, particularly the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (al Quds forces), are prominent instruments of power for Iran's foreign and security policies (Abizaid, 2006).

The recent report produced by the Pentagon's Irregular Warfare Support Programme, published by the Library of Congress Federal Research Division, includes a section titled "Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS): A profile" (Gertz, 2013). The Washington Free Beacon obtained a copy of the unclassified report, showing that Iran's intelligence services include approximately 30,000 people who engaged in covert activities that ranged from spying to stealing technology, to terrorist bombings and assassinations (Gertz, 2013). The report concluded that MOIS actively supports Revolutionary Guards Corps and Special Forces of Quds of mullahs in Iran, has been involved in terrorist bombings, from Argentina to Lebanon, and is considered one of the largest and most dynamic intelligence agencies in the Middle East (Cordesman et al, 2007; www.ncr-iran.org, 2013). The information in this report was collected essentially from Farsi and English official journals, online news Web sites and Iranian bloggers in which some older information from the FAS web site is cited (Aftergood, 2013). The report noted that MOIS provides financial, material, technological and other support services to Hezbollah, Hamas, and al Qaeda in Iraq, all classified as terrorist parties and organisations under U.S. Executive Order 13224. The report also claimed that MOIS operates in all areas where Iran has interests, including Afghanistan, Lebanon, Iraq, Kuwait, Centre Asia, Africa, Austria, Azerbaijan, Croatia, France, Georgia, Germany, Turkey, Britain, and the United States.

One must bear in mind that the MOIS is under the guidance and direct control of Iran's theocratic cleric, the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (Gertz, 2013).

This thesis addresses two tasks of the Iranian security services; firstly, to deter external threats via supplying lethal assistance to its proxies; secondly, to reinforce political and ideological roles for its regional allies, in order to enhance the transformative power of its foreign policy. Based on the realist view, Iran has attempted to bolster its regional position by confronting regional threats and gaining a strategic foothold against U.S. forces in Iraq, and Israel in Lebanon. The Iranian regime uses the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to reinforce its foreign policy, with the cooperation of militant organisations and in coordination with fundamentalist groups, to pressure or intimidate other states and, more broadly, to serve as a strategic deterrent. Its security strategy includes deterrence, asymmetrical retaliation and attrition warfare.

Wenger (2004) and Thaler et al (2010) argue that the Ministry of Intelligence and Security in Iran (VEVAK) has close ties with the al Quds force; they have been directly involved in the planning and supporting of terrorist acts and continue to exhort a variety of groups, especially Palestinian cadres, Iraqi militant groups, and Lebanese Hezbollah. Kinzer (2006: 162) notes that "It also has conducted covert actions outside Iran in support of Islamic regimes elsewhere; for example, it was said to have provided military support to Muslim fighters in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s".

The supreme leader is the commander-in-chief and his responsibilities are those of chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and the supreme commander of the Armed Forces as well (Kinzer, 2006). Equally, the Faqih (the Supreme Leader) influences

the security services' duties spiritually and practically, and both share a mutual ideological loyalty to each other. More importantly, the Iranian constitution states that the Iranian army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps are committed to the Islamic principles and will be responsible not only for safeguarding the borders, but also for accomplishing an ideological mission, that is, the Jihad for the sake of God, as well as for struggling to lead the way for the sovereignty of the word of God throughout the world. Accordingly, the intelligence services and the Islamic revolutionary Guard Corps (al Quds forces) adopted this primary mission (soft power) to export the Islamic revolution abroad (Rogers, 2006; www.watanserb.com/reports/8432, 2015).

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the way domestic drivers and foreign factors interact with each other to address the internal structure of Iran's political system and its impact upon foreign affairs. Also the interaction between variables, factors and drivers within the framework of relevant theories, constructivism, neoclassical realism and realist. These theories and approaches have taken both domestic and foreign considerations into account. This chapter, therefore, captured patterns of procedural complexities, interactions between the rings of power of Iranian institutions, as well as religious ideology and its instruments of soft power, to illustrate the mechanism of the domestic political system and the power structure.

The discussion included leaders' orientations, decision making, domestic opposition groups and interest groups, to explain patterns of change in Iran's foreign policy. Furthermore, intervening variables such as regime identity, nationalism and decision-makers have also been discussed in light of their impact on Iranian power structure in

domestic politics and external affairs. Equally important, this chapter demonstrated the importance of the three substantial factors (ideologies, Pan-Islamism, and Revolutionary Shiism) that shaped Iranian identity and its actions, in line with its objectives and interests. Arguably, these intervening variables and substantial factors have played a crucial role (instruments of Soft Power) in pursuing Iranian growth ambitions, with the support of ideological beliefs and geopolitical interests abroad. These essential variables have been used to garner support from minority communities.

The influence of regime identity on the decision-making process can be seen through the behavioural pattern of Iran's foreign policy and in its attempts to reconstruct Pan-Islamism. On the other hand, the most prominent factor driving Iran's behaviour is its improved relative power. Here neoclassical realism provides a useful framework for the study of foreign policy in the wake of changed relative power. Iran's perception of its power drives Tehran to endeavour to expand its interests abroad. Regime identity determines the national interests by narrowing or constraining the range of possible options.

This chapter also showed the importance of clerical institutions, particularly the authority of supreme leader (Takeyh, 2007). This chapter addressed the role of key security institutions, intelligence services and the al Quds forces, core components of the political power structure linking the Iranian regime, and especially the supreme leader, with its proxies of non-states actors and Shiite factions in the region.

The next chapter will give the modern historical and geographical background of the Middle East. It explores the regional security system and the interaction between regional and international states, and challenges patterns within the security environment. It also

highlights regional crises and geopolitical changes in pre-invasion and post-invasion Iraq, in the context of Iranian ascendance and regional threats.

Chapter Four

Background of the Middle East: Changing Security Structure

4.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses Iranian security at the regional level as a political struggle between two schools of thought: revolutionary ideological mainstream and western values. Ideological tenets, in fact, have an impact on states' agenda and influence events. For example, championing the Palestinian cause, is one of the core issues for Arab and Muslim states that affect geopolitical developments in the Middle East (Al-Samadi, 2014).

The chapter asks the second and third research questions: Which events, perceived as security concerns, influence Iranian ideology, identity and foreign policy? What instruments of power does Iran's foreign policy use to increase its power, to ensure its security requirements and meet its strategic interests? Before moving to the discussion of the major historical events that impacted upon the regional security structure, it is important to highlight the geographical and demographic perspectives of the Middle East countries. The Middle East consists of fifteen states: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Turkey, Israel and Iran. Some of these states do not have enough military defensive capabilities, so they entered into regional military alliances such as the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), besides security arrangements with the U.S., and others have ambitions to be a prominent regional power. The political boundaries of the regional states, however, were drawn after the decline of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the

twentieth century. Since then, internal struggles, regional conflicts and international competition have dominated the entire region.

Twelve Arab nation states in the Middle East are Sunni Muslim, with the exception of Iraq and Syria. The Syrian regime is an ‘Alawis,’ which is one of the Shiite school branches (Fawcett, 2009: 151). In Iraq the majority of the population are 'twelver shiites' (www.parstimes.com, 1979; Hanlon et al, 2010).

According to Armanios (2004: 6), the demographic distribution in the Middle East region is as follows:

- **Iran:** Sunni 10% and Shiite 89%
- **Syria:** Sunni 74% and non-Sunni Muslim 16%
- **Turkey:** Sunni 83-93% and Shiite 7-17%
- **Lebanon:** Sunni 23% and Shiite inc. Druze 45%
- **Iraq:** Sunni 32-37% and Shiite 60-65%
- **Saudi Arabia:** Sunni 89-90% and Shiite 10-11%
- **United Arab Emirates:** Sunni 81% and Shiite 15%
- **Yemen:** Sunni 70% and Shiite 30%
- **Kuwait:** Sunni 60% and Shiite 25%
- **Bahrain:** Sunni 30% and Shiite 70%
- **Oman:** Sunni 85% and Shiite 5-10%
- **Jordan:** Sunni 92% and Shiite 02%
- **Qatar:** Sunni 90% and Shiite 10%
- **Egypt:** Sunni 90% and a small number of Shiite
- **Israel (Palestinian Territory):** Sunni 95% and a small number of Shiite

Vali Nasr (2004), who specialises in Shiite affairs and sectarian studies, refers to the "Shia Revival" in his book, where he describes changes in the sectarian balance of power between Sunnis and Shiites in the region, stretching from Pakistan to Lebanon, as a result of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, after a long period of stability. Nasr (2004) stresses that religious and cultural ties among Shiites have been reinforced and have affected the political arena, which has led to a reshaping of the political and security landscape in the region. In this regard, it is important to shed light upon the distribution of other Shiite sects in the Middle East region and beyond that are associated with the doctrine of Twelver Shiite in some beliefs, desires, and practices.

1. The Ismailis or Sevener Shiite, who are scattered worldwide, but are prominently in Afghanistan (under the Naderi clan), India, Pakistan and also in East and South Africa.

2. The Zaydis, one of the minority sects of Shiite Islam, exist mostly in Yemen.

3. The Alawites, found mostly in Syria and Lebanon.

4. The Alevis, an offshoot sect of Shiite Islam in Turkey.

5. The Druze community in Lebanon, Syria and Israel.

6. The Twelver Shiite, prominently pervasive in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Azerbaijan.

This chapter is divided into three main parts, and the discussion is conducted chronologically. The first provides an overview of the pre-Islamic Revolution, in terms of the phases that the Middle East as a regional system has gone through, as a way to gain a deeper understanding of its various dynamics. The second deals in more detail with the period after the Islamic Revolution and pre-invasion Iraq, concerning the structure of the regional security system. The final section explores the competing approaches in post-invasion Iraq and considers the interactions between regional and external players that have changed the balance of power, particularly the security equation.

4.2. Modern History and the Geographical Background of the Region

The Middle East and its sub-region, the Gulf region, have long been amongst the most insecure and volatile geographies in the world and major axis of global affairs, strategically, culturally/religiously and economically. The Gulf region has a high strategic and economic status that has been the focus of world powers. "More than 60% of the world's oil reserves" are in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, and "over 55% of the world's natural gas reserves" are in Iran, Qatar and Russia. "Iraq alone now has about four times the oil reserves of the entire U.S., including the Alaskan deposits" (Rogers, 2009:12). Due to the increasing need for energy sources, conflict over their control in the Gulf region and in the Middle East adds fuel to this unstable and heavily militarised region.

The Gulf region has attracted foreign powers since the Portuguese intervention in 1507. The importance of the region increased after the discovery of oil in the Arabian Peninsula at the start of the twentieth century (Gelvin, 2005), and especially after the withdrawal of

Great Britain in 1971, and the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988). The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait (1990–1991), the 2003 U.S.-led coalition occupation of Iraq, and the so-called Arab Spring in late 2010 and early 2011, have propelled the region into more instability. Both the Middle East and the Gulf region remain in a state of conflict that involves foreign powers and an increasing number of jihadist groups.

The Gulf region provides favourable conditions to grow and embrace ideas and religious ideology. Since 1501, Shiism has been the state religion of Iran, and it stands as the major nation-state attempting to expand the Shiite faith system. “Whether or not the Iranian Revolution opened up a new chapter in Middle Eastern history, it certainly drew the attention of social sciences and foreign-policy analysts to the phenomenon of 'Islamic politics'. The late 1970s and the 1980s seemed to mark the beginning of a golden age for Islamic political movements throughout the region" (Gelvin, 2005). Since there are Shiites in the regional states, Iran has expanded its influence to share a common ideological mindset with many of the citizens in countries where they reside (AL-Suwaidi, 2005).

Iran is literally surrounded by Sunni countries. Most of the modern Middle Eastern states emerged out of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century (Owen, 2007). From Iran's perspective, national identity and a sense of superiority towards its Arab neighbors have links to the past. Many countries in the Middle East are modern creations. Their territories and borders come not from the nature of natural evolution of ancient civilizations, but from colonialists. Between the mid-nineteenth century and World War I, most of the Middle East and North Africa were either already, or later came under different forms of colonial rule (Fawcett, 2009). Iran is one of world's oldest and most self-confident nations with a clear self-image and high self-esteem. In the

aftermath of colonial rule, the mechanism of change throughout the postcolonial era "contributed to early ideological divisions in the region between those willing to continue a cooperative postcolonial relationship with the West and those who were not willing to do so" (Hinnebusch, 2002: 65). By looking at the modern history of the Middle East, it is obvious that political competition and security conflicts dominate the region.

Due to its size and location on rich oil and gas resources, all Iranian regimes have had the potential to make Iran a great regional power. Such regional power requires the possession of the essential material and ideational power resources to survive in an anarchic and to maximise geopolitical power in the regional system. However, this requires Iran to pursue an active role, ranging from assertive to offensive, in order to play this role effectively (Al-Rashed, 2015). On the other hand, if any state (e.g. Iran) took measures to increase its security (e.g. upgrading its military capabilities or making alliances), another state (e.g. Saudi Arabia) would often respond similarly, by taking reactive measures to make up for the shift in the balance of power (Booth et al, 2008). Certainly, the dynamic process of the security dilemma will drive both states to take measures, creating a cycle of action and reaction. Regional tensions often escalate into conflict.

Indeed, ideological factors and materialist power intersect in constructing the security system in the Middle East. The reality of geo-political and security environment in the Middle East is multidimensional and multifaceted (Hinnebusch, 2002). Border disputes, diversities and contradictions in the identity, nationalism, ethnicity, religion and economy are considered a cornerstone in shaping international relations within the Middle East and the sub-region (Ehteshami, 1998; Bilgin, 2005).

4.3. Regional Security in the Middle East

The Middle East is one of the world's most war-prone regions. The pre-existing religious ideology has turned to extremism and then into a lethal weapon. It has been argued that security umbrella schemes in the Middle East oblige nation states and non-state actors to enter into regional and international alliances to reinforce their security. U.S. interventions in regional affairs, and the current deployment of its forces in many locations in the region are seen as factors in the deterioration of regional security (www.en.mehrnews.com, 2014). Webster Tarpley, American historian, journalist and lecturer, criticises U.S. foreign policy and claims that terrorism is a product of U.S. behaviour in the Middle East region (www.watan.com/reports/4600, 2015). Arguably, the U.S. is the non-regional power most present in the region.

Throughout history, the Middle East has been a region of rather than one of cooperation. The region suffers from historical rivalry (Persians and Arabs, Shiites and Sunnis), declining terms of intra-regional trade among partners despite its resources, a system of alliances based on confrontation and uncertainty, rather than common interests and needs (Owen, 2007). Incessant conflict in the Middle East has attracted global attention, especially after the dramatic changes in the global balance of power which reflected upon the changing power structure and power relations, including the geopolitical structure of the region and the security system. Changes at international and regional levels have led to more military risks and security challenges.

Security issues in a changing regional environment should be analysed within the framework of an assessment of events, risks and challenges. Louise Fawcett (2005: 196)

refers to some major military events that took place in the region. These events are "the Arab-Israeli conflict punctuated the modern history of the Middle East with full-scale war in 1948, 1956, 1967-70, 1973 and 1982". Other events also occurred, such as the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) and the establishment of Hezbollah (1982), the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the Soviet war in Afghanistan (1979-1989), the emergence of al-Qaeda, the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (1990-1091).

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the shedding of the Iron Curtain, the Cold War ended (1989-1990). Western countries lost their powerful nemesis, the Soviet Union. Several countries found themselves in a situation where their bargaining power with the West was diminished. Iran was no exception. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Iran was concerned about the belt of instability of its North and Northern East regions (the Central Asian republics), which added a new set of challenges to its national security. With the end of the Cold War, however, military risks and the ideological threat of communism to the West ended. Mohsen Milani (in AL-Suwaidi, 2014: 83) argues that "this confuses the Western policy-makers, who for decades viewed the world through a Manichaean framework. It is also generating competing paradigms that explain the dynamics of the emerging new world order. In one of these evolving paradigms, militant Islam, with Iran as its heart and soul, is portrayed as a menace to the West".

Since the September 11, 2001 attacks, geopolitical developments, with the military intervention of Western forces in Afghanistan, Iraq and Yemen, have put Middle East issues at the top of heated international debates (Barzegar, 2009). This is due to the link between the regional security system and the global security system. This thesis argues that the developments in the Middle East after 2003, with all their complexity, have led to

changes in the balance of regional powers in favour of Iran, with its strategic proxies. Iran has broadened its regional role by reinforcing its security activities, alongside strengthening its abilities to not only bargain in regional affairs, but also at international level, over its nuclear programme.

4.4. Pre- invasion Iraq and Iran's Role in the Middle East

Since the overthrow of the Shah, Iran's foreign policy, from the first stage of the Islamic revolution of 1979 until the invasion of Iraq in 2003, repeatedly met with failure in implementing its ideological-political agenda to expand its influence. This stage was characterised by international crises and war with regional states, internal political turmoil, economic crisis, acts of terrorism, armed insurrection and ethnic insurgency (Dawisha, 1983; Kinzer, 2006). The Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988) and the second Gulf war of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (1990-1991) and its aftermath affected the geopolitical landscape and impacted upon the position of Iranian clerics and the credibility of political thoughts of Khomeini, at both domestic and regional levels. Furthermore, after eight years, once the war was over, the Iranian economy entered a critical stage, in which the promises of the revolution failed to appeal. The Islamic Revolution can be seen as a long dynamic process which is still evolving through gradual stages to reach its strategic objectives. The essential matter that confronts policy makers in Tehran is the available capabilities, in terms of its instruments of power on the ground.

Undoubtedly, the Islamic Republic of Iran with its enormous capabilities, spiritual, conventional and unconventional power, as well as its geostrategic location and natural resources, is an important regional power. Iran expects the international community to

recognise it as such, and to treat it accordingly. In Tehran, clerical elites and policy makers do not see any reason why it should not have a similar right as the U.S., the European countries, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, or Egypt to behave freely in their foreign policy and engage in regional affairs. Alternatively, Iran has been seen as one of the troublemakers in the context of its radical revolutionary regime with a broad ambition, regionally and across the Islamic world. Paul Rogers (2015) noted that neoconservative and realist circles in the Bush administration were under the impression that "Iran was by far the greatest threat to U.S. interests in the region", rather than Iraq. Bruno (2011) and Kinzer (2006: 24) noted that U.S. President George W. Bush on 29 January 2002 described Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as an 'axis of evil' (www.presidentialrhetoric.com, 2002).

In order to prove the credibility of the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Revolution, and the reliability of the revolutionary approach, Iran launched an intensive campaign towards the regional states through its assertive foreign policy, to export principals of the Islamic Revolution. In this way, it exploited the decline of Pan-Arab nationalism. Ayatollah Khomeini advised a group of young Iranians who were going abroad:

> *"Today we need to strengthen and export Islam everywhere. You need to export Islam to other places, and the same version of Islam which is currently in power in our country. Our way of exporting Islam is through the youth, who go to other countries where a large number of people come to see you and your achievements. You must behave in such a way that these large gatherings are attracted to Islam by your action. Your deeds, your action, and your behaviour should be an example; and through you, the Islamic Republic will go to other places, God Willing".*

Imam Ayatollah Ruhollah Mostafavi Moosavi Khomeini (the supreme religious and political leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran) 1979

(Khomeini, 1981; Dawisha, 1983: 19)

This Iranian campaign to export its revolution coincided with the establishment of the Muslim resistance in Afghanistan (Mujahideen) against the Soviet invasion in 1979, which diverted then to Al-Qaeda, the failed attempt to seize the Grand Mosque in Mecca (Saudi Arabia) by radical Islamic group led by Juhayman al-Otaybi in 1979, and the assassination of Egyptian President, Anwar Al-Sadat in 1981, by an Islamist fundamentalist group (Dawisha, 1983). These dramatic events, including the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, captured the world's attention and focused on Islam as a radical ideological approach for internal transformation and regional/international change. The events post-September 11, 2001, became a turning point in regional developments and world attention. Through the "war on terror" and the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. has enhanced its military presence in the region, causing a reaction (Barzegar, 2009).

4.5. Post- invasion Iraq in 2003 and Iran's Role in the Middle East

Since the fall of Saddam's regime in April 2003 the Iraqi crisis has escalated and the regional security system of the Middle East has witnessed profound changes (Barzegar, 2008). The prominent historical adversary of the Iranian regime had been removed after the eight-year war, and so had the decisive confrontation between the secular regime of

Ba'ath Party under Saddam's rule, and the Islamic Shiite-ideology under the clerics' regime. Sovereignty, therefore, was transferred from Sunni rulers to Shiite rulers (Fawcett, 2009). The traditional balance of power in the region has been upset by the removal of Saddam's regime. Certainly, when the United States led the international coalition to invade Iraq and remove Saddam from power, a security vacuum altered the regional balance of power (Barzegar, 2008). This regional vacuum provided Iran's foreign policy with a great opportunity to pursue its claim of regional leadership (Rubin, 2010). Iran's transformative power could fill this vacuum by expanding its influence. On the other hand, the war in Afghanistan in 2001 and the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the international coalition led by the U.S., despite the tacit agreement between the U.S and Iran to remove these two regimes, has led to new security concerns in Iran over the deployment of U.S. troops around its territory (Takeyh, 2010). In Tehran, the consequences of these two events are perceived as a blessing and as a curse.

U.S. combat troops are stationed in several locations, in Iraq and Afghanistan; in the Gulf region; in Turkey, a NATO member. There is military cooperation with Azerbaijan and the nuclear states Israel, India and Pakistan. In contrast, Iran is regionally and internationally isolated, with no allies except Syria and Shiite sects and factions. This has created an environment for indirect confrontation between regional and international players over power, control and self-interest.

The reality on the ground indicates that neither the United States, nor Iran want to engage in military confrontations. The Iranian regime does not have conventional military capabilities to face a huge military arsenal from the United States. Al-Ghareib (2005) therefore argues that the competition to fill the security vacuum remains indirect, because

the U.S. avoids getting involved at asymmetric warfare and unconventional forces with, for instance, the Lebanese Hezbollah and the Al-Mahdi Army in Iraq.

Ideology is paramount in Iran's foreign policy towards the new Iraq. As Shiite are the majority in Iraq, Iran's regime has rebuilt close relations at the level of the Shiite masses, including major Iraqi-Shiite political parties and their leaderships, such as Moqtada al-Sadr, the leader of Al-Mahdi Army, Nouri al-Maliki (the former Prime Minister of Iraq), the leader of the Islamic Dawa Party, Haider al-Abadi (the Prime Minister of Iraq), deputy leader of the Islamic Dawa Party, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, leader of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, and Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani (Barzegar, 2008; Felter et al, 2008; Loi, 2011). The great efforts of Iran’s foreign policy in Iraq have enhanced the Shiite role in the power structure of the region.

General Petraeus, (2007: 1), Commander, Multi-National Force-Iraq, commented: "We have also disrupted Shia militia extremists, capturing the head and numerous other leaders of the Iranian-supported Special Groups, along with a senior Lebanese Hezbollah operative supporting Iran’s activities in Iraq". Furthermore, Petraeus (in Loi, 2011: 47) noted that Iran was supporting Iraqi militias as a “Hezbollah-like force to serve its interests and fight a proxy war against the Iraqi state and coalition forces". Iran's foreign policy has achieved many of its core interests in Iraq. Mostly, Iran's foreign policy has penetrated the Iraqi regime, even reaching the head of authority (the Prime minister) to control the political-security affairs. Moreover, the holy historical places for the Twelver Shiite Muslims, Karbala and Najaf, have returned to the control of the Shiite masses.

Looking at Iran's geopolitical features and its ideological approach, we can conclude that the Iranian regime has become one of the key players in the region.

4.6. The Arab World in the Face of Regional Challenges: Iran's Role

The Iranian regime has employed all means to increase its influence and power: politics, media, oil, arms, a nuclear programme, proxies of non-state actors and religious ideology. However, Iran’s search for a bigger regional role and geopolitical influence affects the status quo by decreasing the security of other players in the region, such as the Arab states, Turkey, Israel and the U.S.

Internal instability in the Arab world and growing political Islamic groups are the most prominent issues on the regional political scene, but also on the world agenda. The Arab world in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular, has seen its position weaken (Al-Qallab, 2015; Al-Qashteni, 2015). Therefore, the sequence of events of "Operation Decisive Storm" on 26 March 2015, a military operation led by Saudi Arabia and supported by a Sunni Arab coalition of ten countries (Morocco, Sudan, Jordan, Egypt, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain including Saudi Arabia and Yemen) against an Iran-linked Shiite militia in Yemen (the Houthi rebels), may change the regional equation by limiting Iran's expansion (Hadi, 2015; Spencer, 2015).

At the same time, there is the U.S. Iranian rapprochement in the reign of Obama and Rouhani, to normalise their relations, especially around the Iranian nuclear programme. The Obama administration attempts to reach a satisfactory settlement with Tehran (Katzman, 2014). In return, Tehran should cooperate with Washington in the management

of conflict zones by taking account of U.S. interests (Al-Na'ami, 2015). There is also an intersection of interests between Washington and Tehran in the fight against extremist groups in the region, especially Sunni, such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS) and keen on Western interests in the region (Al-Khouri, 2015; www.alwatan.kuwait. tt/ ArticleDetails.aspx?Id=420467, 2015).

4.7. Conclusion

Chapter four discussed the geopolitical developments that have existed in the Middle East throughout modern history. These geopolitical developments were discussed within the framework of a dynamic political-security environment, by focusing on the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy. This transformative power of Iran's behaviour is not new. Under Safavids, the Shah and the theocracies (mullahs) alike, Iran's geopolitical interests were at the core of its national identity and sovereignty. Then, this chapter outlined the role of Iran's foreign policy in the Middle East since 1979 to pre- invasion Iraq in 2003, showing its expansion. Furthermore, reverberations of the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy in post-invasion Iraq were discussed, and its attempts to expand its regional influence by depending on the distribution of soft power, including Iran's use of ideological proxies (Bruno, 2011). It has been widely argued that Iran continuously attempts to export its ideological beliefs and revolutionary ideas to the Arab regional countries, in order to maximise its interest abroad by guiding non-state actors and Shiite factions (Armanios, 2004).

Since the September 11 attacks, and following the invasion on Iraq, the scope of regional distribution of power in the Middle East has changed to the benefit of Iran. The influence

of Iran's foreign policy has grown relatively in regional affairs, which has led to an increase in the expansion of its interests abroad. Fandy (2008: 1), an expert in Middle East security affairs, stated that "Today, a non-nuclear Iran uses Iraq as a platform for its influence and dominance in Lebanon, Gaza, Yemen, Bahrain, Kuwait, and other Gulf countries. If Iran has this influence in the region without a nuclear weapon, what will be its weight in regional affairs when it acquires a nuclear weapon and joins the international nuclear club?" Furthermore, the chapter addressed the impact of U.S. military presence in the region and the reaction of Iran to counter it. Iran and the majority of its Arab neighbours hold opposing views on matters related to regional security. While Tehran considers the U.S. a key factor influencing instability, its Arab neighbours see Washington as the foremost element in their defence.

This chapter has been conducted within the theoretical framework of neorealist and constructivist approaches, linking issues of regional security, such as the anarchical system and states' interests, and the essential factors of ideology and nationalism. Constructivist explanations are based on the religious-ideological ties between the Iranian regime and its proxies, and take into account the unique share in culture, beliefs and religious identity. Burgess (2010: 2) states that "Iranian leadership pursues a security strategy intended to deter an attack on its territory and increase its relative power in the region." This is similar to the neorealist view (defensive and offensive) that 'countries seek survival', and to 'maximise power' (Booth et al, 2008: 36-37). Neoclassical realists argue that the actions of a state can be interpreted by independent variables, such as the distribution of soft power capabilities, and also dependent variable such as Iran’s foreign policy outcome, as well as intervening variables of domestic factors and religious drivers, which affect the power of action of the decision-makers in foreign policy. Hence, states respond to any possible

threat by using their available means (material and ideational power resources) to maintain their geopolitical interests. A state may employ its instruments of power, such as ideological proxies of non-state actors, or foreign aid to its strategic allies, in order to create spheres of influence.

The next chapter will examine the interaction between Western and Eastern values and its impact on state behaviour, within the framework of foreign policy, justification and legitimation.

Chapter Five

The US, regional players and the UN within Iranian Strategic Competition: Triangulating Security Perceptions

5.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to present Iran's perspective and that of its strategic allies in the region, both nation-states (e.g. Iraq and Syria) and non-state actors (e.g. Lebanese Hezbollah and Hamas), which is said to be based on the role of protector of Middle Eastern values against any threat from international and regional players. On the other hand, Bilgin argues that "threats to security have been defined largely from the perspective of external powers rather than regional states or peoples" (Bilgin, 2004: 28).

The Iranian regime sees these international players, including the US and the UN, as sources of problems and troubles for regional stability and security in all fields: militarily, culturally, politically and economically. Iran also views Saudi Arabia as a prime regional competitor, especially since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003. Two other adversaries, Israel and radical Sunni groups, are deemed to be further prominent threats to Iran's geopolitical interests in the region. “Since the state is an essentially political entity,” write Buzan, “political threats may be as much feared as military ones” (1991: 119). Political and societal threats cannot be easily separated from each other, as they both threaten the patterns of culture, custom, religious and ethnic identity. Since the survival of a society relies on the maintenance of its identity, Iran has struggled to defend its identity as much as its sovereignty. In this sense, the dynamic process of the security dilemma in the Middle

East remains between Iran and its allies on one hand, and the US, its regional allies, radical Sunni groups, and the UN on the other, and deals with the other in its capacity as protector and defender of values, righteousness and freedom, while considering the other a meddler and a villain.

The chapter seeks to show to what extent Western values and theological beliefs influenced US foreign policy during the George W. Bush administration. It focuses on human rights, democratic values, humanitarian assistance and environmental issues, alongside the support for Israel, after the 9/11 attacks, under the banner "War on Terror". The chapter will address important stages of relations between the US and Iran within the framework of the impact of Western involvement in Iranian politics during the reign of the Shah (1941-1979). This chapter will also discuss Saudi-Iranian tension from the Iranian perspective. Two other adversaries, Israel and radical Sunni groups, will also be discussed.

This chapter is divided into eight sections. The first provides a general overview of the chapter. The second discusses the fluctuations in relations between the US and Iran during the Shah era, the Khomeini to Ahmadinejad era, and lastly, the post-Ahmadinejad era. The third section focuses on relative power for rival actors between Iran and the US in the Middle East, within the framework of Iran's threat perception of the US, in cultural, security and military terms. The chapter discusses Iran's threat perceptions of Saudi Arabia, Israel and radical Sunni movements in sections four, five and six. The seventh section tackles the role of the UN and US policy towards the Iranian efforts in energy production, including Iran's nuclear issue and security concerns. The last section will be a conclusion.

5.2. The Historical Perspective: Fluctuating Relations between the US and Iran

The US-Iran relationship has witnessed a series of decisive junctures: the Shah era (1950s-1979), the Khomeini to Ahmadinejad era (1979-2013), and the post-Ahmadinejad era (2013 to present).

During World War II, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, both US allies, invaded Iran. Relations between the US and Iran were good after World War II and until 1979 (Soltani et al, 2010; Bowen, 2013). However, when the Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq was overthrown in 1953 by the British Military Intelligence (MI6), supported by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), relations on the level of regimes became stronger, but at the level of Iranian people deteriorated (www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23762970, 2013). "The Mossadeq period was a key period in the history of modern Iran" (Gelvin, 2005: 279). For Iran, Mossadeq was a visionary leader who attempted to follow the true essence of democracy in his policies. One of his greatest achievements was the nationalisation of the Iranian oil industry, which had been dominated by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (www.parstimes.com, 1987). Arguably, the 1953 coup was not only an intervention in Iran's sovereignty and its domestic affairs, but also an obstacle to progress. "The events of 1953 were a foundational moment in the construction of U.S.-Iranian relations and transferred Iranian suspicions from the historic Anglo-Russian axis towards the Americans" (Ansari, 2006: 70).

The US attempted to justify its actions on the pretext of containing the communist tide during the Cold War period. There followed a very close alliance between Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's regime and successive US administrations. This was followed

by a dramatic shift in relations between the two parties after the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the subsequent significant events (Muhafaza, 2013). Notably, the Shah became a key player domestically and regionally, after eliminating threats by Prime Minister Mosaddeq. Domestically, he launched the so-called White Revolution which included several sectors, such as economic, social, educational, political and security. Regionally, in the 1960s and 1970s the US provided Iran with military equipment not only to counter the spread of communism, but also to secure oil energy, transferred to the West through waterways. The Shah, a secular leader, became a strategic regional ally of the US and a protector of US interests in the region. "Under the late Shah, Iran turned into the major pillar in the American security policy for the Gulf, known as the twin-pillar policy" (AL-Suwaidi, 2014: 138). The Shah of Iran was called “the policeman of the Gulf”. The overthrow of the Shah signalled the beginning of a new era.

After the success of the Revolution in 1979, relations between the US and Iran deteriorated. Iranian students attacked and captured the US Embassy, taking employees as hostages, on 04 November 1979. The American Hostage Crisis, with the detention 52 American diplomats for 444 days, contributed to the hostility between the two parties (www.news.bbc.co.uk, 1980). "And the seizure is interpreted in a context of more than one hundred fifty years of foreign interference in the country, particularly the involvement of the U.S. in the overthrow of Mosaddaq in 1935" (Ansari, 2006: 71-72). President Carter ordered sanctions and the freezing of Iranian assets in the US (www.news.bbc.co.uk, 1981; www.parstimes.com, 1987). Ayatollah Khomeini described the US as the “Great Satan” and the main source of all contemporary Muslims' problems (Tait, 2007). In equally scathing language, President George W. Bush described Iran, along with Iraq and North

Korea, as the “Axis of Evil” (www.presidentialrhetoric.com, 2002; Bruno, 2011; Kinzer, 2006:24).

Hostility between the US and Iran continued during and after the Iran-Iraq war. The US considered Iran one of the prominent threats to its strategic interests and regional stability. The Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) widened the gap in relations between the US and Iran. During the Iran and Iraq war, the US provided assistance to the Iraqi regime in a number of sectors, including intelligent information on deployments of Iranian forces, access to economic resources, and ensuring that necessary weaponry and military equipment go to Iraq (Gagnon, 2002). Military support was conducted in coordination with its regional allies, Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf states (except Syria). In the context of growing American support for Saddam, President Reagan removed Iraq from the list of sponsors of terrorism (Freudenheim et al, 1982). After the war, the US attempted to overthrow the Iranian regime by isolating it in economic and political spheres, through imposing more economic sanctions and containment policy on Iran, while turning a blind eye to the accretion of biological and chemical weapons, used on Kurdish citizens in Iraq (Hiltermann, 2004). The US administration condemned Iranian involvement and Lebanese Hezbollah in the attack on US marines barracks in Beirut, Lebanon in 1983, killing 241 Americans (Levitt, 2013). An obscure group calling itself 'Islamic Jihad' claimed responsibility for the bombings, whereas US authorities found Iran liable for the bombing (www.news.bbc.co.uk, 2003).

The US attempted to find a middle ground through the so-called "Iran-Contra scandal" in 1985-1986. The Iran-Contra scandal involved secretly shipping American weapons to Iran in exchange for freeing American hostages taken by Hezbollah in Lebanon with Tehran's

help (www.news.bbc.co.uk, 2004). At the time, there was an embargo against selling arms to Iran. For more details, listen to Colonel Oliver North giving evidence before the congressional select committee about his role in the sale of arms to Iran, the profits of which funded the Contras in Nicaragua, broadcasts BBC-Archives, 10 July 1987, (see www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3CFJPYr5hxcCdvZ35vmDthr/oliver-north-s-role-in-iran-contra-10-july,1987).

US relations with Iran remained very sensitive, despite some efforts during Hashemi Rafsanjani's and Mohammad Khatami's presidencies. Rafsanjani's policies concentrated on internal affairs, to solve economic problems, and on improving relations with countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus. In contrast, Khatami sought the normalisation of relations with Western and regional countries to promote peace and stability in the Middle East (Ansari, 2006). While the US-Iran relationship reached an unprecedented level of tension during the Ahmadinejad era, since 2013 they have achieved a level of relative convergence.

5.3. Iran's Threat Perception of the US

It is clear that the Iranian government perceives threats regionally and internationally. Due to the ongoing interventions of Western powers, in general, and the US, in particular, in Middle East issues, countries like Iran can be seen as fighting a defensive war to protect the region (www.arabic.farsnews.com/allstories/news/13940130000626, 2015). In reference to the security perception, "The fear of being exploited most strongly drives the security dilemma" (Jervis, 1978). The Islamic Republic of Iran has legitimate reasons to fear. Firstly, mutual historical hostility as outlined above. Secondly, the classification of

Iran as a state in the axis of evil. Thirdly, the overthrow of the regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq by the US. Fourthly, Iran has found itself surrounded by US troops. Lastly, the US occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq renders the US a threat to Tehran.

Due to rapid changes in international and regional events, it seems clear that Iran's behaviour arises partly from its perception of geopolitical dynamics and foreign policies, US policy in particular, which involve intervention in regional issues. The removal of Saddam's regime in 2003, for example, was part of the US agenda to continue to "spread Western values" in the post-Cold War era, even by force (www.georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html, 2003; Gokay, 2006). Moreover, the American agenda has included waging the so-called war on terror, the dominant role of American foreign policy in world affairs, and the continuing threat of the Iranian regime. This threat has taken several forms, notably the launch of Western media campaigns towards Iran proclaiming the dangers of this regime, as it did with Saddam's regime, which could lead to potential and justified war against Iran (Gokay, 2006).

Hojjatoleslam Kazzem Seddiqi, a senior cleric in Iran said that "the Iranian nation will continue resistance against the US under any kind of condition…Iran is on the path of swift progress and it will never surrender to the arrogant powers" (Hojjatoleslam Seddiqi, leader of Friday prayers in Tehran, Friday prayer on 18 September 2015, www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940627000603).

Furthermore, Iran's Judiciary Chief, Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larijani proclaimed Washington one of the major sources in fomenting insecurity in the region. Larijani also said that "the bonds between the hegemonic powers and the reactionary governments

which don’t know anything about democracy have created the extremist streams" (www.en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940916001240, 2015).

In the words of John Mearsheimer, "the best defense is a good offense" (Mearsheimer, 2001). In order to ensure their survival, states should maximise their power "to be the most powerful state in the system". It has been argued that the best opportunity for expanding influence was found in the anarchic environment after the removal of Saddam’s regime, which led to the political/security vacuum (Barzegar, 2008). This vacuum provided the opportunity for Iran to intervene in the domestic affairs of its neighbouring countries via its proxies, not only to defend the rights of all Muslims through supporting emancipatory missions, but also to counter American policy in the region (Abadi, 2008; www.news.bbc.co.uk, 2009).

Thomas Joscelyn, Long War Journal correspondent, reported on 19 August 2011 that the US State Department released its annual reports relating to terrorist activities in the world for the previous calendar year. Joscelyn stated that the State Department reported that Iran "remained the most active state sponsor of terrorism in 2010" (Joscelyn, 2011). Joscelyn also added "Iran's financial, material, and logistic support for terrorist and militant groups throughout the Middle East and Central Asia had a direct impact on international efforts to promote peace, threatened economic stability in the Gulf, and undermined the growth of democracy" (Joscelyn, 2011).

Matthew Levitt, the Former-Wexler fellow and director of the Washington Institute's Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence, stated on 03 March 2014 that "over the past few years, Iran's state sponsorship of terrorism has increased dramatically to levels not

seen since the late 1980s and early 1990s. Some of this is terrorism carried out by the regime's own operatives from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Qods Force, and some by the regime's closest militant ally, Hezbollah. Events in Syria today have further cemented this partnership, with dire consequences for regional and international security" (Levitt, 2014).

The new era of destabilisation led the security dilemma into a dark tunnel, throwing old security paradigms into question (Takeyh, 2007). It is argued that the regional security equation was complicated by the reaction of the US to the September 11 attacks, through the so-called War on Terror, which drove the US to broaden its agenda via military campaigns, imperial values and regional alliances, leading to the consolidation of principles of hegemony by using soft power (concepts of democracy, human rights, and freedom) supported by hard power (military machine) (Gokay, 2006).

5.3.1. The Cultural Dimension

The aim of this section is to examine the role and impact of culture on decision-making. Culture refers to a set of ideologies, religious, ideas, identity, norms and values. This part focuses on Western values and US foreign policy, concentrating mainly on the Christian Right and the Presidency of George W. Bush. Iran's perspective, the foundations of Islamic values for the Islamic Republic of Iran, was discussed in chapters two and three, and the following chapter will explain the role and impact of these values on Iran's political behaviour during Ahmadinejad’s presidency.

Walter Russell Mead, in Foreign Affairs, argues that:

> *Religion has always been a major force in U.S. politics, policy, identity, and culture. Religion shapes the nation's character, helps form Americans' ideas about the world, and influences the ways Americans respond to events beyond their borders. Religion explains both Americans' sense of themselves as a chosen people and their belief that they have a duty to spread their values throughout the world. Of course, not all Americans believe such things – and those who do often bitterly disagree over exactly what they mean. But enough believe them that the ideas exercise profound influence over the country's behaviour abroad and at home.*
>
> (Mead, 2006: 24)

Despite the fact that the US Constitution establishes a separation between church and state, religious beliefs and values impose themselves on the American public agenda. In his Inaugural Address in January 2001, President George W. Bush expressed his faith in a divine calling to lead the world in the struggle between the forces of good and evil. In addition to that, Bush stated publicly that he had a mission to reshape the world in accordance with American values of liberty, democracy and the free market (Black, 2004; Mansfield, 2004). Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State, spoke about the relevance of the idea of religious freedom to American traditions, during her annual report on international religious freedom to the Congress in 2007. Rice said, "Religious liberty is deeply rooted in our principles and history as a nation, and it is our belief this is a universal human right that leads us into the world to support all who want to secure this right in their lives and in their countries" (Rice, 2007).

Political culture is not only about a state's actions, or how we assess a specific regime through inputs and outputs. It is also a combination of identity, history, religion, values, language and environmental changes (www.globalsecurity.org, 2005). A comprehensive approach in needed to explain the behaviour of people and leaders (David et al, 1979). By looking at the principles of the Islamic Revolution, for example, and interpreting events before and after 1979 (e.g. the US-Iran hostage crisis on 04 November 1979 and its consequences), it becomes easier to interpret ideological strands and a regime identity within the overall atmosphere of Iranian society. Iranian society was ready to accept the revolutionary ideas of the Iranian regime, with its behaviour and actions against US policies and towards regional states. Iran's foreign policy and its assertiveness must be seen in the context of the political thought and religious ideology of Khomeini, which affected both Iranian society and its regional and international orientation, alongside the revival of Iranian nationalism (Takeyh, 2009).

The position of the Christian Right was reinforced during the two presidential terms of George W. Bush (2001 and 2009). A high percentage of white evangelicals voted for President Bush. Edward Ashbee argued that nearly all the critiques of George W. Bush come together in stressing the role of religion in shaping his thinking. He is said to be the most devout president since Jimmy Carter, though Bush's beliefs and ties have almost always been portrayed in a more threatening way (Mansfield, 2004; Heywood, 2007). Indeed, it has been said that he is driven by messianic notions. From this perspective, "White House policy towards both foreign affairs and domestic issues, such as abortion, sex education and gay rights and the nomination of federal judges, has been dictated by faith" (Ashbee, 2007: 2). Arguably, President Bush is not the first American leader who connects his agenda with God's Will. According to this point of view, Bush's religious

values not only guide his domestic and foreign policies, but also determine his understanding of religious principles as a means for social development and political change.

Madeleine Albright, former US Secretary of State, raised several questions in her book The Mighty and the Almighty, concerning thought, speech, and deeds of President George W. Bush, regarding the concepts of value, liberty and duty. Does the US believe it has a special relationship with God? Does it have a divinely inspired mission to promote liberty? What role, if any, should religious convictions play in the decisions of those responsible for US foreign policy? Does America, as George W. Bush has proclaimed, have a special mission, derived from God, to bring liberty and democracy to the world? (Albright, 2007). Albright writes, "He might have added that, in the Bible, God had assigned that same job, in the same words, to Moses". In addition to that, "political liberty is not a magic pill people can swallow at night and awaken with all problems solved, nor can it be imposed from the outside" (Albright, 2007: 19).

On 29 January 2003, President George W. Bush mentioned in his speech before the invasion Iraq that "We will free people (www.presidentialrhetoric.com, 2003). This great, powerful nation is motivated not by power for power's sake, but because of our values. If everybody matters, if every life counts, then we should hope everybody has the great God's gift of freedom" (www.georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html, 2003).

On 12 December 2005, President George W. Bush said that democracy will spread out from Iraq to the neighbouring countries and will inspire reformers across the Middle East.

Moreover, he noted that free Iraq will allow us to disseminate the teachings of Christ in countries where laws restrict doing so (www.presidentialrhetoric.com, 2005). The Islamic Republic of Iran and many other countries in the Middle East region have focused on such speech acts, which formed their perceptions of US foreign policy. In accordance with their perceptions, American policies do not take into account the desire and will of the peoples of the region. Iran took the speech of President Bush as a hostile act and interference in its internal affairs. With the end of the Cold War and the emergence the so-called new world order, Islam was seen as the next challenge to the West. Therefore, there are Muslims who believe that the so-called War on Terror came as a result of tension between Christianity and Islam (Wahib, 2014). The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order by Samuel Huntington illustrates a possible origin of the tension between Islamic and Western civilization. Huntington stated that the essential problem between the two communities is that each nation has its own values and perceptions. Huntington argues that the heart of the tension between the West and Islam lies in the universality of Western culture and Islamic culture. This tension may increase when there are attempts from each side to spread its values and impose them on the other side (Huntington, 1996; Rafsanjani, 2008).

5.3.2. The Security Dimension

The Iranian regime realised that the strategic objectives of the US were stability, through its concentration on state building efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, alongside a policy of deterrence against any efforts to undermine Western policies in the region. In order to play a prominent role on the regional arena, Iran has strategically teamed up with non-state actors, such as Hezbollah, on the basis of a common ideology and geopolitical interests in undermining American expansionism or imperialism. Both Iran and the US have been

engaging in indirect fierce battles to demonise each other. Iran considers the US the most serious threat to its existence and interests in the Middle East (Nasr and Takeyh, 2008), while the US views Islamic fundamentalism as a threat in general, and the Islamic Republic of Iran as a threat to its security and economic interests in the region, in particular (Kemp, 2005; Takeyh, 2010).

As far as Iran is concerned, Western propaganda has 'sold' the Iranian risk. Freedman writes of 'selling the threat' (Freedman, 2004). The US needed a strategy of 'selling the threat' through the creation of a mechanism of legality and responsibility to justify waging war on Iraq, by linking Saddam's regime with the sources of threats, such as weapons of mass destruction and Islamic terrorism (Freedman, 2004). To illustrate this point, Miller sheds light on the techniques used to sell the war in Iraq in accordance with public opinion strategy (Miller, 2002). Before the invasion of Iraq, President George W. Bush had no choice but to work within a strategy to persuade the public, the Congress and the allies to wage war against Saddam's regime (Miller, 2002). The strategy involved raising the issue of danger and threat faced by the public, definining a crisis that needed to be handled. The Iranian regime also focuses on dangers and threats, while it perceives itself as always being in the spotlight of world media, world attention and the regional political scene.

After the removal of Saddam's regime in 2003, regional competition escalated. Confrontation has taken the form of US military presence and Iran's soft power. While both countries have benefited from the overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001 and Saddam's regime in 2003, and their interests have converged in removing major threats (Sunni terrorism), Iran has always been concerned about US presence at its borders.

US interests in the region are based on three goals: securing energy supplies, preserving regional stability and protecting Israel (www.whitehouse.gov, 2010). The desire to increase regional influence is not unique, but Iran's approach (soft power backed by asymmetric warfare) to create a balance of power with the US (material power backed by Western values) is unique. During Ahmadinejad's presidency, Iran made regional security issues a top priority, using asymmetric warfare, enhancing a strategic alliance with Syria, supporting the opponents of the US in Afghanistan and Iraq, adopting hardline rhetoric towards the US, adopting an assertive policy towards Israel, and attempting to improve relations with neighbouring countries. Like any other state surrounded and threatened, Iran would use all its capacities to confront threats. "As the global hegemony maneuvers to squeeze, isolate, and weaken the Islamic Republic of Iran, it in fact strengthens the forces of extremism that continue to smoulder in Iran. Such policy risks crippling and humiliating the regional hegemon, and could cause it to pursue increasingly desperate and aggressive political activities. The greater the tension between the U.S. and Iran, the closer the system approaches violent explosion" (AL-Suwaidi, 2014: 114).

Iran refuses to be labelled a terrorist state, instead preferring to define itself as a victim (AL-Suwaidi, 2005). For instance, Iran sees Islamic jihadist movements, Hamas in Gaza Strip, Al-Quds Brigades in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Lebanese Hezbollah, as legitimate movements of national liberation, not terrorist groups. Articles 152-154, as stated before, emphasise the commitment of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the struggles of the oppressed and persecuted in every corner of the world. The US and Israel oppose this strongly. Therefore, the dynamic process of the security dilemma occurs in accordance with uncertainty, self-help and self-interests. The principle of self-interests, for instance, illustrates the difficulties to determine a common global list which includes all terrorist

organisations, and even the failure to set a standard definition to the term ‘terrorism’. According to self-help, there is no other state that can be relied upon to help ensure the state's survival (Booth et al, 2008). Some argue that small states have no choice but to enter into security arrangements to guarantee their survival. A number of Gulf states are examples of this. Additionally, Iran's proxies of non-state actors rely substantially on each other to ensure their survival.

Both parties realise each other’s nature, influence and power. The US is aware of Iran’s instruments of power in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. Iran is also well aware of US military power in the region and its ability to change the status quo. This situation has made both parties less severe in dealing with each other in the shadow of a non-zero sum game. In game theory, in a non-zero-sum game solutions exist if all parties sought to accept the game in accordance with the status quo of regional reality. Therefore, all parties could gain, or all parties could lose.

5.3.3. The Military Dimension

There is no parity between the resources and capabilities of the two parties, either in terms of budget, or technological level and processing equipment. The majority of Iranian tanks are old, even older than the Iranian Revolution of 1979, and the same applies to the Air Force. The last military deal between Iran and Russia was in the 1990s to redevelop the Iranian military arsenal through buying a number of tanks type T-72, aircraft type MiG-29, and two submarines. Therefore, "Iran's armed services have quantity in Gulf terms, but they do not have the quality. This is due to several reasons including mismanagement, the arms embargo by the U.S., and the lack of enough funds to maintain and purchase new

weapons systems" (Cordesman et al, 2006). One must bear in mind that Iran is self-sustaining in many areas of conventional and unconventional arms production. In terms of conventional weapons, Iran has sophisticated programmes, manufacturing equipment, and technology, because of the presence of experts from Russia, China, North Korea, and Argentine, for example, to help in expanding its manufacture of military sectors. These sectors include the components of different forces such as Land, Air, Maritime, Air defense, and short- to long-range ballistic missiles (AL-Suwaidi, 2014).

There are some difficulties in estimating Iran's military power, due to the secrecy of its projects, ambiguity and exaggeration. Such projects are usually revealed only after their completion. Moreover, some of these military projects are used for propaganda, or the Iranian press misinterprets military statements, thus adding to the confusion (Cordesman et al, 2006).

It has been argued that the US military involvement in the Middle East has been one of the major sources of radicalisation and terrorism (Bowman, 2008). The deployment of its troops in Lebanon to support international peacekeeping forces in 1982–1984 resulted in terrorist acts on 23 October 1983, against the compound of the US contingent of the multinational force at Beirut international airport, killing 299 American and French servicemen (www.paperlessarchives.com, 1983). The Islamic Jihad Organization claimed responsibility for the bombing. That was the time of the emergence of Hezbollah in the Lebanese arena with asymmetric warfare. Furthermore, there was a most significant operation in 1987-1988, after US warships escorted and reflagged Kuwaiti oil tankers to protect them from Iranian attacks through convoy missions, and also the aftermath of Operation Desert Storm in 1991, after the Iraqi invasion to Kuwait resulted in the

deployment and operation of US forces across the Middle East (Bowman, 2008). The US navy patrolled the waters in the Gulf region and the Red Sea and there was an increase and redeployment of troops in the Gulf states, including Afghanistan, Iraq and Turkey. The US enhanced its military power in the region to maintain permanent bases in the Middle East, to minimise any possible change in the regional balance of power that light threaten its interests, while Iran emphasised its strategy to gain more power both conventional and unconventional, to diminish US political and military power in the region.

US predominance may force others to accept its leadership, but the Iranian regime neither accepts nor concedes to the American Administration; instead, it challenges through its proxies in the region (www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13930730001608, 20 14). Iran, therefore, relies heavily on its allies in the region, such as "the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, the Organisation for the Islamic Revolution on the Arabian Peninsula, and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq" (Green, Wehrey and Jr. Wolf, 2009). This includes also other non-state actors, AL-Houthy rebellions in Yemen and Lebanese Hezbollah, for instance, who rely on asymmetric warfare and unconventional forces in their movements and actual activities. The US has major concerns over its interests in the region and potential threats to the flow of oil from the Gulf region (www.mubasher.aljazeera.net, 2015). This has led the US to intervene militarily, and such military solutions have led to the escalation of radicalism, growing fundamentalist thoughts and increasing terrorist attacks, as well as anti-American sentiments in Arab and Muslim streets.

5.4. Iran's Threat Perception of Saudi Arabia

Diplomatic relations have existed between Saudi Arabia and Iran since 1928, but the nature of this relationship has varied over time. The Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979, and, more importantly, the 2003 invasion of Iraq, have brought a new reality in the regional political scene, which is based on geopolitical rivalry and the dispute over Islamic leadership. This rivalry and dispute has cast a shadow over security events with proxy wars that have become increasingly violent, with divided societies turning upon one another, drawing in external players offering their support for religious, ideological, ethnic, tribal or kin (Bruno, 2011). This rivalry has manifested itself within regional political fluctuations, such as the crisis in Iraq, the Lebanese issue, the conflict in Syria, the war in Yemen, and political turmoil in Bahrain. Sectarian issues, including disputes over energy policy, have resulted in increasingly violent conflict (Zweiri, 2012). Understanding the rivalry behind these conflicts helps shed light on Iran's relations with Saudi Arabia and the factors driving the conflict, especially since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003. Saudi-Iranian relations and their impact on the geopolitical dynamics of the region will be discussed in this section.

The Saudi-Iranian rivalry is, at its core, conflict that dates back several years, over power, influence and dominance in the Middle East. During the Iran-Iraq war, most Arab states supported Saddam Hussein’s regime, Saudi Arabia included. Al-Jubeir, Adel (2016) Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, on 20 January 2016, stated that Iran behaves as a revolutionary state, aiming to export Iranian revolution by supporting the Shiite militants such as Lebanese Hezbollah, Shiite factions in Iraq and the Houthi rebels in Yemen in accordance to its constitution. The revolutionary principles form the basis of

their rivalry and perceptions of each other as dangerous and threatening. Additionally, US presence and support for the Saudi regime cannot be ignored. Iran perceives the relationship between Riyadh and Washington as a threat to its security, especially in the context of the growing military presence of the US in the region.

From Iran's perspective, Saudi Arabia is actively attempting to keep Iran weak and incapable. In contrast, Saudi Arabia sees the Iranian Revolution as a threat to its existence and to the regional security order. Under the circumstances, a security dilemma emerges: when one side feels threatened, the reaction would be the reinforcement of its security by defence spending, and support for a regional proxy in order to guard against a perceived threat, or through alliances. The other side may perceive such actions as a threat, which compels a response. This is a process of cause and effect, of action and reaction (Booth et al, 2008). As one side feels more secure, the other side feels less secure. This increases, rather than decreases, the overall insecurity. It could be argued that Iran's regime and Saudi Arabia are regional powers that deal with each other in accordance with zero-sum game. On this basis, the more powerful Iran is, the less secure Saudi Arabia becomes, and vice versa. Undoubtedly, whenever competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia intensifies, the regional order is likely to worsen.

Regional events have increasingly become violent, because of indirect confrontations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, based on proxy wars inside or outside their territories. These confrontations have manifested themselves in countries such as Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Bahrain, resulting in violent conflict (www.english.farsnews. com/ news te xt. aspx?nn=13940611001258, 2015; Al-Marai, 2016). In order to discover the most

prominent driving forces of the conflict, it is essential to understand the nature of this rivalry.

From the early days of the Iranian revolution, relations between Riyadh and Tehran have been shaped by two driving forces. The first is the religious institution. Iran's regime perceives Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi movement or Salafism, adopted in its foreign policy, as a threat, and one that goes beyond the Middle East to include the whole of the Islamic world. The second driving force is the military/security factor. This is interconnected with American alliances in the region, where Saudi Arabia plays a key role. Here there was a remarkable development when the former President of Iran, Mohammad Khatami, introduced the concept of dialogue among civilisations in 2001 and rapprochement with the Gulf states. Indeed, his rational policy reduced tensions between Riyadh and Tehran, to some extent. However, as a result of reformist policies internally and regionally, Khatami lost his position in the political scene, and religious trends and revolutionary guards returned to the Iranian political scene. Thus came the election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005.

There are four main issues affecting Riyadh – Tehran relations. The first is a religious sectarian issue. The second is competition for regional leadership. The third is the relationship with the West and particularly with the US. Finally, the oil issue, which includes policies of pricing and production.

The sectarian issue has deep historical roots. Religious sectarianism casts a shadow over the geopolitical dynamics in a range of ways. Remarkably, Iran suspects Saudi Arabia of arming the moderate Syrian opposition (www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13

940611001258, 2015). This suspicion is based on Saudi Arabia's tendency to deprive Tehran of a strategic ally (Syrian regime), with the ultimate objective of isolating Iran regionally. Saudi Arabia suspects Iran of backing the Houthi rebellion in Yemen (www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/americas/18380-un-report-iran-arming-houthis-since-2009, 2015). Saudi Arabia believes that this is a step towards not only transferring anarchy to Yemen, but also towards overturning the regional order, which is so important to Saudi Arabia's security.

In the competition for regional leadership and leadership of the Muslim world, both countries behave in accordance with their holy duty. Perhaps the Palestinian cause and the handling of this issue by the two countries is a testament to the depth of this rivalry. Iran has succeeded in gaining the support of the Arab/Muslim street through supporting vulnerable people, in parallel with its anti-Israeli stance. Several countries, including Saudi Arabia, have been criticised for striving to find a settlement for the Palestinian cause through a peace process. On this basis, Iran's support for Palestinian resistance movements is perceived with suspicion and is seen as an attempt to expand its geopolitical influence.

With respect to oil policies, production and prices, Iran sees the Saudi oil policy as going hand in hand with the so-called western economic war (economic sanctions). Perhaps the Iranian nuclear programme is one of the major developments in Iran-Saudi relations, especially after the nuclear agreement with world powers in mid-2015. For more details, see chapters 5 and 6. Rivalry for leadership often takes the form of economic warfare, media war, diplomatic tension, and brinkmanship. In the case of Iran and Saudi Arabia, tensions in relations will remain as long as both sides believe in a different religious ideology.

5.5. Iran's Threat Perception of Israel

Prior to the 1979 Revolution, Iran and Israel were close allies, collaborating with the US to spread Western capitalist values to counter the proliferation of Communism in the Middle East region. After Ayatollah Khomeini came to power, a dramatic reversal occurred between Iran, on the one hand, and Israel and the US, on the other, as their relationship turned from collaboration to enmity. Why and how did this enmity between Iran and Israel emanate? Rational accounts fall short of providing a sufficient explanation of their mutual foreign policies. A constructivist theory is needed to explain Iran's foreign policy towards Israel, with emphasis on the speech act model. Their mutual enmity reached a level of significant complexity, especially during the Ahmadinejad presidency. This enmity can be seen through the lens of geopolitical interests and religion.

Iran adopts the Palestinian cause as the backbone of its foreign policy, as well as its existential struggle with Israel. Iran’s commitment to the Palestinian cause is religio-political in nature. Jerusalem (Al-Quds or Bayt Al-Maqdis in Arabic), is one of the oldest and holiest cities on earth for Jews, Christians and Muslims. For Muslims, Al-Aqsa Mosque or Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary) is the third holiest place in Islam, after Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia. It was also the direction for all Muslims to pray before God allowed Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to pray towards Mecca instead. On this basis, Iran condemns Israel for the usurping of most of Palestinian territories. Iran sees Israel as one of the paramount threats to Iran and to the whole of the Islamic world. Khomeini and Ahmadinejad gave the Israeli-Palestinian conflict a religious dimension, in order to legitimise Iran's continuous interventions and to play a leading role in this cause, as a regional power who attracts the Arab street and Islamic masses, to reinforce its

geopolitical interests. President Ahmadinejad's speech to Al-Alam TV on 14 January 2009 referred to the Palestinian cause as the "most important cause in our time, and the biggest injustice of history" (Ahmadinejad, Al-Alam TV, 14 January 2009).

Iran is Israel's paramount threat, mainly due to its controversial nuclear programme. Tensions have escalated between them, to the point where Israel declared that, if Iran acquired the capability to construct nuclear weapons, the response would be overwhelming (see section 6.6. for details). On the other hand, the Iranian regime uses soft power and asymmetric warfare through funding groups like Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad and Hamas, as part of its effort to counter the Israeli threat (for details, see section 7.3. and 7.4.). The Israeli threat can be seen in its expansion policy on occupied lands in the West Bank, the Golan Heights and Sheba'a Farms. Hezbollah perceives Iran as the vanguard of the resistance movement in the region, standing against Zionist expansion. Thus, Iran's relationship with resistance movements can be viewed through its commitment to the Palestinian cause and its enmity towards Israel, in terms of religion, geopolitical interests and national security (www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940611000630, 2015).

5.6. Iran's Threat Perception of Radical Sunni Movements

To understand the threat of Sunni movements, one must understand the scope of ideological disputes between Sunnis and Shiites. The origin of such disputes can be found in values and practices, and the rivalry for leadership to create a caliphate for over 1,400 years (Al-Ghareib (2005). What we are seeing today is ideological movements turned

militant, as with the Shiite movements through Hezbollah in Lebanon and AL-Mahdi Army in Iraq, and the Sunni movements by Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS).

It is important to note that both sides (Sunnis and Shiites) view each other from the perspective of ideological religious fundamentalism. On this basis, rivalry and conflict among players often results in a zero sum. In this sense, Iran perceives radical Sunni movements as a threat, not only to its religious ideology, but also to its geopolitical interests and regional security. The Sunni threat comes in the historical context of reconstituting pan-Islamism. Iran adopts the same approach, but in accordance with the Shiite Islamic doctrine. Indeed, the revival of pan-Islamism involves both Sunnis and Shiites, on the level of nation states and non-state actors, in the context of the transnational caliphate as a single political entity that would abolish existing states and align political reality with Islam (Shams al-Din, 1992).

The Iranian regime is concerned about the attempts of Sunni Movements to impose their ideology on the region, against existing governments if necessary. Hence, declaration of asymmetric warfare against a regime is commonplace. Nowadays, there are several examples of this phenomenon, whether it is individuals, groups or organisations. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan, including the Islamic State in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, are notable examples of Sunni-jihadist movements. The trouble is that some regimes support such radical movements in the mistaken belief that this constitutes preserving religious freedom.

5.7. Iran and the UN: Regional Perspectives

It has been argued that the actions of the UN and the US, in pursuing engagement and harsh sanctions as a way of limiting Iran's nuclear activities and the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, are the result of hardline policies that led to the failure of the UN to deal with Iran's regime and the nuclear issue. The nuclear programme would give Iran a regional hegemonic status, and ensure survival and bargaining power over regional and global matters. Therefore, Iran is no different from other states within the international system. Iran constructed bases for its security and foreign policy on principles of national choice. Global concerns and regional fears due to Iran's nuclear ambitions and its ballistic missiles programme, came as a result of Iran's external behaviour in the shadow of its transformative power (Bahgat, 2007). Its relationship with non-state actors and its intervening in others' affairs, in addition to delivering harsh foreign policy speeches, all contributed to disquieting perceptions of its nuclear activities and its foreign policy.

Despite the arguments surrounding Iran's nuclear ambitions that threaten the regional stability, it is unlikely that such weapons would be used against others, but are only for deterrence. Still, this may prompt other countries in the Middle East to pursue nuclear options, as a reaction within the dynamic process of the security dilemma.

5.7.1. Iran's Role as an Energy Producer

Undoubtedly, studying Iran's regional role necessitates demonstrating the importance of energy resources, which have become a priority in regional and world politics. Iranian authorities often claim that oil is an effective political weapon. The supreme leader

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned Western nations on 04 June 2006 that "attempts to punish Tehran would jeopardize the shipment of energy from the Persian Gulf" (www.theodoresworld.net, 2006). However, he added that the Islamic Republic of Iran would not be the country that begins war. Thus, economic interdependence connects the world's oil markets with Iran. During 2003, before the rise in oil prices, the Iranian regime relied on oil exports for 60% of its revenues, whereas the world oil markets depend on Iran's oil exports of 2.7 million barrels per day (Lowe et al, 2006).

The rivalry between Iran and the US remains rooted on several regional issues, including the massive Silk Road project (www.aljazeera.com, 2012). The initiative of reviving the ancient Silk Road through a network of roads and maritime linkages, especially with the distinctive geographical location of Iran, could consolidate cooperation between the various regional blocs and could alter the economic and political landscape of a vast area stretching from Asia to Europe (Azarpay, 2009).

On the other hand, Iran’s energy resources serve as a source of funds for its nuclear programme, support for its proxies of non-state actors and clients of Shiite factions, and other activities to reinforce its foreign policy and as leverage over world players who condemn these activities. Abundant natural resources of oil and gas are available in Iran, but global oil demand will be affected from time to time, in accordance with international policies and great events. Great powers and industrial countries decisively use all the available means to control this vital resource, or at least to preserve and guarantee its flow to supply the international markets. Mahdi Mohammad Nia supports the argument which says that Iran plays an important role in world politics due to its strategic location, geopolitical importance and the huge natural resources in the Gulf region (Crist, 2009).

This important role drove Iran to be at the core of the global agenda, competing with regional and international players (Nia, Mahdi, 2010). Today, possession of huge natural wealth allows the regime in Tehran to challenge the influence of the US in the region. This has become a prominent issue on the international stage (Howard, 2007; Al-Husseini, 2014). This type of challenge has many dimensions; it threatens not only US interests in the region, but also industrial countries and the wider world. Iran cannot stay silent or dormant. From the US point of view, Iran provides assistance to its proxies of fundamentalist organisations and Shiite factions loyal to it throughout the region, while its nuclear programme, allegedly for the production of civil energy, conceals a secret: to produce the war heads that are able to strike not only cities in South Europe and Israel, but also the oil wells in the Gulf States, in addition to threatening the watercourses to transport the oil across the Gulf, on which the American and the international economy, in general, are dependent.

5.7.2. Iran's Nuclear Plans and Security Concerns

It is not so easy to positively determine whether the Iranian nuclear programme is of a peaceful nature, as claimed by Iran, or it is a programme that goes side by side with or covers a military nuclear programme, as claimed by the US, Israel and other countries in the region. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) issued a report suggesting that "a range of activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device were conducted in Iran prior to the end of 2003" (Murphy et al, 2015).

What is certain is the fact that the desire of the Iranian regime to acquire a nuclear programme and to develop such capabilities is met with pressure by the US and the UN on

Tehran, via sanctions and diplomatic isolation, as part of a Western policy to prevent Iran from doing so (Katzman, 2003; Cordesman et al, 2006). Therefore, attempts to prevent Iran from pursuing its nuclear programme are at the heart of the priorities of any US administration (Byman, 2012). For the past decade, the US, Israel and the UN have made the Iranian nuclear programme a priority and have launched a concentrated campaign against Iran, while Iran shows a very solid stance in its nuclear programme and activities and presents a challenge to the policies of the superpower and the international organisations (Addis et al, 2010).

The military build-up in the Middle East has created a security problem, which forces regional countries to try to protect and defend their national security from numerous threats. The concern with arms race and nuclear proliferation in the region has been the subject of much debate. However, some regional countries, for instance, Israel, India and Pakistan, still have nuclear power with no staunch international procedures against them, or criticism. This has allowed these countries to develop their nuclear weapons programmes (Sevilla, 2011). This dual policy, which suggests the implicit approval of the West and the UN, was one of the main reasons behind the current nuclear race in the Middle East, and Iran is not an exception. Israel, for example, clings to its nuclear stance, while fears are increasing for the attempts of some other countries, Iran in particular, to get equal or parallel capabilities, which may lead to changes in the regional balance of power (Mansour, 2001).

So far, Iran has been negotiating through diplomatic channels with the United Nations and the superpowers very skillfully, while its nuclear programme remains its weak point, as well as its source of power. The weakness lies in the impact of sanctions on Iranian domestic affairs, while the Iranian nuclear programme is considered a winning hand in

Iranian diplomacy. Indeed, while P5+1 focuses on Iranian nuclear talks, Iran is making considerable, but little-noticed, strategic advances. Iran's proxies, with huge support from Iran's Quds Forces, are quietly occupying more of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen and further away, in a way that could soon create a Shiite arc of power in the region (Al-Sha'er, 2015; www.wsj.com, 2015).

5.8. Conclusion

The study of the role and contribution of the instruments of soft power in Iran's foreign policy making involves two important aspects: the role of religious ideology in international relations and the role of political/religious elites in the foreign policy making process. The discussion of the role of religious ideology in international relations is broadly dominated by the social constructivist approach, which stresses the role and impact of political/religious elites in foreign policy making. This chapter suggested that, in order to better understand US foreign policy during the George W. Bush administration, we need to think more about the contribution of social factors, Western values and theological beliefs, faith and ideas, as well as domestic actors, such as the Christian Right, as important factors in formulating foreign policy. Apart from that, Iran's perception of regional threats, like Saudi Arabia, Israel and radical Sunni movements, must be taken into account when trying to understand the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East.

In contrast, a realist school of thought usually rejects religion as part of its analysis in providing explanations as to how and why certain foreign policies came into existence. In accordance with realist perspective, foreign policy rests solely on material or rational justifications, such as on national or economic interest (Jackson et al, 2007). Therefore,

religion has no important role to play in society and states. On the other hand, social constructivists argue that international relations is a product of elements of social reality, such as thoughts, identity, norms, values and culture, with its own dynamic entity, that influences actors, rather than material variables (Hopf, 1998).

Political ideologies inspire people, societies and states. They shape a worldview that contains some type of order and meaning. On this basis, Iranian foreign policy is based on long-term priorities and aims to promote its position upon the Islamic world, to reinforce Iranian sovereignty, to defend its nuclear ambitions and to extend its influence in the region and the Arab World. Iran's ability to intervene in regional issues and affairs remains significant and continuous in supporting extremist groups and fundamentalist organisations, so as to reinforce its influence on the region and to undermine the interests of regional and foreign countries, including radical Sunni groups (www.watan.com/reports/4327, 2015). Iranian concerns emerged largely as a result of US interventions in the region with a large army, massive military abilities and a huge arsenal of military-grade weapons in storage facilities in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Gulf states and Turkey, America's regional allies (Kemp, 2005). Since the Islamic revolution, Iranian leaders have attempted to unite the Islamic world under an Islamic government, changing the regional policies to confront US policies and interests (Coughlin, 2010).

Despite the regional environment that provided favourable conditions for expanding Iran's influence in the post-Saddam era, Iran sensed it was vulnerable to international pressure and regional isolation that prevented the attainment of its strategic goals with its Arab neighbours, to consolidate its status as an ascendant regional power (Kemp, 2005; Juneau, 2009; Shoamanesh, 2012; Krauthammer, 2015). This is due to opposing perspectives

between Iran and its Arab Sunni neighbours on matters relating to regional security, where Tehran views the US as one of the key factors causing instability and disruption to any effort for unity. In contrast, most of Iran's Arab neighbours look to Washington as an essential element in their defence (Bahgat, 2007). Despite Iran's repeated calls to reinforce the regional security system, free from foreign influence, neighbouring Arab countries have shown little interest in such proposals, because of their concerns over Iran's rising power. In this regard, Iranian leaders, Ahmadnejad, for instance, always seek regional security without involving foreign states (Mansharof et al, 2010). In contrast, the differences in perceptions and interests made Iran's Arab neighbours rely on the US for their security and for the regional security system.

This chapter discussed the possibility and suitability of the above theoretical arguments to gain a better understanding of the role of religious ideology and its contribution to the process of foreign policy making. It has been argued that these two theories (Constructivism and Realism) are compatible with each other, due to the fact that both accept the centrality of the state in international relations, and the importance of power (realism, material power, constructivism, ideational power) in foreign policy decision making. Both internal driving forces and external factors contribute to state behaviour, as they respond to the geopolitical dynamics.

The next chapter will analyse the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy in post-Saddam Iraq, between 2003 and 2013, particularly during Ahmadinejad's presidency, which was deemed a turning point for the interconnectedness of Middle East affairs, as well as a shift in the role of actors that challenge the status quo.

Chapter Six

Iranian Foreign Policy and Strategic Interests in the Middle East

6.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses the second and third questions, which are: Which events, perceived as security concerns, influence Iranian ideology, identity and foreign policy? What instruments of power does Iran's foreign policy use to increase its power, to ensure its security requirements and meet its strategic interests? This chapter also provides answers to the following supplementary questions: What is the main driver behind Iran's foreign and security policy? What are the paradoxes of Iran's foreign policy? To what extent do regional policies determine Iran's foreign policy?

The chapter focuses mainly on Iran's foreign policy assertiveness between 2003 and 2013, through neoclassical realist, constructivist, offensive realist, and speech acts frameworks. According to Juneau (2009), Iran's use of ideological proxies is an independent variable, while Iran's foreign policy outcome is introduced as a dependent variable, changing the balance of power to the benefit of Iran's regional objectives. As a result, Iran's relative power has improved, which has led to it expanding its interests abroad. It is crucial for this thesis to demonstrate this change, because an essential element of the thesis is to explore the consequences of the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy upon the dynamic situation of the regional security system. Critical issues such as ideological beliefs and religious principles need to be taken into account in the decision making process and to interpret Iran's foreign policy.

Debate among scholars centres on Iranian foreign and security policy in terms of whether it is driven by religious/ideological drivers or by rational vision of its needs and requirements to survive in an anarchic regional system (Collins, 2007). There is no simple answer that can provide a comprehensive explanation of the impact of the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy, and the factors affecting the security system structure of the Middle East. As mentioned earlier, because this is a multi-disciplinary research project, this thesis relies upon more than one theory and approach to provide a better explanation of Iran's behaviour and understanding of the political and security regional reality.

6.2. Iranian Foreign Policy: between Ideology and Pragmatism

The history of the Islamic Republic of Iran contains references both to its Islamic character and its Persian heritage, as well as its revolutionary traits and confrontations with any potential threat, mainly the US (Posch, 2013). However, after Iran's nuclear programme talks between the P5+1 and Iran, it seems that Iran chose a pragmatic approach.

As with other states in the region, Iran's foreign policy can be viewed as shaped by pressure from three environments. First, the national environment, one of intense rivalry between conservatives and reformers. Equally important, for Iranian elites and citizens, the past is as essential as the present. A paradoxical combination between a sense of pride and victimisation in Iranian culture has inspired a sense of independence and a resistance reflected in their international relations. Thus, Iran's foreign policy is built on these beliefs and perceptions that are widely held sentiments (R.K. Ramazani in www.mideasti.org, 2009). Second, the regional environment, formed in the presence of a large US military presence in the region surrounding Iranian territory. In 2003 Iran was given the

opportunity to maximise its regional power through its attempts to apply its strategic agenda of the Islamic Revolution (Khomeini, 1981). This agenda involves controlling the capitals of regional Muslim countries, mainly the Arab states, such as Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Yemen (Al-Sha'er, 2015; www.wsj.com, 2015). Lastly, the global environment, in terms of the political isolation imposed by Western countries, particularly the US. Additionally, the economic sanctions and military embargo by international organisations (www.irannewsdaily.com, 2015). Pragmatic conservatives understand that the deterioration in relations between the US and Iran inhibits Iran's economic development, and also reduces the opportunities for international investors, who are loath to invest in a struggle zone.

In spite of Iran's reputation since the end of the eight-year war with Iraq (1980-1988), and especially since the death of Ayatollah Khomeini (1989), the Islamic Republic of Iran has proved to be a well-institutionalised, rational actor, which has mainly followed its strategic interests before its ideological ones in questions of foreign policy, with the exception of Ahmadinejad's presidency. Ahmadinejad's foreign policy will be discussed in more detail in the following section. On the other hand, it has been argued that "since the revolution, Iran's leaders have faced the challenge of balancing their ideological (idealism) and geopolitical (pragmatism) approaches to foreign policy. Since the advent of the Islamic Revolution, Iran's regional policies have been driven by ideology as well as geopolitics" (Kayhan Barzegar in www.mideasti.org, 2009: 134). The thesis argues that ideology and pragmatism are two sides of the coin of Iran's foreign policy. In other words, Iran's political behaviour derives its ideological doctrine directly from the concepts of Islamic revolution, and especially the thought of Ayatollah Khomeini, who built upon the Iranian Constitution, alongside with dealing with regional challenges and international risks.

Evidence of both approaches can be found in the behaviour of Iran after the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the removal of the Sunni- Baathist regime, which was one of the most serious threats to Iran's interests, gave Iran's foreign policy a great opportunity to enhance its presence in Iraq and in other states in the region, through supporting Shiite sects and fundamentalist organisations. Bahgat (2007: 7) noted that "Iran seeks to expand its economic and cultural ties with neighbouring states, enlarge its sphere of influence, promote regional stability, and resist U.S. military and political presence and policies".

Loi (2011) and Barzegar (2008) consider the concept of the Shiite Crescent including both Jordan and Egypt (see chapter 7, section 7.2.3. for more details). Recently, the Shiite Crescent has stretched to Yemen (Abu Hilal, 2014; Al-Qallab, 2015; www.aawsat.com/home/article/287646, 2015). This leads to a reinforcement of Shiite militias in these countries and elsewhere and allows their domination over the domestic political-security scene in which they reside, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and AL-Mahdi Army in Iraq, which reflects the geopolitical reality of the Middle East. In this context, the ultimate strategic interest of Iran's foreign policy is to capture ideologically the minds and hearts of Arab and Islamic people, through accessing Shiite sects in the Middle East. The so-called theory of Wilayat Al-Faqih remains a powerful tool for supporting Iran's foreign policy to interconnect spiritually Shiite sects with the clerical leadership in Tehran, particularly the supreme leader.

6.3. Iran's Tactical Foreign Policy Rhetoric

> *Nations do not think, they only feel. They get their feelings at second hand through their temperaments, not their brains. A nation can be brought — by force of circumstances, not argument—to reconcile itself to any kind of government or religion that can be devised; in time it will fit itself to the required conditions; later it will prefer them and will fiercely fight for them.*
>
> (Twain, 1906: 139)

"Revolutionary states often do not engage in cost-benefit analysis that other states do. The main goal of such states is to pursue their revolutionary mission and to construct a particular identity based on certain set of norms and values", writes Takeyh (Takeyh, 2012). This thesis argues that Iran's foreign policy, to some extent, has advanced revolutionary discourses to manifest its identity and interests through interactions in its international relations. The revolutionary identity is reinforced by the history of hostility both internationally and regionally. The regional environment with its diverse geopolitical interests has led to hostility among states. This thesis explains not only the causes and effects of confrontations between Iran and Western countries, but also shows a causal link between the discourses and practices in foreign policy.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has used speech acts in its foreign policy, through political rhetoric and religious discourse. Speech acts are used as an instrument of power to arouse feelings of terror and warn of threats. Austin and Searle (in Oishi 2006) argue that language is, fundamentally, action. Therefore, Austin (in Oishi 2006) refers to warnings as

utterances that could be implemented into action. In this sense, within the framework of Austin's model of actions, the understanding of the structure of language highlights the nature of reality. Official speech acts such as statements are likely to be linked with actions. Some speech acts, such as the announcement of a massive military exercise, are a kind of message towards others showing the state's quantitative and qualitative material power on the ground. In this context, Takeyh (2007) argues that speech acts are deemed an offensive approach in the context of the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy in post-Saddam Iraq and contribute to escalating regional tension and uncertainty. Zalman et al (2009) add that the Iranian acute rhetorical approach in its foreign policy drives the region into a more destabilised condition, with less integration of its international relations. Iran uses all means or instruments of power to reinforce its security requirements and increase its power to achieve strategic interests.

In the initial stage of the Iranian Revolution and during Ahmadinejad's presidency in particular, the political rhetoric of Iran's foreign policy was based on threats; there was hardline rhetoric by both religious and political elites. This kind of aggressive discourse and hardline rhetoric is often used as a tool to express Iran's revolutionary identity to achieve its interests and geopolitical objectives, through expanding its ideological influence in neighbouring states, and also to deter regional threats. Ahmadinejad reintroduced and amplified Ayatollah Khomeini's rhetoric as a tactical weapon, which includes overcoming Iran's diplomatic isolation in the Middle East region and internationalising the crisis over its nuclear programme. Ahmadinejad, in order to overcome international isolation, used effective public diplomacy and anti-US, anti-Israel speech acts, and the rhetoric of resistance, which has been much more successful than the majority of policies of the Arab states in reaching out to several parts of the world. The use

of anti-imperialist and pan-Islamic rhetoric as a tool in Iran's post-revolutionary policy has enhanced its massive efforts to expand its security perimeter in the Middle East to include Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and the Palestinian territories (Nashat in www.mideasti.org, 2009). Bilgin (2005) argues that the Islamic Republic of Iran has been trying to show the world that it is a defender of Muslim and Arab issues.

Iran gained popularity among the Muslim and Arab masses as a result of using tactical foreign policy rhetoric. Takeyh (2007: 53) notes Ahmadinejad's statement, "that any person, who provides any step towards Israel, will be burnt in the furnace of fiery wrath aflame by the Islamic nation". Takeyh (2007) argues that this statement is a message that the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the Islamic nation, would no longer recognise or accept any peace process agreements that have been, or will be, in the future between Israel and the Arab countries or Palestine. In this context, Zweiri (2007) writes that Ahmadinejad revived the hardline speech of Israel and the Holocaust, which had disappeared during Khatami's presidency. After an unprecedented speech in the UN General Assembly on 24 September 2012, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon warned Ahmadinejad of the dangers of incendiary rhetoric upon the Middle East region, due to his offensive and outrageous discourse against Israel and its existence (Charbonneau, 2012). Accordingly, Takeyh (2007, 2010) concluded that the government of Ahmadinejad would not only continue its support for radical Palestinian groups, such as Hamas, to prevent any deal concerning peace treaties, but would also revive the old policy aimed to overthrow the Arab regimes, which would normalise relations with the state of Israel.

It has been argued that the concept of resistance and counter hegemonism is an integral part of Iranian identity and Islam in general (Dehshiri et al, 2008). The principle of

offensive realism is that nation states seek to gain supremacy, not to be dominated by others. The Islamic Republic of Iran is no exception.

6.4. Iran's Foreign Policy during the Presidency of Ahmadinejad

This section discusses Iran's foreign policy during the Presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who led the country, during a critical period in Iran's modern history, into more hardline policies and assertive measures. When Ahmadinejad came to power in 2005, Iranian foreign policy shifted back to the fundamentalist mentality of the 1979 revolution. Ahmadinejad stressed a return to the revolutionary values of Khomeini and religious principles that must be implemented within domestic and external affairs (see Appendix 3, p. 402). Ahmadinejad had a military and revolutionary background. Marshall et al (2005) and Kinzer (2006) mention that during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) Ahmadinejad was a senior officer in the special operations brigade of the Revolutionary Guard Corps; he was, perhaps, among the participants in the storming of the US Embassy in Tehran in 1979, taking 66 US diplomats hostage for 444 days.

Here it is important to analyse three levels of variables: the level of the individual, which refers to the aggressive nature of human beings; the level of the state or regime, where some states act more aggressively in their foreign affairs than others; and the level of the regional and international system structure that may lead states to conduct war. At the first level, and in the neoconservative era under Ahmadinejad, an aggressive approach is taken that relies on the logic of force and hardline rhetoric, to attract audiences, to increase Iran's prestige and influence in the region, and this has become a paradigm in the era of his presidency. In order to clearly demonstrate Iran's foreign policy during Ahmadinejad's era,

it is crucial to discuss it in a way that assesses the relationship between religion and politics, on the one hand, and in the context of isolation, regional interests contradiction, the presence of huge forces of great power in the region, and a political and security vacuum after the removal of Saddam's regime, on the other. All these factors shape the regional distribution of power and clarify the role of Iran's foreign policy in the Middle East (www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13931013001011, 2015).

The second level is the regional distribution of power and the role of Iran's foreign policy in the Middle East. Certainly the Middle East has been affected by prominent changes in the regional security system after the invasion Afghanistan and Iraq. Although traditional threats to Iran's national security were removed, ideologically from the Taliban, and the Sunni Baathist military from Saddam's regime, a new and great security threat replaced them: the US military forces located on both flanks of Iranian territories, the Eastern wing in Afghanistan, and the Western wing in Iraq. These changes reconstructed Iran's foreign policy approach to confront threats and reshaped its role in dealing with regional and international actors. Iran's foreign policy during Ahmadinejad's reign, especially the Iranian Revolutionary ideas, and more assertive Shiite movements, led to concerns in Sunni states about their own citizens. Puelings (2010: 29) states that "the pragmatic Iranian foreign policy and its refined influence building are seen as a challenge. Sunni States like Egypt or Saudi Arabia fear losing their strategic position in the region and the Arab world towards the west to the 'Iranian camp'."

The new threats in post-Saddam Iraq are caused by the US military presence in the region, and the frenetic competition among various players, such as Iran, the US and its regional allies, led Iran to respond by using all the instruments of power at its disposal. The non-

equal power between Iran, on one hand, and great powers including their regional allies, on the other, caused Iran's foreign policy to provide direct support via its special forces of Quds Force to its proxies.

This thesis argues that Iran's foreign policy during Ahmadinejad's presidency was a practical policy, in terms of a pragmatic approach to dealing with various challenges. This can be seen through the use of religious ideology and hardline speeches to earn the support of Arabs and Muslims to conduct asymmetric warfare against Iran's adversaries (Zweiri, 2007). Indeed, the vulnerability of the regional security system makes it difficult for traditional military forces to confront asymmetric warfare, which allows Iran's foreign policy to be active and strongly present in any regional negotiations about any security arrangements (Barzegar, 2010).

The third level is the way in which Iran's foreign policy drives external strategies in its international relations. Both offensive and defensive realism stress the necessity of states to ensure their survival. Defensive realism considers the balance of power as the best strategy of a state to ensure its survival, whereas offensive realism argues that the maximisation of power is the only guarantee for a state to ensure its survival. The Iranian political system is a theocratic system based on Islamic Shiite ideology, seeking survival in an anarchic international system and spreading its ideology into neighbouring countries to maximise its influence (www.yemeress.com, 2014). The export of Shiite ideology abroad needs an intensive campaign to overthrow the existing systems, including all cultural norms and values, and have them replaced by the doctrine of Shiite Islam (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008). This requires changing the status quo. Due to limited capabilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran to implement its ideological project abroad, synchronous in dealing with threats and

challenges, it needs proxies like Shiite factions, fundamentalist parties and paramilitary groups, to play offensive and defensive roles.

The argument of this thesis is that Iran's foreign policy is based on the principles of the offensive approach of international relations, according to the argument of John Mearsheimer (Mearsheimer, 2001; Abu Hilal, 2014). Mearsheimer argues that the "security issue requires a state to have more power to harm another, and the ultimate safety comes only from being the most powerful state in the system" (Williams 2008: 23). In the case of the Iranian regime, due to the acceleration in rebuilding a massive conventional and non-conventional power, the security dilemma has arisen. Thus, regional hegemony became the ultimate goal for Iran. According to Mearsheimer, conflict over power is unavoidable. Offensive realist theory assumes that uncertainty in international politics can never be reduced; it is never possible for policymakers to fully understand or allay the security fears of other states. In spite of their defensive intentions, it is never possible for states to control paradoxical security competition. Offensive realist theory suggests that states are driven by the fatalist logic of insecurity (Sutch et al, 2008). It has been widely assumed that Iran's foreign policy is understood within the framework of defensive realism, while some consider Iran's foreign policy during Ahmadinejad's presidency a sort of hegemonism in the shadow of offensive realism. This thesis assumes that the foreign policy of Ahmadinejad was constructed around confrontation, activity, engagement and a more assertive approach which fluctuates between deterrence against Western forces and hegemony over the region.

The thesis does not attempt to link Islamic ideology and offensive realism, as it uses three additional theories (constructivism, neoclassical realism and speech acts) to cover all

aspects of Iran's foreign policy outcomes and the impact of its transformative power on the regional security system.

6.5. Iran and Avenues for Regional Cooperation and Engagement with US policy

Iran's foreign policy after the invasion of Iraq needs to be discussed within a broader historical framework of strained relations between Iran and US that includes the intensive US military presence in the region. This military presence ensures American strategic interests and regional commitments, and constitutes the biggest national security threat to Iran.

Five elements define the conflict between the US and Iran. Firstly, the conflict is about power, influence and control of the Middle East region. Secondly, the Bush administration is classified as Christian Right, while Ahmadinejad's as conservative. Thirdly, the war on terror was part of Bush's foreign policy, the fight against the evils of terrorism, tyranny and oppression, while Ahmadinejad's foreign policy also adopted a similar hardline approach in the context of achieving the aspirations of the Iranian Revolution, the expansion of Persian influence in the region, and the unprecedented support to fundamentalist organisations under the pretext of helping the oppressed (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008). Fourthly, the US sent its soldiers to hotbeds of tension and conflict to spread Western values, while the foreign policy of Ahmadinejad also involved fighters acting in accordance with the theory of Wilayat Al-Faqih on governments and peoples (Mansfield, 2004; Al-Theyabi, 2011). Finally, Bush believed in the necessity of cleansing the world of 'evil' states (www.presidentialrhetoric.com, 2002), while Ahmadinejad believed it was necessary to rid

the world of aggressive states like Israel and the US (Ahmadinejad, 2005; mubasher.aljazeera.net, 2010).

Washington reluctantly accepted the rise of Iran as a regional power and the regime's ability to survive in the shadow of the regional turmoil. They started a dialogue with Iran seeking to regulate and control any possible overt action or maximising of its power (www.tehrantimes.com, 2012). Washington adopted a policy of détente, as it did in the past with its obstinate enemies, the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea. As Iran is one of the largest states in the region geographically, militarily, and by population, it found itself faced with two choices, either coexistence or confrontation with the US. Despite the radical discourses of its leaders, Iran chose to avoid any direct military confrontation with great powers. In post-invasion Iraq, "regional players have also looked to develop multilateral cooperation, albeit from a low base. Most notably, the five years since the invasion have seen the convening of a number of meetings of foreign and interior ministers, in what has loosely come to be called the 'Neighbouring Countries Initiative'" (Fawcett, 2009: 299).

In May of 2007, Ayatollah Khamenei stated that he supported US-Iran talks in Baghdad about improving Iraq's security situation. However, he indicated that there was no change in Tehran's policy toward Washington (Jones, 2007). Khamenei warned that the talks would only concentrate on US responsibilities in Iraq and not the Iranian influence in its neighbouring countries. The same source confirmed that Iraqi Foreign Minister, Hoshyar Zebari, had affirmed this statement during a meeting with his Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki at the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Islamabad, Pakistan on 16 May 2007. Zebari said that Iraqi, Iranian and US officials would discuss

arrangements for talks in Baghdad soon, in order to assist the Iraqi government in stabilising the Iraqi security situation and ease regional tensions (Jones, 2007). In line with these trilateral talks, "U.S. officials have said they do not oppose contributions from Iran-supported Iraqi Shiite militias as long as they operate under the command and control of the Iraqi government" (Burns, 2015). Burns (2015) added that in accordance to two US defence officials, "Iranian forces have taken a significant offensive role in the Beiji operation in recent days, in conjunction with Iraqi Shiite militia". This military operation was conducted against Islamic State militants in Iraq during May 2015. Al-Nefisy and Al-Rashed, however, expressed their deep concern about the US-Iran talks which go beyond Iraq's affairs to include the so-called "Grand Deal". Rashed argues that such a deal may also consist of arrangements or even agreements between both parties allowing Iran to engage in the Middle East issues such as Syria Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen, and even to proceed in its ballistic missile activities for example (Al-Rashed, 2015; Al-Nefisy, 2015).

Axelrod's explanation of how cooperation can emerge in situations of conflict offers a paradigm of understanding US-Iranian relations (Axelrod et al, 1988). In accordance with the prisoner's dilemma, a non-zero-sum game allows competitors to cooperate in a wide range of areas, in an anarchic environment of uncertainty. On this basis, the players may be losing or winning together, because they have both competitive and cooperative interests (Jervis, 1988; Wu et al, 1995). Collaboration is the rational approach of the prisoner's dilemma through open diplomacy between the players. This diplomacy is the way to keep the lines of communication open in their relationships, which may lead to a settlement of differences by mutual concessions. This approach is based on a rational account for both players, who decide to compromise in the framework of preferred choice for both, in accordance with cost or gain (Fakhoury, 2009; Soares, 2010).

Iran and the US took a pragmatic approach, despite their different interests, and made a rational decision to find common ground, because they realised there was no winner or loser. This is due to the fact that each player had strategic instruments of power and tactical effective capabilities that could severely harm the other. These instruments of power and capabilities can be seen as a confrontation between asymmetric warfare (Iran) and traditional military power (the US). In other words, according to the practical perspective, the US and Iran have found that a non-zero sum game was a rational approach for both sides to a win-win game (Hollis et al, 1990; www.payvand.com, 2012).

6.6. Iran's Nuclear Activities and Development of Ballistic Missile Systems

The Iranian nuclear programme and the development of ballistic missile systems are a contentious issue and closely monitored by the international community, led by Western nations (Carter, 2004; Cordesman et al, 2006; Takeyh, 2006). However, the Iranian regime has rapidly advanced both programmes, nuclear and missile, over the past decade, with constantly increasing ranges, which potentially could be used to deliver nuclear warheads (Cordesman et al, 2006). Hence, these two programmes created a regional and international crisis and posed a serious challenge to regional security and world stability, by creating growing threats to regional countries and beyond. This section explains the regional risks of Iran's foreign policy in terms of the growing capabilities of its ballistic missiles, short medium and long range, which are capable of carrying nuclear warheads, and its consequences on the regional security system. Iran's national interests, however, require nuclear deterrence in the region in the face of Israel, the US military presence and India-Pakistan, to some extent (Moran et al, 2009). In contrast, countries such as Iran's

neighbours, the Gulf states, Israel and the US are deeply concerned over the growing geopolitical instability, but also stability worldwide (Cronin et al, 2011).

Lawrence Freedman has taken these issues into consideration in his work. His notable article ‘Prevention, Not Preemption’ (2003), discusses deterrence strategies in the shadow of the concepts of prevention and preemption. Freedman (2003: 107) defines prevention as a situation that "intends to deal with a problem before it becomes a crisis, while preemption is a more desperate strategy employed in the heat of crisis". In the case of Iran's nuclear activities, the US and Israel have attempted to wage preemptive attacks against Iran's nuclear facilities, in order to eliminate Iranian nuclear capability before it develops and poses a serious threat. The national security strategy suggests, even in times of crisis, that preemption can be managed in other ways, such as through diplomatic talks and technical advice, along with attempts to prevent an aggravation of the conflict, which may drive great powers to the use of force (Freedman, 2003). Many scholars argue that the realist approach provides a better lens to look at the power capabilities, which mainly dictates self-interests, self-help, and egoism (Sevilla, 2011). Iran, despite signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1970, in the past decade has intensively pursued the development of its nuclear programme, ostensibly for peaceful purposes with Iran's decision to enrich its own uranium alongside an advanced missile system (www.nti.org, 2013). Iran has taken such a decision in order to reinforce its national security and to maximise its regional status. (Pollack et al, 2005). The other countries in the region, the Gulf States, Israel and the US react cautiously, viewing Iran as an actual threat to their existence, as well as to their self-interests, which lie on energy security, to continue the flow of energy to world markets (Katzman, 2003).

Social Constructivism puts the emphasis on ideas and identity in international relations, which have in turn been shaped by social interactions and intellectual perceptions. The Iranian national identity has been constructed on ideas that are anti-West, anti-American and anti-Israel, where Iran considers them enemies and assumes the inevitability of confrontation. However, the national identities of Arab states in the region, such as the Gulf countries, have been built on negative perceptions of the Islamic Shiite doctrine (Cronin et al, 2011). Add to that the concept of exporting the Islamic revolution and overthrowing monarchic regimes still entrenched in the minds of leaders and masses since 1980s (Bahgat, 2007). Thus, these mutual tensions have created the conventional arms race and have introduced regional and international alliances among nation-states and non-state actors as well. The Iranian nuclear programme alongside its growing missile capabilities is more likely to escalate the regional tension and may lead to unconventional arms race (Kemp, 2005).

US national interests towards a nuclear deterrence and means of delivery for missile systems stem from its international obligations for a nuclear non-proliferation agenda. These international obligations are based upon a combination of internal pressures, such as a range of hawkish Republicans, Israel lobby groups and self-interested department heads and advisors, on the one hand, and an external environment, derived from its global standing and prestige, on the other. Thus, it is clear that the regional situation of the Middle East is based upon a dynamic situation of action and reaction, in accordance with the process of the security dilemma regarding conventional and unconventional levels. Practically, the ongoing Iranian efforts to develop a nuclear programme in tandem with advanced missile systems reinforce its foreign policy to maximise its regional power. In

other words, acquiring nuclear weapons in addition to nuclear technologies provides deterrence power, negotiating power and prestige.

After several rounds of talks between the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Iran, concerning its advanced nuclear power programme, Tehran failed to report significant parts of its programme to IAEA, and insisted on developing not only all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle (www.iaea.org, 2003; Albright et al, 2012), but also on working to acquire, develop, and deploy a wide range of ballistic missile systems with capabilities to carry nuclear warheads (Fisk, 2011). Iran has heavily invested in nuclear industries in the past two decades, including "nuclear reactors, uranium conversion facilities, heavy water production plants, fuel fabrication plants, and uranium enrichment facilities" (Albright et al, 2006), while the IAEA inspectors have been prevented from accessing underground facilities for centrifuge sites, such as Natanz in Iran (http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/iran-constructing-the-40-mw-heavy-water-reactor-at-arak-despite-calls-not-t/8#images, 2005; Borger, 2009). See a map of Iran's nuclear installations (Appendix 4, p. 403).

David Albright, President of Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), reported on 22 February 2007 regular clashes between IAEA inspectors and Iranian officials over the frequency of inspections and refusal to grant the inspectors multiple entry visas according to the agency's protocol, and stated that without more collaboration and transparency the IAEA "will not be able to provide assurances about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities or about the exclusively peaceful nature of that program" (www.isis-online.org, 2007). A robust nuclear infrastructure, including the insistence of the Iranian regime on broadening the scope of the nuclear fuel cycle and its

frequent declarations of successfully enriched uranium (www.isis-online.org, 2006), investing heavily in programmes to increase ranges of new missile technology, and its capabilities in pursuing a dual track strategy to develop industry for both solid and liquid propellant missiles, have led the majority of states to worry about the true intention behind acquiring nuclear ambitions (Chipman, 2010). Thus, the interconnection between the two programmes, Iran's secret nuclear activities (www.isis-online.org, 2004) and the continuation of the development of the missile systems, pose serious challenges to international peace and security; regional and international destabilisation come as a result (Black et al, 2010). 'Image shows a tunnel construction in Isfahan nuclear facility in Iran (see Appendix 5, p. 404), and (Appendix 6, p. 405) a map of the range of Iran's missiles'.

Collectively, members of the Security Council Committee on Iran Sanctions after reports from the panel of experts of IAEA on 23 June 2011 expressed concern about Iran's continuation of its enrichment activities and also the successful launch of a second satellite into orbit. The Chair of the Committee, Néstor Osorio, reported that, although the Iranian regime repeatedly declared that its nuclear programme was peaceful, Iran persisted in obstructing all efforts by the IAEA to confirm the fact of Iranian peaceful atomic activities. The UK representative indicated that Iranian behaviour was clear evidence of Iran's challenge to the Council resolutions and sanctions regime (www.un.org, 2011). Despite Iran's claims that the missile systems are strictly for defence purposes, a long-range ballistic missiles (surface-to-surface or ground-to-ground) with the capacity to load conventional and unconventional warheads are normally used to strike targets well beyond state borders. In contrast, air defence systems, such as Patriot missiles (surface-to-air), are classified as defensive weapons. The risk regarding Iran's ballistic missiles has increased, as "Iran is not a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), and is

actively working to acquire, develop, and deploy a broad range of ballistic missiles and space launch capabilities" (www.nti.org, 2013). This can be seen through efforts to modify the Soviet missiles family R-17/R-300 (Scud-B) and R-17M (Scud-C); acquire Nodong missiles from North Korea (renamed the Shahab family of missiles 1/2/3), and develop both liquid and solid-fueled systems, in order to maximise the range missiles Ghadr-1, and the Sajjil-2 (Chipman, 2010; www.en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13941119000608, 2016).

John Chipman, director general and chief executive of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London, argues that shortly after the end of the Iran-Iraq war the Iranian regime put all efforts towards developing one of the most sophisticated systems for ballistic missiles in the Middle East, which enable Tehran to deliver a conventional or a potential nuclear warhead against any country in the region and beyond (Chipman, 2010). Efforts to develop advanced missile systems for a longer range started in the late 1980s with the Shahab family of missiles of Shahab-1 (300km-range), Shahab-2 (500km-range) and Shahab-3 (900 km-range), (Cordesman, 2008). The Shahab-3 missile, which has payload of 1,000kg, entered into operational service in mid-2003. In 2004, the Ghadr-1 missile, a modified version of the Shahab-3, was test-fired with a range of 1,600km, but with a smaller 750kg warhead. The Sajjil-2 missile was tested in 2008; it was capable of delivering a 750kg warhead to a range of approximately 2,000-2,200km. Operationally, the Sajjil-2 has been subjected to flight tests several times and is more likely to be deployed to military units (Cordesman, 2008; Chipman, 2010). Despite claims that Iranian ballistic missiles are limited and lacking in their militarily performance, due to their very poor accuracy, Iran has several hundreds of these kinds of missiles which are able to reach targets in its neighbouring countries (Fisk, 2011). Chipman argues that "nuclear warheads

have a much stronger strategic logic and all of Tehran's ballistic missiles are inherently capable of a nuclear payload, if Iran is able to make a small enough bomb" (Chipman, 2010). The most likely missiles that could carry an Iranian nuclear warhead would be the Ghadr-1, and possibly the Shahab-3, and Sajjil-2. However, in 2006 the Iranian regime alleged that the Shahab-3 missile has the capability to strike enemy targets within a distance up to 2,000km (1,200 miles), including most of the Middle Eastern countries and beyond (Cordesman, 2008). In addition to that, some believe that the upgraded version of Iran's Shahab-4 would have a range of 4,000 km (2,400 miles), enabling Iran to strike Germany, Italy, and Moscow (www.fas.org, 2006). Iran publicly announced a new version of long-range ballistic missile named Shahab-4, which is a developed version of the Shahab-3. The most detailed information for Shahab-4 missile systems is available in the public domain.

During testimony on global intelligence challenges to the US on 16 February 2005, Porter J. Goss, Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), reported that the supreme leader Ali Khamenei and the Iranian foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki, insisted that Iran would proceed with enriching uranium. Goss stated that "we (U.S.) are more concerned about the dual-use nature of the technology that could also be used to achieve a nuclear weapon." He added, "in parallel, Iran continues its pursuit of long-range ballistic missiles, such as an improved version of its 1,300 km range Shahab-3 MRBM, to add to the hundreds of short-range SCUD missiles it already has" (www.cia.gov, 2005).

On 1 March 2005, Pierre Goldschmidt, IAEA Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Safeguards, stated during his briefing to the Board of Governors of the agency that Iranian officials clearly acknowledged that "the Heavy Water Research

Reactor (IR-40) project is progressing" (isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/isis-imagery-brief-kalaye-electric/8#images, 2005). John Negroponte, Director of the US National Intelligence, expressed to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence common concerns related to Iran, which are shared by many countries and organisations, such as Iran's neighbours, IAEA, and the US. Negroponte stated on 02 February 2006 that "Iran may weaponize missiles to deliver nuclear warheads". He also reported:

> *The danger that it (Iran) will acquire a nuclear weapon and the ability to integrate it with the ballistic missiles Iran already possesses is a reason for immediate concern. Iran already has the largest inventory of ballistic missiles in the Middle East, and Tehran views its ballistic missiles as an integral part of its strategy to deter—and if necessary retaliate against—forces in the region, including US forces*
>
> (Negroponte, 2006: 11).

Ehud Barak, Israel's Defence Minister, said in a speech in Washington on 28 February 2010 that a danger of Iran's nuclear programme extends beyond Israel, which causes a serious worldwide challenge; thus, he stated, "I can hardly think of a stable world order with a nuclear Iran." "It means they (Iran) are not just trying to create a Manhattan-project-like crude nuclear device," he added. "They are trying to jump directly into the second or second-and-a-half generation of nuclear warheads that could be installed on top of ground-to-ground missiles with ranges that will cover not just Israel, but Moscow or Paris" (Keyes, 2010). Greg Bruno reported that the US Defence Department in 2010 proclaimed that Tehran "is keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons, if it chooses to do so"

(Bruno, 2011). The Pentagon also indicated there was advanced nuclear power in plant Bushahr for instance, with assistance from Russia.

On 28 June 2011, on the second day of the Iranian military exercise named 'Great Prophet 6' that lasted 10 days, the official media of Iran stated that the elite Revolutionary Guards launched 14 missiles, including medium-range missiles reaching over 1,000 miles. The Head of the Guards' aerospace division, Commander Amir Ali Hajizadeh, stated to the official media that "Iran's missiles have a maximum range of 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) and are designed to reach U.S. targets in the region and the Zionist regime" (www.theisraelproject.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=hsJPK0PIJpH&b=689705&ct=10890197, 2011). Hajizadeh also added that "the Zionist regime is 1,200 kilometers away from Iran, and we are able to target this regime with our 2,000-kilometer-range missiles" (www.theisraelproject.org, 2011). However, Victoria Nuland, spokesperson for the US Department of State, stated that UN Security Council Resolution 1929 prevents Iranian from developing missile systems for carrying nuclear warheads (Cordesman, 1999; Cordesman et al, 2006; www.theisraelproject.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=ewJXKcOUJlIaG&b=7737551&ct=11145537#.UUyRMRwvloF, 2011). On the other hand, some have argued that Iranian ballistic missiles systems and nuclear programme could be used in the context of a deterrence strategy as a political weapon, technically, to wage psychological warfare and propaganda, and to substantially reduce the enemy's ability to fight, which might lower an enemy's morale by raising fear. This complex situation usually leads to arms race, uncertainty, tension which escalates the scope of the security dilemma, and likely to create favourable conditions for regional conflict.

Several satellite images obtained by the Institute for Science and International Security from Space Imaging and Digital Global from 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012, and 2013 (www.isis-online.org, 2013) show high security uranium enrichment facilities, such as Natanz using gas centrifuges, including Arak heavy water reactor and heavy water production facilities, tunnel entrances to the underground facilities (www.isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/tunnel-entrance-to-the-underground-facilities-at-natanz-iran/8#images, 2005), as well as a suspected building for high explosive testing (Albright et al, 2004). These views of nuclear activities of Iran has led to a reaction from the IAEA Board of Governors and great powers as well (Albright et al, 2003; isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/new-satellite-images-show-tunnel-construction-at-esfahan-facility-in-iran/8#images, 2005; isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/New_Satellite_Imagery_of_Iranian_Nuclear_Sites_on_Google_Earth_11October_2011.pdf, 2011). In this context, a video tour of Iran's nuclear sites, obtained by NBC News in 2005, and transcribed and translated by the Institute for Science and International Security in 10 April 2009, which was produced by Iran as a promotional video with propaganda under the name of "Video Tour of Iranian Nuclear Sites", can be seen at www.isis-online.org, 2009. Moreover, David Albright, President of ISIS, spoke on 21 October 2011 on Iran's nuclear programme at George Washington University, Elliott School on video, which can be seen on (isis-online.org/conferences/detail/highlights-from-david-albrights-talk-on-irans-nuclear-program-at-george-was/8, 2011). In line with Iranian suspicious nuclear activities, the UK has informed the UN that "Iran is actively trying to buy nuclear technology through blacklisted companies, according to a confidential UN report that surfaced on 30 April 2015". This can be found in Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, 01 May 2015 (in www.rferl.org/content/iran-nuclear-un-sanctions-blacklist/26988272.html, 2015).

On the issue of the Iranian nuclear crisis, debates arise from two perspectives. First, some believe that diplomatic initiatives and peaceful solutions are preferable to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Kenneth Waltz the founder of neorealism (structural realism), argues that the proliferation of nuclear weapons would increase the probability of international peace (Waltz, 1993). In his view, the mere possibility of nuclear use causes extreme caution all around. Waltz considers Iran's leaders, despite their extreme speeches, rational elites (Waltz, 1993). This is because the leaders of Iran are not suicide bombers, and perhaps a nuclear-armed Iran could be deterred by the deliberate use of a nuclear weapon or the transfer of nuclear equipment to terrorists (Waltz, 2012). In defense of this view, Waltz claims that there is no need for all these efforts to prevent the Iranians from developing a nuclear weapon, whether by the US and its allies, or the UN (Waltz, 1993). Hence, Waltz encourages diplomatic efforts by keeping the lines of communication with the Iranian government open, so as to be able to co-exist with a nuclear Iran (Waltz, 2012).

The second perspective, on the other hand, favours imposing intensive international pressure and more sanctions, which could culminate in military action against Tehran to destroy its nuclear programme (Cordesman et al, 2006; Al-Hamid, 2013; www.theisraelproject.org, 2013). Colin Cal (2012) rejects Waltz's perspective on Iran's possession of nuclear power. He believes this may make the Middle East a more volatile place and even more prone to conflict. Iran should be prevented from acquiring nuclear weapons and developing ballistic missile systems (Cal, 2012). Cal also expressed his concern over Iran's nuclear activities, because they may support terrorist groups. Cal adds that without the use of military force it is hard to imagine how the Iranian regime can be prevented from developing nuclear weapons (Cal, 2012).

Ian Black et al argue that some regional states such as Israel prefer a military solution through launching an intensive air assaults on Iran's nuclear facilities. Black states that the majority of Arab states expressed their concern about Iran's possession of nuclear weapons, in referring to Iran as an "existential threat" and a power that "is going to take us to war" (Black et al, 2010). US Defence Secretary Robert Gates warned in February 2010 of the failure of diplomatic efforts, by saying that risks of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East may lead to an Israeli strike on Tehran (Sanati, 2008; Black et al, 2010). Prince Turki al-Faisal, a former Saudi intelligence chief and ambassador to Washington, warned of a possible outbreak of nuclear conflict in the Middle East region if Iranian efforts came close to obtaining nuclear weapons. Al-Faisal stated, "If Iran develops a nuclear weapon, that will be unacceptable to us and we will have to follow suit" (Burke, 2011). Al-Faisal also added that the Gulf states, in general, and Saudi Arabia, in particular, cannot live in a situation where the Islamic Republic of Iran acquires nuclear weapons. This statement came as a reaction to continuous endeavours by the Iranian regime to maximise its regional power in both conventional and unconventional military sectors.

Despite the fact that several rounds of talks about resolving the nuclear issue between the five permanent Security Council members including Germany (P5+1), those negotiations have failed, due to technical matters. This failure led to additional international sanctions on the Iranian regime (Negroponte, 2006; Albright et al, 2012). However, Iran's nuclear programme talks are approaching the final stages, after they hammered out a preliminary agreement in the first half of 2015 (Charbonneau, 2015). However, it is important to mention that Iran’s missile power will not be included in the talks between Iran and the great powers (www.tehrantimes.com/images/pdfs/12158.pdf, 2014). In reference to the impact of sanctions, Ali Salehi, the former head of the Atomic Energy Iran's Organisation,

admitted in 2010 that Iran's enrichment programme had been delayed due to the international sanctions (www.whitehouse.gov, 2012; www.consilium.europa.eu, 2012). To conclude, this section discussed the scope of Iran's threats concerning its nuclear activities and missile capabilities, as an integrated unity that imposed a new comprehensive threat towards the regional security of the Middle East and beyond.

6.7. Iran's Foreign Policy and Non-State Militant Actors

Buzan argues that non-state actors that are representing both the civil and paramilitary sides are really a matter of concern and play important roles in the security agenda (Buzan, Jones & Little 1993). This strategic alliance and Iran's behaviour are under test, in order to assess the nature and scope of correlation between the distribution of soft power, including Iran's use of ideological proxies that have been used as instruments for asymmetric warfare, and the geopolitical dynamics implications.

Boosting Shiite Islam empowers Iran's foreign policy, not only because it enhances the spiritual influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran, but also because it broadens the capabilities of its proxies in asymmetric warfare. Sir Lawrence Freedman (2006), addressed a dilemma that confronted regular forces, especially Western armies governed by liberal values and principles in dealing with asymmetric warfare, during the course of their efforts to safeguard their regional interests and reinforce the national security of their allies. According to Freedman, this line of argument demonstrates the strategic challenges of the phenomenon of regional conflict, where non-state actors emerged as resistant forces using terrorist methods, and fight as national liberation movements against colonial powers or their regional allies. (www.media.clubmadrid.org, 2005). Iran's proxies are defined as

non-state actors like fundamentalist organisations (Hezbollah in Lebanon) and extremist groups (Al-Mahdi Army in Iraq) that share ideological beliefs and political-security agendas with Tehran (Cordesman, 2007; Byman, 2008; Fawcett, 2009; Puelings, 2010).

This part of the thesis explains why, who and how the new political actors, particularly non-state actors of Shiite organisations, who have a strategic linkage with Iran, have influenced the regional security system of the Middle East. In contrast, and in order to explain the origin of the regional security landscape and the mechanism of the security dilemma, the role of radical Sunni jihadists is also examined. Organised militia groups, such as the so-called mujahedin in Afghanistan and the networks related to Al-Qaeda (the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State), are actively operating in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Arabian Peninsula, and Northern Africa, in order to implement their political agendas, and commit violent acts, in the name of freedom fighting and resistance (Al-Rashed, 2014). These militia groups have embraced Jihad to legitimise their activities to counter their adversaries, such as the Shiite factions, and neighbouring states that ally with the Western forces in the region (Miller, 2006; Byman, 2008).

After the war in Afghanistan in 1979, the mujahedin reoriented their focus on the next target, instead of the Soviet Union. Their target has been the world. It has been argued that in the post-Cold War era and the aftermath of the 11 September attacks, new non-state actors have emerged on the terrorist scene, including violent groups that represent Islamic terrorism, such as Al Qaeda (Horgan, 2005). Robert Jervis supports this argument by saying that "a terrorist group, such as al-Qaeda, for example, could not carry out its terrorist activities without the compliance of one or more nation-states" (Jervis, 2005: 41).

Sunni organisations and Shiite factions are both receiving sponsorship and support, by individuals, groups or governments.

Nowadays, terrorist incidents and acts of violence have become more complex. These complexities came as a result of expansionist activities of transnational terrorist organisations, resulting in increased difficulty in the face of the wave of violence. Al-Qaeda's threats and its related networks of transnational Islamist terrorism, for instance, have grown at a very fast pace and spread across the region and beyond (www.memri.org, 2003). Most importantly, the safe havens, possession of weapons and funding and sometimes the loss of control by the central authority (e.g. Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen) have driven the political situations and security landscape in the region into a dark tunnel. Undoubtedly, a compete for leadership and interactions between major players in the light of attaining their self-interests by depending on non-states actors have drove regional situation into more complex (www.memri.org, 2003; Abizaid, 2006; Jones, 2012).

It has been argued that whatever the type of regime, Sunni or Shiite, non-state actors remain one of the active instruments of power for foreign policies. Freedman (2008) and Wehrey et al (2010) wrote that Iran has long supported non-state actors like Hamas in Gaza, Palestinian Islamic Jihad in West Bank, and Lebanese Hezbollah. Despite the differences between Iran and Sunni radical Salafi (Al-Qaeda) and the Muslim Brotherhood (Hamas), Iran's regime provides them with a safe haven and lethal military aid in line with its pragmatist approach.

In this context, Freedman argues that, in a strategic concept, terrorist methodology is mainly designed for political gains by using excessive violence that affects the

psychological state in the short run, and loss of confidence in the legitimacy of the regime in the long run (www.media.clubmadrid.org, 2005). The patterns of terrorist activities can involve asymmetric warfare, kidnappings and suicide bombings in air, at sea and on land. Terrorist incidents have linked to al Qaeda have occurred in countries such as Saudi Arabia, the US, the UK, Kenya, the Philippines, Indonesia, Pakistan, Tunisia, Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Bahrain, Egypt and Kuwait.

Notwithstanding America's counter-terrorism strategy, based on material power, the terrorist threat is still great. Terrorist groups, Sunni and Shiite, continue to perpetuate their struggle and attract new recruits locally and externally, and are able to replenish their resources (Hoffman, 2006). Religion is very important for Middle Eastern people and the Islamic world. As a result, US strategy against extremist religious ideology, a strategy involving the use of military power, remains questionable.

Since 2003 the US administration has focused its concerns and its forces on Sunni militant groups, instead of Shiite militias (Al-Rashed, 2014). This gave Iran the opportunity to stretch its influence to Iraq and beyond, to include Lebanon, Syria and Yemen (Al-Habbas, 2015), and even further to reach Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait, and other Arab states. It seems that the beneficiaries of the US invasion of Iraq were the Shiites and the Islamic regime in Tehran, while the big losers were the Sunni population of Iraq, who lost their traditional influence in political life. As a result, some Sunni opposition in the form of armed factions emerged. Iranian writer and political analyst Mohammed Sadiq Al-Husseini discusses the Iranian perspective on the regional situation by highlighting Iran's behaviour towards Arab countries, in particular, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Al-Husseini argues that Yemen has been seized by Iran as it did in southern Lebanon and Syria. Al-Husseini says

that Saudi Arabia is going to collapse soon. This can be seen on Arabi 21 TV, London, Video-Archives (30 September 2014) in Arabic language (see www.arabi21.com/story/779032, 2014). These Iranian efforts rely on proxies of Shiite factions wherever they exist across the region, and within regional geopolitical rivalries. Public Safety in Canada Minister Vic Toews pointed out that the Canadian authorities added Iran's Quds Force to a list of terrorist groups on 20th December 2012, as a result of the terrorist activities of Al-Quds Forces, a special unit in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Toews said that the Quds Force was responsible for "exporting the Iranian Revolution" through arming, funding and paramilitary training to extremist groups, including the Taliban, Hezbollah, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (www.skynewsarabia.com, 2012; www.irna.ir, 2014).

To summarise, the close link between non-state actors and the Iranian regime, especially with powerful Shiite militant groups such as Lebanese Hezbollah, affects Iran's foreign policy (Cronin et al, 2011). Iran and its proxies have behaved according to an ideological doctrine alongside a geopolitical approach to maximise their power in the region (Kinzer, 2006; Owen, 2007).

6.8. Conclusion

This chapter focused on Iran’s foreign policy assertiveness and its strategic interests in the Middle East, by analysing its transformative power in post-Saddam Iraq between 2003-2013. This chapter discussed how religious ideology and material factors interacted, by addressing the independent variable (the distribution of soft power via ideological proxies), the dependent variable (Iran’s foreign policy outcome) and intervening variables (the

domestic dimension). By linking these variables, it constructed bridges to explore a common epistemological ground for Iran's foreign policy assertiveness between 2003 and 2013. It used neoclassical realist, constructivism, offensive realist, and speech acts approaches.

The chapter began by discussing the strategic interests and geopolitical factors of Iran's foreign policy, concentrating on the ideological approach alongside the pragmatism to assist in the analysis of the dynamic processes of geopolitical realities of the region particularly, during Ahmadinejad's presidency (Al-Ghareib, 2005).

There followed a discussion of the Iranian rhetoric of foreign policy as one of the instruments of soft power that supports its foreign policy and regional interests. The chapter showed that President Ahmadinejad managed to reinforce Iranian public diplomacy more successfully than the Arab states by reaching out to different parts of the world. Ahmadinejad's administration revived Imam Khomeini's revolutionary approach on the one hand, and amplified his rhetoric as a tactical instrument on the other hand to overcome Iran's isolation on the regional and international stage. On the regional stage, anti-Israeli, anti-imperialist, and pan-Islamic rhetoric, including the Israeli–Palestinian conflict were used as deliberate tools in the conduct of Iran's foreign policy in order to reach into the Arab street and put Arab governments on the defensive. On the international stage, the Iranian regime has succeeded in internationalizing Iran's nuclear programme by interconnecting it to regional issues, by stressing the themes of state sovereignty, international justice, and technological self-sufficiency. In contrast, the Western media, especially the U.S. beside Israel continuously launched media campaigns against Iranian

regime including hardline rhetoric which increased the regional tension and escalated the geopolitical dynamics in light of security dilemma in the Middle East region.

The chapter highlighted the offensive approach alongside the defensive approach in Iran's foreign policy. When Ahmadinejad came into power in 2005, Iran's foreign policy shifted into greater assertiveness, becoming less favourable towards the US and Israel. The impact of his foreign policy on the region was discussed.

Iran's foreign policy and avenues for regional cooperation and engagement with US policy were evaluated. This thesis argued that, despite the mutual historical animosity between the Iranian regime and the US, their clashing interests and policies, and the intensive military presence of the US in the Middle East, both countries have followed a pragmatic approach, deciding to find common ground, to ensure their strategic interests according to "no winner or loser" strategy (Hollis et al, 1990; Kinzer, 2006; Fawcett, 2009). This chapter also highlighted the complexities of the Iranian nuclear programme and development of its ballistic missiles, which are deemed not only a serious threat to the regional security system, but also a challenge to world stability. As Iran proceeds in its efforts to become a nuclear power, it has employed an assertive foreign policy that relies heavily on supporting foreign operations to further its perceived interests (Levitt, 2012). Referring to this assertive foreign policy, President Obama stated on 12 May 2015:

> *It is important to remember that Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism and has already engaged in these activities without a nuclear arsenal. We can only imagine how Iran might become even more provocative if it were armed with a nuclear weapon. Moreover, it would become even harder for the international community*

to counter and deter Iran's destabilizing behavior. That's one of the reasons why the comprehensive deal we're pursuing with Iran is so important—by preventing a nuclear-armed Iran it would remove one of the greatest threats to regional security

(Al-Oraibi, 2015: 3).

The next chapter provides further discussion of the four essential issues under study, in line with Iran's foreign policy outcomes and the impact of its transformative power on the regional security system.

Chapter Seven

The Four Essential Issues under Study

7.1. Introduction

> *The export of revolution via the weapon does not achieve the real objective of the Islamic Revolution. Therefore, the actual export by through developing the Islamic facts, Islamic ethics, and human ethics. The meaning of export our revolution is that, all nations and all governments awake to save themselves from these ordeals that they suffer. Indeed, our movement is expanding and moving into peoples*
>
> (Imam Ayatollah Ruhollah Mostafavi Moosavi Khomeini, the supreme religious and political leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, 1979, in Khomeini, 1981: 38; AL-Sobagha, 2015: 11).

In addition to the active role of asymmetric warfare, there are other instruments of power that can be used without firing a single shot (Hamourtziadou, 2016). Hamourtziadou writes that wars of words, wars of ideas, or discourse wars, have the power to influence successive generations, even after armed conflict has ended. She adds that wars that depend on soft power, such as the discourse on the struggle against imperialism, "enemies, of threats, of hegemony and of counter-hegemony, of freedom and of enslavement", can lead to armed confrontation at any time. This approach of soft power is an efficient

instrument to capture the hearts of the Arabs and the minds of Muslims who need a champion to represent them in the conflict. Moreover, soft power is less costly for the economy and infrastructure.

Iran's official discourses are consistent with the direction of the leader of the Iranian Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini (www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940625001158, 2015). In this regard, Lieutenant General, Hossein Salami, the Chief of the Joint Staff of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of Iran, stated that "The Iranian Islamic Revolution is not only working on spreading the culture that wakes up and develops the mentality of the Muslim world, but it is also working toward activating confrontation, which has pulled the rug from under the foreign forces in the region" (www.iranprimer.usip.org, 2015). Salami added also that the region is still looking for "a new political and security order. The Islamic Republic of Iran is contributing to the production of this order. We have advanced on the enemy in this regard and we have the initiative in shaping this order" (www.iranprimer.usip.org, 2015).

As previously mentioned, the Iranian Revolution is derived spiritually from the movement of the third Imam for Shiite Twelver, Hussein, Ali's son, when he tried to revolt on Caliph's legitimacy of Yazid bin Muawiyah and overthrow his power and reform the path of religious leadership for Islam, but his mission failed and he was killed. So the question is how to put the idea of reform on the ground. Soft power is the answer. This chapter explores the relationship between the three essential variables. These are: independent variable, dependent variable and intervening variables. This will improve our understanding by examining how a state (Iran) and its proxies (non-state actors such as Lebanese Hezbollah and Shiite factions in Iraq) have been impacted by the geopolitical

dynamics and, in turn, how they have responded to a changing security environment which affected the security dilemma.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. Each section discusses one of the issues connected with Iran's behaviour during the time frame of this study. These issues are: Iranian policy in Iraq post-2003; Iranian support to Hezbollah; Iran's anti-Israel policy; and Iran's policy towards the Strategic Communities of Gulf states. The chapter is designed to establish a conceptual framework to explain Iran's foreign policy and explore the nature and scope of the security dilemma. Article 152-154 of the Iranian Constitution (adopted in 1979 and amended in 1989), as noted earlier, clearly explains the goals of Iran's foreign policy, which are "defense of the rights of all Muslims, non-alignment with hegemonic superpowers, and the maintenance of peaceful relations with all non-belligerent States" (www.parstimes.com, 1979). However, Iran's external activities have been condemned and suspicion has fallen on the role of its proxies of non-state actors, such as Hezbollah, Hamas and Iraqi militants, for undermining efforts to bring peace to the region and for reinforcing a regional influence of Iran (Feltman et al, 2010). Such activities are conducted in the shadow of common strategic interests around several regional issues that relate to Iraq, Lebanon, Israel, and the Gulf states and many others (Cilluffo, 2013).

7.2. Iranian Policy in Iraq 2003

To understand Iranian policy in Iraq in 2003, it is essential to discuss the roots of the Iran-Iraq relationship and its impact on Iran's foreign policy in the post-Saddam era. A longitudinal study of the Iran-Iraq relationship by Potter et al (2002) reports that "for a long time, Iraq has been Iran's nemesis and it continues to represent the real threat and

danger to Iran's national interest". Al-Aderous (1999) points out that the Iranian view of Iraq is, and has always been, that of an intersection of Iranian grand interests and sources of threats and challenges. The removal of Saddam's military and ideological threat came with the liquidation of his regime in 2003, removing two barriers for Iran, which began its transformative foreign policy. For Iran, a collapsed Iraq was a pivotal point for expanding its ideological influence upon the Middle East region, by supporting Shiite sects and non-state actors, to execute Iran's geopolitical interests in the long run (www.alwatan.kuwait.tt /articledetails.aspx?id=444988, 2015).

Throughout history and especially during the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 religious and ideological ties between Iranian and Iraqi Shiite clergies in Najaf and Karbala (South Baghdad) were close. The Iranian bolstering of Iraqi Shiite organisations during Saddam's era began officially in 1979 (Al-Ghareib, 2005). Freedman (2008: 435) argues that the Islamic Dawa Party in Iraq, for instance, "was viewed in the West as a terrorist organisation, uncomfortably close to Iran". By forming the ad-Da'wa Al-Islamiya party and the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) as an umbrella organisation for Shiite political and paramilitary activity, the Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard paved the way for unprecedented levels of coordination between Iraqi Shiite paramilitaries and the new theocratic regime in Iran (Freedman, 2008; Puelings, 2010).

The neoclassical realist explanation for the Iranian support of Iraqi Shiite factions interprets the transformative power in Iran's external behaviour, which is affected by domestic factors (Juneau, 2009). Constructivist explanations are based on a philosophy of ideational factors which interact among the Iranian regime and Shiite factions of Iraq,

within the framework of the social construction of reality that consists of consciousness of thoughts, beliefs, and cultural concepts that have been created through historical interactions (Jackson et al, 2007). Offensive realist explanations for Iranian support for various Shiite factions focus on Iran's adoption of asymmetric military capabilities, in order not only to protect its security position and national interests, but also to maximise its influence on Iraq geopolitically (Booth et al, 2008). Speech acts use hardline rhetoric between Iranian elites and the prominent Shiite factions such as Al-Mahdi Army in Iraq, as a means for identifying language similarity for specific practice, which can be used to formulate and impact on realities, and interpret linguistic phenomena and action (Allwood, 1977; Bilgin, 2005).

7.2.1. Iran-Iraq Relations after Saddam

The bloody eight-year Iran-Iraq war still fresh in Iran's memory, when the Iranian regime attempted to prevent a resurgent Sunni dictatorship from leading Iraq after the removal of Saddam's regime. After Saddam, Iraq became a first line of defence for Iranian national security against any external threats, via supporting Shiite governments loyal to the supreme leader in Tehran, according to the doctrine of Wilayat Al-Faqih (Beehner et al, 2008; Smyth, 2012). Religious ideology, along with others factors, has constructed state identity and determined international relations and the construction of foreign policy. Fawcett (2009) noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran is probably the best-known case for using geopolitical Islamism, alongside Saudi Arabia, to expand their dominant position as a symbol of the real Islamic regime. Al-Ghareib (2005) points out that Iran classifies its alliances in the Middle East according to national factors and religious ideology.

Despite the fact that Iran and Iraq differ in their culture, ethnicity, language and history, the Islamic doctrine of Shiite and common interests link the two nations. Najaf and Karbala, located deep in the Shiite heartland of southern Iraq, are the holiest cities for the Shiite community, after Mecca and the Medina of Western Saudi Arabia. Iraq, in general, and Najaf and Karbala, in particular, were central to the reformation of political Islamic regimes through Imam Hussein's revolution attempt in 680 CE that led to his death in Karbala (Shams al-Din, 1996). Since then, Imam Hussein, has been deemed a reforming model for the Shiite political movement. His tomb became the central building in Karbala city and a place of pilgrimage for all Shiite Muslims in the world, and above all, a city of epic battles and martyrdom (Shams al-Din, 1996).

On the other hand, geopolitical realities are essential factors that influence the Iran-Iraq relationship. Iran plays a major role in Iraq due to its geographic proximity, despite US attempts to mitigate Iran's engagement in Iraq's affairs. Rakel (2008) stresses the influence of Islamic Shiite thought on Iran's geopolitical external affairs. Iranian leaders have a clear vision and approach to foreign policy, driven by ideology. Iraq has played an important role in linking Shiites in the region.

7.2.2. Iranian Interests in Iraq

One major interest for Iran's regime in Iraq is to collaborate closely with Iraqi Shiite groups, particularly Shiite elites and leaders, in order to enhance its influence on the socio-political system of Iraq, through the formation of a strategic coalition (Puelings, 2010; www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13930730001608, 2014). Geoffrey Kemp, director of regional strategic programmes at the Nixon Centre in Washington, D.C., stated

in his special report 156 on Iran and Iraq, 'The Shia Connection, Soft Power, and the Nuclear Factor, Iraq and its Neighbours', in 2005, that, in the aftermath of the fall of Saddam's regime in 2003, Shiite Iran predominantly emerged with increased power and influence in Iraq and the Middle Eastern arena in general (Kemp, 2005). The US military in Iraq confirmed in early November 2011 that the armed groups belonging to Iran's Quds Forces were responsible for attacking US troops and Iraqi security forces (www.state.gov, 2004; www.churchofscotland.org.uk, 2008). The Force Commander of the Revolutionary Guards Airborne, General Amir Ali Haji Zadeh, threatened America that if it targeted officers of Revolutionary Guards through assassinations, Quds Forces would kill ten US officers in Iraq and Afghanistan for every Iranian officer killed (www.aknews.com, 2011). The spokesman of the National Accord Movement, Hadi al-dalimy, announced to the news agency Kurdistan, that speeches of Iranian Commanders are deemed a new sign and evidence of the size of Iran's influence in Iraq. Al-dalimy added that such hardline discourse was also used by Ahmadinejad, when he said that Iran was ready to fill the vacuum after US withdrawal, and this demonstrates that they have the strength and allies on the ground. Hence, the statements, events and security provided evidence of Iranian power in Iraq and its influence on the regional security system (www.aknews.com, 2011).

In the context of Iranian expansion in material power and regional influence, Fairuz Ahmady, responsible for the security and political situation in the province of Zanjan in the North-West Tehran, declared in a press statement that "Iran is no longer fighting inside its territories which are being fully controlled on them, but Iraq and Gaza have become shields for Iran to repel any potential attacks either by the United States or Israel" (www.watan.com, 2012). Ahmady added that what happened in Iraq confirms the success and ability of Iran. However, no further details were given to demonstrate the meaning of

‘Iranian success.’ Such an official statement clearly demonstrates Iran's engagement in the domestic affairs of its neighbours, through coordination and strategic cooperation with its proxies of non-states actors with unconventional forces on the ground, in order to act on behalf of Iran. Ayad Allawi, the interim Prime Minister of Iraq from 2004 to 2005, and Vice President of Iraq since 2014, criticised the role that Iran plays in the region. Allawi stated that Iranian behaviour and the active role of its foreign policy, along with regional ambitions, adds more fuel to volatile events, reflecting significantly on the regional security landscape (Allawi, 2013).

As can be seen from the above, the linkage between the central question of this thesis which addresses how to understand Iran's foreign policy behaviour and the impact of its use of soft power on the security dilemma in the Middle East.

7.2.3. The Shiite Crescent between Reality and Illusion

The term Shiite Crescent appeared in 2004, when King Abdullah II of Jordan warning of the emergence of an ideological situation and used "Shiite Crescent" (Fuller, 2006; Wright, 2010) to describe his concern over the rising Iranian power in the region in post-Saddam Iraq in 2003, a situation dependent on Shiite empowerment in Iraq all the way through the Gulf region, Syria, and Lebanon. The former President of Egypt, Husni (Hosni) Mubarak (1981-2011) admitted in 2006 his concern about the Shiite Crescent two years after King Abdullah II’s warning, stating that "Iran exerted strong influence over Iraq's majority Shia (Shiite) population and Shias (Shiites) living in other Arab countries" (Ehteshami and Zweiri, 2008: 120). Hosni Mubarak said, "Most of the Shiites are loyal to Iran, and not the countries they are living in" (Fuller, 2006: 145). In addition, the Saudi foreign minister,

Saud Al Faisal expressed deep concern over the spread of Iran's influence in the region, stating that "we all fought Iran to prevent its invasion of Iraq, but now all of us (Arabs) have delivered Iraq to Iran without reason" (Barzegar, 2007: 100; Al-Nefisy, 2015).

Since the emergence of the Shiite Crescent as an ideological concept, debates on whether it is real or an illusion have become significant in major regional conferences (Freedman, 2008). Al-Nefisy et al (2008: 8) stressed that in Article 12 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran it says, "the official religion of Iran is Islam of the Jafari Twelvers Imam sect and this article is inalterable in perpetuity". Al-Ghareib (2005) and Al-Nefisy et al (2008) argue that the main objective of the Islamic Revolution was to export the Islamic Shiite doctrine abroad.

In this context, Iranian Revolutionary Guard Leader, Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari, announced publicly that Iran's intervention in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen aims to reinforce the Shiite Crescent's in the region and to unite all Muslims (Khomeini, 1970, 1981; www.mtv.com, 2015). This can be seen through speaker Abdullah Al-Nefisy, in a seminar in the bureau of Hussein Al-Dosari in Kuwait, who focuses on "the transformative power of Iranian external behaviour in the shadow of growing Shiite influence and the impact upon regional stability" (Video 25 March 2013, Arabic language, see www.alziadiq8.com/17310.html, 2013).

7.2.4. Regional Implications of Shiite Revival in Iraq

The removal of Saddam's regime and the dominance of Iraqi Shiites in centres of political-security and economic authority upset the traditional balance of power in the region (Bilgin,

2005; Fawcett, 2009; www.aawsat.com/home/article/344651, 2015). Until 2003, the power of Iraq as a Sunni state was to act as a buffer between Iran's expansionist aspirations and its neighbouring countries. It is important to remember that much of the regional Iranian activism predated the 2003 invasion (Feste, 1996; Takeyh, 2007; Barzegar, 2009). However, it has been widely argued that the Iranian government in Tehran has long supported non-state actors, such as the Lebanese Hezbollah, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, and more importantly, the ad-Da'wa Al-Islamiya party of which the former Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki, is a member (Ehteshami, 2003). Nouri al-Maliki fled to Iran during Saddam's era, in order to revive local Shiite activism to obtain power through the means of democratic elections (Flintoff, 2007; Beehner et al, 2008; Puelings, 2010). This can be seen in a documentary about the dangers of the Marching Black, Ahwazi Arabestan Site, (Video, 21 March 2012, Arabic language, see www.arabistan.org/videoinfos.aspx?elmnt=96&ids=1395, 2012).

Flintoff (2007) argues that Maliki came to power with the help of the leader of Al-Mahdi Army, Muqtada as-Sadr, who was accused by the US of receiving money, weapons and training from Iran, in order to keep fueling the fighting by engaging in asymmetric warfare to weaken American power in Iraq. In this context, President George W. Bush stated to reporters that he could "say with certainty that the Quds Force was providing the equipment to militants. What we do not know is whether or not the head leaders of Iran ordered the Quds Force to do what they did" (www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/02.14.07.html, 2007). Gordon et al (2007) noted that the US administration ordered the Iranian regime to stop the involvement of the Shiite militants in Iraq. These militants had longstanding ties with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Iran and Lebanese

Hezbollah militia, who trained in Iran and were equipped for conducting several attacks against the coalition forces (Cordesman, 2007; Nerguizian, 2013).

The overthrow of Saddam's regime created the perception of increased vulnerability on the Arab side and led to concerns about Iran and its proxies of non-state actors (Al-Aderous, 2002; www.aawsat.com/home/article/358431, 2015; www.iraqakhbar.com, 2015). In 2006, when Iraq's descent into sectarian conflict reverberated inside a number of regional countries, new pressure was put on governments stoking societal tensions (Wehrey et al, 2010). However, this thesis shows different types of Iranian influence on Middle Eastern countries. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Lebanon felt strongest the possibility of sectarian conflict in their communities, whereas Kuwait represents, to some extent, a special case concerning the consequences of sectarian conflict in Iraq, due to a more liberal political system and participatory political culture among all spectrums of society, which mitigates the socio-political congestion. Egypt and Jordan have relatively little concern regarding Shiite agitation, because of their low Shiite numbers.

7.2.5. The Cycle of Violence in Iraq between Iranian Interests and Regional Threats

Ehteshami et al (2008) argue that the Iranian regime views Iraq as a risk as well as an opportunity. The 2003 Iraq crisis was a turning point in modern history and has emphasised the interconnectedness of Middle Eastern affairs, which has allowed Iran to reinforce its ideological power over the region. Sandikli (in Gokay 2004:77) refers to the developments in Iraq as a regional crisis that stands at the top of the agenda today, since "the whole world will suffer the consequences of chaos or a possible civil war in Iraq".

This cycle of violence easily spreads across the region, due to the deep ideological and spiritual link among Shiites, and the centrality of leadership in Shiite communities.

Despite the fact that sectarian violence between Shiites and Sunnis, which reached its peak in 2006 and 2007, decreased in Iraq over the following years (Hanlon et al, 2007; Hanlon et al, 2008; Hanlon et al, 2010; www.iraqbodycount.org, 2013), attacks are still taking place every day with thousands still being killed every year, after US withdrawal from Iraq in late 2011 (Hanlon et al, 2011; Hanlon et al, 2013; Crawford, 2013). "The human costs of the war in Iraq have been massive", wrote Rogers (Rogers (2009: 7). According to a public record of violent deaths following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, a minimum of 133,844 civilians were killed between 2003 and 2013 (www.iraqbodycount.org, 2013).

Since April 2013 and following an attack against Sunni protesters, violence is on the rise again, with over 7,000 civilians killed so far this year, as Iraq Body Count reports (www.iraqbodycount.org, 2013). The most frequent targets are members of the Shiite community, the security forces and government officials. Sunni insurgents, under the organisation of the Islamic State of Iraq, and other radical groups such as al-Qaeda in Iraq, have claimed responsibility for several of the attacks (Usher, 2012; Abouzeid, 2013). Thousands of Sunnis have held regular demonstrations and protest rallies in several Iraqi provinces since December 2012, accusing the Shiite government of the former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki of monopolising power in all sectors and affairs of Iraq. Violence has escalated dramatically, especially after the appearance of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria that seized several Iraqi regions, such as Nineveh, Salahuddin and Al-Anbar, in June 2014 (www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13931007000908, 2014).

Iraq's most senior Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali Husayni al-Sistani, issued a fatwa to Shiite sects urging them to carry weapons against Sunni insurgents led by the Islamic State (www.bbc.co.uk, 2014). Indeed, the fatwa is an example of a speech act amounting to a declaration of war, after the militants widened their grip in the north and west of Iraq, and threatened to march south, towards Baghdad. Most importantly, Sadeq Amoli Larijani, Iran's Judiciary Chief, underlined in a meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi in Tehran on, 22 October 2014, "Iran will continue its strong moral and material support for Iraq" and Iran's record in supporting Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein clearly indicates this (www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13930730001608, 2014). In such sectarian violence and political infighting in Iraq, the critical question is whether regional competition for leadership, distribution of power and conflict in the Middle East has raised new fears, as it seems to be turning increasingly into sectarian confrontations that may spread across the region. Usher Sebastian sheds light on Shiite concerns about the consequences of events in Syria, should a new Sunni leadership take power, as it might sponsor more Sunni insurgency in Iraq and beyond (Usher, 2012).

Muqtada al-Sadr, the leader of Al-Mahdi Army, the prominent militia in Iraq, (as reported in Karadsheh et al, 2011) urged thousands of his followers to "resist" and "disturb" the United States. Al-Sadr (in Karadsheh et al, CNN article, 2011) said in a fiery speech in the holy Shiite city of Najaf that "we continue to resist the occupier militarily, culturally and by all means of the resistance". This speech represents a mutual hardline between Iranian elite discourse and militia Iraqi leaders, based on resistance and violence, in order to change the status quo.

Hoshyar Zabari, Iraq's Foreign Minister, (in Flintoff, 2007) admitted that Iranian interference in Iraq has worsened the situation and made life harder. Zabari (in Flintoff, 2007) also stated that Iran will still be next door after the US forces withdraw. Accordingly, Ali Mohammed Hussein (in Flintoff, 2007), an ordinary Iraqi person, when asked about the influence of Iran in Iraq, said, "Iran fights America here in Iraq; you do not need to be educated to know that". Ryan Crocker, former US Ambassador in Iraq, after a security meeting with Iran's Ambassador to Iraq in 2007, stated that the American administration repeatedly warned Iran about meddling dangerously in Iraq. He also noted that he had seen an increase in Iranian activities facilitating radical paramilitary and militia groups, to commit violent acts against Iraqi security forces, Iraqi civilians and coalition forces (Al-Tamimi, 2012).

The former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, linked Iran to the global war on terror. It was the only nation-state that was directly linked by him during his speech on counterterrorism in London. Blair said that the struggle against terrorism in Madrid or London or Paris is the same as the struggle against the terrorist acts carried out by Lebanese Hezbollah, or Jihad in Palestine, or extremist groups in Iraq (AL- Oraibi, 2006). Accordingly, Blair pointed out, "When Iran supports such terrorism, it becomes part of the same battle with the same ideology at its heart" (AL- Oraibi, 2006). Regarding Iran's role in Iraqi affairs, Michael McConnell, former US Director of National Intelligence, stated to the Council on Foreign Relations in June 2007 that the US possess "overwhelming evidence" that there is Iranian interference in Iraq, by supporting terrorists, and that there is "compelling" evidence that it does the same in Afghanistan (Bruno, 2011). The Commission to Study the situation in Iraq, a report by the Baker-Hamilton that was

received by President George W. Bush, illustrates the scope of deterioration of security situation in Iraq (Baker et al, 2006; www.news.bbc.co.uk/hi/arabic/news/newsid_6210000/6210962.stm, 2006).

Alla Mekki (in Flintoff 2007), a Sunni politician and one of the members of the Accordance Front, an umbrella Sunni party within Maliki's government, reported that Iran is providing lethal aid to extremists on both sides, Sunni and Shiite, with the intention of fueling the fighting and maintaining the destabilised condition, in order to keep US forces tied down in Iraq (details of the Speech by President Bush are given in Appendix 7, page 406). Evidence for such interference in Iraq is clearly reported in the media and the American administration. In February 2008, a senior military spokesman, US Rear Admiral Gregory Smith, told the Chicago Tribune (in www.gwu.edu, 2004; Sly Liz, 2008) that US forces are expressing increasing concern regarding Iranian military supplies for Shiite militants, who are operating as Special Groups, by receiving training, funding, and arms from the Quds Force of Iranian Revolutionary Guard, in order to destabilise the security situation in Iraq through violent acts.

Major General Rick Lynch, the commander of Multinational Division Central in Bagdad (in Roggio, 2007), also saw no indication of an Iranian reduction in the flow of lethal aid for the Shiite terror groups in Iraq. Furthermore, Lynch (in Roggio, 2007) reported that the coalition forces were still finding Iranian munitions, and the Iranian Special Groups were still active on Iraqi land to conduct their operations (Al-Attaway, 2011). Ahmad Jawwad al-Fartusi, the leader of the splinter group Al-Mahdi Army, that attacked British forces by using explosively formed penetrators in southern Iraq, was arrested by British forces.

Gordon et al (2007) reported that American intelligence concluded that al-Fartusi's group might have received training and armour-piercing explosives by Hezbollah.

More importantly, General David Petraeus, Commander, multi-national Force-Iraq, reported to Congress on the situation in Iraq in 10-11 September 2007 (in Petraeus 2007) and described the situation in Iraq by saying that, despite the violence fueled by the Iranian Republican Guard Corps's Quds Force alongside Lebanese Hezbollah, through their support of Shiite militia extremists, US forces arrested a number of senior leaders and fighters ‘see Appendix 8 (on page 425)’. Petraeus (2007) pointed to the arrest of the deputy commander of Lebanese Hezbollah department 2800, who was responsible for training, funding, and arming Shiite factions with advanced explosive devices provided by Iran; assassinated and kidnapped Iraqi governmental leaders; killed and wounded several US soldiers; indiscriminately rocketed the Green Zone and targeted civilians elsewhere randomly. Petraeus (2007) stated that Iran was attempting to turn the Iraqi Shiite factions into a Hezbollah-like force, through providing lethal aid to Iraqi Shiite militants to serve its interests domestically and regionally and fight a proxy war against the Iraqi state and coalition forces in Iraq.

In an attempt to explain general trends in the rising violence in Iraq, unnamed US officials have made it clear that Iraqi Shiite militias, who have ties with Iran and access to supplies of military equipment via Iranian groups, are responsible and that therefore there is compelling evidence to prove that Iran is backing the Iraqi militias (Feltman et al, 2010; Ditz, 2011; Al-Tamimi, 2012). In this respect, some argue that Iran has reason to fear the US military presence in Iraq, as it may intervene not only to stop its nuclear programme,

but also to spread democratic values and norms that threaten the authority of Iran's clerical elite.

Beehner (2008) argues that Iran neither allows the spread of democracy across the region, nor Iraq to become a US-backed client state, nor does Iran seek a failed Iraqi regime. Beehner (2008) argues that some have called Iran's foreign policy in Iraq "managed chaos" with relative destabilisation, sufficient to eject US forces from Iraq, but not enough to enter into an extreme cycle of violence, which may lead to a wider regional sectarian war. Michael Eisenstadt of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (in Beehner 2008) observed that such Iranian policy, to some extent, keeps US forces tied down and incapable of being used against Iran. A failed state in Iraq, however, could lead to a power vacuum, as in Afghanistan, which may allow extremist groups and terrorist organisations to find a safe haven and a base from which to recruit, train, equip, and launch operations against neighbouring countries.

This thesis argues that Iran's foreign policy has significantly achieved several of its core strategic gains in Iraq and therefore has reinforced its national interests in the Middle East during the time frame of this thesis. These gains were briefly highlighted in the introduction as follows: firstly, Iran has ridden the wave of Shiite activism in Iraq in order to reach out to Shiite communities throughout the Middle East region, despite the mini differences between some Shiite factions concerning ideological-political leadership; secondly, it ensured the removal of any threat from the Western flank of Iranian territory; thirdly, it established a Shiite Iraqi government with ideological loyalty to Tehran, as a first step to reconstructing an Islamic government led by the Islamic Republic of Iran, in accordance with principles of the Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Shiite Ideology;

fourthly, it kept US forces tied down in Iraq and with their attention away from Iran, so it has had time to pursue its nuclear programme and reinforce its negotiating position and interests in the region; fifthly, it re-established active Shiite militias as non-state actors and proxies for Iran's foreign policy in the region. The influence of Iran's foreign policy in Iraq is unavoidable, as long as both countries share a border.

7.3. Iranian Support to Hezbollah

This section discusses the strategic partnership between Iran and Hezbollah, in terms of the role of Hezbollah in domestic affairs, the organisation's funding of transfers of arms and material, militant operations, and interactions with neighbouring countries, and Hezbollah's official statements and speech acts. In the academic community for security studies, and the existing literature concerning regional security issues of the Middle East, the regional role of Lebanese Hezbollah (the Party of God) is at the core of regional and international matters (Addis et al 2010; White 2010). The leader of Lebanese Hezbollah, Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah, has often proclaimed that the organisation "is dedicated to liberating Jerusalem and eliminating Israel, and has formally advocated ultimate establishment of Islamic rule in Lebanon" (www.state.gov, 2004: 99; www.en.mehrnews.com, 2014).

This statement supports the principles of the Iranian Revolution and achieves the speeches of political and religious elites of Iranian regime. It bears remembering that Lebanese Hezbollah is the first sectarian religious organisation in the region established in the early 1980s after the Iranian revolution, and even before the emergence of al-Qaeda in

Afghanistan. The commitment of Hezbollah is to impose its will by force domestically and as a resistance movement regionally.

Alagha (2006) and Feltman (2010) argue that, although there has been a shift in Hezbollah's priorities from Shiite resistance movement to a socio-political movement, Hezbollah is still one of the major Shiite militia groups supporting Iran's foreign policy and remains an essential component in any regional and international talks on the security arrangements of the Middle East. In March 2006, Condoleezza Rice, US Secretary of State, claimed that "Iran has been the country that has been in many ways a kind of central banker for terrorism in important regions like Lebanon through Hezbollah in the Middle East, in the Palestinian Territories, and we have deep concerns about what Iran is doing in the south of Iraq" (Bruno, 2011). For these reasons, in October 2007, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was added to the list of foreign terrorist organisations for its continuation to support militant groups by the United States. Furthermore, in June 2010, the UN Security Council agreed to the imposition of a fourth round of sanctions on Iran, which included members of the IRGC (Bruno, 2011). Hillary Clinton, the US Secretary of State, on 29 March 2011, accused Iran of using Hezbollah in shaping events in the Arab world (www.reqaba.com, 2011). This statement was made according to confidential reports, that Iran for the first time took a public stand in supporting Shiite uprisings particularly in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia (Abdul Qadir, 2013; www.arabic.farsnews.com/allstories/news/13940204000426, 2015; www.aawsat.com/home/article/358431, 2015).

Hezbollah, in contrast to all the other non-state actors under study, presents a fairly clear case of a Shiite Islamist militia, paramilitary and unconventional warfare capabilities,

active political party, social welfare organisation, and above all it is a model of a unique relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran ‘see Appendix 9 (on page 442)’, with which it shares ideological beliefs and regional interests (Bergman 2008; Puelings 2010). Freedman (2008) argues that Hezbollah has been and still is one of the main proxies for Iran’s foreign policy in the Middle East, deemed an instrument of power to implement its regional interests (Katzman, 2008; www.aljazeera.com, 2009).

On 20 April 2010, the Pentagon released a report condemning Iran for its support of Lebanese Hezbollah with weapons and financial aid up to $200 million a year (Burns, 2005; www.businessweek.com, 2010). On 4 August 2010, according to Fars News reports, Ali Saeedi, representative of the supreme leader to the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, stressed support for "the Lebanese and Palestinian Islamic Resistance groups", by considering Lebanon and Palestine the "front line's confrontation with its enemies" (www.english.farsnews.com, 2010). Equally important, Saeedi pointed out that currently, "Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq are deemed as the front lines for any potential attacks against Iran, and our support for Hamas is aimed at protecting the front line of the global Islamic Revolution" (www.english.farsnews.com, 2010). Saeedi added that Iran has turned into the centre of Islamic awakening on the global scene.

On 30 August 2010, Ahmadinejad spoke during a meeting with Lebanon's resistance groups (Shiite movements of Hezbollah and Amal), where he stressed the importance of reinforcing the alliance between Iran and Lebanese resistance groups, in order to confront arrogant powers and enemies of humanity. The Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA) quoted Ahmadinejad's speech as saying that "Iran and Lebanon share heavy responsibilities and missions" in this regard (Adkins, 2010). On 14 October 2010, in the

context of mutual coordination, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah met in Beirut secretly at the Iranian Embassy, to discuss domestic and regional developments (www.yalibnan.com, 2010).

On 13 October 2010, Iranian President, Ahmadinejad, announced in a speech in Bint Jbeil (a city in south Lebanon) "today the resistance in Lebanon has become an example to the resistance of all the nations .... resistance is the key of victory to the Lebanese nation and all the nations in the region" (Macleod, 2010; Ibrahim et al, 2010). This can be seen on Aljazeera TV Mubasher (13 October 2010) Farsi language (see http://mubasher.aljazeera.net/).

On 14 October 2010, after the spokesman for the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu proclaimed that "Iran's domination of Lebanon, through its proxy Hezbollah, has prevented Lebanon from being a partner in peace and turned Lebanon into an Iranian satellite and a hub of regional terror and instability" (Ibrahim et al, 2010), Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu articulated on 17 October 2010 that, "Lebanon is rapidly becoming a new satellite of Iran, it's a tragedy for Lebanon" (www.google.com, 2010). Netanyahu's statements came after Ahmadinejad's famous visit to Lebanon on October 13 2010 when he predicted Israeli destruction during a speech at a packed rally, in southern Lebanon, just a few miles from the Israeli-Lebanese border (http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2010/10/201010141613358718l.html, 2010).

On 29 November 2010, Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, urged the former Lebanese Prime Minister, Saad al-Hariri, to reinforce his ties with Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah Secretary General, by stating "these relations must be more consolidated". Khamenei

added, "As long as the occupying Zionist regime exists, Lebanon needs resistance" (Adkins et al, 2010).

Neoclassical realism explains the influential motives for reinforcing ideological ties between Shiites in Iran and Lebanon, and with Hezbollah in particular. This unique relationship between Iran and Hezbollah strengthened the status of this organisation in security calculations in the Middle East (Juneau, 2009). Constructivist explanations address the deep ideological ties between the Shiite of Iran and Lebanon, constructed on socio-political strategic relations and unity of ideational objectives (Griffiths et al, 2009). Offensive realist explanations for Iranian support to Hezbollah focus on Iran's adoption of asymmetric military capabilities to both deter challenges to survive, and to expand influence in Lebanon and beyond (Booth et al, 2008). Speech acts and discourse analysis illustrate a consolidated approach of similarity in practice, in using a hardline rhetoric, to impact on realities which lead to more chaotic situation, on the one hand, and obtain popularity from the Arab masses and the Muslim populaces, on the other (Bilgin, 2005; Oishi, 2006; Takeyh, 2007).

7.3.1. Ideological Links between Iran and Hezbollah

> *"The blood of Khomeini rages in Nasrallah's veins; the confrontation is not only in Lebanon, but deep inside occupied Palestine and within the range of the Lion cubs of Hizbullah… no place in Israel will be safe"*
>
> Gholam-Ali Haddad Adel, Iranian Parliament Speaker, 18 July 2006, (www.memri.org, 2006)

The geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East has provided suitable conditions for non-state actors, particularly Hezbollah, and Iran to pursue their mutual interests by interfering in regional issues, to attain their geopolitical objectives. In a speech, the Secretary General of Lebanese Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, on Al-Manar TV for Lebanese Hezbollah, illustrates the regional roles and strategic links between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Lebanese Hezbollah (19 November 2012) Arabic language (see www.almanar. com .lb/main.php, 2012). Ali Shirazi, the supreme leader's representative in the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, however, stated on 26 January 2015 that "Hezbollah was formed in Lebanon as a popular force like al-Basij. Similarly popular forces were also formed in Syria and Iraq, and today we are watching the formation of Houthi group (Ansarallah) in Yemen" (www.iranprimer.usip.org, 2015).

Karagiannis (2009) shows that Hezbollah's ideology follows the distinctly Shiite Islamist ideology for the supreme leader in Tehran, particularly the doctrine of Wilayat Al-Faqih (www.tehrantimes.com/politics/117178-iran-wholeheartedly-supports-syria-iraq-lebanon-palestine-leaders-advisor, 2014). AL-Sadeq (2006) and Levitt (2013) argue that Iran is deemed a vital artery for Hezbollah, and a main centre from which he is issued his orders from Hassan Nasrallah, the Secretary General of Hezbollah (AL-Sadeq, 2006: 79). On 5 March 1987, Ibrahim Al-ameen, the former spokesman for Hezbollah, stated, "we are not saying we are part of Iran, but, we are Iran in Lebanon, and Lebanon in Iran". Ghaddar (2011) and Shoamanesh (2012) refer to the fact that Nasrallah pays tribute to the Islamic government in Iran and its contributions to support Arab and Islamic issues, and commends the cooperation between Hezbollah and the Iranian regime.

The ideological alliance between Iran, Iraq and Hezbollah goes back to the 1960s and 1970s, when groups of Lebanese Shiites studied in Najaf and after returning to Lebanon from Iraq attempted to revive the Shiite Islamic movement, spurring the political mobilisation of the country and marginalising the Shiite community. Furthermore, it has been widely assumed that the expulsion of radicalised Shiite clerics from Iraq during the 1970s by Saddam Hussein, (includes Khomeini, the leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran), contributed to the empowerment of the Shiite in Lebanon and the rest of the Middle Eastern countries. Hence, the Islamic approach has become the prominent alternative, instead of nationalism and secularism (www.aawsat.net, 2009).

Al-Ghareib (2005) and AL-Sadeq (2006) argue that the Iranian Revolution of 1979 gave a major objective to Hezbollah, to establish an Islamic state in Lebanon. However, the shift in Hezbollah's priorities as a Lebanese Shiite resistance movement, to be a socio-political movement and one of mainstream political parties in Lebanon, needs to be analysed in depth, within the framework of the changes in the balance of powers in Lebanese domestic affairs, the transformative approach of Iran's foreign policy and the regional and international distribution of power. Hardline discourses and classic passive-aggressive speech acts such as resistance, tyranny, oppression, wiping Israel off the map, however, remain a common rhetoric among political and religious Iranian elites and Hezbollah's leaders.

On 15 January 2010, in a series of speeches that emphasised the principles of resistance, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah stressed that resistance is the only option and "would continue to recommend its soul to God and therefore achieve victory in any war" (Assi, 2010; Moughnieh, 2012). Nasrallah said during the commemoration of the Arbaeen (the

anniversary of the death of Imam Hussein) that the path of resistance and arms, including the army and people, are the only guarantee for attaining security, dignity and stability in Lebanon (Moughnieh, 2012).

On the other hand, on 13 October 2010, in reference to Sunni reaction to Shiite activities in Lebanon, the Abdullah Azzam Brigades (an Sunni Islamist militant group affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the global jihad movement) warned Sunnis in Lebanon of the danger of a strategic alliance between Iran-Syria-Hezbollah, by saying, "very soon will return the events of the early eighties of the past century in a similar fashion, and will return the slaughter of the Sunnis anew, and the mill of war will grind on two major axes: Lebanon and Palestine" (www.news.siteintelgroup.com, 2010). This statement reflects a fragile situation of regional security, the sectarian dimension and religious factor (Nerguizian, 2013), which was one of the main causes of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). On 14 October 2010, Hezbollah's member in the Lebanese Parliament, Mohammed Raad, declared "the resistance (Hezbollah) and Iran are linked ideologically. That's why we are seen as a threat" (Macleod, 2010). This statement from a senior official in Hezbollah is evidence of ideology being a factor, one of the major variables that shape the regional security landscape.

7.3.2. The Role of Hezbollah in Lebanon's Domestic Politics

The Lebanese civil war 1975-1990, the Israeli war on Lebanon in 1982, the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000 and the 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli war have all led to the weakening of the Lebanese state, and reinforced Hezbollah's position (www.un.org, 2005; Morrison, 2006; Norton, 2007; Karagiannis, 2009). More importantly,

the vacuum of power after the withdrawal of the Syrian armed forces from Lebanon has strengthened the position of Hezbollah in domestic Lebanese affairs (Chehabi et al, 2006; Bergman, 2008; Levitt, 2014). Accordingly, Addis et al (2010: 21) argue that in the late 2000s, events in Lebanon infer that "Hezbollah's domestic political interests and the transnational security priorities shared by Iranian and Hezbollah security officials create competing pressures in some cases". Addis et al (2010) mention that in 2008, in order to maintain operational effectiveness as a main Iranian militia proxy in the Middle East, Hezbollah imposed control over Beirut's international airport and also all roads leading to it as the only outlet from the air to the outside world, including shutting down Beirut's port and the national communication of Lebanese networks. Undoubtedly, this was an attack on the country's sovereignty and demonstration of force, despite the fact that Hezbollah's image had been badly damaged by reports of it as an Islamic resistance fighter providing national defense and deterring Israel (www.aljazeera.com, 2008).

Judith Harik (in Chehabi et al 2006: 285) refers to the fact that "the Iran-Hezbollah partnership has produced large political dividends for the Lebanese party, for it permitted it to become a major patron in a country where patron-client relationships constitute the underlying exchanging pattern". Hezbollah largely depends on Iranian money to provide services and buy influence in southern Lebanon (Bergman, 2008; www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13930614000529, 2014). Puelings (2010) pointed out that Hezbollah has control over extensive social initiatives in the south of Lebanon, where it supports the various needs of Shiites in the region. Hezbollah has already taken control of the powers and duties of the Lebanese government, through exercising its role to provide tremendous services to Lebanese Shiite community (Nerguizian, 2013). Hezbollah has many materialistic obligations in terms of provision of services such as hospitals, clinics,

schools, jobs for the unemployed, agricultural training centres, and other social services (Al-Abtah, 2015). These employees, in the Lebanese tradition, reward their benefactors with votes at election time. Those on the receiving end of Hezbollah's services express their thanks in a similar fashion. Hezbollah's accomplishments in the political arena well illustrate this point (Harik, in Chehabi et al, 2006: 285). Bergman (2008) reports furthermore that Hezbollah provides direct financial aid to the Lebanese people, particularly the Shiite sect whose homes and businesses were damaged by the fighting with Israel. Bergman argues that Hezbollah's success filled Shiites in Lebanon with pride. "To an oppressed and wretched majority, living in a divided country full of conflicts, Hezbollah gave its Shiite followers a reason to be proud, and a compass pointing to good and evil" (Bergman, 2008: 86).

It has been widely assumed that Hezbollah achieved a substantial victory by enhancing its own prestige and power in Lebanon, while successfully portraying resistance to Israel as a strategic victory not only for Lebanon, but also as a model for the founding of an Islamic state in Lebanon, as an extension of the Islamic regime of Iran (Al-Ghareib, 2005; Al-Nefisy et al, 2008; www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940614001468, 2015). In this context, Islamist socio-political movements that have swept the Middle Eastern region are segmented by variations over approaches, means, strategies, and interpretations of the Quran. Nazih Ayubi (Ayubi, 1991: 123 in Karagiannis, 2009: 3) discusses political Islamisation in terms of an attempt to connect religion and political affairs by way of "resisting, rather than legitimizing, government; therefore, it is essentially a protest movement". Klandermans (1997: 2 in Karagiannis 2009: 3) provides a well-known definition of social movements as "collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites and authorities". In this sense, Hezbollah

and Iran have a mutual ideology, common political interests in Lebanon, and, more importantly, challenge the status quo and method of resistance as a strategic approach to their international relations.

On 08 May 2010, Lebanese President Michel Suleiman implicitly admitted not only the capabilities and influence of Hezbollah locally and regionally, but also the weakness of the central leadership of the state and the Lebanese army. This can be seen clearly in Suleiman's statement:

> *"To demand now, in this regional atmosphere full of dangers and the drumbeats of war that Israel is banging every day, and before we reach an agreement on a national defense strategy to protect Lebanon, we cannot and must not ask the Shiite resistance group (Hezbollah) … Give us your weapons and put it under the state's command"*.
>
> (Bayoumy et al, 2010:1).

On 18 October 2010, US Representative lleana Ros-Lehtinen said:

> *"U.S. assistance to the Lebanese armed forces cannot be reviewed in a vacuum, separate from the increasing influence of Iran, Syria, and their proxy Hezbollah over the Lebanese government. (…) Serious questions remain about whether U.S. security assistance to Lebanon advances American interests and whether it should continue"*.

(www.worldtribune.com, 2010: 1).

Thus, in view of the increasing dominance of Iran over Lebanon through Hezbollah, its main regional proxy, the House and Senate members in Congress decided to withhold US military aid to Lebanese government to regard Lebanon as a military ally of Iran.

On 18 October 2010, in the twelfth semi-annual report on UN Security Resolution 1559, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon expressed his deep worry about Hezbollah's military arsenal, by saying that Hezbollah "maintains a substantial paramilitary capacity that remains distinct from and may exceed the capabilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces" (www.un.org, 2010). Ban Ki-Moon pointed out that "the United Nations continues to receive, on a regular basis, reports that Hezbollah is upgrading and expanding its arsenal and military capabilities" (www.un.org, 2010). In this context, the UN Secretary General urged Hezbollah's leader, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, to disarm his militants and divert into a political party. Ban Ki-Moon showed his concern for the growing Hezbollah arsenal, which creates a destabilised atmosphere and poses a major challenge, not only to Lebanese domestic affairs, but also to the wider security system.

On 31 October 2010, Hezbollah Deputy Chief, Sheikh Naim Qassem, declared that Hezbollah's leadership would not hand its members to the Tribunal, regarding the investigation of Rafik Hariri's 2005 assassination (www.almanar.com.lb, 2010). Qassem also said protective measures for officials have already been taken at "any level politically, socially, and militarily" (www.old.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/0/3F74DA2E554345DFC22577CD0035B614?OpenDocument, 2010).

On 29 September 2010, before the upcoming visit of Ahmadinejad to Lebanon on 13-14 October 2010, Lebanon's largest parliamentary bloc, March 14 coalition, allied with the former Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri, expressed their deep concern over the visit of the Iranian President, due to "his anti-peace positions and his insistence on considering Lebanon an Iranian base on the Mediterranean coast" (www.khaleejtimes.com, 2010). March 14 coalition consists of the pro-US and the Gulf Sunni states that look to Iran as a staunch ally of the Lebanese Shiite group Hezbollah, which is also part of Lebanon's government. This visit came at a time of rising tension in Beirut regarding the indictments expected to be issued against Hezbollah elements, for the assassination of Rafik al-Hariri, on 14 February 2005.

On 11 November 2010, Yazbeck reported that Secretary General of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, said in a speech to mark his militant group's Martyr's Day, on closed-circuit television in southern Beirut, that "the Shiite group would cut off the hand" of anyone who attempted to arrest any of its partisans over the assassination of Lebanon's ex-premier Rafiq Hariri in 2005 (Yazbeck, 2010). This radical rhetoric came as a result of the condemnation by the International Tribunal of some of the elements of Hezbollah for their involvement in the Hariri's assassination, which is part of a common hardline speech between non-state actors and Iran. Nasrallah challenged the UN-backed Tribunal:

> *"The group will refuse to recognize indictments or arrests made against it by the UN-backed Special Tribunal for Lebanon. (...) Whoever thinks the resistance could possibly accept any accusation against any of its jihadists or leaders is mistaken -- no matter the pressures and threats ... Whoever thinks that we will allow the arrest or detention of any of our jihadists is mistaken".*

(Yazbeck, 2010: 1).

On 18 November 2010, Ahlul Bayt News Agency reported that Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary General of Hezbollah, stated in his speech, "our word is heard in Iran, and in Syria President Bashar Assad consults us regarding many issues." Nasrallah added, "We also have friends with whom we have been playing important roles in Iraq and Palestine" (www.abna.ir, 2010). "Hezbollah is now stronger than the Lebanese army… and without any doubt it proved its existence and ability to control Lebanon within hours," declared Lieutenant General Mofaz, adding, "The Arab world and Gulf countries should ally themselves with moderate Sunni forces against Hezbollah and Iran which are trying to control the entire region and transform its (population) into Shiite" (www.old.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/0/ED9E9C92AA565D10C22577F4002E0825?OpenDocument, 2010). In relevant remarks, Eyad Abu Shakra, in his article 'Awaiting the Birth of the Arab Project in the Middle East', points out that Iranian blackmail represented by Hezbollah still prevents the election of the President of Lebanon, due to the actual field domination of Hezbollah upon the Lebanese political scene, which created a political vacuum (Abu Shakra, 2015). This political vacuum indicates the reality in Lebanon, where Tehran wants to legitimise its hegemony over the country constitutionally, through attempts to elect the so-called 'Head doll', in order to enable Hezbollah to control decision making in Lebanon, then proceed towards their strategic objectives (Abu Shakra, 2015). A similar strategy is seen in Yemen through the Houthi rebels (AL-Hamid, 2014; Al-Nefisy, 2014; www.sabq.org/umzgde, 2015).

7.3.3. Iran’s Role in Lebanon and Military Support to Hezbollah

Since Hezbollah was officially established in 1982, from the heart of the Amal movement (Shiite organisation in Lebanon) during the Lebanese Civil War, Iran continuously supported it via Syria (triangle of strategic alliance) militarily, financially, and politically, as a long arm and instrument of power for its foreign policy. Norton (2007: 475) describes Hezbollah as the “cat's paw of Iran". Bahgat (2007) and Addis et al (2010) refer to Lebanese Hezbollah as a strategic partner and proxy for Iran's foreign policy. In other words, Hezbollah is considered a long arm of Iran, which acts alongside Wilayat Al-Faqih in Tehran, according to Iran's wishes. Following Nasrallah's speech on 25 May 2013, a former Prime Minister of Lebanon, the head of the Future Movement, Fouad Siniora, stated that "Hezbollah" is not a party to the Lebanese, but "band Iranian working in Lebanon," dragging Lebanon into a quagmire of war (www.al-seyassah.com, 2013). The international and regional reaction came as a result of a harsh speech of the Secretary General of Lebanese Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, which came on the occasion of "Resistance and Liberation Day," the anniversary of Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon 13 years ago, when Nasrallah declared unequivocally his party's involvement in the fighting in Syria against Free Syrian Army and its determination to continue fighting until his party achieved what he called Victory, in close collaboration and under the guidance of the Syrian regime and Islamic Revolutionary Guard corps-Quds Force (www.al-seyassah.com, 2013).

All available information concerning estimates about the overall size of military arsenal and combat capabilities of Lebanese Hezbollah, especially in its most advanced arsenal of ballistic missile such as Scud missiles, was drawn from public sources. In July 2006 war

analysts were surprised that Israel had underestimated the size, strength, and capabilities of Hezbollah's combat; in contrast, Hezbollah displayed sophisticated weapons and capabilities such as anti-ship, anti-tank, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) (Schapiro et al, 2010; Schneider, 2010; www.en.mehrnews.com, 2014).

The biggest threat by Lebanese Hezbollah is asymmetric warfare. However, Hezbollah presents a direct threat against Israel through its arsenal of missiles. Hezbollah retains a diverse modern arsenal with an estimate of 40,000 to 50,000 short- and longest-range missiles (www.europarl.europa.eu, 2008; Schapiro et al, 2010; www.i24news.tv, 2015). Others have argued that the size of Hezbollah's arsenal of missiles was about 60,000-80,000 different types of ballistic missiles (Issacharaoff, 2009; Schapiro et al, 2010). Lieutenant Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Brigadier General Hossein Salami disclosed that "the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance group is in possession of over 100,000 missiles, which are all ready to launch and hit enemy targets" (www.en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13941219000285, 2016). These types of ballistic missiles are ranging in between short-and medium-range missiles. Short-range rockets include Katyushas and a model of the Russian BM-21 Grad missile that has a maximum range of about 25 km. These kinds of rockets came directly from Iranian army stocks (Devenny, 2006). In 2006 images broadcast on Hezbollah's TV station as Al-Manar showed a Ra-ad-1 being fired. Military experts believe that these missiles were an Iranian-made Shahin-1 with about a 13 km range (www.news.bbc.co.uk/2/ hi/middle _east/ 51 87 974.stm, 2006).

Rocket attacks on the northern part of Israel, the city of Haifa, during the 2006 Israel–Hezbollah war, showed that Hezbollah acquired longer-range missiles, most likely from

the Iranian military arsenal. The Fajr-type missiles are a serious threat to Israel's security, as they can be launched from vehicles, making them relatively easy to move and conceal. The Fajr-3, with a range of 25 miles (40 km), and the Fajr-5, with a range of 45 miles (72 km), each carries a 200-lb warhead, and the Zelzal-2 with the range of 200-400 km and can be fitted with a 600kg high-explosive warhead (Wright, 1992; Gambill, 2002). Reports indicate that Iran and Syria continuously provide Lebanese Hezbollah with sophisticated weapons to boost its military arsenal (Adkins, 2010).

The UN Security Council Resolution 1701, following the July 2006 war, imposed restrictions on some movements and activities of Hezbollah's elements across their traditional territory in southern Lebanon along the Israeli border, constraining their military actions. The head of operations of the Israel Defence Forces, Brigadier General Aviv Kochavi, said in a briefing in December 2009 that "some Hezbollah rockets now have a range of more than 150 miles -- making Tel Aviv reachable from as far away as Beirut" (Schneider, 2010). From an Israeli perspective, Hezbollah is one of the major non-state actors with connections to Iran and Syria, pursuing their mutual geopolitical interests and following their ideological trends.

Retired Major General Giora Eiland, a former Israeli national security advisor who is now a senior researcher at Tel Aviv University's Institute for National Security Studies, pointed out that, if a conflict had taken place between Israel and Hezbollah, "Israel will not contain that war against Hezbollah" (Schneider, 2010: 1). Eiland added that, given Hezbollah's capabilities, "the only way to deter the other side and prevent the next round -- or if it happens, to win -- is to have a military confrontation with the state of Lebanon" (Schneider,

2010: 2). According to Eiland, Hezbollah and Iran pose a threat to Lebanese political leaders, Lebanon's national security, and to the regional security system as a whole.

Indeed, Saad Al-Hariri, the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, at the opening of the Saudi-Lebanese forum in Beirut, on 08 April 2011, gave this statement, reported by world news agencies, "Lebanon and many Arab countries, such as Kuwait and Bahrain, suffer from the blatant Iranian interference in their internal affairs particularly, in the political, economic, and security sectors" (Al-Hariri, 2011: 1). He warned Iran to cease all its attempts to extend its political influence in the region through supporting Shiite factions who are located in Arab communities. In this context, Al-Quwai'i (2011), a well-known Saudi editor, who concentrates on the socio-political issues of the Middle East, stated that he would not be surprised if some day we see the Iranian regime put all its weight behind Hezbollah in Lebanon. After all, the party was constructed by Iran as an organised militia force in southern Lebanon, belonging to Wilayat Al-Faqih in Iran, aimed at exporting the Khomeini Revolution to Islamic countries, especially those countries that have Shiite groups. This was in order to take control of the political and security system, by creating a foothold for Iran to interfere in the region, to achieve its national interests and expansionist religious goals (Levitt, 2012; Abu Hilal, 2014; www.aawsat.com/home/article/358431, 2015; www.iraqakhbar.com, 2015).

Iran has assumed full responsibility for taking care of Hezbollah's needs. AL-Sadeq (2006) refers to the annual budget of Hezbollah, provided by Iran, as follows: in 1990, a sum amounting to three and a half million dollars by some estimates, in 1991 fifty million dollars, in 1992 an estimated one hundred and twenty million dollars, and in 1993 one hundred and sixty million dollars. AL-Sadeq (2006) noted that during the Rafsanjani

presidency the budget to Hezbollah was increased to two hundred and eighty million dollars. Also, since the early days, the Al- Quds force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps proceeded to develop this Shiite organisation and still continues in the development of Hezbollah today (Cordesman, 2007). The Al Quds Force provides financial support, military aid, training and logistical assistance to Lebanese Hezbollah, Iraqi militias and several Palestinian fundamentalist groups (Abizaid, 2006). It has been argued that operationally and strategically Hezbollah has become stronger than the official Lebanese Army.

On 10 March 2010 debates resumed between the powerful Lebanese political parties on how to rein in Hezbollah's military wing and its role in domestic and regional affairs, where the discussions were divided over whether or not the group of Shiite militant (Hezbollah and Amal movement) should be allowed to continue keeping its military power fully on the ground (Blanford, 2010). On 13 April 2010 Israeli President Shimon Peres condemned Syria for its continuous supply of Scud missiles to Hezbollah, while the Syrian regime publicly talks about peace (www.google.com, 2010).

On 27 April 2010, in a press conference during a visit to Washington, Israeli Defence Minister, Ehud Barak and U.S. Secretary of Defence, Robert Gates, said that “Syria and Iran are providing Hezbollah with rockets and missiles of ever-increasing capability …we’re at a point now, where Hezbollah has far more rockets and missiles than most governments in the world". It is obvious the whole region would be driven to destabilisation (www.defense.gov, 2010).

On 19 April 2010 the US called for an immediate cessation of any arms transfers to the group and other terrorist organisations in the region (Duguid, 2010). The State Department condemned the transfer of any weapons, particularly ballistic missile systems such as the SCUD to Hezbollah via Syria, and it also added that "the transfer of these arms can only have a destabilizing effect on the region, and would pose an immediate threat to both the security of Israel and the sovereignty of Lebanon" (Duguid, 2010).

On 04 May 2010, the head of the research department of Israel's Military Intelligence (MI), Brigadier General Yossi Baidatz, stated that "weapons are transferred to Hezbollah on a regular basis and this transfer is organized by the Syrian and Iranian regimes. Therefore, it should not be called smuggling of arms to Lebanon – it is organized and official transfer" (Meranda, 2010). Brigadier General Baidatz briefed the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee on 04 May 2010 about the current state of affairs that Israel is becoming increasingly concerned with the transfer of weapons from Syria to Hezbollah, when he stressed, "today, Hezbollah has an arsenal of thousands of rockets of all types and ranges, including long-range solid-fuel rockets and more precise rockets" (Meranda, 2010: 1).

On 24 October 2010, WikiLeaks revealed a classified US military document that provided evidence that Hezbollah in 2006 had trained insurgents in Iraq, under Iranian coordination and supervision. The report added that training exercises conducted in Iran included a mission to kidnap US soldiers in Iraq, by the Shiite Al-Mahdi Army (www.washingtontimes.com, 2010).

On 26 October 2010 the French newspaper Le Figaro reported in detail how Hezbollah's arsenal is supported. Geographically, the data reveals that Syria is deemed a strategic link (re-supply and transmission) between Iran and Hezbollah (Feltman et al, 2010). There are three units that are responsible for arms transfers: Unit 108, which controls movement of arms in Syria to the Lebanese border; Unit 112, which controls movement across the border into sites in Lebanon; and Unit 100, which has received weapons training in Tehran (Adkins 2010).

On 29 November 2010 US diplomatic documents released by WikiLeaks revealed that during the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war ambulances of Iranian Red Crescent were used to transfer weapons to Hezbollah's units and facilitate shipments to its elements, while conducting missions of medical supplies. Furthermore, some documents quote a witness saying they "had seen missiles in the planes destined for Lebanon when delivering medical supplies to the plane" (Adkins et al, 2010).

More recently, on 30 May 2013, Nigerian Intelligence Agency claimed that the Nigerian army had found a weapons depot that belonged to the Hezbollah in the north of Nigeria, owned by a Lebanese national. A spokesman for the Nigerian army, General Aaliasso, Essa Abba, announced that the gear included rifles and anti-tank weapons and rocket-propelled grenades, in a warehouse in the city of Kano, and three Lebanese citizens were arrested (www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/worldnews/2013/05/130530_nigeria_hezboallh_weapons.shtml, 2013). In this context, the director of the Nigerian state security apparatus in Kano, Bassi Aatang, stated at a news conference on 30 May 2013 in Kano, "what has just been discovered is a Hezbollah cell and what was seen here is a repository of weapons to

Hezbollah" (www.bbc.co.uk, 2013). Aatang added that Lebanese Hezbollah was planning to use such weapons against "Israeli and Western interests" (www.bbc.co.uk, 2013).

7.3.4. War beyond Israel and Hezbollah

The conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, particularly the 34-day war in 2006, has led to much discussion of escalating tensions concerning the triangle of strategic alliance, Syria, Iran, and Hezbollah (www.intelligence.org, 2006; Miller, 2006; Addis et al, 2010). An important question is: what was the benefit of the war in 2006 and how could this conflict have provided benefits, and to whom? "In Arab eyes, Israel's 2006 war against the Shia Hizballah was an attempt to strike at the heart of Iran" (www.independent.co.uk, 2013; www.kayhan.ir, 2015; www.watan.com/news1/5003, 2015).

US and Middle Eastern officials suggest that there are approximately 50,000 militiamen backed by Iran, to preserve and protect Tehran and Hezbollah's interests in post-Bashar Assad's regime (www.upi.com, 2013). On 02 June 2015, Qasem Soleimani, the commander of Iran's elite Quds force, stated that Iran has sent 15,000 additional troops including the militia force, made up of Iranians, Iraqis and Afghanis, to support Assad in Syria (www.aawsat.com/home/article/375511, 2015; www.alwatan.kuwait.tt/articledetails.aspx?id=437408, 2015; www.sabq.org/gI8gde, 2015).

Iran's foreign policy has attempted to attain two strategic objectives in Syria: to support its strategic ally (the Syrian regime) to the end, and to prepare for major mischief, if Bashar's al-Assad's regime collapses. One US senior official told United Press International (UPI) that some Syrian militia receive military training from Hezbollah and the Quds Force of

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of Iran (Feltman, 2010; www.upi.com, 2013). The long history of the Quds Force shows an active role in other states, including the training, financing and arming of the Hezbollah militia in Lebanon. United Press International noted that the Quds Force reports directly to the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei (www.upi.com, 2013). In February 2010, Ahmadinejad stated that "the people of Iran will stand with the people of Lebanon in the event of an Israeli attack".

On 28 April 2010 the supreme court of Egypt convicted 26 men of spying for the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah and plotting terrorist attacks on high value targets in Egypt; the prison sentences ranged from six months to life and the verdict cannot be appealed (Feltman et al, 2010; www.seattletimes.com/html/nationworld/2011719390_apmlegypthezbollah.html, 2010). Egyptian security officials declared that this was the first incident related to Hezbollah that was prosecuted by Egypt's authorities, starting in August 2009, concerning plotting to destabilise the country. El Madany stated that Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, admitted that "one of the men was a member of the Hezbollah and had been working with ten others to supply military equipment to the Palestinians" (El Madany, 2010). The case has shown the deep concerns of conservative Sunni countries such as Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf states, over the growing influence of Shiite Iranian militant groups. On 04 June 2015, Gebran Bassil, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon, said that Arab states must not permit Iranian expansion, and they need to take the initiative (Abbas, 2015).

This thesis proposes a new way of looking at events. Syria is the centre of the Shiite Crescent, so bloody conflict in Syria is likely to separate the Shiite Crescent, which would affect dramatically Iran's geopolitical interests on the ground, as well as its ideological

influence. In other words, the main arm of Iran's foreign policy (Lebanese Hezbollah) confronts a serious threat where it is likely to be amputated. Bashar al-Assad's regime has always been a key lifeline of support to Hezbollah from its patron Iran via overland routes, and any decisive change in the Syria equation could weaken the ability of Iranian regime to influence the Levant and the Arab-Israeli conflict, including its impact upon Iraq crisis and on the Gulf domestic affairs as well (Nerguizian, 2013).

Concerning the conflict in Syria, Iran and Hezbollah have adopted a policy of double standard towards the so-called resistance axis. While Iran and Hezbollah often claimed that their policy is to counter authoritarian regimes and stand beside resistance movements (e.g. Al-Houthy rebels in Yemen, opposition in Bahrain), they have supported the Syrian regime (www.seattletimes.com/html/nationworld/2011911587_apmljordanussyria.html, 2010; Nerguizian, 2013). Through this policy, Hezbollah has undermined its regional popularity and position as a liberation movement and resistance, and has become a sectarian and ideological adversary to a wide popular sector (Ghaddar, 2011). At the same time, they back the Shiite resistance movements in Bahrain (Abdul Qadir, 2013; www.arabic.farsnews.com/allstories/news/13940204000426, 2015). In contrast, they confront militarily the Sunni movement in Syria, as noted above. Hence, the majority of Arab and Islamic masses no longer see Hezbollah as an Islamic paradigm for resistance, freedom and dignity, but instead as a sectarian instrument of power, especially after Hezbollah's mask fell in the burgeoning Arab attention (Ghaddar, 2011). Keeping Assad's regime in power and preserving the resistance axis with Iran, Hezbollah seems to have chosen the most appropriate strategic alternative in accordance with Iran-Hezbollah's perspective. Despite the deterioration of Hezbollah's influence on the domestic and regional level, the Shiite organisation still has some allies inside and outside Lebanon,

particularly among the Shiite community and, on top of that, Hezbollah has a large arsenal of weapons, which allows its militants to dominate domestic affairs (Nerguizian, 2013).

Hezbollah's main priority today is its weapons and it is not willing to concede its interests as long as its weapons are protected (Berti, 2012). Daniel Byman's testimony at a Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on 25 July 2012 clarifies that Hezbollah is, and will remain, one of the main proxies of Iran's foreign policy, and Iran is the major sponsor of Hezbollah, although the main geopolitical chain (Syria) and the bloody conflict have affected the cohesion of the Shiite Crescent (Byman, 2012).

7.4. Iran's anti-Israel Policy

Iran's anti-Israel Policy began during the Islamic Revolution of 1979, alongside anti-Americanism and anti-imperialism, and is deemed the foundation of its foreign policy and its international relations (Khomeini, 198; Takeyh, 2007). Juneau (2009: 12) stresses that "Iran's opposition to Israel is a core pillar of its foreign policy". Bahgat (2007) however, argues that Iran's foreign policy has gone through fluctuations between militancy and moderation towards Israel and Western countries, as shown by the Iran-Contra scandal during the mid-1980s (illegal supply of weapons to Iran by Israel and the US), but both countries, Iran and Israel, perceive one another as enemies. In order to tease out the underlying dynamics of the Iranian-Israeli relationship, this thesis focuses on three key issues: speech acts of Iran's political and clerical elite against Israel, the Palestinian cause, and the support of Hamas and Palestinian Fundamentalist Organisations.

Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Avigdor Liberman, stated during the annual ministerial meeting of the UN General Assembly about the peace processes on 28 September 2010, that "in truth, the connection between Iran and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was precisely the reverse: Iran could exist without Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hizbullah, but terrorist organizations could not exist without Iran" (www.un.org, 2010). Liberman also thought that Iran could foil any settlement between Israel and the Palestinians, or with Lebanon, at any given time, through relying on its proxies. As a result, Liberman said, in order to deal with "the true roots" of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and find a durable agreement with the Palestinians, "the Iranian issue must be resolved" (www.un.org, 2010). Verjee (2011) noted that Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister, said to CNN, on 05 May 2011, that after Osama bin Laden's death, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iranian supreme leader, is now the biggest threat to peace in the world. Verjee (2011) argues that Netanyahu also stresses that Iran's supreme leader was more worrying than its president, Ahmadinejad, and the future of the Middle East is certainly at stake.

Constructivist explanations of Iran's anti-Israel policy emphasise the binding religious and cultural values that unify the Iranian people against the state of Israel. These values assist Iran to ally with Palestinians and Arab and Muslim masses against Israel and its allies, although differences in ideological doctrine between Shiite ideology in Iran and Sunni Palestinians remain. Offensive realist explanations focus on Iran's attempt to use the Palestinian cause as a means for allying itself with some Arab neighbours against Israeli power as a defensive policy, and to gain the support of the Arab street to spread the revolutionary approach, to recast a vanguard of Muslim unity and attain a potential regional hegemony as an offensive approach (Booth et al, 2008). Speech acts and hardline

rhetoric are instruments of power that reach the hearts and minds of the Arabs and Muslims, by showing Iran as the main challenger of Zionism and imperialism.

7.4.1. The Rhetoric against Israel

Hardline rhetoric can be seen in the speech acts of Iranian and Israeli leaders (Hinnebusch et al, 2002; Cole, 2009). Israel focuses on the dangers of Iran's nuclear activities and the consequences on regional stability, while Iran concentrates on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a core dilemma for Arabs and Muslims (Bilgin, 2005; Bard, 2011). Relations between Ahmadinejad and leaders in Israel are characterised by contentious speeches and hardline statements, including what many politicians and researchers perceive to be calls to eliminate the country (Ahmadinejad, 2005; Netanyahu, 2012). After he was elected president of Iran in June 2005, Ahmadinejad launched more hardline discourse towards Israel and adopted harsh foreign policies, which stepped up his anti-Israel rhetoric. Cole (2009: 193) argues, "president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a Holocaust denier who believes the coming of the Shiite messiah is imminent, has been the face of Iran since his election in 2005". Ahmadinejad (2005) furthermore stated, "they have created a myth today that they call the massacre of Jews and they consider it a principle above God, religions and the prophets". Equally important, Karagiannis (2009) illustrates common aggressive discourse by the Iranian elite and Hezbollah, when he refers to the speech given by the secretary general of Lebanese Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, in the July 2006 war, stating that Israel is a regional enemy and aggressive in nature with historic ambitions to control our land, waters and natural wealth.

There are many debates around the relationship between discourse and reality. It has been argued that Iran was one of the countries whose political rhetoric has been used as propaganda that rarely matched its actions. Still, Iran's regional role has increased remarkably through its opposition to any Israeli military operation in Gaza (www.en.mehrnews.com, 2014). At a time when all Arab regimes stayed silent, Iran has actively moved to urge the international community through the UN to take swift action. The consequences of such Iranian aggressive rhetoric against Israel have allowed "Iran to pressure regional governments to forego dialogue or rapprochement with Israel, by seeking to drive a wedge between Arab governments and their populations when they pursue non-confrontational policies" (Juneau 2009: 13).

7.4.2. Adoption of the Palestinian Cause

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been considered Israel's most serious enemy (Cordesman, 2006; www.tehrantimes.com/politics/117416-iran-ready-to-support-palestinian-resistance-in-every-area-irgc-chief-, 2014). Arguing from a realist perspective with emphasis on perceptions of threats to national security and strategic interests, Cordesman (2006, 2008) writes that the Iranian regime is one of the key players in the region (Crist, 2009) and it has been classified as one of the major sources of money and weapons, destabilising regional security. Due to its foreign policy, anti-Western attitude and extreme interpretation of Islamic law, Israel has characterised Iran as a sponsor state of terror (El-Gogary, 2013). Moreover, Iran is blamed for delivering light, medium and heavy weapons to Hezbollah, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and also for providing safe haven to many regional and international terrorists, to enable them to further destabilise security in Israel and beyond (Blair, 2010; www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=1393060

3000905, 2014). This continuous Iranian support is viewed as integral to its effort to challenge Israel and Western influence in the Middle East, which reinforces the role of Iran in the political landscape and consolidates its external policies (Burgess, 2010; Cronin et al, 2011).

In the course of strategic cooperation between Iran and Syria, on the one hand, and Iran and non-state actors such as Hamas, on the other, Yan reported through Syria Arab News Agency (SANA) that the Secretary of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council, Saeed Jalily, met on 04 January 2009 Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and some leaders of Islamic Jihad (Yan, 2009). The meeting included all of Khalid Meshaal, the exiled Hamas politburo, and Secretary General of the Islamic Jihad, Ramadan Abdullah Shallah (Yan, 2009). The meeting centred on the situation in the Gaza Strip.

In order to demonstrate what is behind Iran's anti-Israel policy, it is essential to explore the nature and scope of Iran's commitment to the Palestinian cause and the impact on the destabilised condition. Indeed, Saad-Ghorayeb (2011) discusses the causal variables: ideology, national security, strategic interests, and ontological security. Al-Ghareib, (2005) and Al-Nefisy et al, (2008) refer to these variables as based on historical, religious, ideological, cultural, and political factors that have consecrated the ideological and strategic constants of the sanctity of religious shrines. The organic alliances between Iran, Hamas in Gaza, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in West Bank, and other resistance movements, are considered cornerstones for hostility towards Israel, in accordance with the cleansing of the holy land. The resistance axis, led by the Islamic Republic of Iran, often claims the destruction of the Zionist regime and liberation of Jerusalem as the core political and ideological doctrine in Iranian politics (http://www.tehrantimes.com/politics/

117416-iran-ready-to-support-palestinian-resistance-in-every-area-irgc-chief-, 2014). This can be seen in the speech by the supreme leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei, in the ceremony reviving World Jerusalem Day and solidarity with the oppressed Palestinian people, on the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan of 2009 (Video-Archives of Iran, 23 February 2009, Arabic language, see www.irannegah.com, 2009).

On the other hand, Iran's foreign policy has been much criticised for failing to implement its discourses into reality and to translate its policy towards Palestine into action during the Palestinian-Israeli conflicts particularly and the Israeli invasion on Gaza in late 2009 (Bilgin, 2005; Saad-Ghorayeb, 2011). It has been widely assumed that its speech acts and hardline rhetoric from the Iranian elite, and its active foreign policy are a paradigm for Arab regimes to follow (Bilgin, 2005; Owen, 2007). According to the foundation of the Islamic Shiite doctrine, and the Iranian constitution (Al-Ghareib, 2005; Saad-Ghorayeb, 2011: 15), the Islamic Republic of Iran is responsible for the support of the struggle of peoples for freedom and national independence, as,

> *"the foreign policy of Iran is based upon the rejection of all forms of domination, both exertion of it and submission to it, the preservation of the independence of the country...the defense of the rights all Muslims, non-alignment with respect to the hegemonic superpowers".*

The Palestinian cause is the key issue for Arabs and Muslims, as Khomeini called upon every Muslim to be armed and in high alert against Israel. Karagiannis (2009) refers to the religious legal duty of Hezbollah to resist Israel and provide lethal aid to Palestinian militants as one of the key non-state actors in the region, with ideological commitments

towards resistance movements. Accordingly, these calls have attracted some audiences in the region who view the Palestinian cause as an existential struggle against Israel (Feltman et al, 2010). More importantly, Iran and its allies have imposed a political dilemma upon regional regimes, which led to an escalation of the security dilemma. Iran put the Arab leaders in front of their citizens, in order to prevent any attempt for peace with Israel, as this would create internal problems with their people (Feltman et al, 2010).

This thesis considers the Palestinian cause a paradigm for changing the status quo in the Middle East, through geopolitical expansion which has been used by some leaders, such as Jamal Abdul-Nassir, former President of Egypt, and Saddam Hussein, former President of Iraq, to exploit the mainstream Pan-Arab nationalism during 1950s-1970s. The Palestinian cause was used by Iran to legitimise its foreign activities and policies (Hinnebusch et al, 2002; Bilgin, 2005).

7.4.3. Support of Hamas and Palestinian Fundamentalist Organisations

This thesis discusses Iran's foreign policy outcomes and the impact of its transformative power on regional security policy, in the context of Islamic commitments (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2011) to defend the rights of all Muslims by supporting resistance movements, such as Hamas and other Palestinian fundamentalist groups and organisations. Such a policy may lead to attaining its geopolitical interests in the long run: to maintain its national security, maximise its regional power, end its international isolation, gain respect and sympathy from Arabs and Muslims and reinforce its negotiating position for any security arrangements in the future. However, in terms of the levels of individual, people, and state, the Islamic law (Sharia law) which originates from sources of the Qur'an and Hadith, urges

three levels of commitments towards others Muslims to form the basis of Islamic commitments based on a mandatory legitimate duty, rather than options imposed by national factors such as pan-Arab Nationalism. In other words, those who abandon their duties towards Islamic commitments, for instance by failing to provide support to oppressed Muslims (medically, financially or morally via praying to God or any other means of support such as food, clothes and shelter), will be thought of as unrighteous.

On 12 February 2012, on state TV, in reference to the continuation of the Islamic militant group's resistance against Israel, Supreme leader Ali Khamenei addressed Hamas leaders and said Iran would always stand by the Palestinian struggle. Khamenei sent a warning to "compromisers" in this regard (Karimi, 2012: 1). Iran's president Ahmadinejad stated also that Iran has a "duty" to stand beside the Palestinians (Karimi, 2012: 1). Saad-Ghorayeb (2011: 12) argues that the strategic-ideological commitments between Iran and Hezbollah in support of the Palestinians, with both military and political input, particularly from Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, also achieve geopolitical interests through exporting its "political culture of regional liberation, which in turn, has contributed to its status as a regional powerhouse". Haddad-Adel, Majlis speaker of Iran, refers to the impact of Islamic Shiite values and the regional influence of Iran's foreign policy when he states, "Iran is powerful and popular in the region because it defends the independence of nations and opposes the United States' dominance in the region" (Gholam-Ali, 2008: 1).

In this sense, Iran's foreign policy sings outside the flock in a dissonant tune with the rest of the regional countries which have been affected by its international relations and geopolitical dynamics. In contrast, it has gained popularity with Arabs and Muslims and also with radical movements across the Middle East (Feltman et al, 2010). Support for

resistance movements in Palestine, particularly Hamas in the Gaza strip, is part of the Islamic identity of Iran and its survival. Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari, the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), confirmed this argument, by saying on 04 August 2014 that the Palestinian resistance against Israel is increasing, and the Islamic Republic of Iran will support resistance in every area (www.tehrantimes.com/politics/117416-iran-ready-to-support-palestinian-resistance-in-every-area-irgc-chief-, 2014; www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13930614000529, 2014).

It could be argued that Iran will not abandon its commitment to provide assistance to regional resistance movements (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2011; www.kayhan.ir, 2015). In terms of military support, Iran and Hezbollah have provided assistance to Hamas in Gaza and to other resistance factions with training, finance, weapons, and tactics of guerilla warfare (www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13930614000529, 2014; www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940625001158, 2015). Over and above this, Saad-Ghorayeb (2011) sheds light on the involvement of Lebanese Hezbollah in transferring logistic equipment to the Palestinian resistance, which was captured by Egyptian authorities between the Egyptian-Israeli borders, as the main proxy for Iran's foreign policy in the Middle East.

The geopolitical dynamics in the Middle East will continue, as long as non-state actors remain on top of the regional agenda, whether they have been supported by Iran or other parties, such as the US, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, or Turkey (www.globalresearch.ca, 2014).

7.5. Iran's Policy towards the Strategic Communities of Gulf States

> *"The feeling among all successive Persian governments is that the Arabian-Persian Gulf is from the beginning of the Shatt al-Arab (a waterway in South-Eastern Iraq) to Muscat (capital of Oman), with all its islands and ports (passing through Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman), without exception, ending up to Fares (Persia), evidence that it is a Persian not an Arab Gulf".*
>
> (Halanjei Mirza, Prime Minister of Iran, 1822, in AL-Nifesy, 2009: 3).

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established in 1981 in response to regional security concerns, including the emergence of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its attempts to export its revolution abroad, as well as to confront their security challenges and military threats during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) collectively. The GCC includes Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman (Knights, 2006). Despite promoting economic ties and free trade between member states, however, security issues and military concerns remained a priority in terms of reinforcing their regional interests. Thus, in 1982 the GCC states established "Peninsula Shield Force" (PSF), as a defensive and offensive force against any external and internal threats of the Gulf States (Fulton et al, 2011). Current troop levels number of PSF are at approximately 50,000. However, in July 2011 the Gulf states approved a proposal to double PSF troop levels by the end of 2012.

Relations among Iran and the Gulf states have historically been strained by Iranian efforts to export the Islamic Revolution to the Gulf states, specifically during the 1980s, including Iran's coup attempt in Bahrain in 1981, and continuous incitement of Shiites, whether resident in Saudi Arabia or visiting during the annual hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, to foment unrest and disorder. Iran's external roles and its regional activities usually increase in light of tensions or crises, which leads to a deterioration of regional situations, such as the unstable situation in post-invasion Iraq, the crisis of Syria after the Arab Spring and uprising of Shiites in both Bahrain and Eastern province of Saudi Arabia (Cronin, 2011). As a result, the escalation of Shiite uprising in the Gulf States leads to further strain in relations.

Bahrain will be taken as a model for Iran's ideological attention, due to the high percentage of population from the Shiite sect, compared with the rest of the GCC states. Moreover, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait will be discussed regarding the engagement of Iran's foreign policy in their internal affairs. However, this thesis will discuss Iran's policy towards the Strategic Communities of Gulf States as a bloc. The thesis assumes that whenever there is a higher presence of Shiites, this leads to increased socio-political movements demanding political reforms, including political regime change to Shiite Islamist, which is subject to the supreme leader in Tehran. This leads to more internal conflicts, which impact upon the stability of the region. The security triangle of the Gulf region consists of Iran, the GCC and the US with its military presence. The complex relationships that link these three include patterns of regional collaboration and domestic conflict that continually change the status quo. By identifying and isolating these relationships, one may develop a better sense of the regional security arrangements.

Neoclassical realism provides a clear explanation of the influence of the intervening variables of the Iranian regime. Regime identity links the geopolitical interests of Shiite sects in the Strategic Communities of Gulf States, in order to pursue their strategic goals of maximising its regional power. Constructivist explanations are based on the essential ideological factors of the Islamic Shiite doctrine that unites Twelver Shiites in the GCC communities, who share many tenets with Iran in accordance with the doctrine of Wilayat Al-Faqih, the supreme leader in Tehran. Offensive realist explanations fit the Gulf region and intersect with the geopolitical interests and power expansion of the partners. Speech acts and hardline rhetoric have been used since the Iranian Revolution to export the Islamic revolutionary principles to neighbouring countries, particularly the GCC states. Hardline rhetoric still continues in Ahmadinejad's presidency, to attract Shiite masses and direct them to support foreign policy in the region, through intervening in domestic affairs.

Arab leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council have expressed their condemnation of Iran's external policies in the region and warned the Iranian regime to stop its continuing interference in the affairs of Arab countries. Bahraini Foreign Minister, Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmad al-Khalifah, said to reporters at a press conference at the closing of the 33rd Gulf Cooperation Council summit, on 26 December 2012, that the Iranian regime posed a "very serious threat" with its continuation interfering and meddling with Gulf states' affairs (www.ncr-iran.org, 2012). In this context, Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, President-elect of the Iranian Resistance, expressed her appreciation to Sheikh Khalid al-Khalifah's proposal to hold a conference for "Friends of Iran," emphasising that religious fascism ruling Iran is pursuing a ruthless battle domestically against its people and a hidden war against countries and nations of the region such as Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain and Yemen (www.ncr-iran.org, 2012; Al-Suhaimy, 2012).

7.5.1. Mutual Perceptions, Impediments and Scope of Antagonists: GCC and Iran

Historically and geographically, the relationship between Iran and its immediate neighbours in the Western bank of the Gulf is different from Iran's relations with the other Arab states. Al-Aderous (2002) and Al-Ghareib (2005) refer to geographical proximity and Persian human migrations to the Arabian Peninsula that go back hundreds of years, with the presence of huge Iranian expatriate workers in all of the GCC countries, as well as an economic relationship in the oil sector and re-export trade. All these factors contribute to the perceptions of regional foreign and security policies that sometimes stand in the way of closer relations, and often lead to distance, due to fear and mutual suspicion.

Firstly, Potter et al (2002) refer to the impact of nationalism between Arab and Ajam (Persian) that some argue is a relationship between the two nations with roots in the seventh century. Anti-Arab sentiments had been confirmed in Iran during the Iran-Iraq war, when almost all Arab states in the region except Syria decisively supported Saddam's regime. Secondly, Hunter (2000) mentions the further contribution of the Iranian bellicose posture and occupation of the three United Arab Emirates Islands, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa, in 1971, and the declaration to seize them by whatever means necessary; the ongoing dispute between Iran, on the one hand, and Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, on the other, regarding the Continental Shelf of the Gulf and its claim about the Dorra oil field (Potter et al, 2002). Thirdly, the situation is further exacerbated by the continuous debates around the Iranians' insistence on naming the Gulf's water, which divides Arabs and Persians, "Persian Gulf" or "Arabian Gulf". From the Arab perspective, "this demonstrates the arrogance and hidden agenda for dominance that the Iranians harbor toward them" (Potter et al, 2002: 222). The Arabs counter by saying there are eight

countries bordering the "Arabian Gulf" and Iran is the only state that is not Arab. Fourthly, Iran's dilemma is based on the lack of respect of its vital regional role through its exclusion from any security arrangements in the Gulf region by both the GCC states and the US, despite its strategic location, its ancient civilisation, its large population and its huge military forces. Iran perceives its role as one of regional leaderships that should not be ignored. However, Arabs view with unease the objectives of Iran in the Gulf region and its intention to dominate and become an unrivalled regional superpower. Fifthly, the considerable US military presence in the region, in accordance with military and defence agreements with the GCC states, and the sale of huge military weapons to these states, are a source of great concern to Iran (Jones, 2003; www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2015/05/mil-150503-irna01.htm?_m=3n%2e002a%2e1407%2ehy0ao05h7s%2e1aid, 2015). Lastly, continuous threats to close the Strait of Hormuz by Iranian leaders have become most problematic, not only for the GCC states, but for world markets as well (www.eia.gov, 2012).

The deputy commander of the naval force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, Brigadier General Ali Reza Asgari, on 21 January 2013 announced that Gulf security was in the hands of the Revolutionary Guard forces (arabic.farsnews.com, 2013). A strong condemnation came from the Kuwaiti parliamentary deputy, the chairman of the Committee of Interior and Defense, Askar Al-Enezi, in a press statement, that the security of the Arabian Gulf is the responsibility of the Gulf states and their armed forces, in line with the system of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Al-Enezi noted that the Gulf states do not need Iran to protect regional security (www.alaan.cc, 2013). Al-Enezi said that the statements of military leaders of Iran have regularly included provocative remarks against the Gulf states, in an attempt to show Iran as the dominant power and assert its control of

the region. Such statements reflect a desire to express its influence over the region and its neighbours, which increases fears and uncertainty among people in the region, regarding Iranian threats and expansionist ambitions. Al-Enezi concluded by saying the Gulf Cooperation Council countries stand firmly together in the face of Iran's endeavours in interfering in internal affairs, and they will confront decisively any attempts for Iranian regional expansions, which may lead to prejudice the balance of power in the region (www.alaan.cc, 2013).

7.5.2. The Gulf Region: The Security Threat in Post-Invasion Iraq

The Gulf region has long been viewed as an area that best fits the realist view of international politics, for which state is the key actor in foreign policy, and leaders have had an interest in expanding the autonomy and security of the state. A zero-sum approach to the Gulf region security has predominated. This approach is based on persistent attempts to export the ideology of the Islamic Revolution to Iran's neighbours, to overthrow the governments and replace them with a Shiite Islamist government under the leadership of the supreme leader in Tehran (Khomeini, 1970).

It is widely believed that the Iraq-Iran war and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 02 August 1990 show regional attempts to maximise power (offensive realism) through using military power during Saddam's era. Al-Ghareib (2005) and Barzegar (2009) argue that in post- war on terror in 2001 and particularly in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, there began to emerge some awareness of the need to adopt a fresh approach to the security issues in the Gulf region specifically, and the Middle East generally (Nemer, 2003). This formation of a new political and security landscape has led to new political realities. In this respect,

Al-Qalam Mahmoud (in AL-Suwaidi, 2005) and Cronin et al (2011) argue that a frenzied regional rivalry between the conservative bloc, the pro-Western bloc such as the GCC states, Egypt, and Jordan, on the one hand, and the anti-American populist bloc, such as the Shiite's Republic of Iran and its, on the other, has become more obvious at the level of regimes and people. In other words, given the regional rivalry and the ongoing geopolitical developments in the Middle East, the religious ideology of both has become one of the most prominent factors guiding their politics.

Despite the competition, Iran is keen to maintain good bilateral relations with each of the GCC countries, rather than as a bloc. Cronin et al (2011) refers to the continuous Iranian attempts to play the role of regional hegemon, threatening the GCC monarchies and the Western troops in the Gulf region. Cronin et al (2011: 5) noted that "Iran's long-term goal is to marginalise, rather than destroy, the GCC organization". The threat that the GCC states feel comes from the dangerous and radical discourses of Ahmadinejad and his foreign policy approach towards the Middle East and the Arab Gulf states. In this context, “Iran has considered its own hegemony to be natural and inevitable, and the Gulf a ‘Persian lake’ ” (Marschall 2003: 5 in Cronin et al, 2011: 3). Therefore, the majority of regional states find themselves driven to possible confrontation, considering Iran's geopolitical agenda, at a time when Iran considers itself a major resistance front against Israel and the US (Thaler, 2010). The continuing rivalry and friction, including competition, ideological schism, the nuclear issue, terrorism, oil prices and the threat to the Strait of Hormuz push the region into further escalation of conflict in a never-ending cycle (Cordesman et al, 2006; Connell et al, 2007).

In reference to perspectives of Arab elites towards Iran's regional ambitions, Dr. Abdullah bin Abdul Mohsen Al-Turki, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, issued a statement expressing his gratitude for Association organisations and Islamic centres, and condemned the position of Iranian hostility and provocative intervention in the affairs of the Saudi Arabia and affairs of the GCC states (www.aawsat.com, 2011). AL-Hamid, Tariq (2012), the editor of Middle East newspapers and well-known Saudi writer, stated that Tehran is acting as if it considers the Gulf states hostages, on whom to implement its agenda in accordance with nuclear, political, or sectarian issues. Furthermore, Dr. Ahmed Al-Tayeb, Al-Azhar Sheikh (highest religious centre and university of Muslim scholars and the centre for fatwa in Egypt) urged Iran to stop interfering in the affairs of the Gulf states, and respect Bahrain. Al-Tayeb emphasised his rejection of the expanding Shiite influence in Muslim countries. This statement was made directly to president Ahmadinejad, after his visit to Egypt to attend the Islamic Conference, which held its second summit in Cairo on 05-06 February 2013 (www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/, 2013). Islamic preacher Sheikh Dr. Nazim al-Misbah supports Al-Azhar's position that the Iranian regime should stop interfering in the affairs of Arab Gulf states by spreading Shiite ideology in Sunni countries. Al-Misbah said in a statement received by Alwatan news that Iran's activities will escalate sectarian domestic conflicts in region states, which would only fuel sectarian hostilities and lead to further escalation of regional confrontation (www.alwatan.kuwait.tt/ ArticleDetails.aspx?Id=253077, 2013). Salman Al-Ouda, Saudi cleric, urged the Gulf states to construct a Sunni front to counter the growing Shiite influence (Al-Ouda, 2015).

This thesis maintains that Iran’s involvement in regional activities leads to the deterioration of the regional security system. As a consequence, "the GCC states have responded to the changing geopolitical realities with uncertainty" (Cronin et al 2011: 32).

Perceptions of the deadly threat of the Iranian Revolution have once again dominated the GCC leaders' agenda. The new threat of the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy is the ideological threat targeting the domestic affairs of the GCC states, setting Shiite factions and non-state actors against their regimes, in order to conduct socio-political reforms, then raising the ceiling demands to change the political regime to the Islamic regime similar to the Islamic Republic of Iran (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008). Such a threat is difficult to counter, because direct domestic adversaries are indirectly guided by a third player in Tehran, Wilayat Al-Faqih, and they use asymmetric warfare doctrine, rather than military force.

7.5.3. Iran's Strategic Role in the Gulf Region

This section aims to analyse the causal links between the efforts of Iran to construct friendly relations with the Arab Shiite factions and the Persians who live in the GCC countries, through reinforcing their mutual roles and continuing to build an ideological Shiite Crescent, and how these efforts maximise regional influence. One must bear in mind that the Shiite communities in the Gulf states are ruled by Sunni regimes.

Al-Fayez, Faisal (2011), Chairman of the Jordanian parliament, on the occasion of his visit to Kuwait, in 2011, stated that the Iranian Crescent in the region has translated into a reality and became the full moon crescent. Al-Fayez (2011) pointed out that Iran's involvement is clear in the region, in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait. He called for a unified Arab stance, including the GCC states, against Iran's regional ambitions and its continuous interference in the internal affairs of the GCC states, in particular, and the Arab states, in general. Abdullah Al-Nefisy sheds light in the second episode of his discussion

about 'national dialogue' and the strategic roles for Iran's foreign policy in the Middle East and the Gulf region, in particular (Video, 24 March 2013, Arabic language, see www.alziadiq8.com/17055.html, 2013). Gulf sources in the security sector revealed to Alwatan, Kuwait's daily newspaper, on 15 March 2011, the existence of documents and evidence obtained by the security agencies and intelligence in many states in the Gulf, which confirm the involvement of the Iranian regime with the direct support of the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei, in fueling the security situation in Bahrain and the pursuit for chaos and destabilisation in the countries of the region, to accelerate the implementation of the scheme Iranian hegemony over the region (Al-Husseini, 2015).

In the case of Yemen, Yemeni authorities and the US administration confirmed that a weapons ship seized on 23 January 2013, in Yemeni territorial waters in the Arabian Sea, by coordination between both sides, was Iranian (www.jpost.com, 2013; Jones et al, 2015). The ship had four containers of illegal arms hidden, including explosives, rocket-propelled grenades and surface-to-air missiles, which were Russian-designed, such as SAM 2 and SAM 3 anti-aircraft missiles (www.focus-fen.net, 2013; Starr et al, 2013). Reuters reported, quoting the state news agency Saba of Yemen, that these weapons were destined for insurgents, most likely Shiite insurgents in Yemen (Abdel-Fattah et al, 2013; Jones et al, 2015). A confidential UN report revealed that "Iran has been arming the Houthis since 2009, confirming accusations made by Arab and Western countries against Tehran regarding its support of the Houthis" (www.middleeastmonitor.com, 2015; www.dailymail.co.uk, 2015). As a result of continuous Iranian interference in political and security affairs of Yemen, Yemen's President, Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, accused Iran of meddling in Yemen's affairs and he asked his Iranian counterpart to stop supporting armed groups, otherwise such a policy would force the Yemeni government to react accordingly,

especially at a time when the diplomatic links between the two countries are suffering (www.alwatan.kuwait.tt/ArticleDetails.aspx?Id=252971, 2013; www.sabq.org/WC6gde, 2015).

In this context, the president of Yemen's National Security Board, Major-General Ali al-Ahmadi, accused Tehran of supporting the Houthi rebels who operate in Northern Yemen, near the border with Saudi Arabia. Ahmadi added in an interview on the sidelines of a conference in Bahrain on 10 December 2012, that despite the lack of hostility between Yemen and Iran, Iran continuously interferes in Yemeni domestic affairs, training and funding Shiite Muslim rebels, who along with al-Qaeda-backed Islamists and southern separatists threaten to bring chaos and tear the country apart (McDowall, 2012).

After the state news agency Saba reported, in July 2012, that Yemeni security authorities had arrested members of a spy ring led by a former commander in Iran's Revolutionary Guard, which had operated in the Horn of Africa and Yemen, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council States, Dr. Abdullatif Al-Zayani, praised on 23 July 2012 in Riyadh the efforts of the Yemeni security services, which revealed an Iranian spy network aimed at destabilising the security and stability of Yemen. Hence, Al-Zayani said that the Gulf States support all steps and efforts by the Yemeni government to strengthen security and stability in Yemen and the preservation of its sovereignty, unity and independence (www.sabanews.net/ar/news275850.htm, 2012).

On 13 January 2013, the Yemen News Agency SABA announced that the US ambassador to Yemen, Gerald Feierstein, expressed the worry of the American administration towards the regional security situation specifically, its concern over the escalating Iranian activities

in Yemen. In a press conference held in Sana'a (capital of Yemen), Feierstein accused Iran of being responsible for destabilising Yemen and the region as well, saying that "there are evidences that prove Iran's support for some radical members of the Southern Movement that calls for separation" (www.sabanews.net/en/news294891.htm, 2012). Moreover, Feierstein voiced his country's concerns about the Houthi rebels, who share a common ideology with Iran (a Shiite doctrine), who are implementing Iranian policy and are being the surrogates for Iran in Yemen. For these reasons, in late 2014, Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior advisor to the supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, proclaimed that Iran supported the "rightful struggles" of the Houthi (Ansarullah) group in Yemen, and "considers it as part of the successful Islamic Awakening movements" (www.ncr-iran.org, 2015). Ali Shirazi, the supreme leader's representative in the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, mentioned also that "The Houthi group is a similar copy to Lebanon's Hezbollah, and this group will come into action against enemies of Islam" (www.iranprimer.usip.org, 2015).

In this context, General Mohammad Bagherzadeh, senior military official in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps stated recently, after the Houthis took over control of the capital city of Sanaa in September 2014, "The al-Houthis victory in Yemen was not a simple or an ordinary and a transient one, but it is a historical victory for the Islamic Republic of Iran that has decided to relieve the oppressed in the Islamic world by using the Islamic model" (www.ncr-iran.org, 2015). On 02 May 2015, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, stressed that "security in Yemen is intertwined with that of the Middle East region and Iran (www.english.farsnews.com/Newstext.aspx?nn=13940213000238, 2015).

Shiites in regional countries are divided into two broad categories. First, Shiites who owe allegiance to the regimes where they reside and are willing to participate in political affairs, despite differences of ethno-national and/or religious identities. Second, Shiites who owe allegiance to Tehran within the ideological political thought of Wilayat Al-Faqih that is consistent with Iran's strategic agenda (Al-Ghareib, 2005). Most of this second category of Shiite follows one of the religious authorities (Marja'iyya), either in Tehran, or in Karbala and Najaf in Iraq, obeying orders and giving guidance to their community inside a national context (Puelings, 2010). Obeying orders often involves the implementation of hostile acts and escalation of conflict through demonstrations, strikes, and acts of violence that affect security in the short run and lead to the impediment of development plans and progress in the long run (Connell, 2007). So, in light of this tense situation, general discontent among large sectors of the population lies behind the deteriorating political situation and promises further turmoil and chaos, which pushes the security situation through a dark tunnel of destabilisation (Russell, 2007). Accordingly, the regimes of the GCC states have confronted serious domestic dilemmas resulting from the transformative power of the Iran's foreign policy in post-invasion Iraq (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008). Furthermore, the shift in the political balance in Iraq since 2003 towards Shiites has led to a new security challenge among Arab countries and the GCC states.

In the context of the GCC national security, Al-Salem Ahmed (2011) addressed a statement of Ali Motahhari, member of the Iranian Parliament, via Iranian media, on 07 April 2011, and said that the regimes and monarchies of the GCC states will fall sooner or later. Al-Salem (2011) mentioned also that Motahhari warned Saudi Arabia will pay a high price for killing Iranian pilgrims in 1987 in Mecca (Potter et al, 2002). In 1987, after approximately 400 people, including 275 pilgrims from Iranians, died following a riot in

Mecca, the tension came to a climax, as a result of urging by Ayatollah Khomeni to overthrow the Saudi monarchy (Wallace, 1987; www.lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/satoc.html, 1992; Levitt, 2015). This left a deep psychological scar on the Iranian masses, both official and popular. AL-Sadeq (2006: 54) referring to the events of 1987 during Hajj, indicated that the "Kuwaiti Hezbollah" was also involved in this incident, by using toxic gases in a tunnel of "Alma'asam" in Mecca, which injured and killed hundreds of pilgrims (www.aljazeera.net/programs/al-jazeeraspecialprograms/2016/3/5/, 2016). This shows the cooperation between Shiite factions in the GCC states, with close coordination by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of Iran. As noted above, the general assertions of Iranian sovereignty over the water of the Gulf, an Iranian claim to Bahrain occasionally resurfaces, and the Iranian seizure of the three islands of the United Arab Emirates, have been part of Iran's foreign policy.

Alvandi Roham (2010) argues that, as part of a broader strategy, since the changes in power at the regional level after the withdrawal of Britain as the leading power in the Gulf region in 1971, Iran has attempted to exercise its regional power and influence on the national security of the GCC states. Concerns regarding the possible use of Shiite communities as the cat's-paws of Iran to manipulate the security condition and stability are raised in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait. The fear is that their regimes might be overthrown and replaced by Shiite Islamist governments.

In the case of Saudi Arabia, its relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran, a historic rival, is at stake. During the 1980s, a series of clashes cast a shadow over relations between the two sides. Iran chose to follow the Shiite doctrine as one of the main branches of Islam, while most of Islamic world, including the Arab neighbours, are predominantly Sunni

(Cronin et al, 2011). Potter et al (2002) discussed these two key factors, religious and ideological diversity within a security perspective, which led to increasing tension between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia and Iran have found themselves in ideological schism and political competition which has led to engaging in proxy conflicts across the Middle East region, notably, in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran have not always been hostile. Nevertheless, ideological schism, competing for leadership in the Islamic world, mutual hardline speeches, political and security conflicts and alliances have dramatically shaped their foreign policies of rivalry (Potter et al, 2002; Wehrey et al, 2010; Cronin et al, 2011).

In terms of alliances, Saudi Arabia focuses on the macro level of nation-states and official organisations in the international arena, whereas Iran deals with micro level units of non-state actors, who consider themselves freedom fighters and resistance against tyranny and oppression, whose mission is to reconstruct principles of justice, dignity, and glory, such as the Lebanese Hezbollah, where these principles exist clearly in Iran's constitution in Article 2, 3, 152 and 154 (www.parstimes.com, 1979). Since 1979, and increasingly after 2003, minority Shiite in Saudi Arabia gained inspiration of revolutionary principles and thoughts of Ayatollah Khomeini. Accordingly, relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia have severely deteriorated due to several attempts to put these principles into practice by using protests, uprisings and violent actions (www.lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/satoc.html, 1992). In the context of this deep competition, Iran has launched violent campaigns against Saudi Arabia by employing speech acts of hardline rhetoric, when it was at the height of its revolutionary fever, causing a number of incidents that exacerbated the tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia and the GCC states.

AL-Sadeq (2006: 48) argues that, in the early 1980s, the Islamic Republic of Iran established an organisation called "Organisation of the Islamic revolution to liberate the Arabian Peninsula", based in the Eastern region of Saudi Arabia, led by Sheikh Hassan al-Saffar. As mentioned earlier, in the mid-1980s, the military wing of the organisation was established and called "Hezbollah Hejaz" (AL-Sadeq, 2006: 53). Al-Saffar invited the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps to construct Hezbollah Hejaz under the supervision of the Iranian intelligence officer Ahmad Sharifi. Some Saudi Shiites students, who were studying Islamic Shiite jurisprudence in the holy city of Qom in Iran, were recruited. It has been argued that the fundamental goals of the party are to export the Islamic Shiite revolution to the Muslim world and to liberate the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia) from the Sunni rulers to Islamic Shiite rule, following the doctrine of Wilayat Al-Faqih in Tehran (Al-Ghareib, 2005; Cordesman et al 2006). The party adopts violence coordinated by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, as a means of destabilising the situation particularly, in the days of Hajj, and also in major cities such as Makkah, Madina and the Eastern province (Potter et al, 2002).

Since the 1980s several bomb attacks on Saudi facilities abroad and assassinations of Saudi diplomats have been connected to Saudi Shiites, supported by Iran (Fulton et al, 2011). In 1989, the Saudi government accused Iran of being responsible for two bombings, after which it imposed quotas on Iranians traveling to Mecca (Fulton et al, 2011). On 25 June 1996, the Khobar Towers facility in Saudi Arabia near Dhahran was bombed, in Eastern province of Saudi Arabia, killing 19 American servicemen, when elements of Hezbollah Hejaz detonated a huge truck bomb, near the apartment complex of Khobar. They had been trained and equipped by Iran (Freeh, 2006; Burgess, 2010; Levitt, 2015). Prince Turki al-Faisal, a former Saudi intelligence chief and ambassador to Washington, stated during an

unpublicised meeting in June 2011 in England at the Royal Air Force (RAF) station near Molesworth, that Iran was a "paper tiger with steel claws" that was "meddling and destabilising" the region (Burke, 2011). Diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran have fluctuated since the Islamic Revolution. The former Presidents Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Muhammad Khatami employed more conciliatory tactics and less extensive use of revolutionary rhetoric than Ahmadinejad.

In the case of Bahrain, fears about Iran intervening in Bahrain's affairs started in the early stage of the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979. With continuing reactions to Iran's attempts to violently export the Islamic Revolution to the Gulf states in the 1980s and 1990s, ties between Iran and Bahrain fluctuated, although the two countries have political and economic ties.

In late 1979 and the mid-1990s, Bahraini Hezbollah took several names, such as "Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain", which was led by Hadi Al-Madrasi, located in Tehran, then "Organisation of Direct Action", "Free Movement to Bahrain", "Organisation Usurped Homeland", and, recently, "Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society" led by Ali Salman, but all refer to Bahraini Hezbollah (AL-Sadeq, 2006: 37, 40). The main objectives of the party are to overthrow the Bahraini Sunni regime (monarchy of Al- Khalifa), establish a Shiite regime similar to the revolutionary Khomeini regime of Iran, achieve the country's independence, isolate it from the GCC states and link it to the Islamic Republic of Iran (www.todayszaman.com, 2009; www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/07/09/156881.html, 2011; Abdul Qadir, 2013). This Shiite movement has adopted violence to attain its goals. Initially, in late 1979, it conducted demonstrations that coincided with demonstrations in the Shiite city of Qatif in Saudi Arabia, near Bahrain (Solomon, 2011; www.bbc.co.uk/new

s/world-middle-east-16543013, 2012). In December 1981, Bahraini authorities arrested approximately 73 people, following a failed coup attempt to seize power in Bahrain, led by Mohammad Taqi Al Madrasi (AL-Sadeq, 2006). The same source reported that Bahraini Hezbollah emerged as an active militia organisation (military wing) in the mid-1980s, after more than 3000 Bahraini Shiites were recruited and trained in Iran and Lebanon, under the command of the leader of the party Abdul- Amir al-Jamri and then his successor Ali Salman.

The security situation in Bahrain deteriorated in the mid-1990s, when the Shiite majority violently demanded economic and political reforms and social promotions. Shiite demands led to substantial political reforms, which included the participation of the Shiite majority in governance (Sanati, 2007). However, sabotage, bombing, and arson took place in 1996. On 14 March 1996, a Shiite faction burnt a restaurant on the island of Sitra, claiming 7 victims; on 21 March 1996, Bahraini Hezbollah burnt one of the largest motor shows in Bahrain called Zayani; on 6 May 1996, the same members of the party also burnt and destroyed 9 famous commercial shops, as well as a number of schools, hotels, and banks, in order to paralyse the economic sector. Furthermore, Shiite factions in Bahrain have participated in civil disobedience. Most of these events were in coordination with the Kuwaiti Hezbollah (Al-Nefisy et al, 2008).

The tension between Iran and Bahrain has resulted in an aggressive mutual diplomatic campaign, where both sides issue inflammatory statements against each other. Notably, in February 2009 Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, a former Iranian parliament speaker and current adviser to the supreme leader, Ali Khamenei also re-claimed that, historically, "Bahrain was (Iran's) 14 province and had a representative at the parliament", which strained

bilateral ties (Cronin et al, 2011; Fulton et al, 2011). Later, Manouchehr Mottaki, a former Iranian Foreign Minister, apologised for the statement during a visit to Bahrain. The Iranian elite continued their demands to conquer Bahrain through Ahmad Jannati, the radical cleric, Chairman of Iranian Guardian Council, on 09 July 2011, when he claimed that national dialogue between the Bahraini government and Bahraini opposition is useless, and that the Bahraini regime should be changed by overthrowing the monarchy and governing by Islamic law (www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/07/09/156881.html, 2011). These claims have provoked stormy reactions in Bahrain, and also created tension between the GCC states and the Islamic Republic of Iran (Al-Hubail, 2015).

A major question arises about the loyalty of Arab Shiites and Persian Shiites in Bahrain and in the rest of the GCC states. Are they committed to their national identity, ethnicity, or ideological faith? There is a general perception among peoples of the GCC states and most of the Arab street that the Persian Shiites across the world, as well as Arab Shiites, are loyal to the Islamic Republic of Iran due to their ideological spiritual links with Wilayat Al-Faqih in Tehran, (Al-Ghareib, 2005; Jawada, 2007; Al-Nefisy et al, 2008), particularly when bearing in mind the statement of Hosni Mubarak in 2006 that the Shiites who reside in the Middle East often express their loyalty towards Iran more than their countries (Bazargar, 2007). Dramatically, in early 2011, conflict between the Shiite sect and the Bahraini monarchy escalated. This was perhaps the biggest crisis in Bahrain's modern history. Cronin et al (2011) argue that this crisis showed the fundamental contradictions of ideology alongside democratic participation in political realms, which led the Shiite majority to conduct an alleged coup attempt and create sustained political unrest in Bahrain.

The so-called Arab Spring has further inflamed relations between the Gulf States, as Bahraini authorities have always claimed that Iran and its regional proxies are behind the unrest and violence in Bahrain. Cronin et al (2011) argue that pro-democracy protesters (Shiite demonstrators) erected tents at Pearl roundabout at the heart of Manama, the Bahraini capital, for several days, in an attempt to replicate the success of the Egyptian revolution of 25 January 2011. The demands continued until the prime minister, His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, was overthrown, despite a number of wide ranging socio-political and economic reforms by Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa (www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16492812, 2012). The Bahraini leadership requested urgent assistance from other GCC states, particularly Saudi Arabia, in the Peninsula Shield Forces, when it felt that there were outside parties involved in the internal events of Bahrain. As a result, relations between Iran and the GCC states deteriorated and led to a media war and a diplomatic war between both sides (Cronin et al, 2011).

On 15 March 2011, in response to Iran's external activities against Saudi Arabia, the Bahraini government recalled its ambassador from Tehran, because of Iranian criticism which constituted blatant interference in the domestic affairs of the country (www.latimesblogs.latimes.com, 2011). On 17 March 2011, the Bahraini diplomatic action against Iran led to a similar reaction, through recalling Iran's ambassador in Bahrain back to Tehran, claiming that the move was taken in protest at Bahraini government actions against Shiite protestors (www.cbsnews.com, 2011).

On 19 March 2011 the secretary of Iran's Expediency Council, Mohsen Rezai, insisted that the participants in the anti-government protests in the Middle East and North Africa

between January and March 2011 viewed Iran as a role model (www.english.farsnews.com, 2011). On 22 March 2011 Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Iranian supreme leader, claimed that Iran's support for the Bahraini opposition was unconnected to sectarian objectives; Iran's attempts were to assist all "anti-despotic" movements. Khamenei stated that his country "will not make a differentiation between Gaza, Palestine, Bahrain, Yemen, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia" (Fulton et al, 2011; www.mehrnews.com, 2011).

On 05 April 2011 the Saudi foreign minister, His Royal Highness Prince, Saud Al- Faisal, remarked to the German news agency that Iran was moving in the wrong direction. This came in response to a question from the press (following the meeting of thirty one of the Ministerial Council of the GCC states in Riyadh) about Iran's recent moves to destabilise Bahrain (www.al-madina.com, 2011). Al-Nahham, Ibrahim (2011) reported that Abdullah bin Huwail Al-Merri, Parliamentary member in Bahrain, stressed that Iranian interference in the internal affairs of Bahrain was in order to set Wilayat Al-Faqih as an approach for expanding its regional influence and historical hegemony, by using Shiite opposition.

On 19 April 2011 the King of Bahrain, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa stated that there are several extremist Bahraini Shiite groups that have formed an alliance called 'The Coalition for a Republic,' with ties to Iran (www.foreignaffairs.com, 2011). According to the same source, King Hamad admitted that there is a noticeable number of Bahraini Shiites who prefer a religious regime similar to the paradigm of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and they are willing to take up arms to achieve it.

On 20 April 2011 the members of Gulf Cooperation Council called Iran to stop interfering in the domestic affairs of Gulf countries (www.eu-un.europa.eu, 2011).

On 25 April 2011 Bahrain submitted an official report to the UN alleging that Lebanese Hezbollah has trained Bahraini opposition members in Lebanese and Iranian camps. Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed al-Khalifa, Bahrain's foreign minister, is quoted in the report as saying that "some foreign countries have actively provided logistical support to Hezbollah to assist in destabilising Bahrain over recent months" (Solomon, 2011).

On 06 May 2011 the Iranian legislative body claimed, via its representative Mostafa Kavakebian, that it would comprehensively review the massacre of Bahraini people; equally, the Iranian government announced it would be investigating the military actions of Joint Gulf Forces for Peninsula Shield Force, in particular, Saudi action against Shiite protestors in Bahrain (www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2011/05/06/Iran-to-investigate-Saudi-role-in-Bahrain/UPI-36721304702031/, 2011).

On 06 July 2011 Bahrain's high criminal court sentenced three people working in the Iranian embassy in Kuwait - one Bahraini citizen and two Iranians- to ten years each in prison for spying on behalf of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of Iran (www.google.com, 2011).

In this context, the King of Bahrain, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, during a meeting with a number of Bahraini officers and troops of Peninsula Shield Joint, declared that external aggressive plans (Iran and its proxies) against the national security of Bahrain, which had been planned for approximately twenty or thirty years, had failed. The King of Bahrain added that the external plot that targeted Bahrain was a first step, but, had it succeeded, it would have progressed sequentially in the GCC states one country after another (www.arabic.cnn.com/2011/bahrain.2011/3/21/plot.bahrain/index.html, 2011).

The Foreign Minister of Bahrain, Sheikh Khaled bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, in a letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, provided evidence of the involvement of Iran and Hezbollah in the internal affairs of Bahrain, in order to threaten its national security (www.arabic.cnn.com/2011/bahrain.2011/4/26/bahrain.hezbollah/index.html, 2011). The report also included indictments against Hezbollah and Iran to overthrow the royal family and the training of Bahraini opposition members in Lebanon and Iran to not only carry out violent activities in Bahrain, but also in the neighbouring Gulf countries. Moreover, the report included details of meetings between the Secretary General of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah and the senior officials of Bahrain's Shiite opposition, Al-Wifaq and Al- Haq, the prominent Shiite Islamic parties (www.arabic.cnn.com/2011/bahrain.2011/4/26/bahrain.hezbollah/index.html, 2011).

The Interior Minister of Bahrain, Lieutenant General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa, on 19 February 2013, revealed details about an Iranian terrorist cell recently uncovered. Major General Tariq Hassan, head of Bahraini General Security, pointed out that eight suspects had been arrested, five of them Bahrainis, three of them foreigners, while four others were still being sought. Major General Hassan said the aim of the organisation was to create a terrorist cell nucleus to establish a so-called "Army Imam", to engage in terrorist activities in the Kingdom of Bahrain (Abdul Qadir, 2013). In response to a question by "Akhbar Alkhaleej" (Gulf News), Major General Hassan stated that the members of the organisation had trained in sites belonging to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in Iran and sites affiliated with "Hezbollah Iraqi in both Karbala and Baghdad. This process was managed by an Iranian nicknamed "Abunasser", who belongs to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (Abdul Qadir, 2013).

The case of Kuwait is similar to the rest of the GCC states. Despite diplomatic and economic ties between Iran and Kuwait, several events and issues negatively affected their relations. Iran and Kuwait share cultural links, as an estimated 30% of Kuwait's population is Shiite and 4% of Kuwait's total population is Iranian (Fulton et al, 2011). Kuwait considers Iran's regional role and activities a threat to Kuwait's national security. Hence, Kuwait's government has enhanced its domestic security and upgraded its military arsenal, particularly its Air Defence System of Patriot Missiles, to counter Iran's growing military threat. In addition, the security agreements between great powers, such as the US and the UK, and the Kuwait government, have been renewed (Cordesman et al, 2006). Moreover, on 19 December 2006 Kuwait signed a security agreement with NATO (Fiorenza, 2006; www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_128684.htm, 2016).

Kuwaiti Hezbollah was established in the early 1980s and has taken several names, such as "Harbingers of Change of the System of the Kuwaiti Republic", "Voice of the Free Kuwait People", "Organisation of Islamic Jihad", and "Forces of the Revolutionary Organisation in Kuwait", but all of these names refer to the Kuwaiti Hezbollah (AL-Sadeq, 2006: 57). It includes only the Kuwaiti Shiite sect who studied in the religious city of Qom in Iran, and most members have connections with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and have been trained by it. Its fundamental goals are similar to the other branches of Hezbollah in the GCC states. It aims to overthrow the Kuwaiti regime and establish an Islamic Shiite government following the doctrine of Wilayat Al-Faqih, the supreme leader in Tehran. Ideologically and operationally, these branches of Hezbollah in the GCC states are tightly linked. The major terrorist operations carried out by the Kuwaiti Hezbollah in coordination with Lebanese Hezbollah were during the mid-1980s and included numerous terrorist acts in Kuwait, attributed to domestic Shiite instigated by Iran (Pape, 2003; Levitt, 2012).

Among the events and issues that severely affected relations between the two countries are the following.

From 1980-1988, Kuwait's support for Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war led to further strain, especially in 1987-1988, when the Kuwaiti government asked the US to re-flag Kuwaiti oil tankers and provide them with naval escorts in Gulf waters, to prevent potential Iranian air attacks (Lenczowski, 1990). In early 1983, Lebanese Hezbollah hijacked a Kuwaiti airplane that landed in Mashhad airport in Iran. Furthermore, they set fire to Kuwaiti oil facilities during the 1980s (AL-Sadeq, 2006; Levitt, 2015). On 12 December 1983 the US embassy in Kuwait was attacked by Hezbollah, killing seven of the embassy staff (Pape, 2003). On 25 May 1985, in addition, the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, survived an assassination attempt by Hezbollah, through a car bombing (Pape, 2003; Levitt, 2014).

On 05 April 1988 another airplane was hijacked by Emad Moqniya, the chief of staff of Lebanese Hezbollah and chairman of the coordinators between numerous Shiite factions in the Middle East and elsewhere (AL-Sadeq, 2006). On 29 March 2011 a criminal court in Kuwait sentenced two Iranians and a Kuwaiti national to death for spying for the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps of Iran (Sandels, 2011). On 01 April 2011 the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Qabas, said that the Iranian spy network is one of eight espionage networks in Kuwait; two of them were armed and they were intent upon explosions, car bombings and militia activities (www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/04/01/143793.html, 2011). The same source also reported that Ali Dahrany, head of the tourism office in the Iranian Embassy in Kuwait, was an intelligence officer of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

and responsible for coordinating Kuwaiti cells and other cells in the Gulf region (www.alarabiya.net, 2011).

Accordingly, many members of Kuwaiti Parliament, such as Faisal Al-Muslim, Mohammed Hayeif, and Dleahy Al-Hajri, urged the Kuwaiti government to focus on its security measures and to review its relations with Iran (Al-Sabah, 2011). On 02 April 2011 Kuwait's government expelled three Iranian diplomats accused of spying for Iran since 2003. Sheikh Mohammad al-Sabah, the Kuwait's Foreign Minister, announced that the spy network planned to attack strategic sites inside Kuwait with explosives. Sheikh al-Sabah pointed out that the spy network had extremely sensitive military information that threatened Kuwaiti national security (Sandels, 2011; www. ca.reuters.com, 2011).

On 10 April 2011 Iran expelled three diplomats of Kuwait, in response to Kuwait's decision, on March 2011, to throw out three Iranian diplomats accused of spying for Iran (www.in.reuters.com, 2011).

Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, on 27 June 2011, signed a contract with Raytheon Company, a major American defence contractor and Industrial Corporation, to upgrade their air defence system as a reaction to the increasing security threats by Iran (www.upi.com/Business_News/Security-Industry/2011/06/27/Raytheon-gets-17-billionPatriot-deal/UPI-74681309198406/, 2011).

7.5.4. US Strategic Commitment towards the Regional Security System

American commitment towards the regional security system, particularly the GCC states, began after Britain's withdrawal from the region in 1971, which opened the way for the US to play a strategic role in this troubled region. Notably, this vital strategic role has significantly increased in 1990-1991, after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the war on terror in 2001 (Hinnebusch, 2002; Barzegar, 2009). The transformative power of Iran's foreign policy towards the GCC states, and its impact on the regional security system, cannot be fully comprehended without taking into account US strategic policy in the region, due to the fact that the US military presence is the third element of the three dimensions of the security triangle of the Gulf region, of which Iran is the first element, and the GCC states are the second. There are three major reasons why the US and the GCC states are so intertwined and interdependent:

1. With the power vacuum after the fall of Saddam's regime in 2003, the US is the only country to have an indisputable military capability and influence in the Middle East that can rein in Iranian regional expansion and hegemony.

2. From an Iranian perspective, the US represents the most serious threat to the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the main obstacle to proceeding with its nuclear programme and geopolitical agenda.

3. At a time when Iran sees itself as the most influential actor and as a potential regional hegemon, the GCC states and the US administration view Iran's foreign policy as a source of domestic, regional and international

threats. This can be seen in its ideological interventions at the GCC internal affairs, which threaten US regional interests through using non-state actors, asymmetric warfare, nuclear capabilities and international markets.

As Iran increases its influence in the Gulf region, Iranian threats to its neighbours may be countered militarily by its neighbours and superpowers (www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2015/05/mil-150503-irna01.htm?_m=3n%2e002a%2e1407%2ehy0ao05h7s%2e1aId, 2015). Details of the Iranian threat can be found in Appendix 10 (p. 443). It is important to remember that after the Gulf war in 1991, "most of the GCC states had signed security agreements with the United States" (Lee, S 2008: 49). These agreements ensured American troops' presence with their military arsenals in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf region, in order to deter regional threats. Although these security agreements with the GCC states do not ensure internal security, Western powers are essential in guaranteeing protection from regional military threats, conventional or unconventional. The GCC states depend on the US military and security umbrella, because of the disparity between their own minimal military capabilities, and Iran's and its proxies'.

The GCC states have seen the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy as a direct threat towards their national security. As for Iran, it has deemed the security agreements with the US as a regional threat. Hence, changing the geopolitical reality has led to uncertainty and the continuation of the security dilemma in the Gulf region, and the Middle East more generally. It could be argued that the GCC states adopted a defensive approach through conducting a cooperative military and security agreements with the great powers to strengthen their national security and reinforce their regional interests. On the other hand, Iran embraced an offensive approach in line with its an ideological revolutionary

approach aiming to expand its regional influence, to change the status quo according to the Islamic Shiite doctrine and establish a central Islamic government.

What can satisfy some of the security requirements of the region? Hollis suggests, arrangements can and should be worked out with the Arab states of the Gulf to enhance cooperation between them and Iran. Foreign forces, however, must be excluded from the region, and the U.S. in particular is not welcome there since it is seen as following its own ambitions at the expense of local interests and Muslim values (Hollis, 1993).

7.6. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the primary research question: To what extent have the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East, in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, impacted Iran's foreign policy and, in turn, how did soft power affect the security dilemma? It also answered the fourth question: to what extent does the perception of the Iranian security threat to and by Middle Eastern states influence the security dilemma?

Changes in the regional balance of power and the distribution of soft power led to recalculations. The distribution of soft power created a new dimension in the security landscape and the geopolitical dynamics. A security threat to internal stability, rather than a conventional military threat, was perceived by neighbouring states, coming through Iran’s foreign policy. This came as a result of Iran using ideological Shiite mainstream and proxies to defend its geopolitical interests and achieve its regional aspirations. Iran’s regional influence has expanded through its interventions in regional security issues. The

strategic interests of Iran and its proxies, mainly the Hezbollah, are a key element of the regional security equation.

In reference to Iranian expansion in the region and beyond, Matthew Levitt asserted that "Iran not only continues to expand its presence in and bilateral relationships with countries like Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, but it also maintains a network of intelligence agents specifically tasked with sponsoring and executing terrorist attacks in the western hemisphere" (Levitt, 2013: 1). Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has urged Iran to stop its efforts to dominate the Middle East. President Erdoğan stressed that this has become disturbing, and Iran must withdraw its forces in Yemen, Syria and Iraq (www.azamil.com, 2015).

In an exclusive interview to the Middle East newspaper, on 12 May 2015, President Obama openly declared,

> *Iran clearly engages in dangerous and destabilizing behavior in different countries across the region. Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism. It helps prop up the Assad regime in Syria. It supports Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. It aids the Houthi rebels in Yemen. So countries in the region are right to be deeply concerned about Iran's activities, especially its support for violent proxies inside the borders of other nations"*
>
> (Al-Oraibi, 2015: 3).

Understanding state responsibility for regional instability, through the sponsoring of violent activities of non-state actors, is among the more critical issues to scholars of security studies. This chapter addressed the issue by investigating the causal relationship between Iran and Lebanese Hezbollah, Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Al-Mahdi Army in Iraq and other Hezbollah groups in the Gulf states. This thesis provided evidence to illustrate the role and activities of Iran's regime. These roles and activities rely extensively upon instruments of soft power and have changed the security dilemma.

Iranian interference has been observed in Iraq, Lebanon, Israel and the Gulf states, also Yemen and even Bulgaria. Iranian support has a powerful, yet indirect, impact on decision-making and violent activities of non-state actors, by shaping the options available to groups and party leaders. In addition, Iran can also directly shape strategic decisions of armed non-state actors, forcing its proxies to either expand, or restrict their domestic activities and regional roles. The Iranian security perspective and its political identity can be coextensive with, and constitutive of, strategic national security.

The anarchic environment is the most important variable that shapes state behaviour. From a realist perspective, the Iranian regime has adopted a more assertive approach, due to the geopolitical dynamics of the region. This approach has taken various forms in the pursuit of its geopolitical agenda, such as defiance towards the international community, concerning its nuclear programme, and interference in the internal affairs of others. Moreover, it has taken the form of unlimited support for Lebanese Hezbollah and other Shiite factions, as well as Sunni organisations such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the Palestinian territories. This support is rhetorical, political, military and financial. On the other hand, constructivist explanations of Iran's support to Hezbollah, Hamas and Syria

stress Iran’s revolutionary ideals and its national self interest reflecting Imam Khomeini's philosophical/political thoughts and aiming for the establishment of an Islamic government (Shiism) based in Tehran (Khomeini, 1970). These philosophical thoughts serve Iran's foreign policy objectives in ideological and practical terms. Speech acts and hardline rhetoric are other instruments of power that can be employed to reach minority communities in the region, in order to garner support for the benefit of Iran, from among those looking for a champion, by showing Iran as the main challenger of Zionism and imperialism.

The next chapter will discuss the dynamic process of the security dilemma, its impact on the regional security system of the Middle East, and its link with Iran's foreign policy interests in the region.

Chapter Eight

The Security Dilemma and its impact on the Middle East

8.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses regional security strategic threats, analysing the dynamic process of the security dilemma, within the framework of the interactions of the variables, independent, dependent and intervening, thus linking the distribution of soft power, the foreign policy outcomes and the domestic policies in Iran that are derived from regime identity, nationalism and decision makers. In order to interpret the mechanism of the security dilemma in the Middle East, it needs to understand the impact of the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy on the geopolitical dynamic, particularly in post-2003 Iraq. These threats have become a cornerstone to regional and international security, not due to traditional war itself, but as a result of the intensive effort of Iran and its proxies to counter external threats by expanding their regional influence, after the removal of two regional enemies, the Taliban and Saddam's regime. This chapter explores the paramount priorities in Iran's foreign policy and whether the ideological or pragmatic approach takes priority, in the short and in the long run.

It is divided into seven sections. The first section provides a brief introduction. The second discusses the origins of the security dilemma and its mechanism in the Middle East. The third assesses the interactions of three variables, independent, dependent and intervening, all essential to evaluate the security structure of the Middle East, in the shadow of Iran's grand strategic policy for regional domination. The fourth section explains the

consequences of the security dilemma in the Middle East, in connection with non-state actors, asymmetric warfare and unconventional forces, continuous threats to world markets, and a conventional and unconventional armaments race. The fifth section discusses the main features of the regional ascendance of Iran. The sixth section addresses the natural avenues of the security dilemma as an ongoing process in the Middle East. The final section is a conclusion.

8.2. The Origin of the Security Dilemma in the Middle East

Arguments regarding the security dilemma have shed light on the most profound questions about the variables that impact on anarchy and actual and potential threats, at both international and regional levels. Tang (2009) argues that several areas of disagreement or confusion exist among international relations theorists about the dynamic process of the security dilemma. In this section, this thesis explores three distinct theoretical approaches, offensive realism, constructivism, neoclassical realism, and to some extent defensive realism, to revisit the concept of the security dilemma and some of its most significant extensions, and advance a coherent and systematic restatement of the concept, to explain how security dilemma dynamics occur in the Middle East.

Although the offensive realist approach to the security dilemma is based on the uncertainty of international politics, trust and cooperation among states is unlikely. Therefore, it rejects the idea that paradoxical security competition between defensive states can be mitigated, a view that has been challenged by constructivists and defensive realists on the subject (Jackson et al, 2007). Constructivists and defensive realists claim that it is possible for uncertainty in world politics to be reduced, and rational states are capable of finding ways

for conciliation about misperceptions and lack of trust, in order to reduce uncertainty to levels where it no longer impedes cooperation, and hence mitigate the security dilemma.

Taliaferro (2001: 132) argues that "neorealism seeks to explain international outcomes, such as the likelihood of major war, the prospects for international cooperation, and aggregate alliance patterns among states". Taliaferro (2001) noted that realist theorists disagree on the logical implications of anarchy and this is the core of the debate between offensive and defensive realism. According to offensive realism, due to the absence of a worldwide government of universal sovereign, all states strive to maximise their power relative to other states, so as to guarantee their own survival (Booth et al, 2008). Mearsheimer (in Jackson et al, 2007) argues that the risks of uncertainty are paramount, hence the security dilemma must be resolved according to offensive approaches; in this context all states see each other as opponents and react offensively. This perspective enhances the key argument of this thesis in accordance with the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy in post-invasion Iraq in 2003. Hollis et al (1990) argue that states usually seek to proceed in attaining their expansionist policies, when and where the benefits outweigh the costs. As such, in this situation, states have no choice but to reinforce their relative power positions via arms buildups, diplomatic activities, economic relationships, and military-security agreements with great powers (Shoamanesh, 2012).

On the other hand, a constructivist approach is adopted by others, indicating that the security dilemma is created via interactions among states according to selection policies. Wendt (1992) argues that a security dilemma is a social structure, consisting of intersubjective understandings in which states can undertake social acts through which

they learn more about one another's identity, thereby enabling them to reinterpret the nature and meaning of their relationship and be aware of each other's fears.

Neoclassical realism seeks to explain the foreign policy strategies of individual states. Rose (1998: 145, in Juneau 2009: 5) argues that in terms of various patterns of outcomes concerning interactions among states, theories of foreign policy "seek to explain what states try to achieve in the external realm and when they try to achieve it". Neoclassical realism, therefore, provides a conceptual framework that allows detailed accounts of a certain state's foreign policy to be dealt with at a given time, or under specific conditions. Juneau (2009) adopts a perspective closer to Zakaria's, but similar to Rathbun's. Juneau (2009) argues that neoclassical realism is one of the best approaches to explain the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy. He agrees that states should respond to structural pressures, so as to maximise their security. In political reality, however, states cannot neglect the intervening variables of domestic pressures that shape their external policies to maximise their influence and power in an anarchical environment.

The differing perspectives point to an academic debate between offensive realism, constructivism, neoclassical realism, and to some extent defensive realism, over the extent to which policymakers can find a middle ground. The uncertainty and mutual mistrust among states in the Middle East are based on ideological as well as material threats. From Iran’s perspective, to solve the security dilemma in the Middle East, all monarchic regimes in the region need to be overthrown and replaced with the Islamic Shiite governments, for which the command centre will be in Tehran (Khomeini, 1981). Nearly a billion and a half Muslims worldwide would need to change their ideological doctrine, religious practices, daily activities, identity, culture, dignity and history (Al-Nefisy, 2008).

Relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and most Arab countries have been strained over different geopolitical issues, such as interpretations of Islam, national identity, aspirations for leadership, oil export policy, and relations with the US and the West. Jawada (2007) stresses that uncertainty, tension, hostility and indirect confrontation in the region began due to the competition over leadership in the Islamic world, particularly between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which grew to ideological hostility.

Iran has attempted to justify its right to command the Islamic world by promoting the Islamic Shiite doctrine as the correct approach. In order to demonstrate the link between the Islamic Shiite Doctrine and contemporary political reality, the origin of the conflict in the Middle East needs to be discussed and understood in the context of the security dilemma. As previously mentioned, political and religious conflict in the Middle East is like an inheritance of civilisations, passed down to generations. The Shiite conflict has turned from an ideological conflict to a geopolitical one, and even into ethnic conflict, such as in Iraq against Sunni Arabs (www.churchofscotland.org.uk, 2008). The core argument can be seen in a documentary (www.arabistan.org/videoinfos.aspx?elmnt=96&ids=1395, 2012) which sheds light on Iran's foreign policy, alongside roles and activities of Shiites in the region (video, 21 March 2012, Arabic language).

The majority of people in the region have accepted and followed one approach of Islam (Sunnah which is based on Quran and Hadith), then the Shiite doctrine came, as a result of struggles over leadership with the Sunni majority. The Shiite doctrine emerged attempting to divert Islamic concepts and political reality, in order to maximise its own power, causing uncertainty, conflict and chaos (Al-Ghareib, 2005). The Islamic Shiite doctrine strongly believes that leadership (Imam, Caliph, President, King, commander) is the

position of God, and it is God who appoints the selected people who belong to the Shiite doctrine of the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), through his son-in-law, Ali and his successors of Twelver Imams (Shams al-Din, 1985). Leaders who have been selected through democratic elections, or by any other means, should be removed from power, because they do not have legitimate authority from God. Thus, whatever the popular votes and the practical policies for leaders in the past, present and in the future, they are illegal and must be removed and replaced with a government that follows the Shiite Islamic curriculum in Tehran, under the command of the supreme leader. Otherwise, tension, violence and bloody conflict, such as the current ones in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain, are the consequence.

To what extent does Iran's foreign policy constitute a security threat to Middle Eastern states? From an ideological Shiite perspective, Iran's foreign policy is boundless, until domination is accomplished, regionally and beyond. It attempts to impose theories, doctrines and thoughts on others by asymmetric forces, via interference into domestic affairs to neighbours, rather than diplomatic means of dialogue and persuasion through seminars, forums and regional conferences. The natural reaction of Iran's neighbours is to confront the Islamic Shiite doctrine that guides Iran's foreign policy. They reinforce their national security, by continuing to build a huge military arsenal, and by renewing military agreements and security treaties with great powers. Indeed, the security dilemma does not pay attention to religious and ideological factors, but this thesis demonstrates how the more ideological activities are increased via Iran’s foreign policy, the more it can expand its regional influence, leading to increased regional threats and tensions that reduce the chance of stability and security among states.

8.3. Interactions of the Independent, Dependent and Intervening Variables

This thesis explores the causal link between the three essential variables, to determine their major components. Christopher Layne (in Juneau, Thomas 2009: 8) argues, "all three variables are operationalised and linked". The first variable is ‘X’ (independent variable) - the distribution of soft power, including Iran’s use of ideological proxies. There are two basic components in the case of Iran. The first is non-state actors with asymmetric capabilities. The second is Shiite factions as militias. These components have a dual role, to use asymmetric warfare and to capture the power structures of political systems. This explains the nature and scope of the geopolitical dynamics. The second variable is ‘Y’ (dependent variable) - Iran’s foreign policy outcomes. The dependent variable is the entity under observation and is affected by the response to the independent variable. This can be seen through the continuation of Iran's foreign policy of engaging with regional issues and crises. The third variable is ‘Z’ (intervening variables) - the domestic-level that comprises regime identity, nationalism and decision-makers.

In modern Iranian history, these three variables contributed to the understanding of the geopolitical dynamics and framing of security events after the Islamic Revolution, especially in post-Saddam Iraq. There are essential issues that need to be borne in mind: Ideologies, Pan-Islamism, and Revolutionary Shiism, all of which go hand in hand with Iran's identity, guiding and justifying its foreign policy in line with its geopolitical interests and its role in the region.

8.4. Consequences of the Security Dilemma in the Middle East

The aftermath of the Iraq invasion in 2003 was a turning point for Iran and provided an opportunity to reinforce its regional influence and to counter external threats. Simultaneously, a new era of geopolitical dynamics has emerged, that has led to more instability. Four critical issues have inflamed and complicated regional and international relations. They will be addressed next.

8.4.1. Increased Influence of Non-State Actors: Asymmetric Warfare and Unconventional Forces

After the regime change in Iraq in 2003 and the disbanding of the Iraqi Army, as well as the war on terror, violence escalated in the region (Hanlon et al, 2007; Dodge, 2009). Political violence performed by non-state actors has become one of the most prominent issues of international relations (Barzegar, 2009). Terrorist groups, such as the transnational fundamentalist organisation of Al-Qaeda, Sunni extremist militias and the regional fundamentalist organisation of Lebanese Hezbollah, have increased their violent activities (Feltman et al, 2010). Byman (2008) argues that the engagement of such fundamentalist groups, parties and organisations is increasingly provocative locally, regionally and internationally, and has complicated the security dilemma. In some cases, these activities of non-state actors have been the catalyst for instability and tension between states and within states (Levitt, 2012). The scope of the discussion will be narrowed by focusing on two key issues. Firstly, the interactions between non-state actors and policy-makers and their impact on domestic and regional security dilemma; secondly, the impact of asymmetric warfare and unconventional forces on the security dilemma.

Non-state actors have emerged as new political actors, sharing aspects of fundamentalist ideological ideas based on anti-Israel, anti-West and anti-peace processes (Zalman, 2009). In essence, a new perception of the security dilemma has emerged, due to the activities of non-state actors, their involvement in regional issues causing a political dilemma for policy-makers, when dealing with them as political oppositions, or as terrorists. Different definitions of non-state actors create a dilemma. While the US with its regional and international allies perceive Hezbollah and Hamas, for example, through the lens of terrorism, in contrast, Iran deals with them as freedom fighters and resistance movements (www.presidentialrhetoric.com, 2006; www.irna.ir, 2014).

Palestinian Hamas, as an insurgent movement and freedom fighter, and Lebanese Hezbollah, as a resistance movement, attempt to gain political victory over Israel, in order to obtain greater popularity with Arab and Islamic populaces, but also to destroy images of the conservative political elite in the region. It seems that non-state actors have attempted to set a trap for the Lebanese government and the rest of the Arab regimes, through implicating their decisions and policies in potential internal or external crises. This can be seen through the reaction of states towards Hezbollah activities and their response. If the response was positive to Hezbollah, the costs would be very high at all levels, because Hezbollah would appear as if it had won the battle (political victory), directed against the entire Arab regional countries, to gain popularity and implement a strategic regional agenda for Iran's foreign policy. In contrast, if states responded harshly to Hezbollah activities, they would be faced with significant domestic and regional pressures. As a result, regimes may lose their popularity, which may lead fundamentalist Islamic parties to power through parliamentary elections gained from grassroots. The choice between two

unsatisfactory options is a form of dilemma. This is what Iran's foreign policy has attempted to accomplish (Bergman, 2008; Byman, 2008; Abbas, 2015).

It has been argued that the criteria of victory between state and non-state actors are extremely disparate. If a state attained nine victories, but was defeated in one, it would mean the government failed. In contrast, if non-state actors obtained one victory and failed nine times, it would mean that the fundamentalist organisations had triumphed. More importantly, non-state actors are prepared to fight and win a political conflict, while states, Israel, for instance, are prepared to fight a military conflict. In other words, Israel stood to lose by winning, but non-state actors stood to win by losing. As a result, a classic dilemma is a state facing non-state actors and terrorist organisations.

However, it is important to note that the media has provided non-state actors with one of the greatest instruments of power. The media have become a battle space and have been intensively used by non-state actors, in order to deliver their voice and expand their influence to the populace (Bergman, 2008). Hezbollah, for instance, "in line with Iranian propaganda tactics, have made maximal use of mass media" (Bergman, 2008: 87). Hezbollah's radio station, television station of Al Manar and official website (www.hizbollah.tv, 2012) contain up-to-date information on Hezbollah's activities in all realms and are an effective tool to support their activities and convince people of their issues. This can be seen in the speech by the Secretary General of Lebanese Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, on Al-Manar TV on 19 November 2012.

Another organisation, the Islamic State (IS), particularly during the second half of 2014, used social media to recruit fighters, spread its propaganda and garner financial support. It

has been argued that there are hundreds of users subscribed to the application on the internet, or their Android smart phones, using the Google Play store. Furthermore, this jihadist group has also started recruiting fighters through an online magazine, 'The Islamic State Report', that explains the principles, concepts, approaches and motives of the group, including the nature of life for Jihadists, and how an envisioned Islamic state would look (Ajbaili, 2014). IS attempts to present itself "as a vanguard movement in the global defence of Islam at a time when Islam is under attack and leaders of Muslim states across the Middle East are either apostate or utterly untrue to the tenets of Islam". Moreover, "the Islamic State is leading this historic renewal against the 'far enemy' of the US and its allies that have brought chaos to Afghanistan and Iraq, killing over 200,000 Muslims and wounding many more in the process" (Rogers, 2014: 2). This includes the killing of Muslims in Somalia, Nigeria, Mali, Pakistan, Libya and Yemen.

Western military campaigns in Muslim countries during the last few decades have created a favourable environment for jihadist organisations to gain legitimacy for their activities. Most jihadist groups are prepared to fight for victory or death. Military operations against religious ideology are not easy, and conflict in the Middle East will continue as long as the rules of engagement (the conventional materialistic power of states vs ideational proxies with asymmetric warfare) are different between the two sides. Indeed, for more than thirty years the Western military machine has not stopped in the face of militant groups, however, the quality, quantity, efficiency and scope of confrontation have increased significantly (Rogers, 2014).

Paradoxically, both the Islamic Republic of Iran (nation-state) and the Islamic State (non-state actor and fundamentalist organisation) have endeavoured to create an Islamic

Government. However, the geopolitics and religious ideology have put them in opposition to each other, not only via political and media propaganda, but also on the ground, rather than cooperation.

Non-state actors have not only become more active in political and media propaganda, but are also able to engage in asymmetric warfare and unconventional confrontation against their domestic and regional opponents (Feltman, 2010). As pointed out earlier, Iran's proxies in the region have conducted several operations and activities in domestic affairs, in Iraq and the Gulf states, for example, aided by the provision of arms, training, funds and safe haven. In addition, the security of the regimes in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Yemen, Egypt, Iraq and Jordan remains under threat (www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/12.04.07.html, 2007; www.mehrnews.com, 2011; Burke, 2011; Fulton et al, 2011; Byman, 2012; www.state.gov, 2013). Miller (2006) and Burgess (2010) pointed out that the efforts of the Iranian foreign policy to involve itself in the regional issues and domestic affairs of its neighbours destabilises the Middle East. Equally, Cordesman et al (2006) linked the foreign operations branch of the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security, particularly the Quds Force, with several militant organisations and fundamentalist groups, and the disturbance of the political situation in Iraq.

In this context, American Defence Secretary, Leon Panetta, confirmed in an interview by the Wall Street Journal on 01 February 2013 that intensive efforts at regional and international level are being made to counter the Iranian threat to destabilise the Middle East (Barnes et al, 2013). Panetta accused Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Iran's paramilitary forces of supplying anti-aircraft missiles called "manpads" that can be carried

by a single person to its militant allies (Barnes et al, 2013). Such weapons are a risk not only to military jets and helicopters, but also to commercial airlines.

The US State Department, on 30 May 2013, announced that Tehran's ally Hezbollah, through close collaboration with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force (IRGC-QF), conducted terrorist activities since the 1990s (Wehrey, 2009) in Southeast Asia, Europe, and Africa (www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2012/209978.htm, 2012). In 2012 authorities in Thailand prosecuted a Hezbollah member for his role in assisting and conducting terrorist attacks. In 2011 IRGC-QF was implicated in a plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the US in Washington, DC (Levitt, 2015). In addition, in 2012 IRGC-QF came under suspicion for directing terrorist attacks in Georgia, India, Thailand, and Kenya. Furthermore, on 5 February 2013, the Bulgarian government condemned Hezbollah for the July 2012 bombing against Israeli citizens in Burgas (Levitt, 2013). Moreover, on 21 March 2013, authorities in Cyprus found a Hezbollah operative guilty for his surveillance activities, carried out in 2012, on Israeli tourist targets. The report concluded that both Iran and Hezbollah were crucial in providing assistance in a broad sense to the Assad regime, as he continues the brutal crackdown on the Syrian populace (www.state.gov, 2012).

Regarding the second issue, asymmetric warfare is a war doctrine that differs from traditional military war at the operational level. Strategically, asymmetric warfare is an open war and, tactically, it has no rules of engagement. During any conflict, the first rule for non-state actors is that there are no rules to be followed. Thus, nothing is forbidden. The battlefield is unlimited and includes every corner of the globe. Furthermore, in asymmetric warfare, there is no distinguishing between military or civilian targets. Non-

state actors rely heavily on religious worldviews to justify their actions to the public (Roach et al, 2005). In other words, religious ideology is a concept that provides legitimate cover to target anybody, anywhere, through conducting asymmetric warfare. Iran and most fundamentalist organisations (whether Sunni or Shiite) believe in the notion of martyrdom, which brings the greatest reward from Allah (God). Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh (Khadduri 1955 in Acharya et al, 2010) argues that people who conduct asymmetric warfare in the name of Jihad consider death for the sake of Allah as the best way to get to Paradise.

Nation-states face a serious dilemma concerning asymmetric warfare (Neumann et al, 2005). Any retaliation against non-state actors located in the host country, or the country itself, would force the state to make difficult choices and critical decisions (Freedman in media.clubmadrid.org, 2005). The Israeli war on the Gaza Strip in late 2008 and early 2009, for example, was called the Gaza Massacre in the Arab-Muslim world and all around the world as well (Barzegar, 2009; Cordesman et al, 2009). Clearly, nation-states always face the dilemma in any conflict with non-state actors that put them under pressure, problems and risk, whether domestically, or with neighbouring states, or the international community. It is important to note that several of Hezbollah's factions have entered Iraq through Syria and Iran in order to support extremist Shiite groups, from Baghdad to Southern Iraq (Puelings, 2010). Poole (2007: 137) writes, "Hezbollah is further implicated by the sheer number of suicide bombings in Iraq. It is the Hezbollah-affiliated Palestinian organizations that have adopted the suicide attack as their favorite tactic".

In modern societies, in asymmetric warfare, there are opportunities to kill many innocent people in a short amount of time and authorities have difficulty in responding, due to the enemy's ambiguity. At operational and tactical levels, asymmetric warfare is mainly used

from the lowest tactical levels by conducting its mission in cities. Lebanese and Palestinian asymmetric forces (guerrillas), for instance, normally operate with a small number of units that provide them with the opportunity to penetrate urban areas and hide inside civilian cities and villages, making them difficult to locate (Poole, 2007).

During the Hezbollah-Israel War in 2006, Al Jazeera Television network reported, "Al-Manar, Hezbollah's satellite channel... showed footage of Hezbollah firing rockets from civilian areas and produced animated graphics showing how Hezbollah fired rockets at Israeli cities from inside villages in southern Lebanon" (www.Web.archive.org, 2006). Moreover, it is important to note that forces in asymmetric warfare usually wear civilian clothes instead of uniforms. Therefore, identification of these forces can be difficult, bearing in mind that they can be a civilian during the day and a terrorist at night (Poole, 2007). In essence, in asymmetric warfare, forces are quick-moving and can conduct their tasks of violence from multiple locations autonomously and independently. Moreover, this kind of warfare of non-state actors uses all the available means to have enormous impact.

One of the major dilemmas of states, with regard to non-state actors, is the zero-sum game. Most fundamentalist organisations and groups emphasise their mutual interest, with no negotiation and no compromise concerning their objectives. In this context, there is only one winner and one loser. Thus, total loss or total success. The primary aim for states is to maintain and protect people's right to survive. Asymmetric conflict seeks to achieve political and psychological objectives, rather than one decisive military victory (Poole, 2007). The aim of most non-state actors in the Middle East is to not only kill many adversaries, but also to destroy the infrastructure of target states. Asymmetric conflict escalates the level of uncertainty for/between state actors.

8.4.2. Strait of Hormuz: World Markets and Iranian Threats

This section focuses on the impact of Iran's behaviour on the Strait of Hormuz and the implications for world markets. Iran's foreign policy of proceeding with its nuclear programme, continuing its support for radical movements by lethal aid, increasing the tone of speech acts of hardline rhetoric and its involvement in regional issues, raise tension regionally and internationally. As a result, the security dilemma will escalate to the point where the Iranian regime will take action, by threatening the flow of global oil supply and contributing to higher global oil prices. 40% of world oil flows daily via the Strait of Hormuz (Cordesman, 2007). The Strait of Hormuz is one of the vital waterways in the world, and the sole route leading out/ into the Gulf waterway region (www.eia.gov, 2012). In this sense, the Strait of Hormuz is one of the critical issues that intersect regional and international interests (www.eia.gov, 2012). The Strait of Hormuz is one of the fundamental arteries of the global markets, and is in the grip of Iranian Maritime Forces (Katzman et al, 2012).

The Strait of Hormuz is under threat by Iranian military forces that have occupied three geo-strategic islands (Abu Musa, Greater Tunb Island, and Lesser Tunb Island) of the United Arab Emirates in Gulf waters since 1971. This has given Iran a great opportunity to control and threaten the routes to/from this essential mobility corridor. The question is not whether Iranian forces are capable of harassing shipping and destroying and sinking dozens of oil tankers. Rather, the question is what would the reaction of the international community and great powers be towards Iran and the impact on international markets (Talmadge, 2008). No doubt, Iran’s naval forces are able to threaten the shipping traffic in Gulf waters. This can be done by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and/or Special

Forces by maritime forces, sea mines and long-range ballistic missiles. In 2006 Admiral Ali Fadavi, from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, claimed that Iran had a sophisticated system of weapons, which “no warship could escape because of its high velocity". Iran also claimed that there were new weapons being tested for attacking big ships and submarines (Cordesman, 2007).

Any tension or military conflict in this regard could cause oil prices to rise severely, and would damage the environment as a result of oil spills, which would be catastrophic to the natural marine life, the local water supply Gulf Arab states depend on for desalination, as well as their economies (Talmadge, 2008). Iran has threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz if it was attacked by any regional power, such as Israel, or international powers, under the pretext of proceeding with its nuclear programme (Mansharof et al, 2008; www.latimesblogs.latimes.com, 2012). Mohammad Reza Rahimi, Iranian Vice-President, warned that "not a drop of oil will pass through the Strait of Hormuz," if the West imposes more sanctions over its controversial nuclear programme (www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16344102, 2011). In this context, at the same source, Admiral Habibollah Sayari, the Iranian maritime chief, mentioned that closing the Strait of Hormuz would be "easy". For these reasons, Gosden (2012) states that on Monday 16 January 2012, after a fresh threat to close the Strait of Hormuz, by an Iranian senior official, oil prices rose 70 cents to $111.14 a barrel. Iranian leaders' threats have ranged from closing the Strait of Hormuz to attacking US targets in the region, including in the GCC states, as well as targets in Israel, through employing revolutionary Islamic fighters. The Strait of Hormuz remains a vital card for Iran's foreign policy to apply pressure at any future negotiation.

8.4.3. A Conventional and Unconventional Armaments Race and the Likelihood of Spreading to Non-State Actors across the Region and Beyond

This section focuses on both the conventional and unconventional arms race, and the likelihood of spread to non-state actors in the Middle East and elsewhere, by explaining these matters in relation to action-reaction and offensive-defence patterns. Schelling (in Booth et al, 2008) writes of the interplay between the psychological and the material, within the framework of dynamic situations of uncertainty and mutual mistrust between two or more players. In the case of nation-states, Schelling (in Booth et al, 2008: 43) provides an example of an action-reaction situation and how it works; he notes, "if I go downstairs to investigate a noise at night, with a gun in my hand, and find myself face to face with a burglar who has a gun in his hand, there is danger of an outcome that neither of us desires". Self-defence in such situations becomes ambiguous in terms of mutual uncertainty and the reactions through the confrontation, as each party thinks the other may shoot first.

In the context of the security dilemma, threat is increased if the security situation escalates, and, when it reaches the level of crisis, the need for weapons will be absolutely necessary among all players in the region (Hollis et al, 1990). In terms of offensive/defensive weapons, as John Mearsheimer, argued, weapons speak through the cognitive system of their interpreters (in Booth et al, 2008). In other words, when state deploys defensive weapons for peaceful purposes, it is hard to distinguish their strategic and operational tasks, especially in light of the possibility of modifications, for instance, in terms of increasing their range and the combat effectiveness to become offensive rather than defensive

weapons, which leads to actual threat to neighbours and beyond. The ensuing military spending and arms imports will probably escalate the conflict (Jackson et al, 2007).

On the other hand, the danger posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMD), chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiological weapons has dwindled with the end of the Cold War. Although most countries have abandoned their arsenals of weapons of mass destruction, the Iranian regime is still proceeding with the development of its nuclear programme alongside ballistic missile systems. These Iranian efforts are challenging the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the policies of the Great Western states (www.fas.org, 2006; Cordesman, 2007). This is a crucial issue that threatens the regional security system and violates multiple Security Council resolutions, as it continues to develop its uranium enrichment and heavy water at nuclear reactor activities, and also to develop ballistic missiles, that can carry and deliver nuclear warheads. Byman (2008) argues that the behaviour of Iran in the past indicated that it is not likely to provide either chemical, or biological, or radiological, or nuclear elements to terrorist organisations and fundamentalist groups. These lethal weapons can be devastating even for friends and are seen as heinous, destroying the image of both the group and its state sponsor. Byman (2008) and Waltz (in Cal, 2012) point out that the Islamic Republic of Iran is unlikely to deliver weapons of mass murder to its proxies, despite its ability to do so. Collins (2007: 271) warns, "if the threat posed by WMD proliferation to state actors is of increasing concern, then the possibility that these weapons could fall into the hands of terrorists is alarming".

Iran believes that to ensure its strategic interests it needs to obtain nuclear weapons capabilities, to reinforce its diplomatic, military, and economic instruments of power. That

is, it needs to join the nuclear club of Israel, Pakistan, and India. Katzman (2003) pointed out that John Bolton, undersecretary of State of America, on 09 October 2002, told the Congress that Iran is building a nuclear fuel cycle to support a nuclear weapons programme. Turki al-Faisal warned, in a security forum in Riyadh, that Saudi Arabia has no choice but to seek nuclear weapons, if Iran obtains them (Kahn, 2011). This statement expresses the threat of a nuclear arms race in the Gulf region between Iran and the GCC states. Indeed, it might be argued that the debate surrounding the attempts of some states in the Middle East to obtain conventional or unconventional weapons is a natural consequence of an anarchic environment, due to uncertainty and mutual mistrust. Iran's decisive efforts to expand its influence in the region, the arms race between nation states and the possibility of non-state actors obtaining some elements of weapons of mass destruction severely threaten the regional security and international stability.

8.5. Regional Ascendance of Iran between Reality and Illusion

To what extent does the perception of the Iranian security threat to and by Middle Eastern states influence the security dilemma? This section discusses this issue within the framework of the fourth research question.

A broad international survey was conducted by the BBC World Service between December 2011 and February 2012, which included more than 24,000 persons from 22 countries. The findings showed the ranking of countries' influence on the world negatively. The world press and international news displayed the results of the poll, which showed that Iran was ranked first, having the worst image and the most negative influence on the world (Ravid, 2012). Mountains of official documentation prove that the image of Iran is derived

from reality, which is concrete, physical, visible, rather than imaginary, conceptual, hypothetical, or speculative (Lee, 2008; Sadjadpour, 2009). Since 2003 Iran has attempted to expand its geopolitical power and ideological influence on its neighbours, during Ahmadinejad's presidency, by using an assertive approach as follows: (i) using hardline rhetoric in the speech acts of Iranian political and clerical elites; (ii) supporting fundamentalist organisations and groups of non-state actors; (iii) challenging UN security council resolutions by proceeding with its nuclear programme, which led to more economic sanctions. As a result, relations have deteriorated between Iran and most countries, and its foreign policy has been viewed in a negative light (Al-Ghareib, 2005; AL-Sadeq, 2006; Al-Nefisy et al, 2008; Ehteshami et al, 2008).

Ideologically, AL-Sader et al (2004), Al-Ghareib (2005) and Jawada (2007) argue that the Islamic Republic of Iran is a global religious player that sees the world as divided into a colonialist, exploiting West led by the US and its allies, and the others, who attempt to set themselves free from the Western grip. Bulent Gokay and Darrell Whitman (2004) argue that throughout history religion often served the politics of the nation. These policies need to follow a programme of action in line with government agenda, and not just promises and political discourses. Otherwise, promises and discourses will lose credibility and reliability and become merely illusions of power (Gokay et al, 2004).

In essence, in the real world, Iran has been attempting to maximise both influence and soft power by using conventional and unconventional instruments of power, such as the pursuit of its nuclear programme, alongside building a large military arsenal, as well as strategic collaboration with non-state actors and Shiite factions. In this context, the interaction between ideas, interests, ambitions of hegemony, threaten perceptions, and capabilities, in

line with Iranian geopolitical agenda, has created a visible reality for Iran's foreign policy, which has had a severe impact on the regional security system and international stability. Details of the Iranian threats to world security are given in Appendix 11 (p. 444).

8.6. The Security Dilemma as an Ongoing Process in the Middle East

This section explores how the security dilemma works in post-invasion Iraq, using ideological and psychological paradigms. These paradigms are inter-subjective, that is, they are related to a process of mutual interpretation and representation of the regional activities. Collins (in Booth et al, 2008: 6) argues in The Security Dilemma and the End of the Cold War (1997: 20), and The Security Dilemmas of Southeast Asia (2000: 6-10), that the nature of the security dilemma and the situation of uncertainty and mutual mistrust, when required to choose between two equally balanced alternatives, leads to negative outcomes which are "unavoidable". In fact, "according to most security dilemma theorists, permanent insecurity between nations and states is the inescapable lot of living in a condition of anarchy" (Booth et al, 2008: 2).

Hinnebusch et al (2002), Bilgin (2005) and Owen (2007) argue that this region is one of the trouble spots worldwide and has been an arena of incessant conflict, attracting global attention. Although the countries in this region share religion, race, culture, identity, and landscape, still tensions, conflicts and wars have become common features among the regional states. Some of these conflicts are religious, others national or ideological. For instance, the Arab-Israeli conflict (1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982), the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (1990), the Second Gulf War (1991), the invasion Iraq (2003), the Hezbollah-Israel War (2006), and the conflicts and crises that

have taken place after the so-called the Arab Spring, in Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, all shaped international relations and the regional security system.

This thesis accepts the claim of both constructivism, which believes in the power of ideas, culture, identity, ideology, and social norms (the Islamic Shiite Doctrine), and offensive realism, which stresses increasing the maximum amount of power to reinforce the position of state in the system (the continuous efforts to enhance Iranian conventional and unconventional capabilities to support the hidden Imam Al-Mahdi who will direct the Shiite Muslims to rule the world). The security dilemma in the Middle East has been based on the sectarian threat within the Arab-Sunni states (except Syria), which comprise the majority in the Middle East. This threat rests on the existence of a national security dimension, not a political conflict or military threat, which could be negotiated and solved. There are mutual attempts between players (decision-makers) to understand each other's motives and intentions concerning the material power they possess. These psychological factors are a cornerstone of international relations, whether based on trust and cooperation and/or based on decisions of war and peace according to mistrust, fear and uncertainty in an anarchic environment.

It has been widely argued that the Islamic Republic of Iran has a mixed project, combining a historical pride in Persia and a religious ideological fundamentalism, that directs its foreign policies towards attaining its grand geopolitical interests (Dake, 2010). Iran needs to exercise active external policies that necessitate interfering in the domestic affairs of target states. The consequences of that are domestic instability, regional destabilisation, and international tension. This thesis argues that instability is a suitable environment for Iran and its proxies of non-state actors, as it allows them to meddle in regional affairs to

expand their influence and maximise their power. Stability and peace, however, are contrary to the philosophy of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, that is based on the principle of reform, the Iranian constitution, principles and thoughts of Khomeini, methods both of the supreme leader Khamenei and President Ahmadinejad, and a core theory of Shiite Islam of the Twelver school of thought, Imam Al-Mahdi Al-Montazar (the Awaited). In this sense, stability not only constrains major duties and tasks for Iran's foreign policy, but also invalidates some articles of the Iranian constitution, such as Articles 152-154, which urge to continue Iran's leadership, guidance, and its fundamental role in ensuring the principles of the Islamic revolution, support the world's oppressed and confront all forms of corruption (Nia, 2011; www.irna.ir, 2014).

Stability would undermine the theory of Imam Al-Mahdi, as his mission to reform the world through spreading justice and peace would be unnecessary. The Islamic Republic of Iran faces a serious challenge in a peaceful and stable environment. The Iranian political and constitutional institutions would likely lose their legitimacy and credibility, both internally and externally. The theory of Imam Al-Mahdi says that the world's problems of injustice, oppression and ignorance will be replaced by righteousness, justice, and fairness when he comes to power. With peace and stability there is no need for Imam Al-Mahdi, this means the authority of the supreme leader who acts on behalf of Imam Al-Mahdi will not be required. A favourable environment to the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy and its proxies of non-states actors, to obtain legitimacy for their activities and to attain their strategic geopolitical interests, is an unstable environment.

Winning does not always mean gaining something at the expense of one's adversary. Winning can be defined as gaining relative to one's own value system: a country wins

when it is able to secure and maintain its social values and economic and political constructs. The absolute win is to limit, control, and reduce conflict, while establishing a strategic balance with which both sides can live and this is referred to as a variable-sum game (Grieco et al, 1988). In the security dilemma of the Middle East, when Iran and its allies declare there are no mutual interests to negotiate and no compromise for their objectives, the conflict in the Middle East becomes a zero-sum game, where there is one winner and one loser—total defeat or total victory.

The argument thus far has concluded that two irreconcilable forces in the Middle East, which share the same geographical region but have conflicting interests, especially in post-invasion Iraq, have reshaped the mechanism of the security dilemma in accordance with their polar opposite views. Each of these poles has a bloc of allies, its own political agenda and regional interests. The first bloc comprises most regional countries supported by the West, particularly the US, that support the peace process among all regional players, and the second bloc is Iran, Syria and non-state actors, who believe in changing the status quo, via imposing an ideological influence and geopolitical power on others, using asymmetric capabilities. Despite using material power in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Yemen, US and coalition forces have not managed to eliminate the ideological element. Militant Islamist groups and fundamentalist organisations are able to survive, hide, renew and reproduce their cells no matter what material damage has been inflicted on them.

One must bear in mind that, since the Islamic Revolution, especially in post-invasion Iraq, Iran's foreign policy has attempted to re-build massive socio-political movements in the region, in order to compensate for its materialistic weakness, compared to great powers (Barzegar, 2008; Puelings, 2010). The common efforts by the Iranian regime and its allies

to expand their ideological influence and geopolitical interests have caused the structure of the regional security system to crack (Al-Ghareib, 2005; Felter et al, 2008). Consequently, the security dilemma in the region will continue as it is, as long as the mutual perceptions of threats and interpretations of motives and intentions remain (Booth & Wheeler 2008). The ongoing process of the security dilemma in the Middle East is infinite. Even if Iran achieved its ultimate interests and goals, the regional and international reaction would be counter to the new status quo, and so on (Jones, 2003).

8.7. Conclusion

Chapter eight addressed the fourth and last research question: To what extent does the perception of the Iranian security threat to and by Middle Eastern states influence the security dilemma? The aim of this chapter was to discuss the issues regarding the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East between 2003-2013, by focusing on the impact of the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy on the security dilemma. Above all, this chapter has contributed to an understand of the security dilemma as an ongoing process in the Middle East, in line with the interactions of domestic and regional factors, along with international pressures.

The chapter focused on the root cause of the security dilemma in post-invasion Iraq, between Iran and its allies of non-state actors and Shiite factions, and Arab Sunni regimes. Competition for leadership of the Islamic world and geopolitical influence has become a key factor in deepening tensions and uncertainty between the key players. This leads to a backlash and reaction, and this is the mechanism, nature and scope of the security dilemma (Hollis et al, 1990; Hinnebusch et al, 2002; Collins, 2007; Booth et al, 2008). The situation

between the major regional competitors (Iran vs Saudi Arabia) drove their relationship to a zero-sum game (one winner and one loser-- total loss, or total victory). Therefore, tension is in a never-ending cycle (Axelrod, 2000; Cordesman et al, 2006; Connell et al, 2007).

Why would Iran be willing to accept potential risks of further economic sanctions or military actions by adopting an assertive policy? From a realist perspective, self-interest is one of the prominent motives of foreign policy that lead to compete for power and security, through the pursuit of coercive power and diplomacy. In constructivism, by contrast, persuasive ideas, cultural values, and identities play crucial roles in foreign policy. This thesis concluded that both motives have served as engines in Iran's foreign policy, and have influenced its strategic objectives. With this in mind, this thesis stresses that Iranian long-term objectives are not defensive in nature, but rather the expansion of ideological influence and maximisation of regional preeminence.

Conclusion and Questions for Future Study

9.1. Introduction

The chapter is divided into four sections. It starts with a summary of the chapter. Section two discusses the outcomes of the research. Section three assesses Iran's grand strategy and its impact on the region, alongside US policy. The discussion focuses on the role of religious ideology, revolutionary principles and geopolitical pragmatism. Section four makes recommendations and suggestions for further research.

The engines that drive the core argument of this thesis are religious ideology and geopolitical interests, in line with the instruments of soft power for control and survivability. These patterns organically are associated with the three main themes of the security triangle: Iran's foreign policy as one of the key players with its allies, particularly non-state actors and Shiite factions; the US military presence in the region and its regional and international allies; the Middle East region as the empirical reference for examining interactions, competitions, challenges, and opportunities that are interconnected with Iran's behaviour and the pre-existing security dilemma.

This research is a multi-disciplinary study examining the impact of the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy on the regional security system, in order to explore the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East within the context of regional rivalries that fueled the security dilemma 2003-2013. The focus was on patterns of the distribution of soft power, competition for leadership, changing power structure and power relations.

Interactions between soft power and military power have played a crucial role in shaping the political and security landscape of the region.

This thesis has argued that Iran has countered interference by big powers, particularly the increasing interference of the US in regional affairs, and has also defended Muslim values and rights. Iran has adopted a strategy of so-called offensive deterrence. It has employed all its unconventional instruments of power and asymmetric warfare to resist regional threats to its national security and to maximise its power by spreading its religious ideology.

9.2. Summary of the Main Findings

This thesis explored Iran's behaviour and considered its impact on geopolitical dynamics, using international relations theories and approaches, neoclassical realism, together with constructivism, offensive realism and speech acts, to analyse, interpret and explain policy options, foreign policy behaviour and decision-making, and to understand the causal link between domestic policies, external relations and activities of nation-states and non-state actors. These theories have been used to interpret events and phenomena after the fact, to explore different perceptions and motivations for all players under study in their dynamic relationship. This thesis has tried to bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and security reality on the ground, concerning geopolitical dynamics, behaviour patterns of states, and foreign policy outcomes.

The core issue of Iran's foreign policy since the Islamic Revolution has been an attempt to spread revolutionary thought and ideological Shiite belief. The theory of Wilayat Al-Faqih

was one of the approaches it has used to expand its influence regionally. This approach was established by Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Iranian revolution and the originator of the constitution, in order to impose a Revolutionary Shiite Islamic regime in the region.

This thesis has carried out original work in a number of ways. The originality lies in the fact that the security studies were extended beyond a purely military focus to include roles and activities of non-state actors and unconventional forces, alongside ideological dimensions, revolutionary values and speech acts. In doing so, it provided further insight into the nature of the confrontation between Iran and its allies, on the one hand, and most of regional countries with their Western allies, on the other, in terms of distribution of power, competition for leadership and geopolitical interests. It has contributed to the understanding of the formulation and implementation of Iran's foreign policy, and to the interpretation of the outcomes of its transformative power on the regional security system. This interpretation shows interaction between variables and drivers within a geopolitical dimension, which paved the way for reframing the scope of the security dilemma in the Middle East.

In this context, international relations theories are crucial for several reasons. They allow one to ask how and why specific events have occurred and how they are linked. The theories also provided analytical tools to make sense of how the world works and how elites, policies and actions relate to one another, by simplifying the way to identify the key features of related variables, drivers and factors that serve self-interests and counter security threats.

In order to gain a better understanding of Iran's motivation to be the dominant state in the Gulf region and an indispensable regional power in the broader Middle East, on the one hand, and to counter security threats on the other hand, it was necessary to address the domestic factors, to demonstrate their influence on external affairs. Neoclassical realism and constructivism make this possible through the attempt to connect domestic politics with foreign interests and actions abroad. These theories provide alternative variables to examine a number of the central themes in international relations theory. These include the relationship between state identity and self-interest, the balance of power, an elaboration of power, and the prospects for change in international politics.

Power is a central theoretical element for both neorealist and constructivist approaches to international relations theory, but their conceptions of power are different. Constructivism argues that ideas are a form of power. Hence, power is more than brute force, it is material and ideological. Offensive realists argue that states must always endeavour to maximise their material power, not just for survival, but to be the most powerful in the system. However, defensive realism focuses on survival within an anarchic environment (Collins, 2007).

The findings presented in this thesis suggest that Iranian foreign policy is the result of a complex mixture of different religious drivers: ideologies, pan-Islamism and revolutionary Shiism. Intervening variables, regime identity, nationalism and decision-makers, play a prominent role in power calculations in Iran's political system. This domestic role has been linked with Iran's foreign policy to achieve its geopolitical interests and to counter threats.

Speech acts in Iran's foreign policy are derived from a leitmotif in the Iranian constitution on justice and resistance through supporting oppressed and fighting the world's tyrants. The thesis uses the idea of speech acts as a helpful means to demonstrate how identity is constructed. This approach enables us to explain the sets of ideas and values embedded in Iranian identity. A combination of speech acts and a constructivist approach has been used to study Iran's foreign policy. Political and clerical discourses originate from Islamic political thought, Shiite ideology, the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, speeches of Imam Khomeini and its historical background. Equally importantly, Western democratic constitutions are based on the principles of freedom, liberty and human rights, principles guiding their domestic affairs and foreign policies.

Ideological and pragmatic approaches can be found in Iranian foreign policy. Ambitious geopolitical moves, such as the nuclear programme, anti-imperialism, or extensive geopolitical involvement in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, have been conducted within the framework of self-interest, and its components of Islamic internationalism (religious ideology) and foreign policy (geopolitics). Arguably, in each period of Iran's presidency and according to the culture and identity of the ruling elites, specific layers of religious ideology were emphasised. However, Iranian national identity along with religious ideology remains within the framework of the consolidated guidelines of the supreme leader, alongside the state's foreign policy.

When it comes to distribution of power, the neorealist account would be that the Islamic Republic of Iran was an objective threat to its neighbours and Western interests. A constructivist account would be that a state's identity, such as Iran's, is rooted in domestic

sociocultural milieus. Regime identity produces understandings of oneself and others (in this case, Shiite allies) based on religious ideology and geopolitical strategic interests.

Iran is seen by the US and other Western states as a theocratic regime connected to terrorism, while the US perceives itself as the protector of a particular set of values, both at home and abroad. At the same time, Iran and its allies perceive the US military presence in the region as a threat to their national security and to the regional security system. On this basis, perceptions and interactions between parties determine foreign policy.

The thesis also makes a substantial contribution to the recently emerging literature about regional security studies in the Middle East and establishes new avenues for research concerning causal links between geopolitics and religious ideology. In other words, the thesis re-assesses religious ideology as soft power. Although it is not tangible, it is one of the greatest instruments of power for the Islamic Republic of Iran. Asymmetric warfare, as one of its essential instruments of power, has played a crucial role in countering the US military presence in Afghanistan and in Iraq.

This thesis has endeavoured to bridge the gap between the security dilemma and Iran's foreign policy in literature. It explained how and why perceptions of the security dilemma were affected by the removal of Saddam's regime, shifting from regional military threats to domestic and regional security threats, leading to further instability.

This thesis combined positivist and post-positivist theories, asking what is power, why and how power is exercised, and how it is reproduced. The thesis distinguished between facts and normative judgements, or values.

The research relied on document analysis, a literature review, participant narratives and journals, and a focus group.

9.3. Thesis Revisited

This thesis has provided a deeper understanding of the security dilemma in the Middle East in the period 2003-2013. Since 2003, the geopolitical dynamics have influenced Iran's decision makers. Iran has faced diverse threats and the Iranian regime has responded by exporting revolutionary Islamic thought, imposing the Shiite doctrine on its neighbours, supporting resistance movements and engaging in several regional issues through its proxies, using the legitimacy of Islam (Abu Shakra, 2014). The thesis explored the links between religious ideology, historical relations, challenges, beliefs, national identity, discourses and practices that guide Iran's foreign policy, and the geopolitical dynamics that contributed to the destabilisation of the region.

9.3.1. Assessment of the Grand Strategy of Iranian Foreign Policy

Some believe that Tehran will now enter the international system as a responsible actor, especially after signing a historic nuclear deal with the P5+1; however, such optimism ignores the fact that Iran's current government still bears the imprint of a long imperial history and a longstanding Persian revolutionary and ideological approach. It still has grand strategic ambitions, derived from the political thought of Ayatollah Khomeini, for regional domination.

After the Iran – Iraq war, Iran realised that conventional military doctrine would no longer suffice. Ali Khamenei and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps developed asymmetric warfare tactics aimed at building Iranian influence through sectarian and political alliances. Hence, Iran played the role of the guardian of the broader Shiite sect in countries such as Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain. Iran has rebuilt networks of Shiite militias such as Lebanese Hezbollah, Yemen's Houthis and Iraq's Badr Corps and Al-Mahdi Army, and developed strong ties with Sunni groups, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip.

Recently, given the political landscape in the Middle East and events on the ground, Iran has become a rising power and is a key regional and international player. Since 2003, the Islamic Republic of Iran has exercised the de facto control of several major Arab countries, such as Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen (Cagaptay et al, 2015; www.mubasher.aljazeera.net, 2015).

Ali Akbar Velayati, senior advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and director of the Strategic Research Center at the Expediency Council, said during a speech at a national conference on the role of research on legislation, that the Iranian sphere of influence expands from Lebanon to Yemen. Velayati stated on 15 December 2014, "Our current power was not imaginable for anybody in the world, because Iran has Yemen to Lebanon under its influence" (www.tehrantimes.com/images/pdfs/12158.pdf, 2014; www.yemeress.com, 2014). The Supreme National Security Council in Iran, in coordination with National Council of Resistance, issued a confidential report regarding the latest regional developments. This report was issued after a visit by Ali Shamkhani, Secretary of the Supreme Council of the Iranian National Security to Syria on 30 September 2014. The

report stresses the need to defend Bashar al-Assad's regime and to take all necessary steps to complete the construction of the Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen axis, in order to encircle the rest of the Arab countries (Abu Hilal, 2014; https://www.watan. com/ reports/2157, 2014).

Iranian influence and its geopolitical interests in the Middle East usually do not announce in the public domain; however, Ali Shirazi, the representative of the supreme leader Ali Khamenei in the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, acknowledged directly that "the Islamic republic directly supports the Houthis in Yemen, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the popular forces in Syria and Iraq ... officials in the country have reiterated this many times" (www.mubasher.aljazeera.net, 2015). (www.iranprimer.usip.org, 2015). General Mohammad Bagherzadeh, a senior military official in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, boasted that the regime's borders now extend from Yemen to the Mediterranean. He added, "Arab leaders cannot imagine how far Iran can reach, because Iran has a motivating influence in Islamic nations and the Islamic world" (www.ncr-iran.org, 2015). Such Iranian expansion and the activities of its proxies in the region have paved the way to escalate the violence, especially the sectarian violence between Sunni factions and Shiite factions in Lebanon, Syria and especially in Iraq (Hanlon et al, 2007; Hanlon et al, 2008; Hanlon et al, 2010; Hanlon et al, 2011; Hanlon et al, 2013; Crawford, 2013).

Baghdad, Damascus, Beirut and Sana’a are now under Iranian influence and part of the Shiite axis (www.mubasher.aljazeera.net, 2015). As a consequence, the Gulf countries may be trapped inside a circle of Iranian influence (www.watan.com/reports/2157, 2014). Such geopolitical dynamics create a situation where the actions of one state trying to increase its

security or to maximise its power cause a reaction in a second, which leads to the decreased security of the first, and vice versa. In this context, the military operations of the Arab coalition against Al-Huthies in Yemen, Iran's proxies, on 26 March 2015, were a clear example of a reaction to Iran’s foreign policy.

9.3.2. Assessment of the Mechanism of the Security Dilemma

Freedman (1998:48) argues that "international security therefore deals with the most fundamental questions of war and peace and, consequently, with the highest responsibilities of government". However, between war and peace, there is a situation of political conflicts and security tensions between major players who attempt to avoid military confrontation. Iran's foreign policy conducts a non-zero sum game (both sides have to win), when it deals with the US administration, because direct confrontation by conventional military power is unequal and benefits the US. Iran and its ideological proxies launched asymmetric warfare and terrorist attacks against US military troops in the region, in order to combat Western influence and military power, which threaten Iran. No doubt, non-state actors need a suitable environment to conduct their operations. Roach et al (2005) argue that an active environment can be logistically or tactically favourable for the terrorist organisations and fundamentalist groups, in terms of escape versus pursuits and restrictions versus maneuvers. A favourable environment for non-state actors, such as a power vacuum and instability, provides justification for its behaviour and legitimacy for its activities.

There is a zero-sum game (one winner and one loser, total loss or total victory) towards neighbouring states of Iran, especially the Arab Sunni states. Al-Kulayni (2001) and AL-

Sader et al (2004) refer to the importance of ideological and religious factors, which have caused conflict among Islamic regimes, within the framework of competition about leadership of the Islamic world, as discussed in chapter two. In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran has no choice but to win the leadership spiritually and geopolitically. Thus, others must lose.

After the so-called Arab Spring, Iran has enjoyed relative internal stability, compared to Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, the Gulf states, Yemen, Egypt and Libya. This relative internal stability facilitates Iran's foreign policy, as Tehran can decide when, where and how to proceed and advance its goals.

Jackson et al (2007: 71) argue, "power is understood to be not only a fact of political life, but also a matter of political responsibility". The concepts of power and responsibility cannot be separated. Iran's actions through its foreign policy and its impact on the regional security system, on the one hand, and the counteractions against these policies by neighbouring countries and the great powers, particularly the US, to maintain the balance of power and their regional interests, on the other, are not merely an empirical statement about the way regional politics are expected to operate. For Iran it is a legitimate goal based on the importance of ideological and religious factors and the responsibility of the clerical and political leadership "to support the just struggle of the vulnerable against tyrants around the world" (article 154 of the Iranian constitution, Mahmoud Al-Qalam in AL-Suwaidi, 2005: 190); others also have a responsibility to defend people’s right to choose a way of living and their national security, as well as their own grand interests.

9.4. Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings of this thesis, and taking its limitations into account, subsequent follow-up work seems substantial and promising, and the following three research topics are recommended.

1. Iranian-Turkish Relations: Mutual Cooperation and Security Concerns

Although Tehran and Ankara have managed to cooperate in several spheres, especially in trade and tourism, they still compete for regional influence. There is a limit as to how much Turkish-Iranian relations can deteriorate, as well as to how much they can improve. Turkey and Iran have different security concerns and requirements. Topping the list are the Syrian crisis, the Kurdish issue, the Islamic State, Syrian refugees, and border security. Further research is needed to explore Iranian-Turkish relations.

2. The New Equation in the Middle Eastern Security Triangle: US and Iran vs the Islamic State (IS)

A shift in US-Iranian relations has recently occurred, because of two issues: the nuclear issue and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (Mohseni, 2014). Indeed, warning bells may sound in Sunni-dominated countries such as Jordan, Egypt, the Gulf states and Turkey, due to the possibility of changing the rules of the regional equation. The US and Iran find themselves on the same side in countering IS in Iraq and Syria, which may have implications for nuclear talks (Al-Na'ami, 2015). Therefore, the equation in power relations is under question.

3. *Beyond the regional security perspective: Iranian nuclear capabilities and missile programmes*

Iranian nuclear capabilities and missile programmes are a crucial issue that needs a comprehensive analysis, because the threat will not be limited to the Middle East region, but will go further. The nuclear deal with Iran alongside sanction relief may allow the Iranian regime to practise its regional and international roles freely as a real regional power with advanced ballistic missile programmes. Iran's foreign policy will influence any political and security arrangements and may impose its geopolitical agenda regionally and internationally. Groves (2012) noted that David Cameron, the British Prime Minister, on 06 March 2012, warned members of parliament that Iran is developing nuclear missiles that were potentially a direct threat to the United Kingdom, because they have capabilities to hit London. Tehran is attempting to develop intercontinental missiles that may trigger a nuclear arms race in the region. This warning came after the cabinet was given a secret briefing by MI6 chief, Sir John Sawers, and by the government's national security adviser, Sir Kim Darroch, on the threat posed by Iran.

Middle East security is very much in a state of flux and, in light of current developments with regards to Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and Libya, there are no certainties concerning the future political structure. What is certain is that the Islamic Republic of Iran will maintain its religious ideology and revolutionary approach, as well as its ambitions. It will continue to pursue its nuclear activities and use asymmetric warfare, essential to its geopolitical interests. Ali Yonsei, who served as intelligence minister in the reformist government of President Mohammad Khatami, spoke at a forum about "the Iranian identity" in Tehran, on 08 March 2015, where he said:

"Iran today has become an empire as it was throughout history and its capital is Baghdad now, which is our civilisation and our culture and identity today as in the past. (...) All Middle Eastern region belongs to Iran (...) We will defend all the peoples of the region, because we consider them as part of Iran. (...) Islamic extremism, disbelief, atheism, neo-ottomanism, the Wahhabis, the West, and Zionism will be repulsed by Iran"

(Yonsei, 2015:1).

In this context, Yonsei refers to the Persian Sassanid's Empire before Islam, which occupied Iraq and made Ctesiphon its capital. His speech reflects Iran's objective to exercise its soft power across the Middle East, and its efforts to change the current status quo geopolitically and demographically. This is the transformative power of Iran's foreign policy in post-2003 Iraq.

Iran's foreign policy was, and still is, driven by plans of geopolitical expansion in parallel with an ideological basis for action. Other actors, such as the US, the Gulf states and Iraq, are also involved in the geopolitical dynamics. Although Iran's ultimate goals are similar to those of other actors, in terms of expanding its control over the region, Iran has its own insecurities and threats to which it must respond, using all available means.

Appendix 1

List of Discussed Issues at Focus Group

No.	Background information	Statement				
1.	The Middle East region is one of the most trouble spots worldwide.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… ……					
2.	The image of the Islamic Republic of Iran has damaged badly from most of states both West and East.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… ……					
3.	The role of foreign actors and implications on the Middle Eastern balance of power in the post 2003.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… ……					

4.	Do religions and beliefs (Christian values and Islamic values) guide policies or justify foreign policy?	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… …… ……					
5.	Do you think speech acts are used by applying ideas and beliefs to make things happen in relity?	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… …… ……					
6.	The most significant factors affect the security dilemma in the Middle East since 2003 or post–invasion Iraq.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… …… ……					
Iran's Foreign Policy Behaviour and the U.S. perception						

7.	The primary strategic goals of Iran's Foreign Policy in the Middle East.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… ……					
8.	The Scope of Transformative Power of Iran's Foreign Policy in post – Invasion Iraq in 2003.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… ……					
9.	What is your general perception on the issues of faith in the shadow of U.S. - Iran's foreign policy?	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… …… ……					
10.	How important and influential is the Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Middle East?	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… ……					

	…… …… ……					
11.	The primary strategic goals for Iran's Foreign Policy in the Middle East are to maximize its geopolitical power and expands its ideological influence.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… ……					
12.	What system does Iran use to increase its power to ensure its security requirements are met in controlling internal and external situations?	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… …… ……					
13.	Regional Ascendance of Iran as a reality in the shadow of Shiite Crescent.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… ……					
	The main challenges that the international system					

14.	confronts today when it comes to Iran's security and Foreign Policy are: nuclear programme, hard-line of speech acts and anti-Israeli rhetoric, anti-peace process, regional interventions and support for terrorism.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… ……					
15.	What are the paradoxes of Iran's Foreign Policy?	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… ……					
16.	How does the Iran's Foreign Policy implement its grant strategic goals and interest in the region?	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… ……					
17.	Why does Iran's Foreign Policy behave the way it does?	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… ……					

18.	To what extent do you think the Islamic Republic of Iran has reshaped the security dilemma in post–invasion Iraq during the period 2003 – 2013?	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… …… ……					
The nature of the regional security environment and the patterns of destabilization						
19.	Can you tell me about your perception towards George W. Bush and some of his foreign policies?	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… …… ……					
20.	The main factors contribute to the destabilised condition in the Middle East since 2003.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… …… ……					

21.	Do you think George W. Bush was motivated by his personal religious conviction in conducting foreign policies, for example, the Faith Based Initiative?	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… …… ……					
22.	The vacuum in balance of power in post–Iraq 2003 has shifted the balance of security power in Iran's favour provided the opportunity for Iran's Foreign Policy to maximize its power through intervention in the domestic affairs of its neighbouring countries via its proxies.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… …… ……					
23.	What do you think about U.S. foreign policy towards the following issues: - International Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance. - International Religious Freedom. - War on Terror. - Israel and Middle East policies.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… ……					

	…… …… …… ……					
24.	Belief + Desire + Capability = Action which likely lead to deterioration of regional stability.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… ……					
25.	The influence of non–state actors such as militant Lebanese Hezbollah, Al-Mahdi Army in Iraq, Al-Houthi rebellion in Yemen and Hamas in Gaza Strip upon the security situation in the region and beyond.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… ……					
26.	Regional and international concerns of unconventional forces of non–state actors who have ideological doctrine and geopolitical agenda which increased particularly the Islamic resistance units.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… ……					

	…… …… …… ……					
27.	These unconventional forces could not carry out their roles and activities in order to attain their political agenda without the compliance of one or more nation – states.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… …… ……					
The strategic interests between Iran and non-state actors in the region						
28.	Nature and scope of the coordination between Iran's Foreign Policy and the fundamentalist organisations and parties in the Middle East and what are the interests that bind them?	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… …… ……					
29.	The relationship, if any, between Iran's Foreign Policy and destabilised condition in the Middle East.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… ……					

	…… …… …… ……					
30.	The transformative power of Iran's Foreign Policy alongside its proxies has led into more deterioration of political reality and security structure for the Middle East.	Strongly Disagree ☐	Disagree ☐	Neutral ☐	Agree ☐	Strongly Agree ☐
	Comments: …… …… …… …… …… …… ……					
Final questions						
31.	Is there anything else you would like to add that you believe is important to explain Iran's Foreign Policy and the patterns of destabilization in the Middle East that I have not been covered in this discussion?					
Comments: ……						

Appendix 2

In the Name of Allah, the Magnificent, the Merciful

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Last amended in 1989

Constitution Review Council

بِسمِ الله الرَّحمنِ الرحيم

...لَقَد أَرسَلنَا رُسُلَنَا بالبَيِّنَتِ وَأَنزلنَا مَعَهُمُ الكِتابَ والمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالقِسطِ

"We sent aforetime Our Messengers with clear signs, and we sent down with them the Book and the Balance that mankind may uphold justice...." (57: 25)

Preamble

Chapter 1 (General Principle)

Chapter 2 (The Country`s official Language, Script, Calendar and Flag)

Chapter 3 (The Rights of People)

Chapter 4 (The Economy and Finance)

Chapter 5 (National Sovereignty and Powers Derived from it)

Chapter 6 (The Legislature)

Chapter 7 (The Councils)

Chapter 8 (The Leader or the Leadership Council)

Chapter 9 (The Executive)

Chapter 10 (Foreign Policy)

Chapter 11 (The Judiciary)

Chapter 12 (Radio and Television)

Chapter 13 (The Supreme Council of National Security)

Chapter 14 (Revision of the Constitution)

Preamble

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran sets forth the cultural, social, political, and economic institutions of the Iranian society, on the basis of Islamic principles and norms, which represent the earnest aspiration of the Islamic Ummah. This principal aspiration was defined by the very nature of the great Islamic Revolution of Iran and the course of struggle of the Muslim masses from its early stage to final victory, as expressed in the decisive and forceful slogans of all segments of the society, and now, at the dawn of this great victory, our nation seeks its realization wholeheartedly. The very distinctive characteristic of this revolution, as compared with other movements taken place in Iran during the past century, is its ideological and Islamic nature. Having gone through the Constitutional Movement against despotism and anti-colonial movement relating to the Nationalization of Oil Industry, Muslim people of Iran learned from this costly experience that the main reason for the failure of these movements can be clearly attributed to their lack of an ideological basis. Although the Islamic line of thought and the leadership of militant religious leaders played a major role in these movements in recent history, nonetheless, the struggles waged in the course of these movements floundered due to departure from the genuine Islamic positions. It was at this juncture that under the leadership of the eminent marji‘taqlīd (juristic authority), Āyatullãh al-‘Uîmã Imam Khumayni, the awakened conscience of the nation realized the need for pursuing an authentic Islamic ideological course in its struggles. This time, the militant ‘ulamã’ (clergy) of the country, who, in conjunction with committed intellectuals and writers, had always been in the vanguard of popular movements, found new impetus through his leadership. (The birth of this movement of the Iranian people is set at 1382, lunar year) corresponding to 1341 H. Sh. (solar Islamic calendar) or 1962.

The Dawn of the Movement

The U.S. conspiracy known as the "White Revolution", intended to stabilize the foundations of despotic rule and reinforce political, cultural, and economic dependence of Iran on world imperialism, met with the devastating protest of Imam Khumayni, who initiated a widespread movement of the people culminating in the momentous revolution, marked with much bloodshed, of the Muslim Ummah in the month of Khurdad 1342 H. Sh. (June 1963). This revolution, which in reality marked the birth of this majestic and widespread uprising, confirmed the axial role of Imam Khumayni as Islamic leader. The firm bond between the Imam and the people endured despite his exile from Iran resulting from his protest against the humiliating law of Capitulation (which provided legal immunity for American advisers), and the Muslim nation, particularly committed intellectuals and militant 'ulamã', continued their struggle in the face of banishment, imprisonment, torture and even execution. Throughout this time the conscious and responsible segment of society enlightened the people from the strongholds of mosques, the centres of religious teachings, and universities. Drawing inspiration from the revolutionary and fertile teachings of Islam, they led an unrelenting and conclusive struggle to raise the level of ideological awareness and revolutionary consciousness of the Muslim people. The despotic regime, which had begun the suppression of the Islamic movement with barbaric attacks on the Feydiyyah Theological School, Tehran University, and all other active centres of revolution, in an effort to evade the revolutionary anger of the people, resorted to the most savage and brutal measures. In these circumstances, execution by firing squads, medieval torture, and long-term imprisonment were the price our Muslim Ummah paid, marking its resolve to continue the struggle. The Islamic Revolution of Iran was sustained by the blood of hundreds of young men and women of faith who raised their cries of "Allãhu akbar" (God is the Greatest) at daybreak in

execution yards, or when they were gunned down by the enemy in the streets and marketplaces. Meanwhile, the regular declarations and messages of the Imam, issued on various occasions, extended and deepened the consciousness and determination of the Muslim nation.

Islamic Government

The idea of Islamic government based upon wilãyat al-faqīh (rule of the jurist), as presented by Imam Khumayni at the height of the period of repression by the despotic regime, was path breaking for a genuine struggle based on Islamic teachings. It produced a new well-defined and consistent motive for the Muslim people, giving a new impetus to the struggle of militant and committed Muslims both within the country and abroad. The movement continued on this course until, finally, popular discontent and intense public rage, caused by the mounting repression at home, as well as by the exposure of the regime by the ‘ulamã’ and militant students and the reflection of the struggle at the international level, shook the foundations of the regime violently. The regime and its sponsors were compelled to tone down the repression and to “liberalize” the political atmosphere of the country. This, they imagined, will serve as a safety valve which would prevent their eventual downfall. But the people, aroused, conscious, and resolute under the decisive and unfaltering leadership of the Imam, embarked on a triumphant, unified, comprehensive, and countrywide uprising.

The Popular Outrage

The publication by the ruling regime of an outrageous article on 15 Day, 1356 (January 7, 1978) meant to malign the sanctity of the ‘ulamã’, in particular Imam Khumayni, accelerated the revolutionary movement and caused an outburst of popular outrage across the country. The regime attempted to quell the eruption of the people’s anger, by silencing

the protest and uprising with bloodshed, but this only quickened the pace of the Revolution. The seventh-day and fortieth-day commemorations of the martyrs of the Revolution like a series of steady heartbeats added greater vitality, intensity, fervor and solidarity to this movement all over the country. In the course of this popular movement, the employees of all government establishments took an active part in the effort to overthrow the tyrannical regime, by calling a general strike and participating in street demonstrations. The widespread solidarity of men and women of all segments of society and of all political and religious persuasions played a significant role in the struggle. The women, especially, participated in large numbers and were actively involved in a most conspicuous manner at all stages of this great struggle. The common sight of mothers with infants in their arms rushing towards the scene of battle and in front of the barrels of machine-guns, indicated the essential and decisive role played in the struggle, by this major segment of society.

The Price the Nation Paid

After a little more than a year of continuous and unrelenting struggle, the nascent Revolution sustained by the blood of more than 60,000 martyrs as well as 100,000 wounded and disabled not to mention billions of tumans (Iranian currency) of damage to property came to bear fruit amidst cries of "Independence! Freedom! Islamic government!" This great movement, which triumphed through reliance on faith, unity, and the decisiveness of its leadership at every critical and sensitive juncture, as well as on the self-sacrificing spirit of the people, succeeded in upsetting all the calculations of imperialism and destroyed all its nexuses and institutions, thereby opening a new chapter in the history of all-embracing popular revolutions of the world. Bahman 21 and 22, 1357 H. Sh. (February 12 and 13, 1979) witnessed the collapse of the monarchical regime and abolition of domestic tyranny and foreign domination based on it. This great victory proved to be the

rebirth of Islamic government, a long-cherished desire of the Muslim people, and brought with it the glad tidings of final victory. In the referendum on the Islamic Republic, the Iranian people, unanimously and along with the marãji‘ al-taqlīd of Islam and the leadership, declared their final and firm decision to bring about a new political order, an Islamic Republic, by a 98.2% majority vote. Now the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, setting forth as it does the society's political, social, cultural, and economic institutions and their interrelationships, must now pave the way for the consolidation of the foundations of Islamic government and propound a plan for a new system of government to be established upon the ruins of the previous tãghũtī [i.e. anti-God, profane, tyrannical] order.

The form of Government in Islam

In the view of Islam, government does not derive from the interests of a class, nor does it cater to the domination of an individual or group. It represents, rather, the crystallization of the political ideal of a people sharing a common faith and outlook, organized in order to pave the way, in the process of its intellectual and ideological development, for movement towards the ultimate goal the movement towards God. In the course of its revolutionary developments, our nation has cleansed itself of the dirt and impurities accumulated during the tãghũtī past and purged itself of foreign ideological influences, thus returning to the authentic intellectual standpoints and world view of Islam. It now intends to establish an ideal and model society based upon Islamic norms. The mission of the Constitution is to realize the ideological objectives of the movement and to create conditions conducive to the development of Man, in accordance with the sublime and universal values of Islam. With due attention to the Islamic content of the Iranian Revolution, as a movement aimed at the triumph of all the mustaè‘afīn (oppressed) over the mustakbirīn (oppressors), the

Constitution provides the necessary basis for ensuring the continuity of the Revolution, at home and abroad. In the development of international relations in particular, the Constitution tries, with other Islamic and popular movements, to prepare the way for the formation of a single world community [in accordance with the Qur'ãnic verse]:

(إن هذِهِ أُمَّتُكُم أُمَّةً واحِدةً وَرَبُّكُم فَاعبُدُونِ)

(This community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord, so worship me, [21:92]) and to sustain the continuity of the struggle for the liberation of all deprived and oppressed peoples throughout the world. With due attention to the essential character or this great movement, the Constitution guarantees the rejection of all forms of intellectual and social tyranny and economic monopoly, and aims to entrust the destinies of the people to the people themselves in order to break completely with the system of despotism. [This is in accordance with the Qur'ãnic verse]:

(وَيَضَعُ عَنهُم إصرَهُم والأغلال ألَّتي كانَت عَلَيهِم)

(He removes from them their burdens and the fetters that were upon them. [7:157]) in creating the political infrastructures and institutions which make the foundation of society on the basis of an ideological outlook, the righteous (sãlihīn) assume the responsibility of governing and administering the country [in accordance with the Qur'ãnic verse]

(إنَّ الأَرضَ يَرِثُها عِبادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ)

(Verily, my righteous servants shall inherit the earth. [21:105]) Legislation, which sets forth regulations for the administration of society, revolves around the Qur'ãn and Sunnah. Accordingly, the exercise of close and earnest supervision by just, pious, and just scholars of Islam (al fugahã' ul-'Adil) is an absolute necessity. And as the purpose of government is

to foster the development of the human being in its movement towards a Divine order [in accordance with the Qur'ãnic phrase]:

(وَإِلَى الله المَصِيرُ)

(And toward God is the journeying, [3:28]) so as to bring about conditions favorable for the expression and blossoming of the human being's innate potential for manifesting the divine dimensions of Man, [in accordance with the injunction of the Prophet],

(Mould yourselves according to the Divine morality, [Hadiiíth]) This goal cannot be achieved without the active and broad participation of all segments of society in the process of social transformation. With attention to this aspect, the Constitution provides the ground for such participation by all members of society at all stages of the political decision-making process, on which the destiny of the country depends, so that in the course of man's development towards perfection, each individual is himself involved in and responsible for the growth, advancement, and leadership of society. This is precisely the realization of the government of the mustad'afin upon the earth [in accordance with the Qur'ãnic verse]:

(وَنُرِيدُ اَن نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ استُضعِفوا فِى الأرضِ وَنَجعَلَهُم أَئمَّةً وَنَجعَلَهُمُ الوارِثِينَ)

(And we wish to show favor to those who have been oppressed upon the earth, and to make them leaders and to make them the inheritors. [28:5])

The Wilâyah of the Just Faqîh

In keeping with [the Islamic principle of] governance (wilãyat al-amr) and the perpetual necessity of leadership (imãmah), the Constitution provides for the establishment of leadership by a qualified faqíh, recognized as Leader by the people. [This is in accordance with the hadíth]:

(مَجاري الأُمُورِ بِيَدِ العُلَماء باللهِ الأُمَناءِ عَلى حَلالِهِ وَحَرامِهِ)

(The direction of [public] affairs is in the hands of those who are learned concerning God and are trustworthy in matters pertaining to what He has made lawful and unlawful. [Tuhaf ul-'ugũl, p. 176]) Such leadership will prevent any deviation from authentic Islamic duties by the various organs of the State.

The Economy, a Means Not an End

In strengthening the foundations of the economy, the principal consideration will be the fulfillment of the human being's material needs, in the course of its overall growth and development. This principle contrasts with other economic systems, where the aim is concentration and accumulation of wealth and maximization of profit. In materialist schools of thought, the economy is an end in itself, whereby it becomes a subversive, corrupting and ruinous factor in the course of man's development. In Islam, the economy is a means, and all that is required of a means is that it should provide better efficiency in realizing the ultimate goal. In this perspective, the economic program of Islam consists of providing the means for the expression of the multifarious creative talents of the human being. Accordingly, it is the duty of the Islamic government to furnish all citizens with equal and appropriate opportunities, to create employment, and to satisfy their essential needs, for the sake of unflagging of human development.

Women in the Constitution

Through the creation of Islamic social infrastructures, all the human resources that have hitherto been subject to multifaceted foreign exploitation shall regain their true identity and human rights. As a part of this process, it is only natural that women should benefit from a larger restitution of their rights, because of the greater oppression that they suffered under

the tãghũtí order. The family is the fundamental unit of society and the principal nucleus for the growth and edification of the human being. Compatibility of belief and ideals is the main consideration in the establishment of the family, which provides the primary basis for man's development and growth. It is the duty of the Islamic government to provide the necessary facilities for the realization of this goal. Such a view of the family unit delivers women from being regarded as objects and tools for the promotion of consumerism and exploitation. Thereby, while she recovers her momentous and precious function of motherhood and of rearing human beings committed to Islamic ideals, she also assumes a pioneering social role as a fellow struggler of man in all vital areas of life, thus shouldering a more serious responsibility and enjoying a higher worth and nobility from the Islamic viewpoint.

An Army Committed to Islamic Principles

The basic criterion to be attended to, in the organization and equipment of the country's defense forces, is faith and Islamic teaching. Accordingly, the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps are to be organized in accordance with this goal. They will be responsible not only for guarding and preserving the frontiers of the country, but also for fulfilling the Islamic mission of Jihãd in God's way and of struggling for the cause of extending the sovereignty of God's law throughout the world:

أَعدوا لَهُم مَااستَطَعتُم من قُوَّةٍ وَمِن رِباطِ الخَيل تُرهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَ اللهِ وَعَدُوّكُم وَءَاخَرِينَ مِن دُونِهِم...)

(Prepare against them whatever force you are able to muster, and strings of horses, striking fear into the enemy of God and your enemy, and others besides them. [8:601])

The Judiciary in the Constitution

The Judiciary is of vital importance in safeguarding the rights of the people in accordance with the course set by the Islamic movement, and for preventing deviations within the Islamic Ummah. Accordingly, provision has been made for the creation of a judicial system based on Islamic justice and constituted of judges who are just and have knowledge of the precise Islamic laws. Because of its essentially crucial nature and the need for conformity to Islamic teachings, this system must be free from every kind of unhealthy affiliations and connections. [This is in accordance with the Qur'ãnic verse]:

(...وَإِذاحَكَمتُم بَينَ النَّاسِ أَن تَحكُمُوا بُالعَدلِ ...)

(And when you judge among the people, judge with justice. [4:58])

The Executive

Considering the special importance of the Executive in implementing the laws and ordinances of Islam for the purpose of bringing about a society subject to equitable relations, and considering as well the necessity of this vital issue, for paving the way for realization of the ultimate goal of life, the Executive must open the way for the creation of an Islamic society. Consequently, the Executive's confinement within any kind of complex and obstructive system that delays or compromises the attainment of this objective is rejected by Islam. Therefore, the system of bureaucracy, the product and issue of tãghũtí forms of rule, will be firmly discarded, so as to establish an executive system that is more efficient and swift in fulfilling its administrative commitments.

The Mass Media

The media of mass communication, radio and television, must serve the diffusion of Islamic culture in pursuit of the progressive path of the Islamic Revolution. To this end,

they should draw upon a healthy debate of different ideas, and strictly refrain from diffusing and propagating destructive and anti-Islamic traits. It is incumbent on all to follow the principles of this law, as it regards the freedom and dignity of the human race as its topmost objective and paves the way for the progress and development of the human being. It is also necessary that the Muslim Ummah should participate actively in building the Islamic society, by selecting competent and faithful officials and by keeping a constant watch on their performance, so as to succeed in building an Islamic society that may be a model and witness to the world's people [in accordance with the Qur'ãnic verse]:

(...وَكَذلِک جَعَلناکُم اُمَّةً وَسَطاً لِتَکُونُوا شُهَداء عَلَی النَّاسِ)

(Thus we made you a median community, that you might be witnesses to men. [2:143])

Representatives

The Assembly of Experts, constituted of the people's representatives, concluded the task of framing the Constitution on the basis of the draft proposed by the government and proposals received from various groups. It consists of twelve chapters comprising one hundred and seventy-five articles and was completed, with the above-mentioned objectives and motives, on the eve of the fifteenth century of the hijrah of the Noble Messenger, may Peace and blessings be upon him and his family, the founder of the redeeming school of Islam, hoping that this century will witness the establishment of a world government of the mustaè'afín and the defeat of all mustakbirín.

CHAPTER I

General Principles

Article 1

The form of government of Iran is that of an Islamic republic, endorsed by the people of Iran on the basis of their long-standing belief in the sovereignty of truth and Qur'ãnic justice. This was confirmed through a majority of 98.2% of eligible voters in the referendum of 9 and 10 Farvardin, 1358 H. Sh., corresponding to 1 and 2 Jamãdí al-Awwal, 1399 H. [29 and 30 March 1979], held after the victorious Islamic Revolution led by the eminent marja 'taqlíd, Ãyatullãh al-'Uzmã Imam Khumayni.

Article 2

The Islamic Republic is a system based on belief in:

1. The One God (as stated in the phrase لا اِلهَ اِلاّ الله "There is no deity except God"), His exclusive sovereignty and right to legislate, and the necessity of compliance to His command;

2. Divine revelation as the primary source of law;

3. Resurrection, and the formative role of this belief in the course of man's ascent towards God;

4. Divine justice, in creation as well as legislation;

5. Perpetual leadership (imãmah) and guidance, and its fundamental role in ensuring the continuity of Islamic revolution;

6. The exalted dignity and worth of the human being and its freedom accompanied with its responsibility before God, which secure equity, justice, and political, economic, social and cultural independence, as well as national solidarity, by recourse to:

a. Continuous ijtihãd by qualified jurists exercised on the basis of the Qur'ãn and the Sunnah of the Infallible Ones (Ma 'sũmín), may Peace be upon all of them;

b. The use of sciences, arts and human achievements and endeavors for their advancement;

c. Negation of all forms of oppression infliction of it as well as submission to it and of dominance, its imposition as well as its acceptance.

Article 3

In order to achieve the objectives specified in Article 2, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran must direct all its resources to the following goals:

1. Creation of a favorable environment for the development of moral virtues based on faith and piety, and struggle against all forms of vice and corruption;

2. Raising the level of public awareness in all areas through proper use of the press, mass media, and other means;

3. Free education and physical training for everyone at all levels and facilitation and expansion of higher education;

4. Strengthening the spirit of inquiry, investigation, and innovation in all scientific, technical, cultural, and Islamic spheres by establishing research centres and encouraging researchers;

5. Complete elimination of imperialism and prevention of foreign influence;

6. Elimination of all forms of despotism, autocracy, and monopoly;

7. Ensuring political and social freedoms within the framework of law;

8. The people's participation in determining their political, economic, social, and cultural destiny;

9. Abolition of all forms of unjust discrimination and provision of equitable opportunities for all, in material and intellectual spheres;

10. Creation of a correct administrative system and elimination of superfluous government organizations;

11. Comprehensive reinforcement of foundations of national defense through universal military training to safeguard the country's independence, territorial integrity, and Islamic order;

12. Establishing the foundations of a correct and just economic system on the basis of Islamic criteria for creating welfare, eradicating of poverty and all form of deprivation with respect to food, housing, employment, hygiene, and providing social insurance for all;

13. Obtaining self-sufficiency in scientific, technological, industrial, agricultural, military and other similar spheres;

14. Securing the multi-faceted rights of all citizens, men and women, and providing just legal security for all, and equality of all before law;

15. Expanding and strengthening Islamic brotherhood and general cooperation among all the people;

16. Framing the country's foreign policy on the basis of Islamic criteria, fraternal commitment to all Muslims and unflinching support of the world's oppressed (mustaè ‘afín).

Article 4

All laws and regulations pertaining to civil, penal, financial, economic, administrative, cultural, military, political and other spheres must be based on Islamic criteria. This article governs absolutely and generally all articles of the Constitution, as well as all other laws

and regulations, and the duty to ascertain this matter devolve on the jurists of the Guardian Council.

Article 5

During the occultation of the Waí al- ‘Asr (i.e. the Twelfth Imam), may God expedite his appearance, the wilãyat al-amr and leadership of the Ummah devolve upon the just and pious jurist, fully aware of the times, courageous, possessing administrative and problem-solving abilities, who will assume the responsibilities of this office in accordance with Article 107.

Article 6

The country’s affairs in the Islamic Republic of Iran must be managed on the basis of public opinion as expressed through elections, including the election of the President, the representatives of the Islamic Parliament of Iran, and the members of the councils, and the like, or through referenda, in cases specified in other articles of this law.

Article 7

In accordance with the Qur’ãnic prescription [as mentioned in the following verses]:

(وَأَمرُهُم شُورى بَينَهُم)

(And their affairs [are settled] by consultation among them. [42:38])

(وَشَاوِرهُم فِى الأَمرِ)

(And consult them in the affair [of governance [3:159]) consultative bodies - such as the Islamic Parliament of Iran, and councils at the level of the province, city, region, district, and village, and the like - will be the country’s decision-making and administrative organs.

The instances, the manner of their formation, jurisdiction, and duties will be defined by this law and the laws derived from it.

Article 8

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, summoning to what is good, commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong (amr bil-ma ‘rũf wa nahy ‘anil-munkar) is a universal and mutual duty: of the people in relation to one another, of the government in relation to the people, and of the people in relation to the government. Its conditions, limits, and character will be defined by law.

(والمُؤمنُونَ وَالمُؤمنَاتُ بَعضُهُم أَولياءُ بَعضٍ يأمُرُونَ بِالمَعرُوفِ وَيَنهَونَ عَنِ المُنكَرِ)

(The faithful, men and women, are guardians in relation to one another: they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. [9:71])

Article 9

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the country’s freedom, independence, unity and territorial integrity are inseparable from one another, and it is the duty of the government and every individual citizen to safeguard them. No individual, group, or authority has the right to compromise, in the slightest degree, Iran’s political, cultural, economic, and military independence and territorial integrity under the pretext of exercising freedom, and no authority has the right to withdraw legitimate freedoms under the pretext of preserving the country’s independence and territorial integrity, not even by enacting laws and regulations.

Article 10

As the family is the fundamental unit of Islamic society, all laws, regulations, and relevant planning must be directed towards facilitating the formation of family, safeguarding its sanctity and the stability of family relations on the basis of Islamic laws and morality.

Article 11

In accordance with the noble verse [of the Qur'ãn]:

(إِنَّ هذِهِ أُمَّةٌ واحِدَةً وَأَنَارَبُّكُم فَاعبُدونِ)

This community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord, so worship me, [21:92]) all Muslims form a single ummah and it is the duty of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to formulate its general policies on the basis of the alliance and unity of Muslim nations, and to make consistent effort for the realization of the political, economic, and cultural unity of the Islamic world.

Article 12

The official religion of Iran is Islam and the madhhab (school of law) is the Twelver Ja'farí school, and this article will remain forever unalterable. Other legal schools (madhãhib) including the Hanafi, Shãfi'í, Mãlikí, Hanbalí, and Zaydí, are accorded full respect, and their followers are free to perform their religious rites in accordance with their own fiqh. These schools are officially recognized by the courts in matters pertaining to religious education and training and personal status (marriage, divorce, inheritance, and will) and the related litigation. In any region where the followers of any of these schools constitute a majority, the local regulations will be in accordance with that school within the jurisdiction of the local councils, with due observance of the rights of the adherents of other schools.

Article 13

Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians among Iranians are the only recognized religious minorities and they are free to perform their religious rites and ceremonies within the framework of law and to act in accordance with their own canon in matters of personal law and religious education.

Article 14

In compliance with the noble verse [of the Qur'ãn]:

(لاَيَنهكُمُ اللهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَم يُقَاتلُوكُم فِى الدَّينِ وَلَم يُخرِجُوكُم مِن دِيرِكُم أَن تَبَرُّوهُمِ وَتُقسِطُوااإلَيهُم إنَّ اللهَ يُحِبُّ المقسِطِين)

(God does not forbid you from dealing kindly and justly with those who have not fought with you because of your religion and who did not expel you from your homes, [60:80]) the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Muslims have the duty to treat non-Muslims in accordance with ethical norms and Islamic justice and fairness and to observe their human rights. This article applies to those who do not engage in conspiracy and hostile measures against Islam and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

CHAPTER II

The Country's Official Language, Script, Calendar, and Flag

Article 15

The official and common language and script of the people of Iran is Persian. Official documents, correspondence and texts, as well as text-books must be in this language and script. However, the use of regional and tribal languages in the press and mass media, as well as the teaching of their literature in schools alongside Persian is allowed.

Article 16

Since Arabic is the language of the Quran and Islamic sciences and teachings, and Persian literature is thoroughly permeated with this language, it must be taught, in all classes and in all areas of study, from after the primary level until the end of secondary school.

Article 17

The official calendar of the country commences from the migration (hijrah) of the Messenger of Islam, may God bless him and his Family. Both the solar and the lunar Islamic calendars are recognized, but government offices will follow the solar calendar. Friday is the official weekly holiday.

Article 18

The official flag of Iran is green, white, and red with the special emblem of the Islamic Republic and the الله أكبَر God is the greatest.

CHAPTER III

The Rights of the People

Article 19

All the people of Iran, regardless of ethnic group or tribe, enjoy equal rights; color, race, language and the like do not bestow any privilege.

Article 20

All citizens of the country, men and women, enjoy equal protection of the law as well as all human, political, economic, social and cultural rights in conformity with Islamic criteria.

Article 21

The government must ensure the comprehensive rights of women in conformity with Islamic criteria, and accomplish the following:

1. Creation of a favorable environment for the growth of woman's personality and restoration of her rights, material and intellectual;

2. Protection of mothers, particularly during pregnancy and child rearing, and protection of children without guardians;

3. Establishment of competent courts for protection and preservation of the family;

4. Provision of special insurance for widows, aged women, and women without support;

5. Awarding guardianship of children to worthy mothers to secure the children's welfare in the absence of a legal guardian.

Article 22

The dignity, life, property, rights, residence, and occupation of the individual are inviolate, except in cases sanctioned by law.

Article 23

The investigation of the beliefs of persons is forbidden, and no one may be molested or prosecuted for holding a belief.

Article 24

Publications and the press have freedom of expression, except when it is detrimental to the fundamental principles of Islam or the rights of the public, and the details will be specified by law.

Article 25

Except as provided by law, the inspection and interception of letters, recording and disclosure of telephone conversations, disclosure of telegraphic and telex communications, censorship, or willful failure to transmit them, eavesdropping, and all forms of covert investigation are forbidden.

Article 26

The formation of parties, societies, political or professional guilds, as well as religious associations, Islamic or pertaining to one of the recognized religious minorities, is permitted provided they do not violate the principles of independence, freedom, and national unity, Islamic criteria and the basis of the Islamic Republic. No one may be prevented from participating in the aforementioned groups, or compelled to participate therein.

Article 27

Public gatherings and marches, held without carrying arms, are allowed, provided they are not injurious to the fundamentals of Islam.

Article 28

Everyone has the right to choose any occupation he wishes, provided it does not infringe on the rights of others and is not contrary to Islam and public interests. It is the government's duty to provide all citizens with employment opportunity, and to create equal conditions for obtaining employment, with consideration of society's need for different professions.

Article 29

It is universal right to benefit from social security in respect of retirement, unemployment, old age, disability, being stranded, absence of a guardian, accidents, and from health and medical services and care provided through insurance or other means. The government must provide the afore-mentioned services and financial support for every individual citizen, by drawing, in accordance with the law, on national revenues and funds, obtained through public contributions.

Article 30

The government must provide all citizens with free education up to secondary school, and must expand free higher education to the extent required by the country for attaining self-sufficiency.

Article 31

It is the right of every Iranian individual and family to possess housing commensurate with his needs. The government must facilitate the implementation of this article by giving priority to those whose needs are greater, in particular the rural population and the workers.

Article 32

No one may be arrested except by the order of and in accordance with the procedure laid down by law. In case of arrest, the charges along with the grounds for accusation must be communicated without delay and explained in writing to the accused, and a provisional dossier must be forwarded to the competent judicial authorities within a maximum of twenty-four hours, so that the preliminaries of the trial can be completed as soon as possible. Violation of this article will be liable to penal action in accordance with the law.

Article 33

No one may be banished from his place of residence, or prevented from residing in the place of his choice, or compelled to reside in a given locality, except in cases provided by law.

Article 34

It is the indisputable right of every citizen to seek justice by recourse to competent courts. All citizens have right of access to such courts, and no one may be barred from courts to which he has a lawful right of recourse.

Article 35

Both parties to a lawsuit have the right to select an attorney in all courts of law. If they are unable to do so, arrangements must be made to provide them with an attorney.

Article 36

Only competent courts are entitled to pass a sentence and execute it in accordance with the law.

Article 37

Innocence is to be presumed, and no one is to be held guilty of a charge, unless his guilt has been proven in a competent court.

Article 38

All forms of torture for the purpose of extracting confessions or acquiring information are forbidden. It is not permissible to compel individuals to testify, confess, or take an oath.

Any testimony, confession, or oath obtained under duress is devoid of value and credence. Violation of this article is liable to punishment in accordance with the law.

Article 39

Affronts, in whatever form, to the dignity and repute of persons arrested, detained, imprisoned, or banished, in accordance with law, are forbidden and liable to punishment.

Article 40

No one is entitled to exercise his rights in a way injurious to others or detrimental to public interests.

Article 41

Iranian citizenship is the indisputable right of every Iranian, and the government cannot withdraw citizenship from any Iranian, unless he himself requests it or acquires the citizenship of another country.

Article 42

Foreign nationals may acquire Iranian citizenship within the framework of the law. Citizenship may be withdrawn from such persons, if another State accepts them as citizens, or if they request it.

CHAPTER IV

The Economy and Finance

Article 43

With the objectives of achieving society's economic independence, uprooting poverty and deprivation, and fulfilling human needs in the process of development, whilst preserving human liberty, the economy of the Islamic Republic of Iran will be based on the following criteria:

1. Provision of basic necessities for all citizens: housing, food, clothing, hygiene, medical treatment, education, and the necessary facilities for establishing family;

2. Securing conditions and opportunities of employment for everyone for the purpose of attaining full employment, and placing the means of work at the disposal of everyone able to work but lacking the means, through cooperatives, interest-free loans, or any other legitimate means that neither results in the concentration or circulation of wealth in the hands of a few individuals or groups, nor turns the government into a major and ubiquitous employer. These measures must be taken in due regard of the requirements governing the country's general economic plans, at each stage of development.

3. The national economic plans must be structured in such a manner that the form, content, and hours of work of every individual allow him sufficient leisure and energy to engage, besides his occupational effort, in spiritual, political, and social self-development and to participate actively in the country's affairs, and to upgrade his skills and initiative;

4. Respect for the right to free choice of occupation; absence of compulsion on persons to engage in a particular work; and preventing exploitation of others' labour;

5. Prohibition of infliction of harm or loss upon others, monopoly, hoarding, usury, and other invalid and unlawful dealings;

6. Prohibition of extravagance and wastefulness in all matters related to the economy, including consumption, investment, production, distribution and services;

7. Utilization of science and technology, and the training of skilled personnel in accordance with the developmental needs of the country's economy;

8. Prevention of foreign economic domination over the country's economy;

9. Emphasis on increase in industrial, agricultural and livestock production for meeting public needs and achieving the country's' self-sufficiency.

Article 44

The economy of the Islamic Republic of Iran will consist of three sectors, namely: state, cooperative and private. It is to be based on systematic and sound planning. The state sector will include all large-scale and mother industries, foreign trade, major minerals, banking, insurance, power generation, dams and large-scale irrigation networks, radio and television, post, telegraph and telephone services, aviation, shipping, roads, railroads and the like. All these will be publicly owned and managed by the State. The cooperative sector will include cooperative companies and enterprises engaged in production and distribution, and constituted in urban and rural areas in accordance with Islamic regulations. The private sector consists of activities related to agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, trade, and services that supplement the economic activities of the state and cooperative sectors. Ownership in each of these three sectors - in so far as it is in conformity with the other articles of this chapter, does not exceed the bounds of Islamic law, and contributes to the country's economic growth and progress and does not harm society - is protected by the law of the Islamic Republic. The detailed scope, regulations, and conditions pertaining to each of these sectors will be specified by law.

Article 45

Public property and assets - such as uncultivated or abandoned land, mineral deposits, seas, lakes, rivers and other public waterways, mountains, valleys, marshlands, natural forests, open pasture land, legacies without heirs, property of undetermined ownership, and public property recovered' from usurpers - shall be at the disposal of the Islamic government to be utilized in accordance with public interest. Detailed procedures for the utilization of each of the foregoing will be specified by law.

Article 46

Everyone owns the fruits of his legitimate trade and work, and no one may deprive another of the opportunity of trade or work under the pretext of his own right of ownership over his trade or work.

Article 47

Private ownership, legitimately acquired, is to be respected. The relevant criteria will be determined by law.

Article 48

There must be no discrimination among the various provinces in respect of exploitation of natural resources, utilization of public revenues, and distribution of economic activities among the country's different provinces and regions, so that every region has access to the necessary capital and facilities in accordance with its needs and potential for growth.

Article 49

It is government's duty to confiscate all wealth accumulated through usury, usurpation, bribery, embezzlement, theft, gambling, misuse of endowments, misuse of government contracts and transactions, sale of uncultivated lands and other resources subject to public ownership, operation of centers of prostitution, and other illicit means and restore it to its legitimate owner. If he cannot be identified, it must be entrusted to the public treasury.

This rule must be executed by the government, after proper investigation and furnishing of necessary evidence, in accordance with Islamic law.

Article 50

The preservation of the environment - wherein the present as well as the future generations have a right to a flourishing social existence - is considered a public duty in the Islamic Republic. Economic and other activities that involve pollution of the environment or cause irreparable damage to it are therefore forbidden.

Article 51

Taxes of any kind may not be imposed except in accordance with law. Provisions for tax exemption and reduction will be determined by law.

Article 52

The country's annual budget will be drawn up by the government in the manner specified by law, and submitted to the Islamic Parliament of Iran for examination and approval. Any changes in budget figures will be in accordance with procedures determined by law.

Article 53

All receipts collected by the government will be deposited into government accounts at the central treasury, and all disbursements will be made within approved credits in accordance with the law.

Article 54

The National Accounts Bureau will be under the direct supervision of the Islamic Parliament of Iran. Its organization and administration in Tehran and provincial capitals are to be determined by law.

Article 55

In accordance with the procedure specified by law the Accounts Bureau will inspect and audit all the accounts of the ministries, government institutions and companies as well as other organizations that draw in any way on the general budget of the country, to ensure that no expenditure exceeds approved credits and that all sums are spent for their specified purpose. The Accounts Bureau will collect all relevant accounts, documents, and records in accordance with law and submit an annual budget clearance report, along with its own comments, to the Islamic Parliament of Iran. This report must be made accessible to the public.

CHAPTER V

National Sovereignty and Powers Derived from it

Article 56

Absolute sovereignty of the universe and Man belongs to God, and it is He Who has made the human being master of its own social destiny. No one may deprive the human being of

this God-given right, nor subordinate it to vested interests of some individual or group. The people are to exercise this God-given right in ways specified in the following articles.

Article 57

The powers of the State in the Islamic Republic are vested in the Legislature, the Judiciary, and the Executive, functioning under the supervision of the absolute wilí al-amr and Leader of the Ummah, in accordance with the forthcoming articles of this law. These powers are independent of each other.

Article 58

The functions of the Legislature are to be exercised by the Islamic Parliament of Iran, consisting of the elected representatives of the people. Legislation approved by this body, after covering the stages specified in the following articles, is communicated to the Executive and the Judiciary for implementation.

Article 59

In very important economic, political, social, and cultural matters, the functions of the legislature may be exercised through direct recourse to popular vote through a referendum. Any request for such direct recourse to public opinion must be approved by two-thirds of the members of the Islamic Parliament of Iran.

Article 60

Excepting matters that are directly placed under the jurisdiction of the Leadership by the Constitution, the functions of the Executive are to be exercised by the President and the ministers.

Article 61

The functions of the Judiciary are to be performed by courts of justice formed in accordance with the criteria of Islam and vested with the authority to examine and settle lawsuits, protect the public rights, dispense and enact justice, and implement the penalties prescribed by God (hudũd-e Ilãhí).

CHAPTER VI

The Legislature

¨ Section One: The Islamic Parliament of Iran

Article 62

The Islamic Parliament of Iran is constituted by the people's representatives elected directly and by secret ballot. The qualifications of voters and candidates, as well as the character of the elections, will be specified by law.

Article 63

The term of membership of the Islamic Parliament of Iran is four years. Elections for each term must take place before the end of the preceding term, so that the country is never left without a Parliament.

Article 64

The number of representatives of the Islamic Parliament of Iran shall be two hundred and seventy, and for every decade since the national referendum of 1368 H. Sh. (1987) it may, in consideration of human, political, geographic and other factors, be increased by a maximum of twenty. The Zoroastrians and Jews will each elect one representative; Assyrian and Chaldean Christians will jointly elect one representative; and Armenian

Christians in the north and the south will each elect one representative. The boundaries of the election constituencies and the number of representatives will be determined by law.

Article 65

After elections, the sessions of the Islamic Parliament of Iran will have a quorum with two-thirds of the members present. Drafts and bills will be passed in accordance with the approved internal procedure, excepting cases where another quorum is specified by the Constitution. A quorum of two-thirds of its members is required for approval of the internal code of procedure.

Article 66

The manner of election of the Speaker and the Presiding Board of the Parliament, the number of committees and their terms of office, and matters related to the Parliament's deliberations and discipline will be determined by the Parliament's internal code of procedure.

Article 67

The representatives must take the following oath at the first session of the Parliament and affix their signatures to its text: in the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. "In the presence of the Glorious Quran, I swear by God, the Exalted and Almighty, and undertake by my honor as a human being, to protect Islam, to guard the achievements of the Islamic Revolution of the Iranian people and the foundations of the Islamic Republic, to preserve, as a just trustee, the trust entrusted to me by the people; to observe honesty and piety in fulfilling my duties as a representative, to remain always committed to the independence and honor of the country, to safeguarding the nation's rights and serving the

people, to defending the Constitution, and to keep in mind, in my speech, writing and while expressing my views, the independence of the country, the freedom of the people, and the security of their interests". Members belonging to religious minorities will swear by their own scriptures while taking this oath. Members absent from the first session will take the oath at the first session they attend.

Article 68

In time of war and military occupation of the country, elections in occupied areas or throughout the country may be withheld for a specified period on the proposal of the President of the Republic, approved by three-fourths of all the members of the Islamic Parliament of Iran, and endorsed by the Guardian Council. In the absence of a new Parliament, the present one will continue to function.

Article 69

The deliberations of the Islamic Parliament of Iran must be open, and full minutes of them must be made available to the public through the radio and the official gazette. A closed session may be held in emergency conditions, if such is required for national security, upon the request of the President, or one of the ministers, or ten members of the Parliament. Legislation passed during closed session is valid only when approved by three-fourths of the members, in the presence of the Guardian Council. After emergency conditions have ceased, the minutes of such closed sessions and any legislation approved by them must be made available to the public.

Article 70

The President, his deputies, and the ministers have a right to participate in the open sessions of the Parliament either collectively or individually. They may also be accompanied by their advisers. Also, if the members of the Parliament so require, the ministers are obliged to attend, and their statements will be heard upon their request. Section Two: The Parliament's Powers and Competence

Article 71

The Islamic Parliament of Iran may pass laws in all matters, within the jurisdiction defined by the Constitution.

Article 72

The Islamic Parliament of Iran may not enact laws contrary to the Constitution, or to the doctrines and laws of the country's official religion. It is the duty of the Guardian Council to determine any such violation, in accordance with Article 96 of the Constitution.

Article 73

The interpretation of ordinary laws falls within the competence of the Islamic Parliament of Iran. The intent of this Article does not preclude interpretation by judges in their effort to ascertain the truth.

Article 74

Government bills are presented to the Islamic Parliament of Iran after the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers. Members' bills may be presented to the Islamic Parliament of Iran if sponsored by at least fifteen members.

Article 75

Members' bills and proposals, as well as amendments to government bills proposed by members, that entail reduction of the public income, or increase of public expenditure, may be introduced to the Parliament, only if the means of compensating for the decrease in income, or of meeting the new expenditure, are also specified.

Article 76

The Islamic Parliament of Iran has the right to investigate and examine all the affairs of the country.

Article 77

All international treaties, protocols, contracts, and agreements must be approved by the Islamic Parliament of Iran.

Article 78

All changes in the country's frontiers are forbidden, with the exception of minor amendments in the interests of the country, provided such changes are not unilateral, do not encroach on the country's independence and territorial integrity, and are approved by four-fifths of all members of the Islamic Parliament of Iran.

Article 79

The proclamation of martial law is forbidden. In case of war or a similar state of emergency, the government has the right to temporarily impose certain restrictions with the approval of the Islamic Parliament of Iran. But in no case may such restrictions exceed

thirty days, and if the necessity should persist, the government must seek new authorization from the Parliament.

Article 80

The taking or granting of loans or grants-in-aid, domestic or foreign, by the government must be with the approval of the Islamic Parliament of Iran.

Article 81

The granting of concessions to foreigners, whether for the establishment of companies or institutions dealing with commerce, industry, agriculture, services or mineral extraction, is absolutely forbidden.

Article 82

The employment of foreign experts is forbidden, except in cases of necessity and with the approval of the Islamic Parliament of Iran.

Article 83

Government buildings and property regarded as part of the national heritage may not be transferred except with the approval of the Islamic Parliament of Iran, with the exclusion of irreplaceable treasures.

Article 84

Every representative is accountable to the entire nation and has the right to express his views on all affairs of the country, internal and external.

Article 85

The office of a representative is vested in the individual, and is not transferable. The Parliament may not delegate the power of legislation to an individual or committee. But whenever necessary, it may delegate the power of enacting certain laws to its own committees, in accordance with Article 72. In such cases, the laws will be implemented on a tentative basis for a period specified by the Parliament, and their final approval will be with the Parliament. Similarly, the Parliament may, in accordance with Article 72, delegate to the relevant committees the responsibility of permanent approval of articles of association of government organizations, companies, and institutions, or such as are affiliated to the government, or permit the government to approve them. In this case, the government approvals may not contradict the principles and laws of the country's official religion or the Constitution. Judgment in this matter will lie with the Guardian Council in accordance with the procedure stated in Article 96. Furthermore, the government approvals may not be against the general laws and regulations of the country, and while being notified for implementation, they must be communicated to the Speaker of the Islamic Parliament of Iran to examine and confirm the absence of any inconsistency therein with the aforementioned laws.

Article 86

In the course of performing their duties as representatives, members of the Parliament are completely free to express their views and cast their votes. They may not be prosecuted or arrested for opinions expressed in the Parliament, or votes cast in the course of their duties as representatives.

Article 87

The President must obtain a vote of confidence from the Parliament for the Cabinet after its formation and before all other business. During his incumbency, he may also seek such a vote of confidence for the Cabinet from the Parliament on important and controversial issues.

Article 88

Whenever at least one-fourth of the total members of the Islamic Parliament of Iran raise a question with the President, or when any one member of the Parliament poses a question to a minister, on a subject relating to their duties, the President, or the minister, is obliged to attend the Parliament and answer the question. This answer may not be delayed for more than one month in the case of the President, and ten days in the case of the minister, except with an excuse deemed reasonable by the Islamic Parliament of Iran.

Article 89

1. Members of the Islamic Parliament of Iran may interpellate the Ministerial Cabinet or an individual minister, whenever it is deemed necessary. Interpellations may be tabled when presented to the Parliament signed by at least ten members. The Cabinet or the interpellated minister must be present in the Parliament within ten days after the tabling of the interpellation, in order to respond to it and seek a vote of confidence. If the Cabinet, or the minister, fails to attend the Parliament, the members who tabled the interpellation will explain their reasons and the Parliament may declare a vote of no-confidence, if deemed necessary. If a vote of confidence is not pronounced by the Parliament, the Cabinet, or the minister interpellated, will be dismissed. In both the cases, the minister interpellated may not be a member of the next Cabinet.

2. In the event of at least one-third of the members of the Islamic Parliament of Iran interpellating the President, in respect of his performance of administrative responsibilities related to the Executive Power and administration of the country's executive affairs, he should, within one month after the tabling of the interpellation, present himself in the Parliament and give adequate explanations regarding the questions raised. Should two-thirds of the members of the Parliament declare a vote of no confidence after hearing the statements of the opposing and favoring members and the reply of the President, this will be communicated to the Leadership for implementation of Clause 10 of Article 110.

Article 90

Complaints concerning the performance of the Parliament, or the Executive, or the Judiciary, may be forwarded in writing to the Islamic Parliament of Iran. The Parliament must investigate these complaints and give a satisfactory reply. When the complaint relates to the Executive or the Judiciary, the Parliament must demand a proper investigation and an adequate explanation from them, and announce the results within a reasonable time. When the subject of the complaint is of public interest, the reply must be made public.

Article 91

A council to be known as the Guardian Council is to be constituted to safeguard Islamic laws and the Constitution and to verify the compatibility of legislation passed by the Islamic Parliament of Iran with them. It will be composed of the following:

1. Six Islamic jurists (fuqahã'), who are persons of integrity ('ãdil), well aware of the present needs and issues of the day. They will be appointed by the Leader.
2. Six lawyers, specializing in various fields of law. They will be elected by the Islamic Parliament of Iran from among Muslim lawyers nominated by the Head of the Judiciary.

Article 92

Members of the Guardian Council are appointed for six years, but after three years during the first term half of the members from each group will be replaced by lot and new members appointed in their place.

Article 93

The Islamic Parliament of Iran has no legal status without the Guardian Council, except for approving the credentials of its own members and electing six lawyers of the Guardian Council.

Article 94

All legislation passed by the Islamic Parliament of Iran must be sent to the Guardian Council. The Guardian Council must review it within ten days of its receipt to verify its compatibility with the criteria of Islam and the Constitution. If it finds the legislation incompatible, it will be returned to the Parliament for review. Otherwise the legislation will be considered passed.

Article 95

When the Guardian Council considers ten days inadequate for completing the process of review and delivering a definite opinion, the Islamic Parliament of Iran may be requested to grant an extension not exceeding ten days citing the grounds for the request.

Article 96

Ascertainment of the compatibility of legislation passed by the Islamic Parliament of Iran with the laws of Islam rests with the majority of the six jurists (fuqahã') on the guardian

Council, and ascertainment of its concordance with the Constitution rests with the majority of all members of the Guardian Council.

Article 97

In order to expedite matters, members of the Guardian Council may attend the Parliament, when a government or a members' bill is discussed and listen to the deliberations. When an urgent government or members' bill is placed on the agenda of the Parliament, the members of the Guardian Council must attend the Parliament and make their views known.

Article 98

The right of interpretation of the Constitution is vested in the Guardian Council and is subject to the consent of three-fourths of its members.

Article 99

The Guardian Council is responsible for supervising the elections of the Parliament of Experts for Leadership, the President of the Republic, the Islamic Parliament of Iran, and direct recourse to popular opinion through referenda.

CHAPTER VII

The Councils

Article 100

In order to expedite social, economic, public health, cultural, educational and development programs and facilitate other public welfare affairs through the people's participation and in accordance with the local needs, the administration of each village, division, city, town, and province will be supervised by a local Council which will be known as Village,

Division, City, Town, or Provincial Council. The members of every council will be elected by its respective population.

Eligibility of the voters and candidates of these local Councils, as well as their jurisdiction and authority, mode of election, supervision, and hierarchy which should be in due consideration of the principles of national unity, territorial integrity, the order of the Islamic Republic, and the sovereignty of the central government will be determined by law.

Article 101

A Supreme Council of the Provinces will be established consisting of representatives of the Provincial Councils, in order to prevent discrimination and to ensure cooperation in the formulation of welfare and development plans for the provinces, and to coordinate the execution of such plans. The manner of formation and duties of this council will be determined by law.

Article 102

Within its jurisdiction, the Supreme Council of the Provinces has the right to draft bills and to submit them to the Islamic Parliament of Iran, either directly or through the government. These bills must be examined by the Parliament.

Article 103

Governors of provinces, towns and divisions as well as other officials appointed by the government must abide by the decisions of the local Councils made within their jurisdiction.

Article 104

In order to ensure Islamic justice and cooperation in planning and coordination in expediting matters, councils will be formed, constituted of representatives of workers, peasants, other employees and managers, in production units, industrial and agricultural, and of representatives of members of units in educational, administrative, service and other similar sectors. The formation, duties and jurisdiction of these councils will be determined by law.

Article 105

Decisions of the Councils must not conflict with Islamic criteria and the country's laws.

Article 106

The Councils may not be dissolved unless they deviate from their lawful duties. The authority responsible for ascertaining such deviation, as well as the procedure for the dissolution and reformation of the Councils will be specified by law. Should a Council have any objection to its dissolution, it has the right to appeal to a competent court which will be duty-bound to examine it outside the docket sequence.

CHAPTER VIII

The Leader or the Leadership Council

Article 107

After the demise of the eminent marja'taqlíd, the great leader of the Global Islamic Revolution and the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hadrat Ãyatullãh al-'Uzmã Imam Khumayni, may God sanctify his noble spirit, who was recognized and accepted as marja' and Leader by a decisive majority of the people, the appointment of the Leader

shall be vested in the Parliament of Experts elected by the people. These Experts will review and deliberate concerning the merits of all the qualified jurists possessing the qualifications specified in Articles 5 and 109. In the event of them finding someone more learned in Islamic ordinances and subjects of Islamic law, or in political and social issues, or possessing general popularity, or a special prominence, in respect of the qualifications mentioned in Article 109, he will be appointed as the Leader. Otherwise, they shall elect one of them as the Leader. The Leader thus appointed [or elected] by the Experts shall assume the wilãyat al-amr and all responsibilities arising from it. The Leader is equal to all other citizens in the eyes of law.

Article 108

The law relating to the number of the Experts, their qualifications, mode of their election, and the internal code of procedure for holding sessions must, for the first term, be drawn up by the jurists on the first Guardian Council and passed by a majority vote and finally approved by the Leader of the Revolution. Thereafter, any change or review in this law or framing other rules is within the Experts' own duties and competence.

Article 109

The qualifications for Leadership are:

1. The scholarship required for giving ruling (fatwa) in various fields of Islamic law (fiqh).
2. The integrity (‘adãlah) and piety required for leadership of the Islamic Ummah.
3. A sound political and social vision, prudence, courage, administrative skills and adequate leadership abilities.

Should several persons fulfill these requirements, the one with a stronger vision in fiqhí and political matters will be given preference.

Article 110

The Leader's functions and authority [consist of the following]:

1. Defining the general policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran after consultation with the State Expediency Council.
2. Supervision of the proper execution of the general policies of the regime.
3. Issuing of decrees for national referenda.
4. Supreme command of the armed forces.
5. Declaration of war and peace, and mobilization of the armed forces.
6. Appointment, dismissal, and acceptance of the resignation of:
    a. The jurists of the Guardian Council.
    b. The Head of the Judiciary.
    c. The Head of the radio and television network of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
    d. The Chief of the joint staff.
    e. The Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps.
    f. The Commanders-in-Chief of the armed forces and the law-enforcement forces.
7. Resolving differences between the three powers of the State and regulation of their relations.
8. Resolving problems irresolvable by conventional means through the State Expediency Council.
9. Signing the President's appointment orders after his election by the people. The competence of candidates for the Presidency, in respect of the qualifications specified in

the Constitution, must be confirmed by the Guardian Council before elections, and also by the Leadership during the first term.

10. Dismissal of the President, in consideration of the country's interests, after the Supreme Court finds him guilty of violating his constitutional duties, or following a vote of no confidence by the Islamic Parliament of Iran on the basis of Article 89.

11. Pardon or reduction, within the framework of Islamic criteria, of the sentences of convicts upon the proposal of the Head of the Judiciary.

The Leader may delegate part of his functions and authority to another person.

Article 111

Whenever the Leader is incapable of carrying out his constitutional duties, or loses one of the qualifications mentioned in Articles 5 and 109, or it becomes known that he did not initially possess these, he will be dismissed. The judgment in this matter rests with the Experts mentioned in Article 108.

In the event of the death, resignation, or dismissal of the Leader, the Parliament of Experts shall expedite the appointment of a new Leader. During this time a Council consisting of the President, Head of the Judiciary, and a jurist from the Guardian Council, as decided by the State Expediency Council, shall provisionally assume the duties of the Leader. In the event of any one of them being unable to fulfill these duties, for whatsoever reason, another person shall be appointed by the State Expediency Council, with due observance of a majority of jurists on the [Provisional Leadership] Council. This Council will carry out the functions of the Leader in respect of Clauses 1, 2, 3, 5, and 10, and Sub-classes (d), (e) and (f) of Clause 6 of Article 110, with the approval of three-fourths of the members of the State Expediency Council.

Whenever the Leader becomes temporarily unable to perform the duties of Leadership, owing to illness or some other accident, the [Provisional] Council mentioned in this article shall assume his duties.

Article 112

The State Expediency Council will meet by the order of the Leader to decide what is most expedient, whenever the Guardian Council considers a bill approved by the Islamic Parliament of Iran to be contrary to the principles of the Sharí'ah, or the Constitution and the Parliament is unable to secure the satisfaction of the Guardian Council, on the basis of national expediency. The State Expediency Council will also meet to consult on any issue referred to it by the Leader, or related to its duties, as mentioned in this Constitution.

The permanent and provisional members of this Council shall be appointed by the Leader. The rules related to the Council shall be framed and approved by its members and confirmed by the Leader.

CHAPTER IX

The Executive

¨ Section One: The Presidency

Article 113

After the office of Leadership, the President is the country's highest official. He is responsible for implementing the Constitution and presiding over the Executive, except in matters directly concerned with the Leadership.

Article 114

The President is elected for a four-year term by the direct vote of the people. He may be re-elected only once for a second successive term.

Article 115

The President must be elected from among religious and political personalities possessing the following qualifications: He must be of Iranian origin and an Iranian national, possess administrative and problem-solving skills, have a good track record, be trustworthy and pious, have faith and conviction in the fundamental principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the country's official religion.

Article 116

Presidential candidates must declare their candidature officially before the beginning of elections. The process of presidential elections will be determined by law.

Article 117

The President is elected by an absolute majority of the voters. If none of the candidates wins such a majority in the first round, a second round of voting will be held on the subsequent Friday. In the second round only the two candidates with the greatest number of votes in the first-round will participate. If, however, any of the candidates who secured the greatest number of votes in the first round withdraws from the elections, two from among the rest of candidates securing the largest number of votes in the first round will be named for the second round.

Article 118

The Guardian Council is responsible for the supervision of the Presidential elections in accordance with Article 99. However, before the establishment of the first Guardian Council, this responsibility lies with a supervisory body to be constituted by law.

Article 119

The election of a new President must take place within one month of the end of the term of the outgoing President. In the period between the election of the new President and the end of the term of the outgoing President, the outgoing President will continue to function as President.

Article 120

Should any of the candidates, whose competence was established in terms of the qualifications listed above, die within ten days of the polling day, the elections will be postponed for two weeks. Should any of the candidates who secured the greatest number of votes die after the first round of voting, the election will be postponed for two weeks.

Article 121

The President must take and sign an oath as follows, in the presence of the head of the Judiciary and members of the Guardian Council at a session of the Islamic Parliament of Iran: In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

I, as President, swear in the presence of the Holy Qur'an and in front of the people of Iran, by God, the Exalted and Almighty, that I will guard the official religion of the country, the order of the Islamic Republic, and the Constitution of the country; that I will devote all my energy and ability to fulfill the responsibilities that I have assumed; that I will dedicate

myself to the service of the people, the honour of the country, the propagation of religion and morality, and the support of truth and the spread of justice, refraining from every kind of arbitrary conduct; that I will defend the freedom and dignity of individuals and constitutional rights of the nation; that I will not shirk from taking any necessary measure in guarding the country's frontiers and its political, economic and cultural independence; that by seeking God's help and following the Prophet of Islam and the Infallible Imams, may Peace be upon them, I will guard, as a pious and selfless trustee, the authority vested in me by the people as a sacred trust and transfer it to whomever the people may elect after me.

Article 122

Within the authority and responsibilities vested in him by the Constitution and or ordinary laws, the President is accountable to the people, the Leader, and the Islamic Parliament of Iran.

Article 123

The President is obliged to sign the legislation approved by the Parliament, or the result of a referendum, after it is forwarded to him and the legal stages are covered, and to forward to the relevant authorities for implementation.

Article 124

The President may appoint deputies for the execution of his constitutional duties. Subject to the President's approval, the vice president will be responsible for administering the Ministerial Cabinet and coordinating the functions of the other deputies.

Article 125

The President or his legal representative has the authority to sign treaties, protocols, contracts, and agreements concluded by the Iranian government with other governments, as well as agreements pertaining to international organizations, after the approval of the Islamic Parliament of Iran.

Article 126

The President is directly responsible for national planning and budgeting and the government's administrative and employment affairs, but he may delegate the management of these to others.

Article 127

In special cases, when necessary, the President may, with the approval of the Ministerial Cabinet, appoint one or more plenipotentiaries with specific powers. The decisions of this plenipotentiary will then be regarded as decisions of the President and the Ministerial Cabinet.

Article 128

The ambassadors will be appointed on the proposal of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the approval of the President. The President will sign the credentials of the ambassadors and will receive the credentials of ambassadors of foreign countries.

Article 129

The awarding of State decorations is the prerogative of the President.

Article 130

The President will submit his resignation to the Leader, but will continue to perform his duties until his resignation is accepted.

Article 131

In case of the President's death, dismissal, resignation, or an absence or illness exceeding two months, or on expiry of his term of office without a new President's being elected due to some obstacles, or a similar circumstance, vice president will assume the authority and responsibilities of the President with the Leader's approval. A council consisting of the Speaker of the Parliament, Head of the Judiciary, and vice president of the must arrange for a new President to be elected within fifty days. In case of the death of vice president, or some other circumstance which prevents him from performing his duties, or when the President did not have a vice president, the Leader shall appoint another person to his office.

Article 132

During the period when the authority and responsibilities of the President are delegated to vice president or another person in accordance with Article 131, ministers may neither be interpellated nor may a vote of no confidence be passed against them, nor may a national referendum be held, nor any steps may be taken to review the Constitution.

Article 133

Ministers will be appointed by the President and presented to the Parliament for a vote of confidence. A new Parliament would not require a new vote of confidence. The number of ministers and their jurisdiction will be determined by law.

Article 134

The President heads the Ministerial Cabinet, supervises the work of the ministers and takes necessary measures to coordinate the decisions of the ministers and the Cabinet. He formulates the plans and policies of the government with the ministers' cooperation, and implements the laws. In the case of disagreement or overlapping of the legal duties of government departments, provided it does not call for an interpretation or modification of the laws, the decision of the Cabinet taken at the President's proposal shall be binding. The President is accountable-to the Parliament for the actions of the Cabinet.

Article 135

The ministers shall continue in office unless they are dismissed, or receive a vote of no confidence from the Parliament as a result of their interpellation or a non-confidence motion. The resignation of the Cabinet or individual ministers will be submitted to the President, but the Cabinet will continue to function until a new government is appointed. The President may appoint a caretaker minister for a maximum period of three months for ministries without a minister.

Article 136

The President may dismiss the minister(s) and obtain a vote of confidence for the new minister(s) from the Parliament. When half of the members of the Cabinet have changed since the government received its vote of confidence, the government must seek a new vote of confidence from the Parliament.

Article 137

Each of the ministers is accountable to the President and the Parliament in respect of his duties. But in matters approved by the Cabinet as a whole, he is also accountable for the actions of the others.

Article 138

In addition to cases where the Cabinet or an individual minister is authorized to frame procedures for the implementation of laws, the Cabinet has also the right to frame regulations and procedures to carry out its administrative duties, to ensure the implementation of laws, and to regulate administrative bodies. Individual ministers have also the right to frame regulations and issue circulars in matters within their jurisdiction and in conformity with the decisions of the Cabinet. However, the content of all such regulations may not violate the letter or the spirit of law. The government may assign some of the tasks relating to its duties to commissions composed of several ministers. The decisions of such commissions within the laws will be binding after the President's endorsement.

The government's decisions and the procedures framed by it, as well as the decisions of the commissions mentioned herein, will also be communicated to the Speaker of the Islamic Parliament of Iran, whilst being forwarded for implementation, so that in the event of him finding them contrary to law, he may return them stating his reasons for the necessity of their review by the Cabinet.

Article 139

The settlement of claims pertaining to public and State property, or the referral thereof for arbitration, shall depend in all cases on the approval of the Cabinet, and brought to the notice of the Parliament. In cases where one party to the dispute is a foreigner, or when .it is an important domestic case, the approval of the Parliament must also be obtained. The important cases will be specified by law.

Article 140

Allegations of common crimes against the President, his deputies, and ministers will be investigated in common courts of justice, with the knowledge of the Islamic Parliament of Iran.

Article 141

The President, his deputies, ministers, and government employees may not hold more than-one government position. It is also forbidden for them: to hold any kind of additional position in institutions of which all or part of the capital belongs to the government or public institutions; to be a member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran; to practice the profession of an attorney or legal adviser; or to hold the post of president, managing director, or membership of the board of directors of any kind of private company, with the exception of cooperative companies affiliated to government departments and institutions. Teaching positions in universities and research institutions are exempted from this rule.

Article 142

The assets of the Leader, the President, his deputies and ministers, as well as those of their spouses and children will be investigated before and after their term of office by the head

of the Judiciary, in order to ensure that such assets have not increased in contravention of the law.

¨ Section Two: The Army and the Islamic Revolution

Guards Corps

Article 143

The Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran is responsible for guarding the independence and territorial integrity of the country, as well as the state of the Islamic Republic.

Article 144

The Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran must be an Islamic army, that is, an army committed to Islamic teaching and derived from the people. It must recruit into its ranks worthy individuals having faith in the objectives of the Islamic Revolution and devoted to its cause.

Article 145

No foreigner may serve in the Army or the country's security forces.

Article 146

The establishment of any kind of foreign military base in Iran, even for peaceful purposes, is forbidden.

Article 147

In time of peace, the government must utilize the personnel and equipment of the Army in work relating to relief, education, production, and the Construction Jihãd, whilst observing

the criteria of Islamic justice and to the extent that such utilization does not affect the Army's combat readiness.

Article 148

All forms of personal use of military vehicles, equipment, and means, as well as taking advantage of Army personnel as personal servants, chauffeurs, and the like are forbidden.

Article 149

Promotions and demotions of the Army personnel will be in accordance with law.

Article 150

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, founded in the first days of the victory of the Revolution, is to be maintained in order to maintain its role of guarding the Revolution and its achievements. The scope of the Corps' duties and their areas of responsibility in relation to the duties and areas of responsibility of other armed forces are to be determined by law, emphasizing brotherly cooperation and coordination.

Article 151

The government is obliged to provide a program of military training and furnish the requisite facilities to all its citizens, in accordance with the Islamic criteria, to ensure that all citizens at all times have the ability for armed defense of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is in accordance with the Qur'anic verse:

وَأَعدُّوا لَهُم مَااستَطعتُم مِن قُوَّةٍ وَمِن رِباطِ الخَيلِ تُرهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّاللهِ وَعَدُوكُم وأخَرِينَ مِن دُونِهِم...

(Prepare against them whatever force you are able to muster, and strings of horses, striking fear into the enemy of God and your enemy, and others besides them. [8:601])

The possession of arms, however, is subject to official permission

CHAPTER X

Foreign Policy

Article 152

The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based upon rejection of all forms of domination - both the assertion of it and submission to it - preservation of the country's all round independence, its territorial integrity, defense of the rights of all Muslims, non-alignment with hegemonic superpowers, and the maintenance of peaceful relations with all non-belligerent States.

Article 153

Any kind of agreement resulting in foreign control of the country's natural resources, economy, army, culture, and other aspects of national life, is forbidden.

Article 154

The realization of human felicity throughout human society is the ideal of the Islamic Republic of Iran and it considers independence, freedom, and the rule of justice and Truth to be the right of all people of the world. Accordingly, whilst scrupulously refraining from all forms of interference in the internal affairs of other nations, it supports the struggle of the mustad'afín against the mustakbirín for their rights in every corner of the globe.

Article 155

The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran may grant political asylum to those who seek it, unless they are considered to be traitors and criminals according to the law of Iran.

CHAPTER XI

The Judiciary

Article 156

The Judiciary is an independent power [of the State] and protector of individual and social rights. It is responsible for the realization of justice, and is entrusted with the following duties:

1. Investigation and passing judgment in relation- to grievances, violations, and ‘complaints; resolution of litigation; settling of disputes; and deciding on such matters of personal status as are specified by law;
2. Restoring public rights, promoting justice and legitimate freedoms;
3. Supervising the proper enforcement of laws;
4. Exposing of crimes; prosecution and penalization of criminals and enacting the penalties and provisions of the Islamic penal code;
5. Taking suitable measures for prevention of crime and rehabilitation of criminals.

Article 157

The Leader shall appoint a mujtahid, possessing integrity and administrative and problem-solving abilities, and well-versed in judicial affairs as the Head of the Judiciary for a period of five years, to carry out the judicial, administrative, and executive responsibilities of the Judiciary. His will be the highest judicial office.

Article 158

The Head of the Judiciary is responsible for the following:

1. Creating the necessary organization for the administration of justice to fulfill the responsibilities specified in Article 156;
2. Preparation of bills on judicial affairs appropriate to [the form of government of] the Islamic Republic;
3. Employment of just and worthy judges, their dismissal, appointment, transfer, their assignment to particular duties, promotions, and the carrying out of similar administrative duties in accordance with law.

Article 159

The judicial administration is the official authority for the referral of all grievances and complaints. The formation of courts and their jurisdiction will be determined by law.

Article 160

The Minister of Justice is responsible for all matters concerning the Judiciary's relations with the Executive and the Legislature. He will be elected from among individuals proposed to the President by the head of the Judiciary. The head of the Judiciary may delegate to the Minister of Justice authority in financial and administrative areas, as well as in the employment of personnel other than judges. In that case, the Minister of Justice will have the same authority and responsibility as foreseen by law for the other ministers, in their capacity as highest executive officials.

Article 161

The Supreme Court will be formed in accordance with the regulations established by the Head of the Judiciary, to supervise the correct implementation of the laws by the courts, to ensure uniformity of judicial procedures, and to fulfill any other functions assigned to it by law.

Article 162

The Chief of the Supreme Court and the Prosecutor General must be mujtahids, possessing integrity and well versed in judicial matters. They will be nominated by the Head of the Judiciary for a period of five years, in consultation with the judges of the Supreme Court.

Article 163

The conditions and qualifications of a judge will be determined by law in accordance with the criteria of filth.

Article 164

A judge may not be removed, temporarily or permanently, from his post except when he is tried in a court of law and found guilty, or in consequence of an offense requiring his dismissal. A judge cannot be transferred or reassigned to another post without his consent, except where called for by the interests of society upon the decision of the Head of the Judiciary after consultation with the Chief of the Supreme Court and the Prosecutor General. The periodic transfer and rotation of judges will be in accordance with general rules determined by law.

Article 165

Trials are to be held openly and members of the public may attend without any restriction, unless the court considers an open trial to be contrary to public morality or law and order, or when requested by both parties in a civil dispute.

Article 166

The verdicts of courts must be well-reasoned and documented with reference to the articles and clauses of law on which they are based.

Article 167

The judge must endeavour to base his judgment in each case on codified laws. If he cannot find such basis, he should deliver judgment on the basis of authoritative Islamic sources and reputable rulings (fatwa). He may not refrain from admitting and examining cases and delivering judgment on the excuse of the silence or inadequacy of law in a matter, or its being general or ambiguous.

Article 168

Political and press offences will be tried by jury in open courts. The manner of the selection of the jury, its qualifications and powers, and the definition of political offences, will be determined by law, in accordance with Islamic criteria.

Article 169

No act of commission or omission may be regarded as a crime with retrospective effect, on the basis of a law framed subsequently.

Article 170

Judges are obliged to refrain from enforcing the government's decrees and regulations that are in conflict with Islamic laws and norms, or which lie outside the competence of the Executive. Everyone has a duty to demand the annulment of any such regulation from the Court of Administrative Justice.

Article 171

Whenever an individual suffers moral or material harm, or loss as a result of a judge's default, or error regarding the subject matter of a case, or the law applicable, or in the application of law to a particular case, the defaulting judge is liable for the reparations in accordance with Islamic criteria. Otherwise, losses will be compensated by the State, and in all such cases, the repute and good standing of the accused will be restored.

Article 172

Military courts will be established to investigate crimes related to military or security duties of personnel of the Army, Gendarmerie, police, and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps. However, they will be tried in public courts for common crimes, or crimes committed while serving the department of justice in an executive capacity. The military courts and the office of military prosecutor are part of the Judiciary and are subject to the same articles that apply to it.

Article 173

A court to be known as the Court of Administrative Justice will be constituted under the supervision of the Head of the Judiciary in order to investigate the complaints, grievances,

and objections of the people in respect of government officials, organs, and statutes. The jurisdiction, powers, and mode of operation of this court will be determined by law.

Article 174

An organization to be known as the General Inspection Organization will be constituted under the supervision of the Head of the Judiciary, in accordance with the supervisory rights of the Judiciary over the conduction of affairs and correct implementation of laws by the government's administrative organs. The jurisdiction and functions of this organization will be determined by law.

CHAPTER XII

Radio and Television

Article 175

The freedom of expression and dissemination of ideas must be secure in the Radio and Television of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with due observance of Islamic norms and the country's interests. The appointment and dismissal of the head of the Radio and Television Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran will be by the Leader. A Council consisting of two representatives each from the Executive, the Head of the Judiciary and the Islamic Parliament of Iran will supervise this organization. The policies and procedures for the administration of this organization and its supervision will be determined by law.

CHAPTER XIII

The Supreme Council of National Security

Article 176

A Supreme Council of National Security presided over by the President will be established to secure national interests, preservation of the Islamic Revolution, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic. It is to fulfill the following duties:

1. Determine the defense and national security policies within the framework of the general policies determined by the Leader.
2. Coordinate political, intelligence, social, cultural, and economic activities in accordance with the general defense and security plans.
3. Utilize the material and non-material resources of the country to confront internal and external threats.

This Council shall consist of:

a. The heads of three branches of powers of the State,
b. The chief of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces,
c. The official responsible for planning and budgeting affairs,
d. Two representatives appointed by the Leader,
e. The ministers of foreign affairs, the interior, and intelligence,
f. One of the ministers, in accordance with the relevance of a case, and the highest ranking official of the Armed Forces and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps.

The Supreme Council of National Security shall, commensurate with its duties, form sub-councils such as a Council for Defense and a State Security Council. Each sub-council will be presided over by the President, or a member of the Supreme Council of National Security appointed by the President. The jurisdiction and functions of the sub-councils will be determined by law and their organizational structure will be approved by the Supreme Council of National Security. The decisions of the Supreme Council of National Security shall be effective after the Leader's approval.

CHAPTER XIV

Revision of the Constitution

Article 177

The revision of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, whenever deemed necessary, will be according to the following procedure:

The Leader will issue a decree to the President after consultation with the State Expediency Council stipulating the amendments or additions required to be made by the Council for Revision of the Constitution consisting of:

1. The members of the Guardian Council
2. The heads of the three powers of the State.
3. The permanent members of the State Expediency Council.
4. Five members from the Parliament of Experts.
5. Ten members nominated by the Leader.
6. Three members of Cabinet.
7. Three members from the Judiciary.

8. Ten members from among the representatives of the Islamic Parliament of Iran.

9. Three university professors.

The procedure, method of selection and qualifications for the Council will be determined by law. The decisions of the council, once confirmed and signed by the Leader, will be valid if approved by an absolute majority of voters participating in a national referendum. The provisions of Article 59 of the Constitution will not apply to a referendum in respect of a revision of the Constitution.

The contents of the Article pertaining to the Islamic character of the country's political order, the necessity of basing all laws and regulations on Islamic criteria, the religious foundations and objectives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the republican character of the State, the wilayas al-amr and imamah of the Ummah, the administration-of the country's affairs on the basis of public opinion, and the official religion and madhhab of Iran, are unalterable.

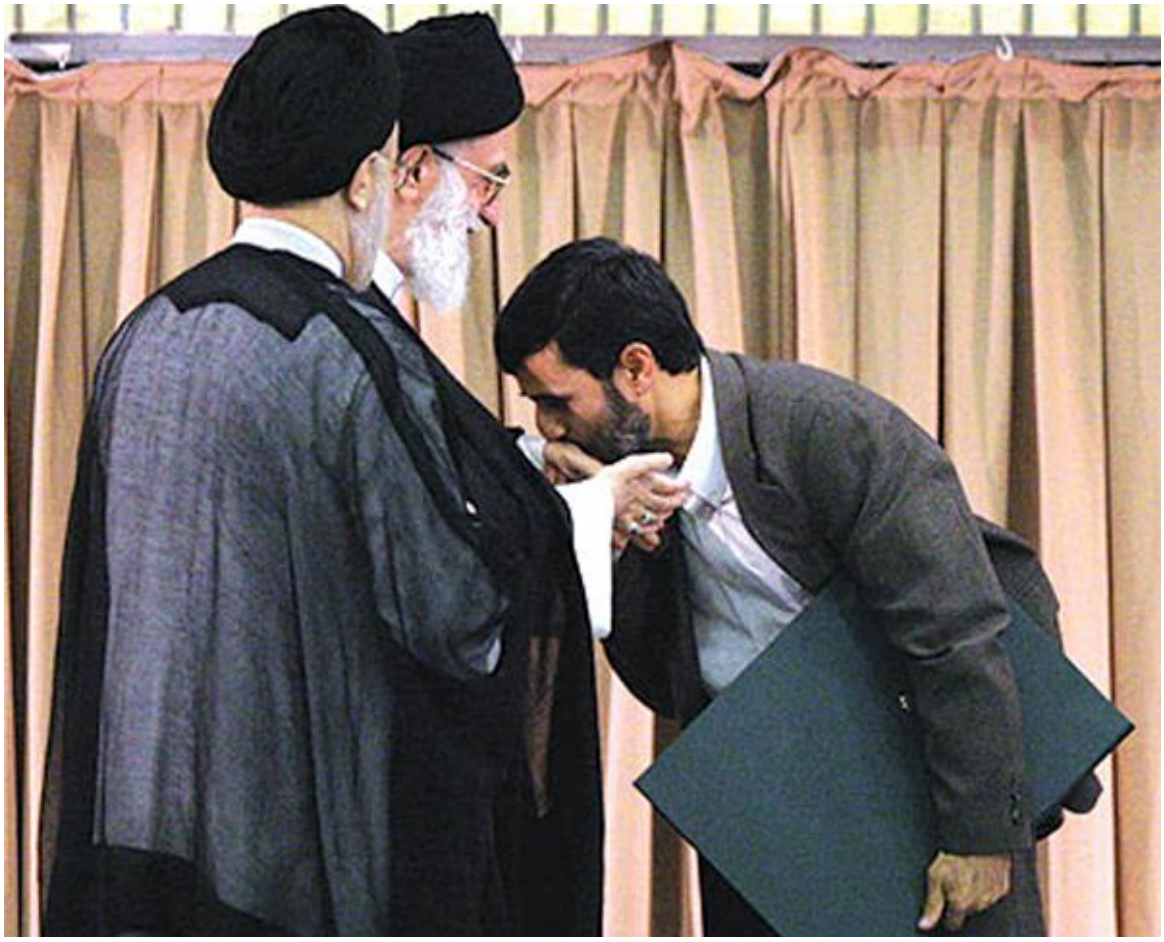
Pars Times, Centre Iran and Beyond

http://www.parstimes.com/ (1979)

http://en.parliran.ir/index.aspx?siteid=84&pageid=3053

Appendix 3

Image of loyalty



The President of Iran, Ahmadinejad leans forward to kiss Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's hand to show him his honour and loyalty after being elected in 2005.

www.allvoices.com/contributed-news/8526879/image/75634193-mahmud-ahmadinejad-kisses-ali-khamenei-s-hand

Appendix 4

Map of Iran's Declared Nuclear Installations on 06 April 2015

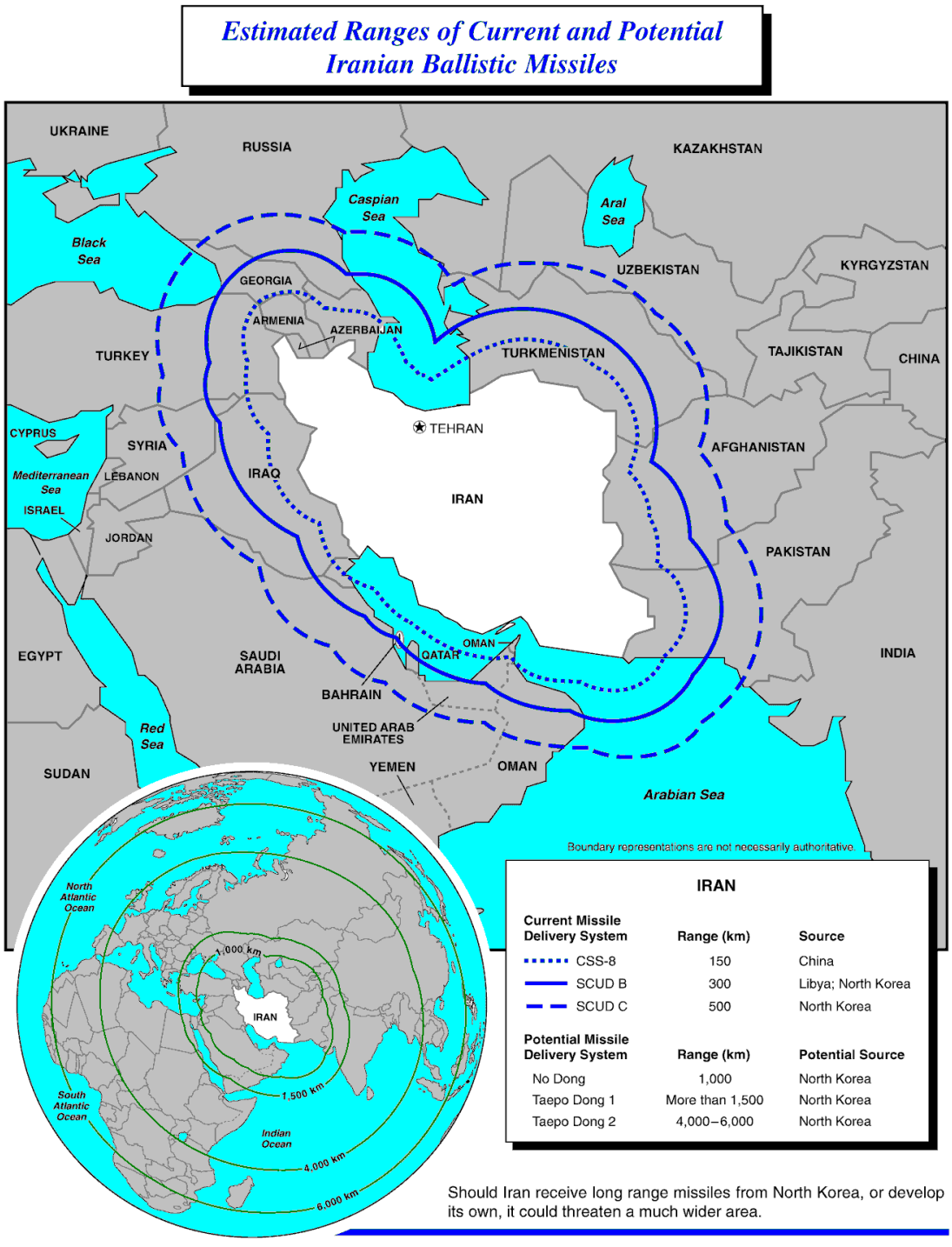
http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/irans-nuclear-installations-2015

Appendix 5

Satellite Imagery Shows Tunnel Construction in Isfahan Facility in Iran on 17 February 2005

http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/new-satellite-images-show-tunnel-construction-at-esfahan-facility-in-iran/8#images

Appendix 6



http://www.theisraelproject.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=ewJXKcOUJlIaG&b=7737551&ct=11145537#.UUyRMRwvloF

Appendix 7

Speech by President Bush

Speech to the 89th annual national convention of the American Legion in Reno, Nevada.

August 28, 2007

Thank you all very much. (Applause) Thank you all. Please be seated. Commander, thank you very much for the invitation to come. I'm honored to be here. I'm honored to represent Post 77 of Houston, Texas. (Applause) I hope my fellow Texans behave themselves here in Reno (Laughter). You won't? Okay, well -- (Laughter)

I appreciate the fact that nearly every community in America has been enriched by the American Legion and the Women's Auxiliary. I appreciate the work that you do to remind our citizens about the blessings of America. You have the profound gratitude of the President and the people of this country. Thank you for your service (Applause)

I particularly appreciate the work you do with our country's young. I like the fact that you have an oratorical competition that, according to your organization, helps Americans communicate their ideas clearly and effectively. Paul suggested I might want to sign up. (Laughter and applause) I appreciate the fact that through Boys and Girls Nation you teach young people who are interested in public service about how Washington really works. (Laughter) I'm not there. (Laughter and applause)

We meet today at a critical time for our country. America is engaged in a great ideological struggle -- fighting Islamic extremists across the globe. Today I want to talk to you and to

the American people about a key aspect of the struggle: the fight for the future of the Middle East. I'm going to explain why defeating the extremists in this troubled region is essential to our nation's security, and why success in Iraq is vital to winning this larger ideological battle. (Applause)

I do want to thank your Commander. It's been my pleasure to work with Paul. He's been in the White House a lot, along with the Executive Director, John Sommer. He's represented you well, and he's served with distinction. (Applause)

I thank JoAnn Cronin, the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary. I appreciate Bob Spanogle, the National Adjutant of the American Legion. I want to welcome the Governor of the great state of Nevada with us today -- Governor Jim Gibbons is with us. Mr. Governor, thanks for coming. (Applause) The Congressman from this district is the fine representative named Dean Heller. His wife Lynne sang the National Anthem. Thank you both for being here today. (Applause)

I'm honored to be in the presence of those who wear our nation's uniform. I thank General Charles Campbell, Commanding General U.S. Army Forces Command, for joining us. Major General Gale Pollock, Acting Surgeon General of the U.S. Army. And for all those who wear the uniform, thank you for volunteering to defend this nation in a time of peril. I'm proud to be your Commander-in-Chief. (Applause)

For nearly a century, Presidents have looked to the American Legion to provide an example of vision, valor, and love of country. In times of peace, you counseled vigilance. In times of war, you counseled resolve. And in every era, you have carried the well-being

of our men and women in uniform in your prayers and in your hearts. We're grateful to your service.

You have an appreciation for how special America is because you have defended her. You know how fragile freedom is because you have seen it under attack. And you know the pain of war because you have lost friends and family members on distant shores -- including those whose fates are still unknown. We must not, and we will not, end our search until we have accounted for every member of our Armed Forces from every war and every corner of the Earth. (Applause)

I appreciate your efforts to honor the American flag. There are those who say the flag is just a piece of cloth. That's not the view of those who bled for it and saw it drape the caskets of some of our finest men and women. It was the American flag that we planted proudly on Iwo Jima, that first graced the silver surface of the moon. The country is careful to protect many things because of what they symbolize. Surely we can find a way to show equal respect for the symbol that our soldiers and sailors and airmen and Marines and Coast Guard's men and women have risked their lives for -- the flag of our nation. So today I join the Legion in calling on the United States Congress to make protection of the flag the law of our land. (Applause)

I also thank you for your strong support of our nation's veterans. We share a common goal: to make sure our veterans have all the help they need. (Applause.) We have worked together to achieve that goal. The budget this year that I submitted is nearly $87 billion for our veterans. That's a 77-percent increase since I took office. It is the highest level of support for veterans in America's history. (Applause)

I know health care is a concern of yours, and that's why we've extended treatment to a million additional veterans, including hundreds of thousands of men and women returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. We're building new VA facilities in places where veterans are returning [sic] so more veterans can get top-quality health care closer to your home. We've expanded grants to help homeless veterans in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. My point is this: The veterans were there when we needed them -- and this administration will be with the veterans when they need us. (Applause)

Perhaps the most important duty that Legion members undertake is to serve as living reminders that a great country has great responsibilities. Once again, America finds itself a nation at war. Once again, we're called to assume the mantle of global leadership. And once again, the American Legion is walking point. I thank you for your fervent and enthusiastic defense of our men and women in uniform as they take the fight to the enemy in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and across the world. They're the finest military on Earth -- and we are right to be proud of them. (Applause)

Many people in this country are asking whether the fight underway today is worth it. This is not the first time Americans have asked that question. We always enter wars reluctantly -- yet we have fought whenever dangers came. We fought when turmoil in Europe threatened to shroud the world in darkness. America sent its military to fight two bitter and bloody conflicts -- we did what we had to do to get the job done. We fought when powers in Asia attacked our country and our allies. We sent Americans to restore the peace -- and we did what we had to do to get the job done. And we responded when radicals and extremists attacked our homeland in the first ideological war of the 21st century. We toppled two regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq that gave harbor to terrorists, defied the

international community, and threatened the security of our nation. And now we're working to help build free and secure societies in their place -- and like the past, we will do what we have to do to get the job done. (Applause)

We've learned from history that dangers in other parts of the world -- such as Europe and Asia -- directly affect our security here at home. On September the 11th, 2001, we learned that there's another region of the world that directly threatens the security of the American people -- and that is the Middle East. America has enduring and vital interests in the region. Throughout our history, the American people have had strong links with this region -- through ties of commerce and education and faith. Long before oil and gas were discovered in the Middle East the region was a key source of trade. It is the home to three of the world's great religions. It remains a strategic crossroads for the world.

Yet the hope and prosperity that transformed other parts of the world in the 20th century has bypassed too many in the Middle East. For too long, the world was content to ignore forms of government in this region -- in the name of stability. The result was that a generation of young people grew up with little hope to improve their lives, and many fell under the sway of violent Islamic extremism. The terrorist movement multiplied in strength, and bitterness that had simmered for years boiled into violence across the world. The cradle of civilization became the home of the suicide bomber. And resentments that began on the streets of the Middle East are now killing innocent people in train stations and airplanes and office buildings around the world.

The murderers and beheaders are not the true face of Islam; they are the face of evil. They seek to exploit religion as a path to power and a means to dominate the Middle East. The

violent Islamic radicalism that inspires them has two main strains. One is Sunni extremism, embodied by al Qaida and its terrorist allies. Their organization advances a vision that rejects tolerance, crushes all dissent, and justifies the murder of innocent men, women, and children in the pursuit of political power. We saw this vision in the brutal rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan, where women were publicly whipped, men were beaten for missing prayer meetings, and young girls could not go to school.

These extremists hope to impose that same dark vision across the Middle East by raising up a violent and radical caliphate that spans from Spain to Indonesia. So they kill fellow Muslims in places like Algeria and Jordan and Egypt and Saudi Arabia in an attempt to undermine their governments. And they kill Americans because they know we stand in their way. And that is why they attacked U.S. embassies in Africa in 1998, and killed sailors aboard the USS Cole in 2001 [sic]. And that is why they killed nearly 3,000 people on 9/11. And that is why they plot to attack us again. And that is why we must stay in the fight until the fight is won. (Applause)

The other strain of radicalism in the Middle East is Shia extremism, supported and embodied by the regime that sits in Tehran. Iran has long been a source of trouble in the region. It is the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism. Iran backs Hezbollah who are trying to undermine the democratic government of Lebanon. Iran funds terrorist groups like Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which murder the innocent, and target Israel, and destabilize the Palestinian territories. Iran is sending arms to the Taliban in Afghanistan, which could be used to attack American and NATO troops. Iran has arrested visiting American scholars who have committed no crimes and pose no threat to their regime. And Iran's active pursuit of technology that could lead to nuclear weapons

threatens to put a region already known for instability and violence under the shadow of a nuclear holocaust.

Iran's actions threaten the security of nations everywhere. And that is why the United States is rallying friends and allies around the world to isolate the regime, to impose economic sanctions. We will confront this danger before it is too late. (Applause)

I want our fellow citizens to consider what would happen if these forces of radicalism and extremism are allowed to drive us out of the Middle East. The region would be dramatically transformed in a way that could imperil the civilized world. Extremists of all strains would be emboldened by the knowledge that they forced America to retreat. Terrorists could have more safe havens to conduct attacks on Americans and our friends and allies. Iran could conclude that we were weak -- and could not stop them from gaining nuclear weapons. And once Iran had nuclear weapons, it would set off a nuclear arms race in the region.

Extremists would control a key part of the world's energy supply, could blackmail and sabotage the global economy. They could use billions of dollars of oil revenues to buy weapons and pursue their deadly ambitions. Our allies in the region would be under greater siege by the enemies of freedom. Early movements toward democracy in the region would be violently reversed. This scenario would be a disaster for the people of the Middle East, a danger to our friends and allies, and a direct threat to American peace and security. This is what the extremists plan. For the sake of our own security, we'll pursue our enemies, we'll persevere and we will prevail. (Applause)

In the short-term, we're using all elements of American power to protect the American people by taking the fight to the enemy. Our troops are carrying out operations day by day to bring the terrorists to justice. We're keeping the pressure on them. We're forcing them to move. Our law enforcement and intelligence professionals are working to cut off terrorist financing and disrupt their networks. Our diplomats are rallying our friends and allies throughout the region to share intelligence and to tighten security and to rout out the extremists hiding in their midst. Every day we work to protect the American people. Our strategy is this: We will fight them over there so we do not have to face them in the United States of America. (Applause)

In the long-term, we are advancing freedom and liberty as the alternative to the ideologies of hatred and repression. We seek a Middle East of secure democratic states that are at peace with one another, that are participating in the global markets, and that are partners in this fight against the extremists and radicals. We seek to dry up the stream of recruits for al Qaeda and other extremists by helping nations offer their people a path to a more hopeful future. We seek an Iran whose government is accountable to its people -- instead of to leaders who promote terror and pursue the technology that could be used to develop nuclear weapons. We seek to advance a two-state solution for the Israelis and Palestinians so they can live side by side in peace and security. We seek justice and dignity and human rights for all the people of the Middle East.

Achieving this future requires hard work and strategic patience over many years. Yet our security depends on it. We have done this kind of work before in Europe. We have done this kind of work before in Japan. We have done this kind of work before -- and it can be done again. (Applause)

The future course of the Middle East will turn heavily on the outcome of the fight in Iraq. Iraq is at the heart of the Middle East. And the two dangerous strains of extremism vying for control of the Middle East have now closed in on this country in an effort to bring down the young democracy.

In Iraq, Sunni extremists, led by al Qaeda, are staging sensational attacks on innocent men, women, and children in an attempt to stoke sectarian violence. Their operatives have assassinated those seeking to build a new future for the Iraqi people. Their targets include everyone they consider infidels -- including Christians and Jews and Yezidis and Shia, and even fellow Sunnis who do not share their radical distortion of Islam. Their ranks include foreign fighters who travel to Iraq through Syria. Their operations seek to create images of chaos and carnage to break the will of the American people. These killers don't understand our country. America does not give in to thugs and assassins -- and America will not abandon Iraq in its hour of need. (Applause)

Shia extremists, backed by Iran, are training Iraqis to carry out attacks on our forces and the Iraqi people. Members of the Qods Force of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps are supplying extremist groups with funding and weapons, including sophisticated IEDs. And with the assistance of Hezbollah, they've provided training for these violent forces inside of Iraq. Recently, coalition forces seized 240-millimeter rockets that had been manufactured in Iran this year and that had been provided to Iraqi extremist groups by Iranian agents. The attacks on our bases and our troops by Iranian-supplied munitions have increased in the last few months -- despite pledges by Iran to help stabilize the security situation in Iraq.

Some say Iran's leaders are not aware of what members of their own regime are doing. Others say Iran's leaders are actively seeking to provoke the West. Either way, they cannot escape responsibility for aiding attacks against coalition forces and the murder of innocent Iraqis. The Iranian regime must halt these actions. And until it does, I will take actions necessary to protect our troops. I have authorized our military commanders in Iraq to confront Tehran's murderous activities. (Applause)

For all those who ask whether the fight in Iraq is worth it, imagine an Iraq where militia groups backed by Iran control large parts of the country. Imagine an Iraq where al Qaeda has established sanctuaries to safely plot future attacks on targets all over the world, including America. We've seen what these enemies will do when American forces are actively engaged in Iraq. And we can envision what they would do if we -- if they were emboldened by American forces in retreat.

The challenge in Iraq comes down to this: Either the forces of extremism succeed, or the forces of freedom succeed. Either our enemies advance their interests in Iraq, or we advance our interests. The most important and immediate way to counter the ambitions of al Qaeda and Iran and other forces of instability and terror is to win the fight in Iraq. (Applause)

Together our coalition has achieved great things in Iraq. We toppled one of the world's most brutal and dangerous dictators. This world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power. (Applause) The Iraqi people held three national elections, choosing a transitional government, adopting the most progressive and democratic constitution in the Arab world, and then electing a government under that constitution. Despite endless threats from the

car bombers and assassins, nearly 12 million Iraqi citizens came out to vote in a show of hope and solidarity that we should never forget.

In 2006, a thinking enemy struck back. The extremists provoked a level of sectarian violence that threatened to unravel the democratic gains the Iraqi people had made. Momentum was shifting to the extremists. The Iraqi people saw that their government could not protect them, or deliver basic services. Many Shia turned to militias for security. Many Sunnis did not see a place for them in the new Iraq. Baghdad was descending into chaos. And one of our military intelligence analysts wrote that Anbar Province -- al Qaeda's base in Iraq -- was lost to the enemy.

Given the stakes in Iraq, given the fact that what happens in Iraq matters in the United States, it became clear that we needed to adjust our approach to address these changes on the ground. So in January, I laid out a new strategy. This strategy was designed to help bring security to the Iraqi population, especially in Baghdad. It was designed to help clear the terrorists out of Iraqi cities and communities so that local governments could retake control, resume basic services, and help revive businesses in their communities. It was designed to give the Iraqi security forces time to grow in size and capability so that they can ultimately bring security to their country. It was designed to provide a secure environment in which national reconciliation could take place. And it was designed to encourage more members of the international community to recognize their interest in a free and democratic Iraq -- and to do more to help make that possible.

The central objective of this strategy was to aid the rise of an Iraqi government that can protect its people, deliver basic services, and be an ally in this war on terror. And we

understood that none of these goals could be met until the Iraqi people feel safer in their own homes and neighborhoods.

To carry out this new strategy I sent reinforcements to Baghdad and Anbar Province. I put a new commander in place -- General David Petraeus, an expert on counterinsurgency. Those reinforcements have been fully operational for just over two months. Yet there are unmistakable signs that our strategy is achieving the objectives we set out. Our new strategy is showing results in terms of security. Our forces are in the fight all over Iraq. Since January, each month we have captured or killed an average of more than 1,500 al Qaeda terrorists and other enemies of Iraq's elected government. (Applause) Al Qaeda is being displaced from former strongholds in Baghdad and Anbar and Diyala provinces.

We've conducted operations against Iranian agents supplying lethal munitions to extremist groups. We've targeted Shia death squads and their supply networks. The Prime Minister of Iraq, Prime Minister Maliki, has courageously committed to pursue the forces of evil and destruction. Sectarian violence has sharply decreased in Baghdad. The momentum is now on our side. The surge is seizing the initiative from the enemy -- and handing it to the Iraqi people.

Our new strategy is also showing results in places where it matters most -- the cities and neighborhoods where ordinary Iraqis live. In these areas, Iraqis are increasingly reaching accommodations with each other, with the coalition, and with the government in Baghdad. This reconciliation is coming from the bottom up. It's having an impact in the fight against the enemy and it's building a solid foundation for a democratic Iraq.

In Anbar, the province that had been thought to be lost to the enemy, is increasingly becoming more peaceful because members of local Sunnis are turning against al Qaeda. They're sick and tired of the dark vision of these murderers. Local sheikhs have joined the American forces to drive the terrorists out of the capital city of Ramadi and elsewhere. Residents are providing critical intelligence, and tribesmen have joined the Iraqi police and security forces.

People want to live in peace. Mothers want to raise their children in a peaceful environment. The local Iraqis, given a chance, are turning against these murderers and extremists. (Applause)

Many Iraqis who once felt marginalized in a free Iraq are rejoining the political process, and now it's the enemy of a free Iraq that is being left on the margins. Last month, provincial officials reopened parts of the war-damaged government center with the help of one of our provincial reconstruction teams. Similar scenes are taking place all across Anbar, the province once thought lost. Virtually every city and every town in the province now has a mayor and a municipal council. Local officials are forming ties with the central government in Baghdad because these Sunni leaders now see a role for their people in a new Iraq. And in an encouraging sign, the central government is beginning to respond with funding for vital services and reconstruction, and increased security forces.

In other provinces, there are also signs of this kind of bottom-up progress. In Diyala Province, the city of Baqubah reopened six banks, providing residents with capital for the local economy. In Ninewa Province, local officials have established a commission to investigate corruption, with a local judge empowered to pursue charges of fraud and

racketeering. These are signs that our strategy to encourage political cooperation at the grassroots level is working. And over time, see, and over time, as the Iraqis take control over their lives at the local level, they will demand more action from their national leaders in Baghdad. That's how democracy works. And that's why the encouraging developments at the local level are so important for Iraq's future.

At the moment, our new strategy is showing fewer results at the national level. Iraq is overcoming decades of tyranny and deprivation, which left scars on Iraq's people and their psyche. The serious sectarian violence of 2006 and early 2007 further tore at the fabric of Iraqi society, increasing distrust between Iraq's ethnic and religious communities. In the midst of the security challenges, Iraq's leaders are being asked to resolve political issues as complex and emotional as the struggle for civil rights in our own country. So it is no wonder that progress is halting, and people are often frustrated. The result is that it has been harder than anticipated for Iraqis to meet the legislative benchmarks on which we have all been focused.

In my weekly consultations with Ambassador Crocker we discuss these challenges. We also discuss the signs of hope. We're encouraged by the agreement reached Sunday night by the top leaders in Iraq's government. They agree on several draft pieces of legislation that are at the core of national reconciliation -- and are among the benchmarks identified by the United States Congress. For example, the draft law on de-Baathification reform addresses the question of how Iraqis will deal with their past. The draft legislation on provincial powers tackles how Iraqis will map out their future. These measures still have to be passed by the Iraqi parliament. Yet the agreement shows that Iraq's leaders can put aside

their differences, they can sit down together, and they can work out tough issues central to the fate of their country.

The agreement by Iraq's leaders was significant for another reason. It thanks the coalition for our sacrifices, and recognizes the importance of maintaining a coalition presence in Iraq. It also calls for the development of a long-term relationship with the United States. I welcome this invitation. I've committed our government to negotiating such a partnership soon. This long-term relationship need not require the level of engagement that we have in Iraq today. But it can serve the common interests of both Iraq and the United States -- to combat terrorism, and to help bring stability to an important country and region.

Iraq's government still has more work to do to meet many of its legislative benchmarks. Yet it's also important to note that many of the goals behind these benchmarks are being achieved without legislation. Here's an example: We believed that an equitable sharing of oil revenues would require the Iraqi parliament to pass an oil-sharing law. In fact, the national government is already sharing oil revenues with the provinces -- despite the fact that no formal law has been passed. Iraq's government is making gains in other important areas. Electricity production is improving. The parliament has passed about 60 pieces of legislation, including a $41-billion budget. Despite the slow progress in the Iraqi parliament -- here's the evidence -- Iraq as a whole is moving forward.

Our strategy is also showing results at the international level. The United Nations and Iraq -- with support from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and nations from around the globe -- have finalized an International Compact for Iraq that will bring new economic assistance and debt relief in exchange for aggressive economic reforms. So far,

the Iraqis have made significant progress in meeting the IMF's economic benchmarks. The Iraqis have convened a Neighbors Conference that's bringing together nations in the region. The goal is to help the Iraqis through specific security and economic and diplomatic cooperation.

As part of these diplomatic initiatives, Prime Minister Maliki has met with counterparts in Turkey, Syria, and Iran to urge the support for his nation. Saudi Arabia is looking to open a new embassy in Baghdad. The United Nations Security Council has decided to expand its mission in Iraq, and is seeking to help with local elections and reconciliation. The United Nations will soon name a new high-ranking envoy to Iraq, to coordinate the UN's expanded effort to that country. Here's what I'm telling you -- the international community increasingly understands the importance of a free Iraq. They understand a free Iraq is important for world peace. And that is why we'll continue to rally the world for this noble and necessary cause. (Applause)

All these developments are hopeful -- they're hopeful for Iraq, and they're hopeful for the Middle East, and they're hopeful for peace. In two weeks, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker will return to Washington to deliver an interim assessment of the situation on the ground and the prospects for the future. This status report comes less than three months after the surge became fully operational. It will likely assess what's going well in Iraq, and what needs to be improved, and what changes we need to make in our strategy and force deployments in the months ahead. Congress asked for this assessment. Congress should listen to it in its entirety. And I ask members of the Congress to withhold any conclusions until they can hear these men out. (Applause)

Unfortunately, some who had complained about a lack of security in Iraq are now attempting to change the terms of the debate. Their argument used to be that security was bad, so the surge has failed. Now their argument seems to be security is better, so the surge has failed. They disregard the political advances on the local level, and instead change -- charge that the slow pace of legislative progress on the national level proves our strategy has not worked. This argument gets it backwards. Improving security is the precondition for making gains in other areas.

Senator Joe Lieberman puts it this way: "While it is true there is no pure 'military' solution to the violence in Iraq, it is worth remembering that neither is there any pure 'political' solution." Security progress must come first. And only then can political progress follow -- first locally, and then in Baghdad. So it's going to take time for the recent progress we have seen in security to translate into political progress. In short, it makes no sense to respond to military progress by claiming that we have failed because Iraq's parliament has yet to pass every law it said it would.

The American people know how difficult democracy can be. Our own country has an advanced and sophisticated political system in place. Yet even we can't pass a budget on time -- and we've had 200 years of practice. (Applause) Prime Minister Maliki and other Iraqi leaders are dealing with the issues far more controversial and complicated, and they are trying to do it all at once, after decades of a brutal dictatorship. Iraq's leaders aren't perfect. But they were elected by their people. They want what we want -- a free Iraq that fights terrorists instead of harboring them. And leaders in Washington need to look for ways to help our Iraqi allies succeed -- not excuses for abandoning them. (Applause)

The challenge is before us -- the challenge before us is hard, but America can meet it. And the conflict has come at a cost, on behalf of a cause that is right and essential to the American people. It's a noble cause. It is a just cause. It is a necessary cause. I wouldn't have asked the young men and women of our military to go in harm's way if I didn't think success in Iraq was necessary for the security of the United States of America. (Applause) I know it can be difficult to see sometimes, but what happens on the streets of Baghdad and in the neighborhoods of Anbar has a direct impact on the safety of Americans here at home. And that is why we're in this fight. And that's why we'll stay in the fight, and that is why we're going to win this fight. (Applause)

One of the great blessings of this country is that our men and women in uniform understand it. One of those young men was Specialist First Class Stephen Davis of Fayetteville, North Carolina. Stephen came from a proud military family. His father and grandfather were veterans. His younger brother, his mother, and her father were all stationed with him in Iraq.

When Stephen was killed by an insurgent grenade on the Fourth of July, their hearts were broken. And yet, somehow this remarkable family found a way to put aside their grief and continues to serve our country. Stephen's mother said that Stephen was proud of what they were doing in Iraq -- so six days after the funeral, she went back on duty as a medic. His father, Buck, a Gulf War veteran, says he wants to go to Iraq today. This family represents the best of the American spirit -- a spirit that shows we have the grit and the will to defend the American people. (Applause)

One day years from now, another president will be in a room like this. That president will look out upon a sea of caps worn by those who show a quiet pride in their service. Some in that audience will include people who won the fight against fascism and Nazism and communism. You'll be joined by younger veterans who have fought in places like Kandahar and Ramadi. And just like you, the new generation of veterans will be able to say proudly they held fast against determined and ruthless enemies, helped salvage an entire region from tyranny and terror, and made a safer world for the American people.

To those future members of the American Legion, and to all of you, I offer the gratitude of our nation, and offer my prayers for a future of peace. Thank you. And may God America. (Applause)

www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/iraq/bush2007b.htm

(also available at www.whitehouse.gov)

Appendix 8

Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq

General David H. Petraeus

Commander, Multi-National Force-Iraq

10-11 September 2007

Mr. Chairmen, Ranking Members, Members of the Committees, thank you for the opportunity to provide my assessment of the security situation in Iraq and to discuss the recommendations I recently provided to my chain of command for the way forward.

At the outset, I would like to note that this is my testimony. Although I have briefed my assessment and recommendations to my chain of command, I wrote this testimony myself. It has not been cleared by, nor shared with, anyone in the Pentagon, the White House, or Congress.

As a bottom line up front, the military objectives of the surge are, in large measure, being met. In recent months, in the face of tough enemies and the brutal summer heat of Iraq, Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces have achieved progress in the security arena. Though the improvements have been uneven across Iraq, the overall number of security incidents in Iraq has declined in 8 of the past 12 weeks, with the numbers of incidents in the last two weeks at the lowest levels seen since June 2006.

One reason for the decline in incidents is that Coalition and Iraqi forces have dealt significant blows to Al Qaeda-Iraq. Though Al Qaeda and its affiliates in Iraq remain

dangerous, we have taken away a number of their sanctuaries and gained the initiative in many areas.

We have also disrupted Shia militia extremists, capturing the head and numerous other leaders of the Iranian-supported Special Groups, along with a senior Lebanese Hezbollah operative supporting Iran's activities in Iraq.

Coalition and Iraqi operations have helped reduce ethno-sectarian violence, as well, bringing down the number of ethno-sectarian deaths substantially in Baghdad and across Iraq since the height of the sectarian violence last December. The number of overall civilian deaths has also declined during this period, although the numbers in each area are still at troubling levels.

Iraqi Security Forces have also continued to grow and to shoulder more of the load, albeit slowly and amid continuing concerns about the sectarian tendencies of some elements in their ranks. In general, however, Iraqi elements have been standing and fighting and sustaining tough losses, and they have taken the lead in operations in many areas.

Additionally, in what may be the most significant development of the past 8 months, the tribal rejection of Al Qaeda that started in Anbar Province and helped produce such significant change there has now spread to a number of other locations as well.

Based on all this and on the further progress we believe we can achieve over the next few months, I believe that we will be able to reduce our forces to the pre-surge level of brigade

combat teams by next summer without jeopardizing the security gains that we have fought so hard to achieve.

Beyond that, while noting that the situation in Iraq remains complex, difficult, and sometimes downright frustrating, I also believe that it is possible to achieve our objectives in Iraq over time, though doing so will be neither quick nor easy.

Having provided that summary, I would like to review the nature of the conflict in Iraq, recall the situation before the surge, describe the current situation, and explain the recommendations I have provided to my chain of command for the way ahead in Iraq.

The Nature of the Conflict

The fundamental source of the conflict in Iraq is competition among ethnic and sectarian communities for power and resources. This competition will take place, and its resolution is key to producing long-term stability in the new Iraq. The question is whether the competition takes place more – or less – violently. This chart shows the security challenges in Iraq. Foreign and home-grown terrorists, insurgents, militia extremists, and criminals all push the ethno-sectarian competition toward violence. Malign actions by Syria and, especially, by Iran fuel that violence. Lack of adequate governmental capacity, lingering sectarian mistrust, and various forms of corruption add to Iraq's challenges.

The Situation in December 2006 and the Surge

In our recent efforts to look to the future, we found it useful to revisit the past. In December 2006, during the height of the ethno-sectarian violence that escalated in the wake of the bombing of the Golden Dome Mosque in Samarra, the leaders in Iraq at that time – General George Casey and Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad – concluded that the coalition was failing to achieve its objectives. Their review underscored the need to protect the population and reduce sectarian violence, especially in Baghdad. As a result, General Casey requested additional forces to enable the Coalition to accomplish these tasks, and those forces began to flow in January.

In the ensuing months, our forces and our Iraqi counterparts have focused on improving security, especially in Baghdad and the areas around it, wresting sanctuaries from Al Qaeda control, and disrupting the efforts of the Iranian-supported militia extremists. We have employed counterinsurgency practices that underscore the importance of units living among the people they are securing, and accordingly, our forces have established dozens of joint security stations and patrol bases manned by Coalition and Iraqi forces in Baghdad and in other areas across Iraq.

In mid-June, with all the surge brigades in place, we launched a series of offensive operations focused on: expanding the gains achieved in the preceding months in Anbar Province; clearing Baqubah, several key Baghdad neighborhoods, the remaining sanctuaries in Anbar Province, and important areas in the so-called "belts" around Baghdad; and pursuing Al Qaeda in the Diyala River Valley and several other areas.

Throughout this period, as well, we engaged in dialogue with insurgent groups and tribes, and this led to additional elements standing up to oppose Al Qaeda and other extremists. We also continued to emphasize the development of the Iraqi Security Forces and we employed non-kinetic means to exploit the opportunities provided by the conduct of our kinetic operations – aided in this effort by the arrival of additional Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

Current Situation and Trends

The progress our forces have achieved with our Iraqi counterparts has, as I noted at the outset, been substantial. While there have been setbacks as well as successes and tough losses along the way, overall, our tactical commanders and I see improvements in the security environment. We do not, however, just rely on gut feel or personal observations; we also conduct considerable data collection and analysis to gauge progress and determine trends. We do this by gathering and refining data from coalition and Iraqi operations centers, using a methodology that has been in place for well over a year and that has benefited over the past seven months from the increased presence of our forces living among the Iraqi people. We endeavor to ensure our analysis of that data is conducted with rigor and consistency, as our ability to achieve a nuanced understanding of the security environment is dependent on collecting and analyzing data in a consistent way over time. Two US intelligence agencies recently reviewed our methodology, and they concluded that the data we produce is the most accurate and authoritative in Iraq.

As I mentioned up front, and as the chart before you reflects, the level of security incidents has decreased significantly since the start of the surge of offensive operations in mid-June,

declining in 8 of the past 12 weeks, with the level of incidents in the past two weeks the lowest since June 2006 and with the number of attacks this past week the lowest since April 2006.

Civilian deaths of all categories, less natural causes, have also declined considerably, by over 45% Iraq-wide since the height of the sectarian violence in December. This is shown by the top line on this chart, and the decline by some 70% in Baghdad is shown by the bottom line. Periodic mass casualty attacks by Al Qaeda have tragically added to the numbers outside Baghdad, in particular. Even without the sensational attacks, however, the level of civilian deaths is clearly still too high and continues to be of serious concern.

As the next chart shows, the number of ethno-sectarian deaths, an important subset of the overall civilian casualty figures, has also declined significantly since the height of the sectarian violence in December. Iraq-wide, as shown by the top line on this chart, the number of ethno-sectarian deaths has come down by over 55%, and it would have come down much further were it not for the casualties inflicted by barbaric Al Qaeda bombings attempting to reignite sectarian violence. In Baghdad, as the bottom line shows, the number of ethno-sectarian deaths has come down by some 80% since December. This chart also displays the density of sectarian incidents in various Baghdad neighborhoods and it both reflects the progress made in reducing ethno-sectarian violence in the Iraqi capital and identifies the areas that remain the most challenging.

As we have gone on the offensive in former Al Qaeda and insurgent sanctuaries, and as locals have increasingly supported our efforts, we have found a substantially increased number of arms, ammunition, and explosives caches. As this chart shows, we have, so far

this year, already found and cleared over 4,400 caches, nearly 1,700 more than we discovered in all of last year. This may be a factor in the reduction in the number of overall improvised explosive device attacks in recent months, which as this chart shows, has declined sharply, by about one-third, since June.

The change in the security situation in Anbar Province has, of course, been particularly dramatic. As this chart shows, monthly attack levels in Anbar have declined from some 1,350 in October 2006 to a bit over 200 in August of this year. This dramatic decrease reflects the significance of the local rejection of Al Qaeda and the newfound willingness of local Anbaris to volunteer to serve in the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police Service. As I noted earlier, we are seeing similar actions in other locations, as well.

To be sure, trends have not been uniformly positive across Iraq, as is shown by this chart depicting violence levels in several key Iraqi provinces. The trend in Ninevah Province, for example, has been much more up and down, until a recent decline, and the same is true in Sala ad Din Province, though recent trends there and in Baghdad have been in the right direction. In any event, the overall trajectory in Iraq – a steady decline of incidents in the past three months – is still quite significant.

The number of car bombings and suicide attacks has also declined in each of the past 5 months, from a high of some 175 in March, as this chart shows, to about 90 this past month. While this trend in recent months has been heartening, the number of high profile attacks is still too high, and we continue to work hard to destroy the networks that carry out these barbaric attacks.

Our operations have, in fact, produced substantial progress against Al Qaeda and its affiliates in Iraq. As this chart shows, in the past 8 months, we have considerably reduced the areas in which Al Qaeda enjoyed sanctuary. We have also neutralized 5 media cells, detained the senior Iraqi leader of Al Qaeda-Iraq, and killed or captured nearly 100 other key leaders and some 2,500 rank-and-file fighters. Al Qaeda is certainly not defeated; however, it is off balance and we are pursuing its leaders and operators aggressively. Of note, as the recent National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq explained, these gains against Al Qaeda are a result of the synergy of actions by: conventional forces to deny the terrorists sanctuary; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets to find the enemy; and special operations elements to conduct targeted raids. A combination of these assets is necessary to prevent the creation of a terrorist safe haven in Iraq.

In the past six months we have also targeted Shia militia extremists, capturing a number of senior leaders and fighters, as well as the deputy commander of Lebanese Hezbollah Department 2800, the organization created to support the training, arming, funding, and, in some cases, direction of the militia extremists by the Iranian Republican Guard Corps' Qods Force. These elements have assassinated and kidnapped Iraqi governmental leaders, killed and wounded our soldiers with advanced explosive devices provided by Iran, and indiscriminately rocketed civilians in the International Zone and elsewhere. It is increasingly apparent to both Coalition and Iraqi leaders that Iran, through the use of the Qods Force, seeks to turn the Iraqi Special Groups into a Hezbollah-like force to serve its interests and fight a proxy war against the Iraqi state and coalition forces in Iraq.

The most significant development in the past six months likely has been the increasing emergence of tribes and local citizens rejecting Al Qaeda and other extremists. This has, of

course, been most visible in Anbar Province. A year ago the province was assessed as "lost" politically. Today, it is a model of what happens when local leaders and citizens decide to oppose Al Qaeda and reject its Taliban-like ideology. While Anbar is unique and the model it provides cannot be replicated everywhere in Iraq, it does demonstrate the dramatic change in security that is possible with the support and participation of local citizens. As this chart shows, other tribes have been inspired by the actions of those in Anbar and have volunteered to fight extremists as well. We have, in coordination with the Iraqi government's National Reconciliation Committee, been engaging these tribes and groups of local citizens who want to oppose extremists and to contribute to local security. Some 20,000 such individuals are already being hired for the Iraqi Police, thousands of others are being assimilated into the Iraqi Army, and thousands more are vying for a spot in Iraq's Security Forces.

Iraqi Security Forces

As I noted earlier, Iraqi Security Forces have continued to grow, to develop their capabilities, and to shoulder more of the burden of providing security for their country. Despite concerns about sectarian influence, inadequate logistics and supporting institutions, and an insufficient number of qualified commissioned and non-commissioned officers, Iraqi units are engaged around the country.

As this chart shows, there are now nearly 140 Iraqi Army, National Police, and Special Operations Forces Battalions in the fight, with about 95 of those capable of taking the lead in operations, albeit with some coalition support. Beyond that, all of Iraq's battalions have been heavily involved in combat operations that often result in the loss of leaders, soldiers,

and equipment. These losses are among the shortcomings identified by operational readiness assessments, but we should not take from these assessments the impression that Iraqi forces are not in the fight and contributing. Indeed, despite their shortages, many Iraqi units across Iraq now operate with minimal coalition assistance.

As counterinsurgency operations require substantial numbers of boots on the ground, we are helping the Iraqis expand the size of their security forces. Currently, there are some 445,000 individuals on the payrolls of Iraq's Interior and Defense Ministries. Based on recent decisions by Prime Minister Maliki, the number of Iraq's security forces will grow further by the end of this year, possibly by as much as 40,000. Given the security challenges Iraq faces, we support this decision, and we will work with the two security ministries as they continue their efforts to expand their basic training capacity, leader development programs, logistical structures and elements, and various other institutional capabilities to support the substantial growth in Iraqi forces.

Significantly, in 2007, Iraq will, as in 2006, spend more on its security forces than it will receive in security assistance from the United States. In fact, Iraq is becoming one of the United States' larger foreign military sales customers, committing some $1.6 billion to FMS already, with the possibility of up to $1.8 billion more being committed before the end of this year. And I appreciate the attention that some members of Congress have recently given to speeding up the FMS process for Iraq.

To summarize, the security situation in Iraq is improving, and Iraqis elements are slowly taking on more of the responsibility for protecting their citizens. Innumerable challenges lie ahead; however, Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces have made progress toward

achieving sustainable security. As a result, the United States will be in a position to reduce its forces in Iraq in the months ahead.

Recommendations

Two weeks ago I provided recommendations for the way ahead in Iraq to the members of my chain of command and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The essence of the approach I recommended is captured in its title: "Security While Transitioning: From Leading to Partnering to Overwatch." This approach seeks to build on the security improvements our troopers and our Iraqi counterparts have fought so hard to achieve in recent months. It reflects recognition of the importance of securing the population and the imperative of transitioning responsibilities to Iraqi institutions and Iraqi forces as quickly as possible, but without rushing to failure. It includes substantial support for the continuing development of Iraqi Security Forces. It also stresses the need to continue the counterinsurgency strategy that we have been employing, but with Iraqis gradually shouldering more of the load. And it highlights the importance of regional and global diplomatic approaches. Finally, in recognition of the fact that this war is not only being fought on the ground in Iraq but also in cyberspace, it also notes the need to contest the enemy's growing use of that important medium to spread extremism.

The recommendations I provided were informed by operational and strategic considerations. The operational considerations include recognition that:

- Military aspects of the surge have achieved progress and generated momentum;

- Iraqi Security Forces have continued to grow and have slowly been shouldering more of the security burden in Iraq;
- A mission focus on either population security or transition alone will not be adequate to achieve our objectives;
- Success against Al Qaeda-Iraq and Iranian-supported militia extremists requires conventional forces as well as special operations forces; and
- The security and local political situations will enable us to draw down the surge forces.

My recommendations also took into account a number of strategic considerations:

- Political progress will take place only if sufficient security exists;
- Long-term US ground force viability will benefit from force reductions as the surge runs its course;
- Regional, global, and cyberspace initiatives are critical to success; and
- Iraqi leaders understandably want to assume greater sovereignty in their country, although, as they recently announced, they do desire continued presence of coalition forces in Iraq in 2008 under a new UN Security Council Resolution and, following that, they want to negotiate a long term security agreement with the United States and other nations.

Based on these considerations, and having worked the battlefield geometry with Lieutenant General Ray Odierno to ensure that we retain and build on the gains for which our troopers have fought, I have recommended a drawdown of the surge forces from Iraq. In fact, later this month, the Marine Expeditionary Unit deployed as part of the surge will depart Iraq.

Beyond that, if my recommendations are approved, that unit's departure will be followed by the withdrawal of a brigade combat team without replacement in mid-December and the further redeployment without replacement of four other brigade combat teams and the two surge Marine battalions in the first 7 months of 2008, until we reach the pre-surge level of 15 brigade combat teams by mid-July 2008.

I would also like to discuss the period beyond next summer. Force reductions will continue beyond the pre-surge levels of brigade combat teams that we will reach by mid-July 2008; however, in my professional judgment, it would be premature to make recommendations on the pace of such reductions at this time. In fact, our experience in Iraq has repeatedly shown that projecting too far into the future is not just difficult, it can be misleading and even hazardous. The events of the past six months underscore that point. When I testified in January, for example, no one would have dared to forecast that Anbar Province would have been transformed the way it has in the past 6 months. Nor would anyone have predicted that volunteers in one-time Al Qaeda strongholds like Ghazaliyah in western Baghdad or in Adamiya in eastern Baghdad would seek to join the fight against Al Qaeda. Nor would we have anticipated that a Shia-led government would accept significant numbers of Sunni volunteers into the ranks of the local police force in Abu Ghraib. Beyond that, on a less encouraging note, none of us earlier this year appreciated the extent of Iranian involvement in Iraq, something about which we and Iraq's leaders all now have greater concern.

In view of this, I do not believe it is reasonable to have an adequate appreciation for the pace of further reductions and mission adjustments beyond the summer of 2008 until about mid-March of next year. We will, no later than that time, consider factors similar to those

on which I based the current recommendations, having by then, of course, a better feel for the security situation, the improvements in the capabilities of our Iraqi counterparts, and the enemy situation. I will then, as I did in developing the recommendations I have explained here today, also take into consideration the demands on our Nation's ground forces, although I believe that that consideration should once again inform, not drive, the recommendations I make.

This chart captures the recommendations I have described, showing the recommended reduction of brigade combat teams as the surge runs its course and illustrating the concept of our units adjusting their missions and transitioning responsibilities to Iraqis, as the situation and Iraqi capabilities permit. It also reflects the no-later-than date for recommendations on force adjustments beyond next summer and provides a possible approach we have considered for the future force structure and mission set in Iraq.

One may argue that the best way to speed the process in Iraq is to change the MNF-I mission from one that emphasizes population security, counter-terrorism, and transition, to one that is strictly focused on transition and counter-terrorism. Making that change now would, in our view, be premature. We have learned before that there is a real danger in handing over tasks to the Iraqi Security Forces before their capacity and local conditions warrant. In fact, the drafters of the recently released National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq recognized this danger when they wrote, and I quote, "We assess that changing the mission of Coalition forces from a primarily counterinsurgency and stabilization role to a primary combat support role for Iraqi forces and counterterrorist operations to prevent AQI from establishing a safe haven would erode security gains achieved thus far."

In describing the recommendations I have made, I should note again that, like Ambassador Crocker, I believe Iraq's problems will require a long-term effort. There are no easy answers or quick solutions. And though we both believe this effort can succeed, it will take time. Our assessments underscore, in fact, the importance of recognizing that a premature drawdown of our forces would likely have devastating consequences.

That assessment is supported by the findings of a 16 August Defense Intelligence Agency report on the implications of a rapid withdrawal of US forces from Iraq. Summarizing it in an unclassified fashion, it concludes that a rapid withdrawal would result in the further release of the strong centrifugal forces in Iraq and produce a number of dangerous results, including a high risk of disintegration of the Iraqi Security Forces; rapid deterioration of local security initiatives; Al Qaeda-Iraq regaining lost ground and freedom of maneuver; a marked increase in violence and further ethno-sectarian displacement and refugee flows; alliances of convenience by Iraqi groups with internal and external forces to gain advantages over their rivals; and exacerbation of already challenging regional dynamics, especially with respect to Iran.

Lieutenant General Odierno and I share this assessment and believe that the best way to secure our national interests and avoid an unfavorable outcome in Iraq is to continue to focus our operations on securing the Iraqi people while targeting terrorist groups and militia extremists and, as quickly as conditions are met, transitioning security tasks to Iraqi elements.

Closing Comments

Before closing, I want to thank you and your colleagues for your support of our men and women in uniform in Iraq. The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen with whom I'm honored to serve are the best equipped and, very likely, the most professional force in our nation's history. Impressively, despite all that has been asked of them in recent years, they continue to raise their right hands and volunteer to stay in uniform. With three weeks to go in this fiscal year, in fact, the Army elements in Iraq, for example, have achieved well over 130% of the reenlistment goals in the initial term and careerist categories and nearly 115% in the mid-career category. All of us appreciate what you have done to ensure that these great troopers have had what they've needed to accomplish their mission, just as we appreciate what you have done to take care of their families, as they, too, have made significant sacrifices in recent years.

The advances you have underwritten in weapons systems and individual equipment; in munitions; in command, control, and communications systems; in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities; in vehicles and counter-IED systems and programs; and in manned and unmanned aircraft have proven invaluable in Iraq. The capabilities that you have funded most recently – especially the vehicles that will provide greater protection against improvised explosive devices – are also of enormous importance. Additionally, your funding of the Commander's Emergency Response Program has given our leaders a critical tool with which to prosecute the counterinsurgency campaign. Finally, we appreciate as well your funding of our new detention programs and rule of law initiatives in Iraq.

In closing, it remains an enormous privilege to soldier again in Iraq with America's new "Greatest Generation." Our country's men and women in uniform have done a magnificent job in the most complex and challenging environment imaginable. All Americans should be very proud of their sons and daughters serving in Iraq today.

Thank you very much.

www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/pet091007.pdf

Appendix 9

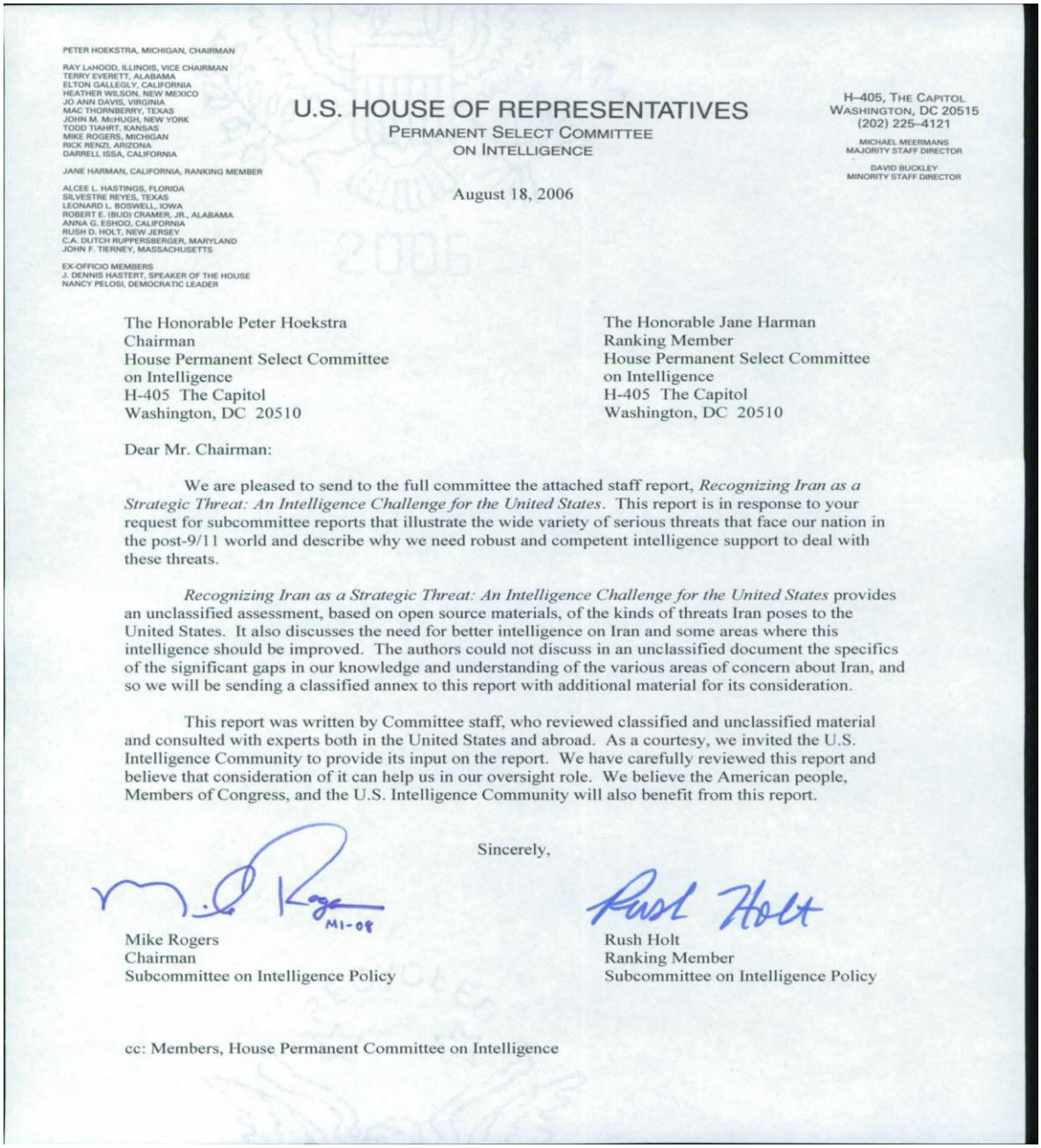
Image of loyalty

The Secretary General of Hezbollah, sayyed Hassan Nasrallah kisses the hand of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali khamenei in July 2000, expresses honour and loyalty.

http://tmtv.shiatv.net/search_result.php?search_id=ummah
AL-Sadeq, Ali. (2006). What Do You Know About Hezbollah. Arabic version, No.1

Appendix 10

U.S. House of Representatives



PETER HOEKSTRA, MICHIGAN, CHAIRMAN

RAY LAHOOD, ILLINOIS, VICE CHAIRMAN
TERRY EVERETT, ALABAMA
ELTON GALLEGLY, CALIFORNIA
HEATHER WILSON, NEW MEXICO
JO ANN DAVIS, VIRGINIA
MAC THORNBERRY, TEXAS
JOHN M. McHUGH, NEW YORK
TODD TIAHRT, KANSAS
MIKE ROGERS, MICHIGAN
RICK RENZI, ARIZONA
DARRELL ISSA, CALIFORNIA

JANE HARMAN, CALIFORNIA, RANKING MEMBER

ALCEE L. HASTINGS, FLORIDA
SILVESTRE REYES, TEXAS
LEONARD L. BOSWELL, IOWA
ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR., ALABAMA
ANNA G. ESHOO, CALIFORNIA
RUSH D. HOLT, NEW JERSEY
C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER, MARYLAND
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS
J. DENNIS HASTERT, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
NANCY PELOSI, DEMOCRATIC LEADER

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE
ON INTELLIGENCE

H–405, THE CAPITOL
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225–4121

MICHAEL MEERMANS
MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

DAVID BUCKLEY
MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

August 18, 2006

The Honorable Peter Hoekstra
Chairman
House Permanent Select Committee
on Intelligence
H-405 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jane Harman
Ranking Member
House Permanent Select Committee
on Intelligence
H-405 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We are pleased to send to the full committee the attached staff report, *Recognizing Iran as a Strategic Threat: An Intelligence Challenge for the United States*. This report is in response to your request for subcommittee reports that illustrate the wide variety of serious threats that face our nation in the post-9/11 world and describe why we need robust and competent intelligence support to deal with these threats.

Recognizing Iran as a Strategic Threat: An Intelligence Challenge for the United States provides an unclassified assessment, based on open source materials, of the kinds of threats Iran poses to the United States. It also discusses the need for better intelligence on Iran and some areas where this intelligence should be improved. The authors could not discuss in an unclassified document the specifics of the significant gaps in our knowledge and understanding of the various areas of concern about Iran, and so we will be sending a classified annex to this report with additional material for its consideration.

This report was written by Committee staff, who reviewed classified and unclassified material and consulted with experts both in the United States and abroad. As a courtesy, we invited the U.S. Intelligence Community to provide its input on the report. We have carefully reviewed this report and believe that consideration of it can help us in our oversight role. We believe the American people, Members of Congress, and the U.S. Intelligence Community will also benefit from this report.

Sincerely,

M. Rogers MI-08

Mike Rogers
Chairman
Subcommittee on Intelligence Policy

Rush Holt

Rush Holt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Intelligence Policy

cc: Members, House Permanent Committee on Intelligence

http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2006_rpt/hpsci082306.pdf

Appendix 11

Bush: Iran threatens world security

CNN Politics .com

January 14, 2008

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates (CNN) -- President Bush said Sunday that Iran is threatening the security of the world, and that the United States and Arab allies must join together to confront the danger "before it's too late."

Bush said Iran funds terrorist extremists, undermines peace in Lebanon, sends arms to the Taliban, seeks to intimidate its neighbors with alarming rhetoric, defies the United Nations and destabilizes the entire region by refusing to be open about its nuclear program.

"Iran is the world's leading state sponsor of terror," Bush said in a speech he delivered about midway through his eight-day Mideast trip that began with a renewed push for an Israeli-Palestinian peace pact -- an accord he said whose "time has come."

Bush also chided U.S. allies who have withheld civil liberties, saying governments will never build trust by harassing or imprisoning candidates and protesters. But his rebuke was general, and he did not single out any U.S. partner in the region for oppressive practices.

"You cannot expect people to believe in the promise of a better future when they are jailed for peacefully petitioning their government," Bush said. "And you cannot stand up a modern, confident nation when you do not allow people to voice their legitimate criticisms." Watch excerpts from Bush speech »

Bush gave the speech on democracy in one of the few countries in the region -- the United Arab Emirates -- where democracy has been virtually ignored. In other countries in the region, especially Egypt, the fight between democracy activists and autocratic governments has been much more pointed and controversial.

He called on the Palestinians to reject extremists, although he did not mention the Islamic radical group Hamas, which has gained control of Gaza. And he said the Iranian government in Tehran should make itself accountable to its people.

"Iran's actions threaten the security of nations everywhere," Bush said. "So the United States is strengthening our long-standing security commitments with our friends in the Gulf, and rallying friends around the world to confront this danger before it is too late."

Bush spoke at the Emirates Palace, at an opulent, gold-trimmed hotel where a suite goes for $2,450 a night. Built at a cost of $3 billion, the hotel is a kilometer long from end to end and has a 1.3 kilometer white sand beach -- every grain of it imported from Algeria, according to Steven Pike, a spokesman at the U.S. Embassy here. Half the audience was dressed in western attire and the other half in Arabic clothes -- white robes and headdresses for men and black abayas, many with jeweled edges, for women. Bush said advancing democracy and freedom is the core of his administration's foreign policy and critical to U.S. security.

"The United States has no desire for territory. We seek our shared security in your liberty. We believe that stability can only come through a free and just Middle East where the extremists are marginalized," the president said.

He noted democratic reform in Iraq. "You have made your choice for democracy and have stood firm," Bush said, speaking to the Iraqi people. "The terrorists and extremists cannot prevail." Watch report on the state of democracy in the United Arab Emirates. »

Making an equally direct appeal to the Palestinians, Bush said "The dignity and sovereignty that is your right is within your reach."

In renewing his "Freedom Agenda" -- Bush's grand ambition to seed democracy around the globe -- he declared that "democracy is the only form of government that treats individuals with the dignity and equality that is their right."

"We know from experience that democracy is the only system of government that yields lasting peace and stability," he added.

Yet he was speaking about democracy in a deeply undemocratic country, the Emirates, where an elite of royal rulers makes virtually all the decisions. Large numbers of foreign resident workers have few legal or human rights, including no right to citizenship and no right to protest working conditions.

Some human rights groups have accused the Emirates of tolerating virtual indentured servitude, where workers from poor countries like Sri Lanka are forced to work to pay off debts to employers, and have their passports seized so they can't leave.

Officials in Abu Dhabi and the neighboring emirate of Dubai have said they are taking slow and gradual steps toward reform, both democratic and in labor rights.

In the country's first-ever elections in late 2006, the government hand-picked a group of voters to cast ballots to choose members of a government advisory panel.

But there is little clamor for elections in a wealthy country whose citizens are a privileged minority with access to free housing and lucrative government jobs. Many here say the galloping economy is evidence the government has done a good job.

Earlier Sunday in Bahrain, U.S. Vice Adm. Kevin Cosgriff, commander of the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, which patrols the Gulf, told Bush that he took it "deadly seriously" when an Iranian fleet of high-speed boats on January 6 charged at and threatened to blow up a three-ship U.S. Navy convoy passing near Iranian waters. The Iranian naval forces vanished as the American ship commanders were preparing to open fire.

Bush spoke with Cosgriff after he had a breakfast of pancakes and bacon with troops of the U.S. 5th Fleet based in Bahrain.

In visits over three days in Kuwait, Bahrain and Abu Dhabi, Bush also was urging continued and visible Arab support for fragile peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. Arab backing, and probably funding, is considered essential to make any agreement stick.

www.edition.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/01/13/bush.mideast.speech/index.html

Bibliography

A. Primary Sources

1. International and Regional Documents

Presidential Speeches/ Press Conferences

(2013). Remarks by President Obama after a bilateral meeting with President Hollande of France. President Barack Obama, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, For Immediate Release, 18 June 2013, [Online] <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/18/remarks-president-obama-after-bilateral-meeting-president-hollande-franc> [Accessed 21 August 2013].

(2012). Fact Sheet: Sanctions Related to Iran. President Barack Obama, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, For Immediate Release, 31 July 2012, [Online] <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/07/31 /fact-sheet-sanctions-related-iran> [Accessed 12 November 2012].

(2012). Mitt Romney: Campaign Remarks in Jerusalem. Speeches from the 2012 Presidential Campaign, Jerusalem, Israel, 29 July 2012, [Online] <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/campaign2012/romney/07.29.12.html> [Accessed 07 November 2012].

(2009). Statement from the President on Iran. President Barack Obama, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, For Immediate Release, 20 June 2009, [Online] <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/statement-president-iran> [Accessed 21 August 2013].

(2007). George W. Bush: Iraq & Iran: The President's Press Conference. Manassas, Virginia, 14 February 2007, [Online] <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/02.14.07.html> [Accessed 07 November 2012].

(2007). The Threat of Iran: The President's Press Conference. George W. Bush, Washington, DC , 04 December 2007, [Online] <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/12.04.07.html> [Accessed 07 November 2012].

(2006). Iran & The War on Terror: Address to the Address to the Military Officers Association of America. George W. Bush, Washington, DC, 05 September 2006, [Online] <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/09.05.06.html> [Accessed 07 November 2012].

(2005). The Struggle for Democracy in Iraq: Speech to the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. President Rhetoric, George W. Bush, 12 December 2005, [Online] <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/12.12.05.html> [Accessed 02 January 2015].

(2003). George W. Bush: Remarks at Camp Lejeune, Camp Lejeune, NC 3 April 2003, [Online] <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/04.03.03.html> [Accessed 03 October 2013].

(2003). President Bush Discusses Freedom in Iraq and Middle East. President George W. Bush, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, For Immediate Release, 06 November 2003, [Online] <http://www.georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html> [Accessed 29 July 2013].

(2003). Excerpts on Iraq From Grand Rapids Speech. President George W. Bush, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, For Immediate Release, 29 January 2003, [Online] <http://www.georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030129-2.html> [Accessed 02 January 2015].

(2002). George W. Bush: State of the Union Address. Washington, DC, 29 January 2002, [Online] <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/01.29.02.html> [Accessed 27 November 2012].

Letters and Reports

Armanios, Febe. (2004). Islam: Sunnis and Shiites. CRS Report for Congress, Analyst in Middle East Religions and Cultures Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, Order Code RS21745, 23 February 2004, [Online] <http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/testimony/337.pdf> [Accessed 06 November 2012].

Baker, James. Hamilton, Lee. (2006). The Iraq Study Group Report. United States Institute of Peace, Letter from the Co-Chairs, November 2006, [Online] <http://www.usip.org/isg/iraq_study_group_report/report/1206/index.html> [Accessed 20 January 2015].

Gertz, Bill. (2013). Pentagon Report: Iranian Intelligence linked to Spying, Terror Attacks: Iran Spy Network 30,000 Strong. The Washington Free Beacon, 03 January 2013, [Online] <http://www.freebeacon.com/iran-spy-network-30000-strong/> [Accessed 04 January 2013].

Katzman, Kenneth. (2014). Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses. CRS Report for Congress, [Online] <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL32048.pdf> [Accessed 25 December 2014].

Katzman, Kenneth. (2010). Iran-Iraq Relations. CRS Report for Congress, [Online] <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/142761.pdf> [Accessed 26 April2012].

Katzman, Kenneth. (2008). Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses. CRS Report for Congress, 06 May 2008, [Online] <http://www.parstimes.com/history/crs_may 2_08.pdf> [Accessed 20 January 2015].

Katzman, Kenneth. (2004). Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses, CRS Report for Congress, [Online] <http://www.parstimes.com/history/crs_july04.pdf> [Accessed 30 November 2010].

Katzman, Kenneth. (2003). Iran: Current Developments and U.S. Policy, CRS Report for Congress, [Online] <http://www.fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/20242.pdf> [Accessed 07 January 2011].

Kemp, Geoffrey. (2005). Iran and Iraq: The Shia Connection, Soft Power, and the Nuclear Factor, Iraq and its Neighbours, United States Institute of Peace, Special Report 156, pp. 1-20, [Online] <http://dspace.cigilibrary.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/15049/1/ Iran%20and%20Iraq%20The%20Shia%20Connection%20Soft%20Power%20and%20 the%20Nuclear%20Factor.pdf?1> [Accessed 04 July 2013].

Lowe, Robert. Spencer, Claire. (2006). Iran, its Neighbours and the Region. A Middle East Programme Report, Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, pp. 1-50, [Online] <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research /Middle%20East/iran0806.pdf> [Accessed 09 January 2015].

Petraeus, David. (2007). Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq. Commander, Multi-National Force-Iraq, pp. 1-9, [Online] <http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/Petraeus-Testimony20070910.pdf> [Accessed 23 February 2012].

Rice, Condoleezza. (2007). Remarks on the U.S. Department of State's Annual Report on International Religious Freedom. U.S Department of State, Diplomacy in Action, 14 August 2008, [Online] <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2007/09/92113.htm> [Accessed 04 January 2015].

Zweiri, Mahjoub. (2012). Iranian-Saudi Relations and Region's Hot Files. Aljazeera Center For Studies, Reports, 09 May 2012, [Online] <http://studies.aljazeera.net/reports/ 2012/05/20125983013255262.htm> [Accessed 20 October 2015].

(2013). Country Reports on Terrorism: Terrorism and Patterns of Global Terrorism. U.S. Department of State, Diplomacy in Action, [Online] <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/ rls/crt/> [Accessed 19 March 2013].

(2012). U.S. Department of State: Diplomacy in Action. Strategic Assessment, Chapter 1, Office of the Coordinator for counterterrorism, Country Reports on Terrorism, 30 May 2013, [Online] <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2012/209978.htm> [Accessed 31 May 2013].

(2012). World Oil Transit Chokepoints. U.S. Energy Information Administration, eia, Full report, 22 August 2012, [Online] <http://www.eia.gov/countries/Analysis briefs/World_Oil_Transit_Chokepoints/wotc.pdf> [Accessed 21 August 2013].

(2010). National Security Strategy. The White House, Washington, During Presidency of Barack Obama, May 2010, [Online] <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/ files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf> [Accessed 19 May 2015].

(2006). Recognizing Iran as a Strategic Threat: An Intelligence Challenge for the United States. Staff Report of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Subcommittee on Intelligence Policy, 23 August 2006, [Online] <http://www.fas.org/ irp/congress/2006_rpt/hpsci082306.pdf> [Accessed 03 November 2012].

(2004). Country Reports on Terrorism 2004. US Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Released April 2005, pp.1-129, [Online] <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/45313.pdf> [Accessed 04 October 2013].

(1987). Government and Politics. The Library of Congress Country Studies, Pars Times, Greater Iran and Beyond, [Online] <http://www.parstimes.com/history/government _politics.html> [Accessed 04 November 2012].

(1983). Marines Barracks Beirut 1983 Bombing: Defense Department Report. Report of the Department of Defence and other Security Agencies, Commission on Beirut International Airport National Archive Records and Administration and Presidential Libraries of the United States, Terrorist Act, 20 December 1983, [Online] <http://www.paperlessarchives.com/FreeTitles/Beirut1983BombingDoDReport.pdf> [Accessed 25 June 2013].

Senate/ Congressional Testimonies

Addis, Casey. Blanchard, Christopher. (2010). Hezbollah: Background and Issues for Congress. Congressional Research Service, [Online] <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/ mideast/R41446.pdf> [Accessed 24 January 2011].

Addis, Casey. Blanchard, Christopher. Katzman, Kenneth. Migdalovitz, Carol. Nichol, Jim. Sharp, Jeremy. Zanotti, Jim. (2010). Iran: Regional Perspectives and U.S. Policy. Congressional Research Service, [Online] < http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/

R40849.pdf> [Accessed 03 July 2013].

Blair, C. Dennis. (2010). Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Directore of National Intelligence, Statement for the Record, 02 February 2010, pp. 1-46, [Online] <http://www.intelligence.senate.gov/100202/blair.pdf> [Accessed 07 July 2013].

Byman, Daniel. (2012). Iran's Support for Terrorism in the Middle East. Prepared Testimony, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 25 July 2012, [Online] <http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/testimony/2012/7/25%20iran%20terrorism%20byman/25%20iran%20terrorism%20byman.pdf> [Accessed 01 September 2013].

Feltman, Jeffrey. Benjamin, Daniel. (2010). Assessing the Strength of Hizballah. Testimony before the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Washington, DC, 08 June 2010, [Online] <http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rm/142857.htm> [Accessed 04 October 2013].

Hoffman, Bruce. (2006). Combating Al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat. Testimony presented to the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, The RAND Corporation, p. 1-16, 16 February 2006, [Online] <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2006/RAND_CT255.pdf> [Accessed 17 January 2015].

Levitt, Matthew. (2014). Iran's Support for Terrorism Worldwide. The Washington Institute, Congressional Testimony, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Policy Analysis, 03 March 2014, [Online] <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/Irans-support-for-terrorism-worldwide> [Accessed 16 June 2014].

Levitt, Matthew. (2013). Threat to the Homeland: Iran's Extending Influence in the Western Hemisphere. The Washington Institute, Congressional Testimony, House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency, 09 July 2013, [Online] <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/threat-to-the-homeland-irans-extending-influence-in-the-western-hemisphere> [Accessed 01 September 2013].

Levitt, Matthew. (2012). Iran's Support for Terrorism in the Middle East. The Washington Institute, Congressional Testimony, U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Near Eastern and Central Asian Affairs, 25 July 2012, [Online] <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/irans-support-for-terrorism-in-the-middle-east> [Accessed 14 August 2012].

Levitt, Matthew. (2012). Iran's Support for Terrorism in the Middle East. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Testimony of Dr. Matthew Levitt, director, Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 25 July 2012, [Online] <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/testimony/LevittTestimony20120725.pdf> [Accessed 16 December 2012].

Negroponte, John. (2006). Annual Threat Assessment of the Director of National Intelligence. Testimony to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 2 February 2006, p. 11, [Online] <http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2006_hr/020206negroponte.pdf> [Accessed 14 March 2013].

(2005). DCI Testimony: Global Intelligence Challenges 2005. Global Intelligence Challenges 2005: Meeting Long-Term Challenges with a Long-Term Strategy, Testimony of Director of Central Intelligence Porter J. Goss Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (as prepared for delivery), Speeches & Testimony, 16 February 2005, [Online] <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/2005/Goss_testimony_02162005.html> [Accessed 06 March 2013].

Press Briefings/ Interviews

Abizaid, P. John. (2006). United States Central Command Posture for 2006. Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 16 March 2006, pp. 1-60, [Online] <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/congress/2006_hr/060316-abizaid.pdf> [Accessed 21 August 2013].

Barnes, Julian. Entous, Adam. (2013). Panetta: Iranian Threat Spreads. The Wall Street Journal, 01 February 2013, [Online] <http://www.online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323926104578278231369164640.html> [Accessed 02 February 2013].

Burke, Jason. (2011). Riyadh will build nuclear weapons if Iran gets them, Saudi prince warns. The Guardian, 29 June 2011, [Online] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/29/saudi-build-nuclear-weapons-iran> [Accessed 11 March 2013].

Duguid, Gordon. (2010). Syrian Diplomat Summoned to Department. U.S. Department of State, Press Statement, Deputy Department Spokesman, Bureau of Public Affairs, Washington, DC, 19 April 2010, [Online] <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/04/140528.htm> [Accessed 02 March 2013].

Levitt, Matthew. (2014). If You Don't Understand Our Commitment to Iran, You Don't Understand Hezbollah. The Washington Institute, Improving the Quality of U.S. Middle East Policy, Interviews and Presentations, Policy Analysis, 13 February 2014, [Online] <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/if-you-dont-understand-our-commitment-to-iran-you-dont-understand-hezbollah> [Accessed 11 August 2014].

Levitt, Matthew. (2013). Hezbollah Ready to Do Whatever Iran Asks in Support of 'Shadow War with the West'. The Washington Institute, Improving the Quality of U.S. Middle East Policy, Interviews and Presentations, Policy Analysis, 24 October 2013, [Online]

<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/hezbollah-ready-to-do-whatever-iran-asks-in-support-of-shadow-war-with-the [Accessed 07 February 2014].

(2010). Media Availability with Secretary Gates and Israeli Defense Minister Barak from the Pentagon. U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), 27 April 2010, [Online] <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4616> [Accessed 25 February 2013].

(2007). Iran: Briefing and Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, One Hundred Tenth Congress, First Session, Serial No. 110-3, 11-31 January 2007, [Online] <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/congress/2007_hr/070131-transcript.pdf> [Accessed 4 November 2012].

National Security Archives

Burns, Nicholas. (2005). U.S. Policy Toward Iran. Johns Hopkins University Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, The Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC, 30 November 2005, [Online] <http://www.parstimes.com/news/archive/2005/state/us_policy_iran.html> [Accessed 20 January 2015].

Cilluffo, Frank. (2013). Cyber Threats from China, Russia and Iran: Protecting American Critical Infrastructure. U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies, Homeland Security Policy Institute, The George Washington University, the National Security Archive Website, 20 March 2013, [Online] <http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/Meehan_Cilluffo%20Testimony%20March%202013.pdf> [Accessed 12 April 2013].

(2013). Iran: A Timeline of Sanctions. The Israel Project, Archives, Facts for a better Future, 05 January 2013, [Online] <http://www.theisraelproject.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=ewJXKcOUJlIaG&b=7712195&ct=11576561&notoc=1#.UK1N5eTZbAn> [Accessed 16 February 2013].

(2011). Iran Threatens Israel, Europe with new Missiles. The Israel Project, Archives, Facts for a better Future, 29 June 2011, [Online] <http://www.theisraelproject.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=hsJPK0PIJpH&b=689705&ct=10890197> [Accessed 16 February 2013].

(2011). The Threat of Iranian Missile Development and Export. The Israel Project, Archives, Facts for a better Future, 07 September 2011, [Online] <http://www.theisraelproject.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=ewJXKcOUJlIaG&b=7737551&ct=11145537#.UUyRMRwvloF> [Accessed 22 March 2013].

(2006). Israel Committed War Crimes. Al Jazeera Television Network, [Online] <http://www.web.archive.org/web/20070816190956/http://englishaljazeera.net/English/archive/ArchiveId=35357> [Accessed 14 October 2008].

(2004). Baghdad Operations Center. U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Declassified by uc/baw 60324, ON 05-21-2009, the National Security Archive Website 11 June 2004, [Online] <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB418/docs/10%20-%20FBI%20interview%20with%20Saddam%20Hussein%206-11-04.pdf> [Accessed 12 April 2013].

Other International and Regional Documents

Al-Attaway, Nafie. (2011). The Role of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards in Assassinations and Bombings in Iraq. 12 October 2011, [Online] <http://arabelites.com/vb/archive/index.php/t-13841.html> [Accessed 17 December 2012].

Bruno, Greg. (2011). State Sponsors: Iran. Council on Foreign Relations, 13 October 2011, [Online] <http://www.cfr.org/iran/state-sponsors-iran/p9362> [Accessed 04 November 2012].

Chipman, John. (2010). Iran's Ballistic Missile Capabilities: A Net Assessment, The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Dossier, London, Press Statement, 10 May 2010, [Online] <http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-dossiers/irans-ballistic-missile-capabilities/press-statement/> [Accessed 11 March 2013].

Crawford, Neta. (2013). Civilian Death and Injury in the Iraq War, 2003-2013. Costs of War, Boston University, March 2013, pp. 1-18, [Online] <http://costsofwar.org/sites/all/themes/costsofwar/images/Civilian_Death.pdf> [Accessed 31 January 2015].

Hanlon, Michael. Livingston, Ian. (2013). Iraq Index. Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq. Brookings, Quality, Independence, Impact, July 2013, pp. 1-13, [Online] <http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/centers/saban/iraq%20index/index20130726.pdf> [Accessed 31 January 2015].

Hanlon, Michael. Livingston, Ian. (2011). Iraq Index. Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq. Brookings, Quality, Independence, Impact, 30 November 2011, pp. 1-34, [Online] <http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/centers/saban/iraq%20index/index20111130.pdf> [Accessed 31 January 2015].

Hanlon, Michael. Livingston, Ian. (2010). Iraq Index. Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq. Brookings, Quality, Independence, Impact, 30 June 2010, pp. 1-46, [Online] <http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/centers/saban/iraq%20index/index20100630> [Accessed 31 January 2015].

Hanlon, Michael. Campbell, Jason. (2008). Iraq Index. Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq. Brookings, Quality, Independence, Impact, 28 September 2008, pp.1-67, [Online] <http://iraqslogger.powweb.com/downloads/Brookings_Iraq_Index.pdf> [Accessed 31 January 2015].

Hanlon, Michael. Campbell, Jason. (2007). Iraq Index. Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq. The Brookings Institution, 01 October 2007, pp.1-65, [Online] <http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/iraq/index.pdf> [Accessed 25 January 2015].

Levitt, Matthew. (2015). Iranian and Hezbollah Threats to Saudi Arabia: Past Precedents. The Washington Institute, Policy Analysis, Policy Watch 2426, 19 May 2015, [Online] <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/iranian-and-hezbollah-threats-to-saudi-arabia-past-precedents> [Accessed 25 May 2015].

Rogers, Paul. (2015). The United States and Iran: A Complex Relationship. Oxford Research Group (ORG), Building Bridges for Global Security, Monthly Global Security Briefings, 10 March 2015, pp. 1-4, [Online] <http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/sites/default/files/ORGMar15TheUSandIranComplexRelationship_0.pdf> [Accessed 23 March 2015].

Rogers, Paul. (2009). Global Security after the War on Terror. Oxford Research Group (ORG), Briefing Paper, November 2009, pp. 1-17, [Online] < http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/sites/default/files/GSAWTNov2009.pdf> [Accessed 23 March 2015].

(2015). UN Report: Iran Arming Houthis Since 2009. Middle East Monitor (MEM), 01 May 2015, [Online] <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/americas/18380-un-report-iran-arming-houthis-since-2009> [Accessed 02 May 2015].

(2014). The public record of violent deaths following the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Iraq Body Count, Documented Civilian Deaths from Violence, 04 March 2014, [Online] <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/> [Accessed 11 December 2014].

(2009). Dealing with Today's Asymmetric Threat to U.S. and Global Security, Symposium Two: Soft Power. International Inc (CACI) and the United States Naval Institute (USNI), February 2009, [Online] <http://www.asymmetricthreat.net/docs/asymmetric_threat_2_paper.pdf> [Accessed 23 February 2015].

(1992). Country Studies: Saudi Arabia -- Shiite. U.S. Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, [Online] <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/satoc.html> [Accessed 30 November 2012].

(1992). Country Studies: Saudi Arabia -- Threats to Internal Security. U.S. Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, [Online] <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/satoc.html> [Accessed 30 November 2012].

2. The Iranian Administration Documents

Political and Clerical Elites Speeches/ Press Conferences

Charbonneau, Louis. (2012). In New York, defiant Ahmadinejad says Israel will be "eliminated". Reuters, U.N. General Assembly, 24 September 2012, [Online] <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/24/us-un-assembly-ahmadinejad-idUSBRE88N0HF20120924> [Accessed 09 November 2012].

(2010). Ahmadinejad's speech at South Lebanon. Aljazeera TV Mubasher, Farsi language, (13 October 2010) [Online] <http://mubasher.aljazeera.net/> [Accessed 04 April 2013].

(2009). Khamenei, Ali's speech in the ceremony reviving world Jerusalem Day and solidarity with the oppressed Palestinian people. Video-Archives of Iran, Arabic language, (23 February 2009) [Online] <http://www.irannegah.com/> [Accessed 18 February 2013].

(2006). Speech of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei of a memorial ceremony marking the 17th anniversary of the departure of Ayatollah Khamenei. (05 June 2006) [Online] <http://www.theodoresworld.net/archives/2006/06/ayatollah_ali_khamenei_say_wha.html> [Accessed 09 January 2015].

Letters and Reports

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2013/88], (12 February 2013)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2010/634], (10 December 2010)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2010/188], (13 April 2010)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2010/172], (26 March 2010)

Letter from Israel's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2009/574], (05 November 2009)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2008/776], (10 December 2008)

Letter from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Iran's Permanent Mission to the UN, [S/2008/643], (10 October 2008)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2008/599], (09 September 2008)

Letter from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Iran's Permanent Mission to the UN, [S/2008/554],

(15 August 2008)

Letter from Israel's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2008/482], (22 July 2008)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2008/397], (17 June 2008)

Letter from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the UN, [S/2008/393], (16 June 2008)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2008/377], (06 June 2008)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2008/203], (24 March 2008)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2008/138], (27 February 2008)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2008/116], (22 February 2008)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2008/117], (19 February 2008)

Letter from Israel's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2008/110], (19 February 2008)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2007/692], (30 November 2007)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2007/378], (21 June 2007)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2007/355], (13 June 2007)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2007/354], (11 June 2007)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2007/343], (01 June 2007)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2007/342], (01 June 2007)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2007/341], (01 June 2007)

Letter from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Iran's Permanent Mission to the UN, [S/2007/180], (29 March 2007)

Letter from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Iran's Permanent Mission to the UN, [S/2007/28], (19 Janurary 2007)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2007/765], (01 January 2007)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2006/1024], (23 December 2006)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2006/1008], 919 December 2006)

Letter from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the UN, [S/2006/985], (07 December 2006)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2006/806], (11 October 2006)

Letter from France's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2006/521], (13 July 2006)

Letter from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the UN, [S/2006/305], (18 May 2006)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2006/273], (27 April 2006)

Letter from Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, [S/2006/178], (17 March 2006)

Other Iran's Documents

McDowall, Angus. (2012). Yemen security chief tells Iran to stop backing rebels. Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, 10 December 2012, [Online] < http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/terrorism-a-fundamentalism/12504yemen-security-chief-tells-iran-to-stop-backing-rebels> [Accessed 12 December 2012].

Yaqubi, S. (2009). The Foreign Policy of Islamic Revolution of Iran During Constructiveness Period. Tehran: The Center For Islamic Revolution Of Iran.

(1989). The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Pars Times, Centre Iran and Beyond, Constitution Review Council, Last amended in 1989, [Online] <http://www.en.parliran.ir/index.aspx?siteid=84&pageid=3053> [Accessed 04 November 2012].

3. United Nations Documents

United Nations Security Council Resolutions

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2049 (07 June 2012)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1984 (09 June 2011)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1929 (09 June 2010)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1887 (24 September 2009)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1835 (27 Sebtember 2008)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1803 (3 March 2008)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1747 (24 March 2007)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1737 (23 December 2006)

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1696 (31 July 2006)

(2010). Twelfth semi-annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004). United Nations Security Council, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Reports of the Secretary-General, 18 October 2010, [Online] <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unifil/reports.shtml> [Accessed 27 February 2013].

United Nations Security Council Presidential Statements

UN Document [S/PRST/2006/15], the 5403rd meeting (29 March 2006)

United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committee Documents

UN Document [S/2013/53], pursuant to resolution 1737 (25 January 2013)

UN Document [S/2012/521], pursuant to resolution 1929 and 2049 (05 July 2012)

UN Document [S/2012/395], note by the President of the Security Council (04 June 2012)

(2011). Security Council Committee on Iran Sanctions Reports New Violations as Members Urge Diplomatic Solution. UN, SC/10292, Reports of International Atomic Energy Agency, Expert Panel Win Praise, 23 June 2011, [Online] <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sc10292.doc.htm> [Accessed 17 March 2013].

UN Document [S/2009/688], pursuant to resolution 1737 (31 December 2009)

UN Document [S/2008/839], pursuant to resolution 1737 (31 December 2008)

UN Document [S/2007/780], pursuant to resolution 1737 (31 December 2007)

United Nations Security Council Meeting Records

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6930th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6930], (06 March 2013)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6888th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6888], (13 December 2012)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6839th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6839], (20 September 2012)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6786th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6786], (12 June 2012)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6737th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6737], (21 March 2012)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6734th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6734], (12 March 2012)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6706th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6706], (24 January 2012)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6706th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6706, Resumption 1], (24 January 2012)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6697th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6697], (21 December 2011)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6607th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6607], (07 September 2011)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6563th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6563], (23 June 2011)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6552th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6552], (09 June 2011)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6502th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6502], (22 March 2011)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6442th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6442], (10 December 2010)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6384th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6384],

(15 September 2010)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6344th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6344], (28 June 2010)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6280th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6280], (04 March 2010)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6235th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6235], (10 December 2009)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6142th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6142], (15 June 2009)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6090th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6090], (10 March 2009)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 6036th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.6036], (10 December 2008)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 5973th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.5973], (11 September 2008)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 5909th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.5909], (13 June 2008)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 5853th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.5853], (17 March 2008)

Meeting Record of the UN Security Council's 5848th Meeting, [UN Document S/PV.5848], (03 March 2008)

United Nations Security Council Press Statements

Press statement by the UN Security Council on attacks against United Kingdom, [UN Document SC/10463], (29 November 2011)

Security Council press statement on the terrorist attacks in Iran, [UN Document SC/9986], (16 July 2010)

(2005). Syria's Withdrawal from Lebanon 'Historical Day' for Middle East: Special Envoy

Terje Roed-Larsen Tells Security Coubcil. Security Council 5172nd Meeting (AM), 29/04/2005, Press Release SC/8372, [Online] <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/sc8372.doc.htm> [Accessed 17 April 2012].

United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

UN Documents for Iran, [Report on the application of safeguards on Iran, S/2013/103], (21 February 2013)

UN Documents for Iran, [Implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement and relevant provisions of UN Security Council resolutions on Iran, GOV/2012/50], (13 September 2012)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, S/2012/677], (30 August 2012)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2012/23], (25 May 2012)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2012/9], (24 February 2012)

UN Documents for Iran, [A resolution from the board of governors on Iran, GOV/2011/69], (18 November 2011)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2011/65], (08 November 2011)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2011/54], (02 September 2011)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2011/29], (24 May 2011)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2011/7], (01 January 2011)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2010/62], (23 November 2010)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2010/46], (06 September 2010)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2010/28], (31 May 2010)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2010/10], (18 February 2010)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/INF/2010/2], (10 February 2010)

UN Documents for Iran, [Letter from the Secretary-General on Iran, S/2009/633], (7 December 2009)

UN Documents for Iran, [Resolution on Iran's obligations and cooperate with the IAEA, GOV/2009/82], (27 November 2009)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2009/74], (16 November 2009)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2009/55], (28 August 2009)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2009/35], (05 June 2009)

UN Documents for Iran, [Joint statement of the E3+3 to the IAEA on the Iran nuclear issue, INFCIRC/749], (12 March 2009)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on implementation of Iran safeguards and relevant Council resolutions, GOV/2008/59], (19 November 2008)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2008/38], (15 September 2008)

UN Documents for Iran, [Statement on Iran's Nuclear Issue, INFCIRC/733], (01 August 2008)

UN Documents for Iran, [Iran offers package of proposals for constructive negotiation, INFCIRC/729], (16 June 2008)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2008/15], (26 May 2008)

UN Documents for Iran, [Statement of the E3+3 concerning UN Security Council resolution 1803 (2008), INFCIRC/723], (05 March 2008)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2008/4], (01 January 2008)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2007/58], (15 November 2007)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement with Iran, GOV/2007/48], (30 August 2007)

UN Documents for Iran, [The Iran-IAEA work plan to resolve all outstanding issues, INFCIRC/711], (27 August 2007)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and Relevant Provisions of Security Council Resolutions on Iran, GOV/2007/22], (23 May 2007)

UN Documents for Iran, [Report on the implementation of the safeguards agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolution 1737 (2006) in Iran, S/2007/100], (22 February 2007)

UN Documents for Iran, [The corrigendum of an IAEA report, GOV/2007/48/Corr.1], (01 January 2007)

UN Documents for Iran, [Iran's compliance with resolution 1737, GOV/2007/8], (01 January 2007)

UN Documents for Iran, [Cooperation between Iran and the IAEA in light of resolution 1737, GOV/2007/7], (01 January 2007)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report on continuation in enrichment related activities of Iran, GOV/2006/64], (14 November 2006)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report on Iran's implementation of the Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons safeguards agreement, S/2006/702], (31 August 2006)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2006/53], (31 August 2006)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report on Iran's continuation to enrich uranium and its nuclear activities, GOV/2006/38], (08 June 2006)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report to the Security Council on Iran's implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement, S/2006/270], (28 April 2006)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2006/27], (28 April 2006)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report on ambiguity of Iran's nuclear activities, GOV/2006/15], (27 February 2006)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report on steps for re-establishing confidence Between Iran and the UN Security Council around the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme, GOV/2006/14], (04 February 2006)

UN Documents for Iran, [A communication from France, Germany and the UK, regarding Iran's resumption of nuclear activities, INFCIRC/662], (18 January 2006)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2005/87], (18 November 2005)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report on Iran's refusal to suspend all enrichment related activities, GOV/2005/77], (24 September 2005)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2005/67], (02 September 2005)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report on Iran's continuation in violation previous IAEA Board resolutions and Security Council resolution 1696, GOV/2005/64], (11 August 2005)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report on implementation of Iran's decision related to extend its suspension of all uranium enrichment and related activities, GOV/2004/90], (29 November 2004)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report identifies fifteen failures by Iran in meeting its obligations under its safeguards agreement since 1985 and describes how Iran had repeatedly misled the international community about its enrichment programme, GOV/2004/83], (15 November 2004)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2004/79], (18 September 2004)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report on Proposed amendments by Malaysia, Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), to the draft resolution submitted by France, Germany and the United Kingdom, GOV/2004/78], (17 September 2004)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2004/60], (01 September 2004)

UN Documents for Iran, [The corrigendum of an IAEA report, GOV/2004/34/Corr.1], (18 June 2004)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report on the lack of Iranian cooperation and Iran's failure to respect its international commitments, GOV/2004/49], (18 June 2004)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2004/34], (01 June 2004)

UN Documents for Iran, [A resolution from the IAEA board, GOV/2004/21], (13 March 2004)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2004/11], (24 February 2004)

UN Documents for Iran, [A resolution from the IAEA board, GOV/2003/81], (26 November 2003)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA Report on Iran, GOV/2003/75], (10 November 2003)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report on Iran's nuclear activities related to suspend all further uranium enrichment, GOV/2003/69], (12 September 2003)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report on the presence of high enriched uranium in Iran since 1980s without declaring it to the IAEA, GOV/2003/63], 26 August 2003)

UN Documents for Iran, [IAEA report on Iran about violation of its safeguards agreement, GOV/2003/40], (06 June 2003)

Other International Law Related Documents

Albright, David; Avagyan, Robert. (2012). New Phase of Suspect Activity at Parchin Site. Institute for Security and International Security (ISIS), ISIS Imagery Brief, 24 August 2012, [Online] <http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/Parchin_test_site_24Aug2012.pdf> [Accessed 11 March 2013].

Albright, David; Brannan, Paul. (2006). ISIS Imagery Brief: IAEA Inspectors and Iran Clash Over Frequency of Inspections of Underground Facilities. The Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), 23August 2006, [Online] <http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/imagerybrief23august2006.pdf> [Accessed 11 March 2013].

Albright, David; Hinderstein, Corey. (2004). Parchin: Possible Nuclear Weapons- Related Site in Iran. Institute for Security and International Security (ISIS), ISIS Reports, 15 September 2004, [Online] <http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/parchin-possible-nuclear-weapons-related-site-in-iran/8#images> [Accessed 10 March 2013].

Albright, David; Hinderstein, Corey. (2003). The Iranian Gas Centrifuge Uranium Enrichment Plant at Natanz: Drawing from Commercial Satellite Images. Institute for Security and International Security (ISIS), ISIS Reports, 14 March 2003 [Online] <http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/the-iranian-gas-centrifuge-uranium-enrichment-plant-at-natanz-drawing-from-/8#images> [Accessed 10 March 2013].

(2013). Iran. The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, Overview Last Updated in February 2013 [Online] <http://www.nti.org/country-profiles/iran/> [Accessed 11 March 2013].

(2013). Iran: ISIS Reports with Imagery. The International Institute for Strategic Studies (ISIS), From 12 December 2002 To 30 January 2013, [Online] <http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/imagery/category/iran/> [Accessed 16 March 2013].

(2012). Iran: New EU Sanctions Target Sources of Finance for Nuclear Programme. Council of the European Union, EN, Brussels, 5457/12, Presse 10, 23 January 2012, [Online] <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/127444.pdf> [Accessed 17 March 2013].

(2011). Joint Communique: 21st EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting, Abu Dhabi. European Union and United Nations, Partnership in Action, 20 April 2011, [Online] <http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/articles/fr/article_10970_fr.htm> [Accessed 24 November 2012].

(2011). New Satellite Imagery of Iranian Nuclear Sites on Google Earth. ISISN Nuclear Iran, 11 October 2011, [Online] <http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/New_Satellite_ Imagery_of_Iranian_Nuclear_Sites_on_Google_Earth_11October2011.pdf> [Accessed 10 March 2013].

(2011). Highlights from David Albright's talk on Iran's nuclear program at George Washington University. Conferences, Videos & Testimony, Institute for Security and International Security (ISIS), 21 October 2011, [Online] <http://isis-online.org/conferences/detail/highlights-from-david-albrights-talk-on-irans-nuclear-program-at-george-was/8> [Accessed 10 March 2013].

(2010). Ministers Urge Serious Steps to End Long-Standing Conflicts, Support: For Peace Processes, as General Assembly's Annual Debate Continues. UN, Sixty-fifth General Assembly, GA/11005, 28 September 2010, [Online] <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/ga11005.doc.htm> [Accessed 28 February 2010].

(2009). Video Tour of Iranian Nuclear Sites. Institute for Security and International Security (ISIS), ISIS Reports, 10 April 2009, [Online] <http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/video-tour-of-iranian-nuclear-sites/8#images> [Accessed 10 March 2013].

(2007) Selected Other UN Documents for Iran [Report to reparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, NPT/CONF.2010/PC.I/14], (09 May 2007)

(2007) Selected Other UN Documents for Iran [Report to reparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, NPT/CONF.2010/PC.I/13], (09 May 2007)

(2007). Iran's Nuclear Program: Status and Uncertainties. Prepared testimony by David Albright, President, Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, Subcommittee on the Middle East and Asia, 15 March 2007, [Online] <http://isis-online.org/uploads/conferences/documents/HCFA_Albright_Testimony_15March2007.pdf> [Accessed 11 March 2013].

(2006). ISIS Imagery Brief: New Satellite Image of the Natanz Uranium Enrichment Complex in Iran. Institute for Security and International Security (ISIS), ISIS Reports, 13 January 2006 [Online] <http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/new-satellite-image-of-the-natanz-uranium-enrichment-complex-in-iran/8#images> [Accessed 10 March 2013].

(2005). Iran Constructing the 40 MW Heavy Water Reactor at Arak Despite Calls Not to Do So by the European Union and the IAEA Board of Governors. Institute for Security and International Security (ISIS), ISIS Reports, 04 March 2005, [Online] <http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/iran-constructing-the-40-mw-heavy-water-reactor-at-arak-despite-calls-not-t/8#images> [Accessed 10 March 2013].

(2005). New Satellite Images Show Tunnel Construction at Esfahan Facility in Iran. Institute for Security and International Security (ISIS), ISIS Reports, 17 February 2005, [Online] <http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/new-satellite-images-show-tunnel-construction-at-esfahan-facility-in-iran/8#images> [Accessed 10 March 2013].

(2005). ISIS Imagery Brief: Kalaye Electric. Institute for Security and International Security (ISIS), ISIS Reports, 31 March 2005, [Online] <http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/isis-imagery-brief-kalaye-electric/8#images> [Accessed 10 March 2013].

(2005). Tunnel Entrance to the Underground Facilities at Natanz, Iran. Institute for Security and International Security (ISIS), ISIS Reports, 02 May 2005, [Online] <http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/tunnel-entrance-to-the-underground-facilities-at-natanz-iran/8#images> [Accessed 10 March 2013].

(2004). ISIS Imagery Brief: Destruction at Iranian Site Raises New Questions About Iran's Nuclear Activities. Institute for Security and International Security (ISIS), ISIS Reports, 17 June 2004, [Online] <http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/isis-imagery-brief-destruction-at-iranian-site-raises-new-questions-about-i/8#images> [Accessed 10 March 2013].

(2003). Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Board of Governors, Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda, GOV/2003/75, Report by the Director General Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, 10 November 2003, [Online] <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2003/gov2003-75.pdf> [Accessed 13 March 2013].

4. Other Primary Sources

Newspapers

Abbas, Thaer. (2015). Lebanese Foreign Minister Says to the Middle East: Arab States Must not Allow for Iranian Expansion. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Thursday, 04 June 2015, No. 13338, [Online] < http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/376826> [Accessed 04 June 2015].

Abdel-Fattah, Sherif. Fakhry, Rifki. (2013). Yemen called Iran to stop its support for rebels. Reuters news agency, 07 February 2013, [Online] <http://ara.reuters.com/article/topNews/idARACAE9B2F4D20130207> [Accessed 07 February 2013].

Abdul Qadir, Syed. (2013). Run by an officer of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard: Details conspiracy against Bahrain. Akhbar Alkhaleej (Gulf News), The first daily newspaper in Bahrain, 20 February 2013, Issue No: 12752, [Online] <http://www.akhbar-alkhaleej.com/12752/article/8805.html> [Accessed 20 February 2013].

Abouzeid, Nahed. (2013). Deadly car bomb blasts hit Shia areas in Baghdad. BCC News, Middle East, 17 February 2013, [Online] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-21489777> [Accessed 18 February 2013].

Abu Shakra, Eyad. (2015). Awaiting the Birth of the Arab Project in the Middle East. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Friday, 27 February 2015, No. 13240 [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/299456> [Accessed 27 February 2015].

Abu Shakra, Eyad. (2014). Differing priorities over Iran's regional position. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Wednesday, 26 November 2014, No. 13147, [Online] <http://www.classic.aawsat.com/leader.asp?section=3&article=795924&issueno=13147#.VHX4OTGUfHU> [Accessed 27 January 2015].

Ahmadinejad, Mahmoud. (2005). Iranian leader Denies. BBC News Channel, 14 December 2005 last undated 13: 50 GMT, [Online] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4527142.stm> [Accessed 24 April 2012].

Al-Abtah, Sawsan. (2015). Dream of ISIS. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, 22 February 2015, [Online] <http://aawsat.com/home/article/295266> [Accessed 22 February 2015].

Al-Fayez, Faisal. (2011). Chairman of the Jordanian parliament: Iranian Crescent .. Became a full moon. AL-Watan, Kuwaiti Newspaper, Monday 04 April 2011, Arabic version, [Online] <http://www.kuwait.tt/ArticleDetails.aspx?Id=101770> [Accessed 04 May 2012].

Al-Habbas, Khalid. (2015). About Iranian Role in the Arab Region. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Monday, 03 March 2015, No. 13243, [Online] <http://aawsat.com/home/article/301646> [Accessed 03 March 2015].

Al-Hamid, Tariq. (2012). The difference between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Wednesday, 18 January 2012, No. 12104, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/leader.asp?section=3&issueno=12104&article=659497> [Accessed 02 May2012].

Al-Hamid, Tariq. (2014). Iran wants the Houthis like Hezbollah. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Tuesday, 21 October 2014, No. 13111, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/205361> [Accessed 21 October 2014].

Al-Hamid, Tariq. (2013). Iran Turned into a Failed State. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Monday, 07 October 2013, No. 12732, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/leader.asp?section=3&article=745845&issueno=12732#.UlM4G1DGrdM> [Accessed 08 October 2013].

Al-Hariri, Saad. (2011). Hariri: Regional Powers Seek to Create Chaos and Political Turmoil in Lebanon. Alwatan, Kuwait's Newspapers. Published: April 08, 2011 [Online] < http://watanpdf.alwatan.com.kw/alwatanPDF/2011-04-08/1.pdf> [Accessed 19 April 2012].

Al-Husseini, Huda. (2015). Iran is determined to reach the nuclear threshold. Asharq Al-Awsat, London, Arabic version, 22 January 2015, No. 13204, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/271271> [Accessed 22 January 2015].

Al-Husseini, Huda. (2015). Hoist the Black Flag to Confront Wilayat Al-Faqih. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Thursday, 26 February 2015, No. 13239, [Online] <http://aawsat.com/home/article/298521> [Accessed 26 February 2015].

Al-Husseini, Huda. (2014). The Permissive approach for Obama encourages Iranian attack on the region. Asharq Al-Awsat, London, Arabic version, 20 November 2014, [Online] < http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/225831> [Accessed 27 November 2014].

Al-Hubail, Mehanna. (2015). Iran will move toward Bahrain after the fall of Yemen. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, 22 January 2015, [Online] <https://www.watan.com/news1/4162> [Accessed 23 January 2015].

Al-Jubeir, Adel. (2016). Is it Possible for Iran to Change. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Wednesday, 20 January 2016, No. 13567, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/548036/> [Accessed 20 January 2016].

Al-Khouri, Rajah. (2015). Messages of Obama and Khamenei: The Area and ISIS. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Saturday, 21 February 2015, No. 13234 [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/294646> [Accessed 21 February 2015].

Al-Marai, Ibrahim. (2016). Iran Is the Exporter for Terrorism in the Region. Sabq, Saudi Arabia Newspaper, Saturday, 02 January 2016, [Online] <https://www.sabq.org/%D8%A2%D9%84, 2016> [Accessed 02 January 2016].

Al-Nahham, Ibrahim. (2011). Iranian interferences in Bahrain's new attempt to clone Wilayat Al-Faqih. AL-Watan, Kuwaiti newspaper, Sunday 20 March 2011, Arabic version, [Online] <http://alwatan.kuwait.tt/ArticleDetails.aspx?Id=97829> [Accessed 05 May 2012].

Al-Na'ami, Saleh. (2015). Deal: Iran's Nuclear Programme in Exchange for American Interests in the Region. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, Arabic version, 03 February 2015, [Online] <https://www.watanserb.com/reports/6835> [Accessed 07 February 2015].

Al-Nefisy, Abdullah. (2015). The American Iranian Deal Includes the Gulf, Iraq and Greater Syria. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, 25 May 2015, [Online] <https://www.watan.com/news1/6463> [Accessed 26 May 2015].

Al-Nefisy, Abdullah. (2014). Iranian Fifth Column: Houthis in Yemen. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, 21 October 2014, [Online] <https://www.watan.com/%D8%B9> [Accessed 01 February 2015].

Al-Oraibi, Mina. (2015). Obama: We are Prepared to Use all Elements of our Power to Secure our Interests in the Middle East. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Wednesday, 13 May 2015, No. 13315, pp. 1-6, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/358881> [Accessed 13 May 2015].

Al- Oraibi, Mina. (2006). Blair: Iran's Support for Terrorism Makes it into Battle. Asharq Al-Awsat, London, (in Arabic), March 22. [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?issueno=9896&article=354295> [Accessed 04 January 2013].

Al-Ouda, Salman. (2015). It Should be Configured a Gulf Front Against Terrorism of Shiite. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, Thursday, 26 February 2015, [Online] <https://www.watan.com/news1/4738> [Accessed 26 February 2015].

Al-Qallab, Saleh. (2015). Iran is Seeking to Borders with Jordan and Completed Shiite Crescent. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Thursday, 19 February 2015, No. 13232 [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/293136> [Accessed 19 February 2015].

Al-Qallab, Saleh. (2015). For this America Became Unreliable for the Arabs. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Thursday, 12 February 2015, No. 13225 [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/287576> [Accessed 12 February 2015].

Al-Qashteni, Khalid. (2015). America is Betting on the New Horse. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Sunday, 15 February 2015, No. 13228, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/289906> [Accessed 15 February 2015].

Al-Quwai'i, Saad. (2011). Hezbollah: The Consecration for Strife and Divisions. Sabq, Saudi Arabia Newspaper. Published: April 02, 2011 [Online] <http://www.sabq.org/VA0aCd> [Accessed 19 April 2012].

Al-Rashed, Abdulrahman. (2015). Iran's Leadership and Rapprochement with the Devil. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Thursday, 12 March 2015, No. 13253, [Online] <http://aawsat.com/home/article/309406> [Accessed 12 March 2015].

Al-Rashed, Abdulrahman. (2015). Is the Camp David Summit a Marketing Tool for the Iran Deal? The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Saturday, 09 May 2015, No. 13311, [Online] < http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/355891> [Accessed 09 May 2015].

Al-Rashed, Abdulrahman. (2015). Iran on Saudi Fronts. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Monday, 03 March 2015, No. 13243, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/301671> [Accessed 03 March 2015].

Al-Rashed, Abdulrahman. (2014). Sunni extremism against Shiite extremism. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Saturday, 08 November 2014, No. 13129 [Online] < http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/217511> [Accessed 08 November 2014].

Al-Sabah, Mohammed. (2011). The expulsion of three Iranian diplomats for their involvement on spy network. AL-Watan Kuwaiti Newspaper, Arabic version, Thursday, 31 March 2011, [Online] <http://www.alwatan.kuwait.tt/articledetails.aspx/resources/resources/media/printarticle.aspx?Id=100665&iYearQuarter=0> [Accessed 06 May 2012].

Al-Salem, Ahmed. (2011). Iran Continues its Assault on the Gulf Cooperation Council States. Alaan, Electronic Newspaper of Kuwait, Arabic version, Thursday, 07 April 2011, [Online] <http://www.alaan.cc/pagedetails.asp?cid=46&nid=71544> [Accessed 05 May 2012].

Al-Sha'er, Sawsan. (2015). The War Between Iran and the Gulf States: Fact or a Potential Scenario. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Wednesday, 11 March 2015, No. 13252, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/308861> [Accessed 11 March 2015].

Al-Suhaimy, Abeed. (2012). Bahrain FM calls for "Friends of the Iranian people Conference", Asharq Alawsat, The Leading Arab International Daily, English Edition, 20 December 2012, [Online] <http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=32246> [Accessed 14 February 2013].

Bayoumy, Yara. Jones, Matthew. (2010). Lebanon President Says Won't Ask Hezbollah to Disarm. Reuters, 08 May 2010, [Online] < http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/05/08/us-lebanon-president-arms-idUSTRE64715V20100508> [Accessed 02 March 2013].

Black, Ian; Tisdall, Simon. (2010). Saudi Arabia urges US attack on Iran to stop nuclear programme, The Guardian, 28 November 2010, [Online] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/28/us-embassy-cables-saudis-iran> [Accessed 31 January 2013].

Borger, Julian. (2009). Iran is continuing nuclear activity, says United Nations watchdog. The Guardian, 28 August 2009, [Online] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/aug/28/iran-nuclear-programme-united-nations> [Accessed 11 March 2013].

Bowen, Jeremy. (2013). New tone, but old differences still separate Iran and West. BBC, News Middle East, 25 September 2013, [Online] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24237745> [Accessed 19 December 2014].

Burns, Robert. (2015). US Officials: Iran Enters Iraqi Fight For Key Oil Refinery. Associated Press, Saturday, 23 May 2015, [Online] <http://www.hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_UNITED_STATES_IRAQ?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT> [Accessed 24 May 2015].

Cagaptay, Soner. Jeffrey, James. Khalaji, Mehdi. (2015). Iran Won't Give up on its Revolution. The New York Times, 26 April 2015, [Online] <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/27/opinion/iran-wont-give-up-on-its-revolution.html?_r=0> [Accessed 28 April 2015].

Charbonneau, Louis. (2015). Britain told U.N. monitors of active Iran nuclear procurement: panel. World, United Nations, Reuters, Thursday, 30 April 2015, [Online] <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/30/us-iran-nuclear-idUSKBN0NL09220150430> [Accessed 01 May 2015].

Ditz, Jason. (2011). US Blames Iranian 'Materials' for Rising Violence in Iraq. 03 July 2011, [Online] <http://www.news.antiwar.com/2011/07/03/us-blames-iranian-materials-for-rising-violence-in-iraq> [Accessed 26 December 2012].

El Madany, Sherine. (2010). Prosecutor Seeks Death Penalty in Egypt Plot Trial. Reuters, 26 January 2010, [Online] <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2010/01/26/idUKLDE60P1Z1> [Accessed 02 March 2013].

Fakhoury, Jalal. (2009). Game theory in international relations. Alrai Website, An Arabic Version, 08 July 2009, [Online] <http://www.alrai.com/article/54842.html> [Accessed 04 September 2013].

Fandy, Mamoun. (2008). "al-'Iraq: Ja'izat al-'Arab al-Kubra [Iraq: The Great Arab Prize]," Asharq Al-Awsat (in Arabic), June 9th. [Online] <http://www.asharqalawsat.com/leader.asp?section=3&issueno=10786&article=474218> [Accessed 25 February 2012].

Fisk, Robert. (2011). Robert Fisk: Iran's war games go underground: World Focus. The Independent, 29 June 2011, [Online] <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/fisk/robert-fisk-irans-war-games-go-underground-2304026.html> [Accessed 11 March 2013].

Freeh, Louis. (2006). Khobar Towers. Wall Street Journal, 23June 2006, [Online] <http://www.online.wsj.com/article/SB115102702568788331.html> [Accessed 01 December 2012].

Freudenheim, Milt. Slavin, Barbara. Rhodenand, William. (1982). The World in Summary: Readjustments in the Mideast, Ney York Times, 28 February 1982, [Online] <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/02/28/weekinreview/the-world-in-summary-readjustments-in-the-mideast.html> [Accessed 24 December 2014].

Gordon, Michael. Shane, Scott. (2007). U.S. Long Worried That Iran Supplied Arms in Iraq. The new York Times, Middle East. Published: March 27, 2007 [Online] <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/27/world/middleeast/27weapons.html? ref=georgewbush&pagewanted=all> [Accessed 08 April 2012].

Gosden, Emily. (2012). Oil prices rise on Iran's threats to cut off Strait of Hormuz. The Telegraph,16 January 2012, [Online] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/oilprices/9018993/Oil-prices-rise-on-Irans-threats-to-cut-off-Strait-of-Hormuz.html> [Accessed 19 May 2012].

Groves, Jason. (2012). Iran trying to build nuclear missiles capable of hitting London, Cameron warns MPs. Mail Online, Wednesday, 07 March 2012, [Online] <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2111307/Iran-trying-build-nuclear-missiles-capable-hitting-London-Cameron-warns-MPs.html> [Accessed 07 June 2012].

Hadi Mansour Abd Rabbu. (2015). Yemen's President: It is Necessary to Stop The Houthis. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Tuesday, 14 April 2015, No. 13286, [Online] <http://aawsat.com/home/article/335866> [Accessed 14 April 2015].

Ibrahim, Alia. Greenberg, Joel. (2010). In Speech in Lebanese Border Town, Ahmadinejad's Fiery Rhetoric Targets Israel. Special to the Washington Post, 14 October 2010, [Online] <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/14/AR2010101406121.html> [Accessed 24 February 2013].

Issacharaoff, Avi. (2009). Peres: Israel Knows Hezbollah Has 80,000 Rockets. Haaretz, 24 August 2009, [Online] <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/peres-israel-knows-hezbollah-has-80-000-rockets-1.282579> [Accessed 22 February 2013].

Jones, Brent. (2007). Iran's spiritual leader backs U.S.-Iraq talks. The Associated Press, 16 May 2007, [Online] <http://www.usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-05-16-iran-us_N.htm> [Accessed 22 August 2013].

Jones, Sam. Kerr, Simeon. (2015). Mystery deepens over Iranian cargo ships en route to Yemen. The Financial Times, Middle East & North Africa, Friday, 22 May 2015, [Online] <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/120e161c-ff1d-11e4-8dd4-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3bFYwSxRQ> [Accessed 25 May 2015].

Kahn, Gabe. (2011). Saudis Threaten Nuclear Arms Race, Again. Israel National News, Sunday, 12 June 2011, [Online] <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/150423#.T7iW1dycBOU> [Accessed 20 May 2012].

Karadsheh, Jomana. Sterling, Joe. (2011). In Iraq, a Popular Cleric Cranks up anti-U.S. Rhetoric. CNN, January 08, 2011, [Online] <http://articles.cnn.com/2011-01-08/world/iraq.sadr_1_al-sadr-mehdi-army-iraqi-flags?_s=PM:WORLD> [Accessed 14 April 2012].

Karimi, Nasser. (2012). Iran urges Hamas to continue fight against Israel. Associated Press, 12 February 2012, [Online] <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/iran-urges-hamas-continue-fight-against-israel> [Accessed 20 December 2012].

Katz, Yaakov. (2010). IDF Names Top Iranian in Charge of Hizbullah. Jerusalem Post, 08 July 2010, [Online] <http://www.jpost.com/IranianThreat/News/Article.aspx?id=180767> [Accessed 24 February 2013].

Keyes, Charley. (2010). Top Israeli official: A nuclear Iran would endanger world stability. CNN, 28 February 2010, [Online] <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/meast/

02/26/israel.iran.nuclear/> [Accessed 15 February 2013].

Krauthammer, Charles. (2015). Iran's emerging empire. The Washington Post, 22 January 2015, [Online] <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/charles-krauthammer-irans-emerging-empire/2015/01/22/c3098336-a269-11e4-903f-9f2faf7cd9fe_story.html> [Accessed 23 January 2015].

Macleod, Hugh. (2010). Hezbollah gives Ahmadinejad a hero's welcome in southern Lebanon. The guardian, 14 October 2010, [Online] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/14/hezbollah-lebanon-ahmadinejad-bint-jbeil> [Accessed 24 February 2013].

Mahfouz, Mohammad. (2006). Dialectics of Ideas and Reality. Al-Riyadh Newspapers, [Online] <http://www.alriyadh.com/2006/06/13/article162470.html> [Accessed 13 February 2012].

Marshall, Tyler. Richter, Paul. (2005). Was Iranian Leader a 1979 Hostage Taker? Washington Presses for Answers about the President-Elect's Role in the Embassy Takeover, Los Angeles Times, 01 July 2005, [Online] <http://articles.latimes.com/2005/jul/01/world/fg-usiran1> [Accessed 06 August 2013].

Meranda, Amnon. (2010). Military Intelligence: Hezbollah Scuds Tip of Iceberg. YNet News, 04 May 2010, [Online] <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3884753,00.html> [Accessed 25 February 2013].

Moughnieh, Sara. (2012). Sayyed Nasrallah on Arbaeen: Our Certainty of this Right Path Is Increasing. Al-Manar, Lebanese Communication Group, 14 January 2012, [Online] <http://www.almanar.com.lb/english/adetails.php?fromval=2&cid=14&frid=23&seccatid=14&eid=41956> [Accessed 04 March 2013).

Murphy, Francois. Nasralla, Shadia. (2015). Iran Had 'Coordinated Effort' Relevant to Atom Bombs: IAEA, Reuters, Wednesday, 02 December 2015, [Online] <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/12/02/us-iran-nuclear-iaea-idUSKBN0TL24G20151202> [Accessed 02 December 2015).

Nemer, Sleman. (2003). Saud Al-Faisal: The Occupation of Iraq Leads to the 4 States of Terrorism. Al-Hayat, Daily Saudi Newspaper, 06 February 2003, No. 14564, [Online] <http://daharchives.alhayat.com/issue_archive/Hayat%20INT/2003> [Accessed 02 February 2015].

Netanyahu, Benjamin. (2012). Iran Nuclear: Israel's Netanyahu Warns on Attack Timing. BBC News Middle East, 9 March 2012 Last undated at 15: 39, [Online] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-17316638> [Accessed 24 April 2012].

Rafsanjani, Ali Akbar Hashemi, (2008). Persian Gulf is the Historical name: Rafsanjani. Tehran Times: 167462, April 30, 2008 [Online] <http://www.old.tehrantimes.com/

index_view.asp?code=167462> [Accessed 19 March 2012].

Ravid, Barak. (2012). Israel ranked alongside Iran as one of countries with most negative global influence. HAARETZ, Israeli Newspaper, Wednesday, 16 may 2012, [Online] <http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/diplomania/israel-ranked-alongside-iran-as-one-of-countries-with-most-negative-global-influence-1.430895> [Accessed 21 may 2012].

Roggio, Bill. (2007). Iran's Ramazan Corps and the Ratlines into Iraq. The long War Journal. A Project of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, December 05, 2007 [Online] <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/12/irans_ramazan_corps.php> [Accessed 08 April 2012].

Rubinstein, Ariel. (2013). How game theory will stop Iranian nukes. Haaretz, 25 April 2013, [Online] <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/magazine/how-game-theory-will-stop-iranian-nukes.premium-1.517550> [Accessed 07 September 2013].

Sandels, Alexandra. (2011). KUWAIT: Court sentences 3 to death for being part of Iranian spy ring. Los Angeles Times, 29 March 2011, [Online] <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2011/03/kuwait-court-sentences-3-to-death-iranian-spy-ring.html> [Accessed 25 April 2011].

Sandels, Alexandra. (2011). KUWAIT, IRAN: Iranian diplomats to be expelled over spy ring row in latest spat in Arab Gulf-Iranian relations. Los Angeles Times, 02 April 2011, [Online] <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2011/04/kuwait-iran-iranian-diplomats-to-be-expelled-over-spy-ring-row-in-latest-blow-to-arab-gulf-persian-r.html> Accessed 25 April 2011].

Schneider, Howard. (2010). Hezbollah's Relocation of Rocket Sites to Lebanon's Interior Poses Wider Threat. Washington Post Foreign Service, 23 January 2010, pp. 1-2, [Online] <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/22/AR2010012204494.html> [Accessed 23 February 2013].

Sly, Liz. (2008). U.S. Wary of Iran's Growing Activity in Iraq. Chicago Tribune in February 29, 2008, Tribune Correspondent, [Online] <http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2008-02-29/news/0802290061_1_iran-iraq-war-revolutionary-guard-corps-iranian-president-mahmoud-ahmadinejad> [Accessed 09 April 2012].

Solomon, Jay. (2011). Bahrain Sees Hezbollah Plot in Protest: In Report to U.N., Government Says Lebanese Militant Group Has Been Working to Overthrow Ruling Khalifa Family, The Wall Street Journal, 25 April 2011, [Online] <http://www.online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703907004576279121469543918.html> [Accessed 24 November 2012].

Spencer, Richard. (2015). Saudi Leads Ten-Nation Sunni Coalition in Bombing Yemen's Shia Rebels. The Telegraph, 26 March 2015, [Online] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/

worldnews/middleeast/yemen/11496264/Saudi-leads-ten-nation-Sunni-coalition-in-bombing-Yemens-Shia-rebels.html> [Accessed 27 March 2015].

Starr, Barbara. Botelho, Greg. (2013). Yemen, US intercept arms-filled ship. 20 January 2013, [Online] <http://www.kcra.com/news/national/Yemen-US-intercept-arms-filled-ship/-/11797450/18312674/-/hmiekjz/-/index.html> [Accessed 20 January 2013].

Tait, Robert. (2007). Khomeini 'sought to drop Death to America chant'. The Guardian, 19 August 2007, [Online] <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/aug/20/iran.roberttait> [Accessed 02 October 2013].

Usher, Sebastian. (2012). Iraq attacks 'aimed at exploiting fragility'. BCC News, Middle East, 23 July 2012, [Online] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-18951290> [Accessed 18 February 2013].

Verjee, Zain. (2011). With bin Laden Dead, Iran is Israel's Greatest Fear, PM Says. CNN, Thursday, 05 May 2011, [Online] <http://articles.cnn.com/2011-05-05/world/israel.iran.bin.laden_1_bin-supreme-leader-militant-islamic-regime?_s=PM:WORLD> [Accessed 09 May 2012].

Wallace, Charles. (1987). Die in Clashes of Saudis, Iranians: Killings at Shrine in Mecca Trigger Attacks on Four Embassies in Tehran, Los Angeles Times, 02 August 1987, [Online] <http://articles.latimes.com/1987-08-02/news/mn-971_1_saudi-arabia> [Accessed 30 November 2012].

Yan. (2009). Iran's Security Chief Meets Hamas, Jihad Leaders in Damascus over Gaza. China View, 04 January 2009, [Online] <http://www.news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-01/04/content_10598727.htm> [Accessed 08 March 2013].

Yonsei, Ali. (2015). Baghdad Became the Capital of Iranian empire. Iraqi News, Search Engine, 08 March 2015, [Online] <http://www.iraqakhbar.com/iraq-news/75303.html> [Accessed 08 March 2015].

(2016). DM: Iran Not to Withdraw from Plans to Enhance Defense Capabilities. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Monday, 08 February 2016, [Online] <http://www.en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13941119000608> [Accessed 09 February 2016].

(2016). Commander: Over 100,000 Hezbollah Missiles Ready to Hit Enemy Targets. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Wednesday, 09 March 2016, [Online]<http://www.en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13941219000285> [Accessed 09 March 2016].

(2015). Iranian Guard Troops are Moving to Damascus to Protect the System from Falling. Sabq, Saudi Arabia Newspaper, 05 June 2015, [Online] <http://www.sabq.org/gI8gde> [Accessed 05 June 2015].

(2015). Tens of Thousands of Iranians and Iraqis Arrived in Syria to Defend Damascus. AL-Watan Kuwaiti Newspaper, Arabic version, Friday, 05 June 2015, [Online] <http://www.alwatan.kuwait.tt/articledetails.aspx?id=437408> [Accessed 05 June 2015].

(2015). Tehran's continuous support to its allies. AL-Watan Kuwaiti Newspaper, Arabic version, Monday, 10 August 2015, [Online] <http://www.alwatan.kuwait.tt/article details.aspx?id=444988> [Accessed 10 August 2015].

(2015). The Arrival of Thousands of Iranians and Iraqi Fighters to Syria to Defend the Capital. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Wednesday, 03 June 2015, No. 13336, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/375511> [Accessed 03 June 2015].

(2015). Iran Must Be Immunized against Sanctions. Iran News Daily, 07 January 2015, [Online] <http://www.irannewsdaily.com/?lng=en&cid=CMSContent&content=2778> [Accessed 13 January 2015].

(2015). America Condone Iran's Quest to Dominate the Arab World. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, 30 January 2015, [Online] <https://www.watan.com/reports/4327> [Accessed 20 January 2015].

(2015). Supreme Leader Warns Officials against West's Political, Cultural Influence. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Friday, 18 September 2015, [Online] <http://www.english. farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940625001158> [Accessed 09 November 2015].

(2015). Iran Calls for Regional States' Vigilance against Enemies' Plots in Mideast. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Sunday, 03 May 2015, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/ Newstext.aspx?nn=13940213000238> [Accessed 04 May 2015].

(2015). IRGC Chief: U.S. Role Reduced to a Player. Kayhan daily Persian-language newspaper in Iran, News ID: 11975, 11 March 2015, [Online] <http://www.kayhan.ir/ en/news/11975/irgc-chief-us-role-reduced-to-a-player> [Accessed 27 April 2015].

(2015). Imam Khamenei: Iran will not Pose a Threat to the Region, but Will Confront Decisively any Danger. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Sunday, 19 April 2015, [Online] <http://www.arabic.farsnews.com/allstories/news/13940130000626> [Accessed 20 April 2015].

(2015). Overthrowing Monarchical System is the Main Solution in Bahrain. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Friday, 24 April 2015, [Online] <http://www.arabic.farsnews.com/ allstories/news/13940204000426> [Accessed 24 April 2015].

(2015). Senior MP: Iran's Regional Power Admitted Even by US. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Monday 12 January 2015, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx? nn=13931013001011> [Accessed 14 January 2015].

(2015). Major General Jafari: If We Sent the Unity of the Mobilization of Basij (a Paramilitary Volunteer Militia) to Resistant Fronts Will Lead to Change the Balances. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Wednesday, 09 December 2015, [Online] <http://www.ar.farsnews.com/iran/news/13940918001252> [Accessed 09 December 2015].

(2015). Iranian General Killed in Syria. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Saturday, 10 October 2015, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940717000218> [Accessed 10 October 2015].

(2015). IRGC Quds Force Commander: US Unable to Remove Hezbollah. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Thursday, 18 September 2015, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940626000405> [Accessed 18 September 2015].

(2015). Zarif Stresses Iran's Continued Arms Aid to Regional Allies. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Sunday, 09 August 2015, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940518000828> [Accessed 09 August 2015].

(2015). Judiciary Chief: Terrorist Groups Created, Supported by US. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Monday, 07 December 2015, [Online] <http://www.en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940916001240> [Accessed 07 December 2015].

(2015). Several Ahrar Al-Sham Militants Surrender to Syrian Army in Zabadani. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Saturday, 05 September 2015, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940614001468> [Accessed 05 September 2015].

(2015). Senior MP: S. Arabia Spreading ISIL Thoughts in Region. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Wednesday, 02 September 2015, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940611001258> [Accessed 02 September 2015].

(2015). Commander: Iran Continues Military Enhancement Until Collapse of Israel. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Friday, 04 September 2015, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940611000630> [Accessed 04 September 2015].

(2015). Saudi Arabia Has Defeated in Three Battles Recently. Iranian Site, Monday, 29 September 2015, [Online] <http://www.aljomhoor.net/content/9444> [Accessed 29 September 2015].

(2015). Al-Nefisy: King Salman will Draw a New Scene for the Middle East. Sabq, Saudi Arabia Newspaper, 20 February 2015, [Online] <http://www.sabq.org/Ydzgde> [Accessed 20 February 2015].

(2015). Rohani Admits to Intervene in Iraq, Yemen, Syria and Lebanon. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Thursday, 12 February 2015, No. 13225, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/287646> [Accessed 12 February 2015].

(2015). Ed Miliband criticise Iraq invasion decision. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Saturday, 25 April 2015, No. 13297, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/344651> [Accessed 25 April 2015].

(2015). The Middle East Crumbles and the Iranian Empire Jogs to fill the Vacuum. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, Monday, 16 February 2015, [Online] <https://www.watanserb.com/news/7005> [Accessed 16 February 2015].

(2015). Iranian Basij and Hezbollah Provide Consulting for the Houthis to Dominate through Arms. Sabq, Saudi Arabia Newspaper, Sunday, 22 February 2015, [Online] <http://www.sabq.org/umzgde> [Accessed 22 February 2015].

(2015). Kerry: Washington and Tehran Found that They Have Common Interest Against ISIS. AL-Watan, Kuwaiti newspaper, Thursday, 26 February 2015, Arabic version, [Online] <http://www.alwatan.kuwait.tt/ArticleDetails.aspx?Id=420467> [Accessed 26 February 2015].

(2015). Iran Occupies Iraq. The Wall Street Journal, 11 March 2015, [Online] <http://www.wsj.com/articles/iran-occupies-iraq-1426116089?mod=trending_now_3> [Accessed 11 March 2015].

(2015). ISIS is a Secret Army to Washington. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, Friday, 20 February 2015, [Online] <https://www.watan.com/reports/4600> [Accessed 20 February 2015].

(2015). Qassem Suleimani: Indications of the Iranian Revolution Shown in Bahrain, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and North Africa. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, Sunday, 15 February 2015, [Online] <https://www.watanserb.com/reports/6989> [Accessed 15 February 2015].

(2015). Iran: Will Control the Gulf and Sea of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf State our brothers. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, Wednesday, 25 February 2015, [Online] <https://www.watanserb.com/reports/7167> [Accessed 25 February 2015].

(2015). Yemeni President: Iran Conspired on the Region. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, Wednesday, 13 May 2015, [Online] <http://www.sabq.org/WC6gde> [Accessed 13 May 2015].

(2015). IRGC Commander: Hezbollah is a Miracle of the Iranian Revolution. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, 12 March 2015, [Online] <https://www.watan.com/news1/5003> [Accessed 12 March 2015].

(2015). Iran Arming Yemen's Huthi Rebels Since 2009: UN Report. The Daily Mail, 30 April 2015, [Online] <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3063247/Iran-arming-Yemens-Huthi-rebels-2009-UN-report.html> [Accessed 02 May 2015].

(2015). Iran Spends $ 8 Billion a Year to Finance Six Armies for Fighting in Four Wars in the Region. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, 26 April 2015, [Online] < https://www.watanserb.com/reports/8432> [Accessed 26 April 2015].

(2015). Iranian Interventions and Support for Terrorist Groups are at the Table of Camp David. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Thursday, 12 May 2015, No. 13314, [Online] < http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/358431> [Accessed 12 May 2015].

(2015). Kerry: We Know that Iran is Arming Rebels .. and will not stand idly by. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Thursday, 09 April 2015, No. 13281, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/332481> [Accessed 09 April 2015].

(2015). Senior Cleric: Iranian Nation Firm against US. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Friday 18 September 2015, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940627000603> [Accessed 18 September 2015].

(2014). Our Current Power was not Imaginable to Anybody: Iran's Velayati. Iranian Newspaper, Tehran Times, NO.12158, Tuesday, 16 December 2014, [Online] <http://www.tehrantimes.com/images/pdfs/12158.pdf> [Accessed 20 January 2015].

(2014). Iran's Military Advisor Killed Defending Holy Shiite Sites in Iraq. Fars News Agency, Sunday, 28 December 2014, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13931007000908> [Accessed 03 February 2015].

(2014). Iran: Confidential Report Reveals Khamenei Strategy toward Syria and other Arab Countries. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, 13 October 2014, [Online] <https://www.watan.com/reports/2157> [Accessed 30 January 2015].

(2014). Hamas Leader Praises Iran's Support for Palestine. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Monday, 25 August 2014, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13930603000905> [Accessed 25 August 2014].

(2014). Judiciary Chief: ISIL Product of US, Europe Colonial Policies. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Wednesday, 22 October 2014, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13930730001608> [Accessed 22 October 2014].

(2014). Iraq conflict: Shia cleric Sistani issues call to arms. BBC, News Middle East, 13 June 2014, [Online] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-27834462> [Accessed 10 December 2014].

(2014). DM: Iran Supporting Freedom-Seeking Nations. Fars News Agency, Tehran, Friday, 05 September 2014, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13930614000529> [Accessed 05 September 2014].

(2014). IRGC Commander: We are Preparing for all-out War with a Hostile Arab Countries to the Islamic Revolution. Website Mareb Press, Wednesday, 03 September 2014, [Online] <http://www.rasd24.net/newsdetails.aspx?id=1511384> [Accessed 12 September 2014].

(2014). Iran wholeheartedly supports Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine: Leader's advisor Political Desk. Tehran Times, Volume. 12039, Tuesday, 22 July 2014, [Online] <http://www.tehrantimes.com/politics/117178-iran-wholeheartedly-supports-syria-iraq-lebanon-palestine-leaders-advisor> [Accessed 22 July 2014].

(2014). Staff of the Iranian Army Warns U.S. and Saudi Arabia from Ignoring the Demands of the Houthis. Search Engine News, Yamrs, Yemen, Tuesday, 09 September 2014, [Online] <http://www.yemeress.com/akhbaralyom/82133> [Accessed 14 March 2015].

(2014). Resistance only Way to Confront Israel. Mehr News, Tehran, News Code: 103650, Saturday, 16 August 2014, [Online] <http://www.en.mehrnews.com/detail/News/103650> [Accessed 17 August 2014].

(2014). Iran ready to support Palestinian resistance in every area: IRGC chief Political Desk. Tehran Times, Volume. 12048, Tuesday, 05 August 2014, [Online] <http://www.tehrantimes.com/politics/117416-iran-ready-to-support-palestinian-resistance-in-every-area-irgc-chief-> [Accessed 05 August 2014].

(2014). Hamas Leader Lauds Iran's Support for Palestine. IRNA, Islamic Republic News Agency, Tuesday, 26 August 2014, [Online] <http://www.irna.ir/en/News/2735272/Politic/Hamas_leader_lauds_Iran%CB%88s_support_for_Palestine> [Accessed 26 August 2014].

(2013). Hassan Rouhani, President of Iran. BBC, News Middle East, 11 November 2013, [Online] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-22886729> [Accessed 18 December 2014].

(2013). Iran to send 4,000 troops to aid President Assad forces in Syria. The independent, 16 June 2013, [Online] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iran-to-send-4000-troops-to-aid-president-assad-forces-in-syria-8660358.html> [Accessed 17 June 2013].

(2013). Yemen confirms seized weapons ship is Iranian. The Jerusalem Post News, 02 February 2013, [Online] <http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=301882> [Accessed 04 February 2013].

(2013). Azhar calls for Ahmadinejad that Iran should not interfere in the affairs of the Gulf States, BBC, News Middle East, 05 February 2013, [Online] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/> [Accessed 05 February 2013].

(2013). Nazim al-Misbah: Iranian Ideological expansion leads only to more regional conflict. Alwatan Kuwait's Daily Newspaper, 09 February 2013, [Online] <http://alwatan.kuwait.tt/ArticleDetails.aspx?Id=253077> [Accessed 09 February 2013].

(2013). Yemen called Iran to stop its support for armed groups. Alwatan Kuwait's Daily Newspaper, 08 February 2013, [Online] <http://alwatan.kuwait.tt/ArticleDetails.aspx?Id=252971> [Accessed 08 February 2013].

(2013). Yemen says intercepted ship carrying weapons was Iranian. Focus News Agency, Bulgarian private information agency, 03 February 2013, [Online] <http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n298473> [Accessed 04 February 2013].

(2013). Brigadier General Asgari: Gulf Security is in the Hands of the Revolutionary Guard Forces. Fars News Agency, 21 January 2013, [Online] <http://arabic.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=9107137503> [Accessed 21 January 2013].

(2013). The Gulf Security Protected from the Revolutionary Guards. Alaan Kuwaiti Electronic Newspaper, 21 January 2013, [Online] <http://www.alaan.cc/pagedetails.asp?nid=131284&cid=46> [Accessed 21 January 2013].

(2013). A storm of responses condemning the war: Nasrallah speech and full compliance with the orders of Iran. Seyassah, Kuwaiti Newspaper, Arabic version, 27 May 2013, [Online] <http://www.al-seyassah.com/AtricleView/tabid/59/smid/438/ArticleID/246167/reftab/76/Default.aspx> [Accessed 31 May 2013].

(2013). Nigeria declares find "weapons to Hezbollah" in the city of Kano. BBC, News Middle East, 30 May 2013, [Online] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/worldnews/2013/05/130530_nigeria_hezboallh_weapons.shtml> [Accessed 31 May 2013].

(2013). CIA documents acknowledge its role in Iran's 1953 coup. BBC, News Middle East, 20 August 2013, [Online] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23762970> [Accessed 24 December 2014].

(2012). Bahrain Protests Draw Thousands to UN Office in Manama. BBC, News Middle East, 10 January 2012, [Online] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16492812> [Accessed 05 May 2012].

(2012). Iranian escalating role in Yemen concerns USA. Yemen News Agency (SABA), 13 January 2013, [Online] <http://www.sabanews.net/en/news294891.htm> [Accessed 14 January 2013].

(2012). Zayani praises Yemeni security efforts for revealed on Iranian spy network. Yemen news agency (SABA), 23 July 2012, [Online] <http://www.sabanews.net/ar/news275850.htm> [Accessed 08 February 2013].

(2012). Canada Adds Iran's Quds Force to Terrorist List. Sky News- Arabic, December 21.

[Online] <http://www.skynewsarabia.com/web/tag?s=%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86&gclid=CNL5sabWu7QCFW3KtAod-TYAlQ> [Accessed 18 December 2012].

(2012). Only Supreme Leader should decide on Iran-U.S. direct talks: Salehi. Payvand Iran News, 13 November 2012, [Online] <http://www.payvand.com/news/12/nov/1115.html> [Accessed 13 November 2012].

(2012). Only Supreme Leader should decide on Iran-U.S. direct talks: Salehi. Tehran Times, International Daily News, 12 November 2012, [Online] <http://www.tehrantimes.com/politics/103247-only-leader-should-decide-on-iran-us-direct-talks-salehi> [Accessed 13 November 2012].

(2012). Shia protester 'shot dead' in Saudi Arabia. BBC, News Middle East, 13 January 2012, [Online] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16543013> [Accessed 06 May 2012].

(2012). From Iran, new threats to close key oil route. Los Angeles Times World, 02 July 2012, [Online] <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world_now/2012/07/iran-hormuz-close-oil-sanctions-embargo-us-persian-gulf.html> [Accessed 11 November 2012].

(2012). Iran: Iraq and Gaza is a Shield to Defend Ourselves. Watan, Daily Newspaper, United States, 07 December 2012, [Online] <http://www.watan.com/news/politics/2012-12-07/17296> [Accessed 07 December 2012].

(2012). All aboard the New Silk Road(s). Iran, India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the US are all scrambling to get the upper hand across Eurasia, Aljazeera, 16 September 2012, [Online] <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/09/20129138245360573.html> [Accessed 10 January 2015].

(2011). Iran threatens to block Strait of Hormuz oil route. BBC, News Middle East, 28 December 2011, [Online] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16344102> [Accessed 19 May 2012].

(2011). For the first time take a public stand against the Arab uprisings: Iran warns Saudi Arabia Of prejudice to Shia during the Days of Wrath. Reqaba, Kuwaiti newspaper, Arabic version, Sunday, 06 March 2011, [Online] <http://www.reqaba.com/ArticleDetail.aspx?id=18466> [Accessed 08 May 2012].

(2011). Muslim World League: Warns of Iranian interference in the internal affairs of the Gulf States. The Middle East Newspaper, Arabic version, Friday, 08 April 2011, 11819, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section= 4&issueno=11819&article=616300&feature=> [Accessed 02 May 2012].

(2011). Kuwaiti Sources: Detection of 8 Spy Networks which Coordinated by Diplomat at the Embassy of Iran in Kuwait. Al-Arabiya net, Arabic version, Friday, 01 April 2011, [Online] <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/04/01/143793.html> [Accessed 09 May 2012].

(2011). Chairman of Iranian Guardian Council Calls to conquer Bahrain and establish of Islamic Rule. Al-Arabiya net, Arabic version, Saturday, 09 July 2011, [Online] <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/07/09/156881.html> [Accessed 09 May 2012].

(2011). Prince Saud al-Faisal: Iran is moving in the wrong direction. Al- Medina, daily newspaper of Saudi Arabia, published by the Foundation of the City Press and Publication, Arabic version, Tuesday, 05 April 2011, [Online] <http://www.al-madina.com/node/297113> [Accessed 05 May 2012].

(2011). King of Bahrain: Kingdom had foiled Planned External. CNN, Arabic version, Wednesday, 20 April 2011, [Online] <http://arabic.cnn.com/2011/bahrain.2011/3/21/plot.bahrain/index.html> [Accessed 05 May 2012].

(2011). Bahrain Accuses the "Hezbollah" for training Shiite opponents and the opposition denies. CNN, Arabic version, Wednesday, 18 May 2011, [Online] <http://arabic.cnn.com/2011/bahrain.2011/4/26/bahrain.hezbollah/index.html> [Accessed 05 May 2012].

(2011). Iran expels 3 Kuwait diplomats in spy row. Reuters, 10 April 2011, [Online] <http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/04/10/idINIndia-56238420110410> [Accessed 23 November 2012].

(2011). Iran cell planned attacks in Kuwait, minister says. Reuters, 21 April 2011, [Online] <http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCATRE73K3NO20110421> [Accessed 25 April 2011].

(2011). Uprising in Bahrain has nothing to do with Shiism, Sunniism: Leader. Mehr News Agency, Tehran, 22 March 2011, [Online] <http://www.mehrnews.com/en/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1277180> [Accessed 08 July 2011].

(2011). EC Secretary Blasts Saudi Military Intervention in Bahrain. Fars News Agency, Tehran, News number: 8912280325, 19 March 2011, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8912280325> [Accessed 08 July 2011].

(2011). Iran Recalls Ambassador From Bahrain. 17 March 2011, [Online] <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/03/17/501364/main20044216.shtml> [Accessed 08 July 2011].

(2011). Manama recalls ambassador to Iran, alleging ‘blatant interference. Los Angeles Times, 15 March 2011, [Online] <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2011/03/bahrain-iran-diplomacy-ambassador-recall-.html > [Accessed 08 July 2011].

(2011). Iraq: commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards evidence of his country's influence in Iraq. The news agency Kurdistan, Independent News Iraq, 09 November 2011, [Online] <http://www.aknews.com/ar/aknews/4/271523> [Accessed 05 February 2013].

(2010). Ahmadinejad Ends Visit with Meeting Hezbollah Chief. Ya Libnan, 15 October 2010, [Online] <http://www.yalibnan.com/2010/10/15/ahmadinejad-ends-visit-with-hezbollah-chief-meeting> [Accessed 24 February 2013].

(2010). IRGC Official Calls Lebanon, Palestine 'Iran's Front Line.' Fars News Agency, 04 August 2010, [Online] <http://www.english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8905131711> [Accessed 24 February 2013].

(2010). Iran Gives Weapons to Re-Arm Hezbollah, Pentagon Says. Bloomberg, 20 April 2010, [Online] <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-04-20/iran-gives-weapons-funds-to-help-lebanese-hezbollah-re-arm.html> [Accessed 02 May 2012].

(2010). WikiLeaks papers back Bush claims of Iran role in Iraq war. Washington Times, 24 October 2010, [Online] <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/oct/24/wikileaks-back-bU.S.h-claims-iran-role-iraq-war> [Accessed 14 September 2011].

(2010). Israel Accuses Syria of Arming Hezbollah. AFP, Jerusalem, 13 April 2010, [Online] <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hHoQq1eCo8qk71GdBR_vC6GBZJKg> [Accessed 25 February 2013].

(2010). Mofaz Urges Sunnis to Unite: Hizbullah Would Take Over Lebanon Within 10 Years. Naharnet, 09 December 2010, [Online] <http://www.old.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/0/ED9E9C92AA565D10C22577F4002E0825?OpenDocument> [Accessed 27 February 2013].

(2010). Congress questioning aid to Lebanon in view of Iran's 'increasing dominance.' World Tribune, 18 October 2010, [Online] <http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/WTARC/2010/ss_lebanon1027_10_18.asp> [Accessed 27 February 2013].

(2010). Lebanon Bloc Concerned About Iran President's Visit. Khaleej Times, 29 September 2010, [Online] <http://www.khaleejtimes.com/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/September/middleeast_September566.xml&section=middleeast&col> [Accessed 28 February 2013].

(2010). US Says Syria Must Curb Arm Shipments to Hezbollah. The Seattle Times, Nation & World, 20 May 2010, [Online] <http://www.seattletimes.com/html/nationworld/2011911587_apmljordanussyria.html> [Accessed 02 March 2013].

(2010). Egypt Convicts 26 of Spying, Plotting Attacks. The Seattle Times, Nation & World, 28 April 2010, [Online] <http://www.seattletimes.com/html/nationworld/2011719390_apmlegypthezbollah.html> [Accessed 02 March 2013].

(2010). Sayyed Nasrallah: Opposition Managed to Defuse Indictment. Ahlul Bayt News Agency, ABNA, Code: 213567, 18 November 2010, [Online] <http://www.abna.ir/data.asp?lang=3&id=213567> [Accessed 04 March 2013].

(2010). Hezbollah against Politicized STL, To Protect Officials Not Cooperating with It. Al Manar, 31 October 2010, [Online] <http://www.almanar.com.lb/NewsSite/NewsDetails.aspx?id=160305&language=en> [Accessed 01 November 2010).

(2010). Qassem: Hezbollah Won't Quit Government over False Witnesses' Issue. Nahar Net, Beirut, 31 October 2010, [Online] <http://www.old.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/0/3F74DA2E554345DFC22577CD0035B614?OpenDocument> [Accessed 01 November 2010).

(2010). Iran leader in Hezbollah stronghold: Thousands flock to hear Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Lebanon village close to Israel border on second day of his visit. Aljazeera, 15 October 2010, [Online] <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2010/10/201010141613358718 1.html> [Accessed 20 January 2015].

(2009). Iran 'leading terrorism sponsor'. BBC News Channel, 1 May 2009, [Online] <http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/8028064.stm> [Accessed 09 March 2013].

(2009). Hezbollah: Iran to support Lebanon: Nasrallah says Tehran would help supply Lebanon's army if his coalition is elected. Aljazeera, 30 May 2009, [Online] <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2009/05/200953080355076 13.html> [Accessed 20 January 2015].

(2009). Khomeini: From Ataturk Avenue to the Holy City of Najaf. Asharq AL-Awsat, The Middle East Newspaper Friday, 27 February 2009, [Online] <http://www.aawsat.net/2009/02/article55255802> [Accessed 20 January 2015].

(2008). Israel’s Barak Warns of Growing Hezbollah Arsenal. Reuters, 10 September 2008, [Online] <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/barak_war/Barak_warns.pdf> [Accessed 23 February 2013].

(2008). Hezbollah 'Seizes West Beirut': Rocket Hits Residence of al-Hariri as Hezbollah Seizes Large Parts of West Beirut. Aljazeera, 09 May 2008, , [Online] <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2008/05/20086150227804659.html> [Accessed 20 January 2015].

(2006). Bush receives a report of the Baker-Hamilton about Iraq. BBC, News Middle East, 06 December 2006, [Online] <http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/hi/arabic/news/newsid_6210000/6210962.stm> [Accessed 07 January 2015].

(2006). Hezbollah's Rocket Force. BBC, News Middle East, 18 July 2006, [Online] <http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5187974.stm> [Accessed 21 January 2015].

(2004). Reagan and the 'Iran-Contra' Affair. BBC, News Middle East, 5 June, 2004, [Online] <http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/269619.stm> [Accessed 25 December 2014].

(2003). Iran 'liable' for Beirut bomb. BBC, News Middle East, 31 May 2003, [Online] <http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/2951938.stm> [Accessed 25 December 2014].

(1981). Tehran frees US hostages after 444 days. BBC, News Middle East, 12 January 1981, [Online] <http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/21/newsid_2506000/2506807.stm> [Accessed 24 December 2014].

(1980). Tehran hostage rescue mission fails. BBC, News Middle East, 25 April 1980, [Online] <http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/april/25/newsid_2503000/2503899.stm> [Accessed 24 December 2014].

Websites

Abu Hilal, Firas. (2014). Iran has the right of being proud and even a sense of arrogance. Aljazeera Net, Arabic version, Saturday 25 October 2014, [Online] <http://www.aljazeera.net/knowledgegate/opinions/2014/10/23/> [Accessed 30 January 2015].

Adkins, Michael. Faley, Katherine. Karian, John. Knapp, Patrick. Lewis, Ashley. Schapiro, David. Zimmerman, Katherine. (2010). Iran-Lebanese Hezbollah Relationship Tracker 2010. Iran Tracker, 31 December 2010, [Online] <http://www.irantracker.org/military-activities/iran-lebanese-hezbollah-relationship-tracker-2010> [Accessed 23 November 2012].

Aftergood, Steven. (2013). An Open Source Look at Iran's Intelligence Ministry. 04 January 2013, [Online] <http://www.fas.org/blog/secrecy/> [Accessed 04 January 2013].

Ajbaili, Mustapha. (2014). How ISIS conquered social media. Al Arabiya News, 24 June 2014, [Online] <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/media/digital/2014/06/24/How-has-ISIS-conquered-social-media-.html> [Accessed 25 January 2015].

Alamdari, Kazem. (2009). Elections as a Tool to Sustain the Theological Power Structure. Middle East Institute, 29 January 2009, [Online] <http://www.mei.edu/content/elections-tool-sustain-theological-power-structure> [Accessed 03 March 2011].

Alfoneh, Ali. (2011). Iran's Most Dangerous General. American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, AEI, Third Series of Middle Eastern Outlooks, No. 4, [Online] <http://www.aei.org/files/2011/07/13/MEO-2011-07-No-4-g.pdf> [Accessed 29 September 2013].

Allawi, Ayad. (2013). Restrain Iranian Role is a Condition for the Salvation of the Region of Dangerous. People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, Voice of Iraq, 17 December 2013, [Online] <http://www.mojahedin.org/newsar/30542> [Accessed 08 January 2015].

Al-Samadi, Fatima. (2014). Iraq in Iranian strategy: Growing Security premonition and retreat of opportunities. Al-Jazeera Centre for Studies, 10 July 2014, [Online] <http://www.studies.aljazeera.net/reports/2014/07/201471019162549695.htm> [Accessed 28 February 2015].

Al-Tamimi, Aymenn. (2012). Violence in Iraq. Gloria Centre, Global Research in International Affairs, 14 November 2012, [Online] <http://www.gloria-center.org/2012/11/violence-in-iraq/> [Accessed 15 November 2012].

Assi, Hussein. (2010). Sayyed Nasrallah: We Will Defeat Enemy, Change Region's Face. 15 January 2010, [Online] <http://realisticbird.wordpress.com/2010/01/15/sayyed-nasrallah-we-will-defeat-enemy-change-regions-face/> [Accessed 04 March 2013).

Azarpay, Guitty. (2009). Iran and the Silk Road: Art and Trade along Asia's Crossroads, Foundation for Iranian Studies, [Online] <http://fis-iran.org/en/irannameh/volxiv/iran-silk-road> [Accessed 10 January 2015).

Bar, Shmuel. (2004). Iran: Cultural Values, Self images and Negotiation Behavior. The Interdisciplinary Centre Herzliya Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy Institute for Policy and Strategy, Herzliya Conference, pp. 1-51, [Online] <http://www.herzliyaconference.org/_Uploads/2614Iranianself.pdf> [Accessed 08 December 2014).

Bard, Mitchell. (2011). Potential Threats To Israel: Iran. Jewish Virtual Library. A Division of the American-Israel Cooperation Enterprise. Updated September 2, 2011, [Online] <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Threats_toIsrael/Iran.html> [Accessed 24 April 2012].

Beehner, Lionel., Bruno, Greg. (2008). Iran's Involvement in Iraq. Council on Foreign relations, [Online] <http://www.cfr.org/iran/irans-involvement-iraq/p12521> [Accessed 02 April 2012].

Beehner, Lionel. (2006). Iran's Goals in Iraq. Council on Foreign Relations, [Online] <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9930/irans_goals_in_iraq.html#p1> [Accessed 29 December 2010].

Blanford, Nicholas. (2010). Lebanon Resumes Defense Talks on Hezbollah's Military Wing. The Christian Science Monitor, 10 March 2010, [Online] <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2010/0310/Lebanon-resumes-defense-talks-on-Hezbollah-s-military-wing> [Accessed 25 February 2013].

Burgess, Ronald. (2010). Iran's Military Power: Statement before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, [Online] <http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/statemnt/2010/04%20April/> [Accessed 13 October 2010].

Carter, B. Ashton. (2004). How to Counter WMD. Foreign Affairs 83, No.5, Septerber/October 2004, pp.72-85 [Online] <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/60098/ashton-b-carter/how-to-counter-wmd> [Accessed 19 August 2013].

Connell, Michael., Nader, Alireza., & Boyars, Jacob. (2007). Iran's Strategic Interests in the Middle East: A Project Iran Workshop, Center for Naval Analyses (CNA), Strategic Studies, October 22, 2007, pp. 2-7 [Online] <http://www.cna.org/sites/default/files/news/2008/D0017613.A1.pdf> [Accessed 19 October 2010].

Cordesman, Anthony. Seitz, Adam. (2009). Iran and the Challenges to Middle East Security. Iran Status Report, Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Washington, DC, [Online] <http://csis.org/files/publication/090608_iranupdate.pdf> [Accessed 18 May 2012].

Cordesman, Anthony. (2008). Iranian Weapons of Mass Destruction: Biological Weapons Programs. Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 28 October 2008, pp.1-37 [Online] <http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/081028_iranbw_chapterrev.pdf> [Accessed 16 August 2013].

Cordesman, Anthony. (2008). The US, Israel, the Arab States and a Nuclear Iran. Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Washington, DC, [Online] <http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/081006_iran_nuclear.pdf> [Accessed 24 August 2013].

Cordesman, Anthony. (2007). Iran, Oil, and the Strait of Hormuz. Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Washington, DC, [Online] <http://www.csis.org/burke> [Accessed 11 August 2009].

Cordesman, Anthony. (2007). Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and Other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces [Online] <http://www.csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070816_cordesman_report.pdf> [Accessed 14 October 2010].

Cordesman, Anthony. Al-Rodhan, Khalid. (2006). The Gulf Military Forces in an Era of Asymmetric War Iran, Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Washington, DC, [Online] <http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/060728_gulf_iran.pdf> [Accessed 25 August 2013].

Cordesman, Anthony. (2006). Iran's Support of the Hezbollah in Lebanon. Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Washington, DC, [Online] < http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/145646_en_060715_hezbollah.pdf> [Accessed 28 August 2013].

Cordesman, Anthony. (1999). The Military Balance in the Middle East: An Executive Summary, the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, [Online] <http://www.igcc.ucsd.edu/pdf/policypapers/pp49.pdf> [Accessed 19 February 2011].

Crist, David (2009). A History of U.S.-Iranian Confrontation at Sea. The Washington Institute, Improving the Quality of U.S. Middle East Policy, Policy Analysis, [Online] <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/gulf-of-conflict-a-history-of-u.s.-iranian-confrontation-at-sea> [Accessed 07 December 2014].

Cronin, Stephanie. Masalha, Nur. (2011). The Islamic Republic of Iran and the GCC states: Revolution to realpolitik? Research Paper, Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States. LSE, the London School of Economics and Political Science. [Online] <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/government/research/resgroups/kuwait/documents/Cronin%20and%20Masalha.pdf> [Accessed 19 February 2011].

Ehteshami, Anoushiravan. (2007). Iran's Politics and Regional Relations Post-Detente. Center for Strategic Research, SAM, pp. 29-44, [Online] <http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Anoushiravan-Ehteshami.pdf> [Accessed 13 September 2013].

Felter, Joe. Fishman, Brian. (2008). Iranian Strategy in Iraq: Politics and "Other Means" Center for International Security and Cooperation, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, Approved for public release, distribution unlimited [Online], <http://cisac.stanford.edu/publications/iranian_strategy_in_iraq_politics_and_other_means> [Accessed 23 September 2011].

Fiorenza, Nicholas. (2006). Kuwait signs information security agreement with NATO. Jane's defense Weekly, Middle East and Africa, 20 December 2006, [Online] <http://www.nato.int/ici/articles/english/2006/061214_en_usa_janesdefenceweekly.pdf> [Accessed 25 September 2013].

Flintoff, Corey. (2007). Religion, History Shape Iraq’s Relationship with Iran. [Online] <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=13863435> [Accessed 02 April 2012].

Freedman, Lawrence. (2006). The Transformation of Strategic Affairs. The Adelphi Series, Books on Key Security Issues, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, IISS, No. 379, 31 March 2006, pp. 5-94, [Online] <http://www.iiss.org/en/publications/adelphi/by%20year/2006-4d94/the-transformation-of-strategic-affairs-b272> [Accessed 09 January 2012].

Fulton, Will. Farrar-Wellman, Ariel. Frasco, Robert. (2011). Saudi Arabia-Iran Foreign

Relations. Iran Tracker, 01 August 2011, [Online] <http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/saudi-arabia-iran-foreign-relations> [Accessed 23 November 2012].

Fulton, Will. Farrar-Wellman, Ariel. (2011). Kuwait-Iran Foreign Relations. Iran Tracker, 01 August 2011, [Online] <http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/kuwait-iran-foreign-relations> [Accessed 23 November 2012].

Fulton, Will. Farrar-Wellman, Ariel. (2011). GCC-Iran Foreign Relations. Iran Tracker, 21 July 2011, [Online] <http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/gcc-iran-foreign-relations> [Accessed 23 November 2012].

Fulton, Will. Farrar-Wellman, Ariel. (2011). Bahrain-Iran Foreign Relations. Iran Tracker, 14 July 2011, [Online] <http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/bahrain-iran-foreign-relations> [Accessed 23 November 2012].

Gagnon, Chip. (2002). Our History with Iraq. 22 October 2002, [Online] <http://www.chipgagnon.com/?s=our+history+with+iraq> [Accessed 24 December 2014].

Ghaddar, Hanin. (2011). A new resistance, a new enemy. Article, The Arab Network for the Study of Democracy, 25 October 2011, [Online] <http://www.ademocracynet.com/index.php?page=articles&id=2153&action=Detail> [Accessed 24 August 2013].

Green, D. Jerrold., Wehrey, Frederic., Jr. Wolf, Charles. (2009). Understanding Iran. National Security Research Division, RAND, Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, pp. 1-143, [Online] <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG771.pdf> [Accessed 07 July 2013].

Hamourtziadou, Lily. (2016). Iraq: Wars and Casualties, 13 Years on. Iraq Body Count (IBC), Saturday, 19 March 2016, pp. 1 of 1, [Online] <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/analysis/beyond/13-years-on/> [Accessed 20 March 2016].

Jones, Seth. (2012). Al Qaeda in Iran: Why Tehran is Accommodating the Terrorist Group. Foreign Affairs, Published by the Council on Foreign Relations, 29 January 2012, [Online] <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137061/seth-g-jones/al-qaeda-in-iran> [Accessed 19 January 2015].

Juneau, Thomas. (2009). Power, perceptions, Identity and Factional Politics: A neoclassical realist analysis of Iranian foreign policy 2001-2007, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association Ottawa, Ontario, pp. 1-14, [Online] <http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2009/Juneau.pdf> [Accessed 04 September 2011].

Kagan, Frederick. (2012). Strait Talk with Iran. Iran Tracker, 04 January 2012, [Online] <http://www.irantracker.org/analysis/kagan-strait-talk-iran-january-4-2011> [Accessed 11 November 2012].

Kagan, Frederick. Majidyar, Ahmad. Pletka, Danielle. Sullivan, Marisa. (2012). Iranian Influence in the Levant, Egypt, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Iran Tracker, A Report by the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War, 23 May 2012, [Online] <http://www.irantracker.org/analysis/iranian-influence-levant-egypt-iraq-afghanistan-may-23-2012> [Accessed 30 September 2013].

Kagan, Frederick. (2009). Islam, Shi'ism, and Iran. Iran Tracker, 09 February 2009, [Online] <http://www.irantracker.org/basics/islam-shiism-and-iran> [Accessed 06 January 2013].

Kagan, Frederick. (2009). Security Structures of Iran. Iran Tracker, 20 February 2009, [Online] <http://www.irantracker.org/basics/security-structures-iran> [Accessed 06 January 2013].

Kagan, Frederick. (2009). Velayat-e Faqih. Iran Tracker, 30 January 2009, [Online] <http://www.irantracker.org/basics/velayat-e-faqih> [Accessed 06 January 2013].

Katzman, Kenneth. Nerurkar, Neelesh. Rourke, Ronald. Mason, Chuck, R. Ratner, Michael. (2012). Iran's Threat to the Strait of Hormuz. CRS Report for Congress. [Online] <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R42335.pdf> [Accessed 18 May 2012].

Khomeini, Imam. (1970). Government of the Jurist (Velayat-e Faqeeh). Islamic Government, The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works, International Affairs Division, Translated by Hamid Algar, Iran Chamber Society, pp. 1-94, [Online] <http://www.iranchamber.com/history/rkhomeini/books/velayat_faqeeh.pdf> [Accessed 29 April 2011].

Loi, Charles. (2011). U.S. and Iranian Strategic Competition: Competition between the US and Iran in Iraq. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), [Online] <http://csis.org/files/publication/110302_Comp_between_US_Iran_in_Iraq.pdf> [Accessed 14 August 2011].

Maleki, Abbas. (2008). Decision Making in Iran's Foreign Policy: A Heuristic Approach, [Online] <http://www.caspianstudies.com/article/Decision%20Making%20in%20Iran-FinalDraft.pdf> [Accessed 8 December 2010].

Mansharof, Y. & Savyon A. (2010). Iran demonstrates its deterrent strength in military manoeuvres. The Middle East Media Research Institute, No. 615, Retrieved 14 June 2010, [Online] <http://www.memritv.org/report/en/4372.htm> [Accessed 09 July 2013].

Mansharof, Y. & Savyon, A. (2008). Iranian Threats in Anticipation of Western Attack. Inquiry and Analysis-No. 455 (MEMRI), 15 July 2008, The Middle East Media Research Institute, [Online] <http://www.memri.org/bin/articles> [Accessed 13 August 2009].

Mead, R, Walter. (2006). God's Country? Foreign Affairs, Vol. 85, No. 5, p. 24, [Online] <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/61914/walter-russell-mead/gods-country> [Accessed 30 December 2014].

Mohseni, Payam. (2014). Bad Move, ISIS: Why America and Iran Should Work Together. The National Interest, 06 October 2014, [Online] <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/bad-move-isis-why-america-iran-should-work-together-11408> [Accessed 07 February 2015].

Morrison, David. (2006). Lebanon: Hezbollah Wins. Labour & Trade Union Review Pamphlet. Published by Bevin Books, 2 Newington Green Mansions, Green Lanes, London N16 9BT, ISBN 1 874463 50 6, [Online] < http://www.david-morrison.org.uk/lebanon/hezbollah-wins.pdf> [Accessed 24 January 2011].

Nemani, F. (1998). Iran Government: Leadership. Pars Times Greater Iran and Beyond, Source; Farhang va Andisheh Institute, August 1997, [Online] < http://ivl.8m.com/IRAN-STATE.htm#_Hlk415985470> [Accessed 02 November 2012].

Nerguizian, Aram. (2013). Assessing the Consequences of Hezbollah's Necessary War of Choice in Syria. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 17 June 2013, [Online] <http://csis.org/publication/assessing-consequences-hezbollahs-necessary-war-choice-syria> [Accessed 25 August 2013].

Puelings, Jelle. (2010). Fearing A Shiite Octopus: Sunni-Shiite Relations and the Implications for Belgium and Europe. Royal Institute for International Relations, Academia Press, [Online] <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/paperegm/ep35.pdf> [Accessed 12 June 2010].

Rogers, Paul. (2006). Iran: Consequences of a War. Oxford Research Group, pp. 1-12, [Online] <http://www.iranbodycount.org/analysis/#org> [Accessed 22 August 2013].

Russell, James. (2007). Regional Threats and Security Strategy: The Troubling Case of Today's Middle East. [Online] <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub814.pdf> [Accessed 01st December 2010].

Saad-Ghorayeb, Amal. (2011). An Examination of the Ideological, Political and Strategic Causes of Iran's Commitment to the Palestinian Cause. A Conflicts Forum Monograph: Beirut-London, [Online] <http://conflictsforum.org/briefings/AmalSaadGhorayeb.pdf> [Accessed 25 April 2012].

Sadjadpour, Karim. (2010). The Supreme Leader. The Iran Primer, United States Institute of Peace, [Online] <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/supreme-leader> [Accessed 12 October 2015].

Sadjadpour, Karim. (2009). Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, New Foreword, pp. 1-35,

[Online] < http://carnegieendowment.org/files/sadjadpour_iran_final2.pdf> [Accessed 18 September 2013].

Salem, Paul. (2008). The Middle East: Evolution of a Broken Regional Order, Carnegie Middle East Center, Carnegie Papers, [Online] <http://www.carnegieendowment.org /files/cmec9_salem_broken_order_final.pdf> [Accessed 22 February 2011].

Sanati, Kimia. (2008). Internal Problems Worry Iranians More, [Online] <http://www.ips news.net/news.asp?idnews=40853> [Accessed 03 May 2011].

Sanati, Kimia. (2007). US Presence Fuels Iran-Bahrain Tension: Middle East. [Online] <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/IG19Ak07.html> [Accessed 13 June 2010].

Schapiro, David. Zimmerman, Katherine. (2010). Estimates for Hezbollah's Arsenal. Iran Tracker, 29 June 2010, [Online] <http://www.irantracker.org/military-activities/ estimates-hezbollahs-arsenal> [Accessed 23 November 2012].

Shoamanesh, Sam. (2012). A New Security Order for the Middle East. Global Brief, World Affairs in the 21s century, October 4, 2012, [Online] <http://globalbrief.ca/blog/2012 /10/04/a-new-security-order-for-the-middle-east/> [Accessed 13 September 2013].

Smyth, Phillip. (2012). The Battle for the Soul of Shi'ism. Gloria Centre, Global Research in International Affairs, 14 November 2012, [Online] <http://www.gloria-center.org/ 2012/11/the-battle-for-the-soul-of-shi%E2%80%99ism/> [Accessed 15 November 2012].

Takeyh, Ray. (2003). Iran at a Crossroads. Middle East Journal, Council on Foreign Relations, [Online] <http://www.cfr.org/world/iran-crossroads/p7336> [Accessed 16 August 2013].

Thaler, David. Nader, Alireza. Chubin, Shahram. Green, Jerrold. Lynch, Charlott. Wehrey, Frederic. (2010). Mullahs, Guards, and Bonyads: An Exploration of Iranian Leadership Dynamics, RAND National Defense Research Institute, [Online] <http://www.rand. org/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND_MG878.pdf> [Accessed 13 October 2010].

Waltz, Kenneth. (2012). Why Iran Should Get the Bomb: Nuclear Balancing Would Mean Stability. Foreign Affairs, The Council on Foreign Relations, [Online] <http://sistemas.mre.gov.br/kitweb/datafiles/IRBr/pt-br/file/CAD/LXII%20CAD/Pol% C3%ADtica/Why%20Iran%20Should%20Get%20the%20Bomb.pdf> [Accessed 17 September 2013].

Wehrey, Frederic. Kaye, Dalia. Watkins, Jessica. Martini, Jeffrey. Guffey, Robert. (2010). The Iraq Effect: The Middle East After the Iraq War, [Online] <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG892.pdf> [Accessed 01st December 2010].

Wehrey, Frederic. Green, Jerrold. Nichiporuk, Brian. Nader, Alireza. Hansell, Lydia. Rasool, Nafisi. Bohandy, S. (2009). The Rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the Domestic Roles of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, [Online] <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG821.pdf> [Accessed 18 August 2013].

White, Jeffrey. (2010). If War Comes: Israel vs. Hezbollah and Its Allies. Policy Focus, The Washington institute for Near East Policy, 106 [Online] <http://www.metransparent.com/IMG/pdf/jeffrey_white_if_war_comes.pdf> [Accessed 12 April 2012].

Wright, Robin. (2010). The Challenge of Iran. An Introduction to the Iran Primer, United States Institute of Peace, The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 18 October 2010, [Online] <http://iranprimer.usip.org/sites/iranprimer.usip.org/files/The%20Challenge%20of%20Iran..pdf> [Accessed 20 January 2015].

Yaphe, S. Judith. (2010). Iran's strategic ambitions: Implications for regional security and U.S. interests. Foreign Affairs. Retrieved 4 November 2010, [Online] <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/yap060508.htm> [Accessed 30 October 2011].

Yazbeck, Natacha. (2010). Nasrallah warns against Hezbollah arrests over Hariri. AFP, 11 November 2010, [Online] <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iOnwNiJOOz21Im1kBNnEltrBR3gA?docId=CNG.c475d315dd94dc3d274371ac27c49236.771> [Accessed 04 March 2013).

(2015). Iran and Region V: Yemen's Houthis. The Iran Primer, United States Institute of Peace, The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 26 January 2015, [Online] <http://www.iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2015/jan/26/iran-region-v-yemens-houthis> [Accessed 31 January 2015).

(2015). Iranian Border Extends from Yemen to Mediterranean, Regime General Boasts. National Council of Resistance of Iran, NCRI, Foreign Affairs Committee, Iran News, 29 January 2015, [Online] <http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/terrorismfundamentalism/17873-iranian-border-extends-from-yemen-to-mediterranean-regime-general-boasts> [Accessed 31 January 2015).

(2015). Commander of Iranian Quds Force Personally Oversees on the Battles of Salah ad-Din. Iraq News, Iraqi news search engine, 03 March 2015, [Online] <http://www.iraqakhbar.com/business-news/73940.html> [Accessed 03 March 2015].

(2015). Dangerous Iranian Confessions. MTV News, Lebanon, 09 May 2015, [Online] <http://www.mtv.com.lb/EN/News/475997> [Accessed 09 May 2015].

(2015). Persian Gulf States Want to Bolster Military Arsenals. Global Security, 03 May 2015, [Online] <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2015/05/mil-150503-irna01.htm?_m=3n%2e002a%2e1407%2ehy0ao05h7s%2e1aid> [Accessed 04 May 2015].

(2015). Erdogan: Iran is Trying to Dominate the Region .. and This Has Begun to Disturb Us. Azamil News Site, 27 March 2015, [Online] <http://www.azamil.com/?p=4194> [Accessed 29 March 2015].

(2014). Report: How Khamenei Makes Decisions. The Iran Primer, United States Institute of Peace, 11 April 2014, [Online] <http://www.iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2014/apr/11/report-how-khamenei-makes-decisions> [Accessed 16 October 2015].

(2014). Why Does the U.S. Support a Country which was Founded with Terrorism. Global Research, 30 August 2014, [Online] <http://www.globalresearch.ca/why-does-the-u-s-support-saudi-arabia-a-country-which-hosts-and-finances-islamic-terrorism-on-behalf-of-washington/5398408> [Accessed 09 August 2015].

(2013). Iran said to train militias in Syria. United Press International (UPI), World News, 11 February 2013, [Online] <http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2013/02/11/Iran-said-to-train-militias-in-Syria/UPI-53591360567800/?spt=hs&or=tn> [Accessed 11 February 2013].

(2013). Pentagon Iran report identifies Anne Singleton and Massoud Khodabandeh as MOIS agents abroad. Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, 04 January 2013, [Online] <http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/terrorism-a-fundamentalism/12622-pentagon-iran-report-identifies-anne-singleton-and-massoud-khodabandeh-as-mois-agents-abroad> [Accessed 05 January 2013].

(2013). Iraqi deaths from violence in 2012. Analysis of the year's death toll recorded by Iraq Body Count (IBC), 01 January 2013, [Online] <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/analysis/numbers/2012/> [Accessed 22 October 2013].

(2012). Guard Commander: Threats Against Iran Lies in the Soft Wars. Network Persian Gulf in Iran, 17 September 2012, [Online] <http://www.persiangulfnetwork.com/?p=1687> [Accessed 05 February 2013].

(2012). GCC warns Iranian regime to end interference in Arab states. Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, 26 December 2012, [Online] <http://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/terrorism-a-fundamentalism> [Accessed 27 December 2012].

(2011). How Radical are Bahrain's Shiites? The Real Source of Unrest in the Kingdom. Foreign Affairs, 15 MAY 2011, [Online] <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67855/justin-gengler/how-radical-are-bahrains-shia> [Accessed 31 August 2013].

(2011). Raytheon gets $1.7 billion Patriot deal. Security Industry, United Press International (UPI), 27 June 2011, [Online] <http://www.upi.com/Business_News/Security-Industry/2011/06/27/Raytheon-gets-17-billion-Patriot-deal/UPI-74681309198406/> [Accessed 23 November 2012].

(2011). Iran to investigate Saudi role in Bahrain. United Press International (UPI), Special Report, 06 May 2011, [Online] <http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2011/05/06/Iran-to-investigate-Saudi-role-in-Bahrain/UPI-36721304702031/> [Accessed 24 November 2012].

(2011). Bahrain jails three for spying for Iran: report. AFP, 06 July 2011, [Online] <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gsre1o1UssbG-NKuJWr-k_kce85g?docId=CNG.400d0f07f2d2e0899ef48311491aa56c.6a1> [Accessed 24 November 2012].

(2010). Netanyahu Says Lebanon 'Becoming Iran Satellite.' AFP, 17 October 2010, [Online] <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5i4YrAou3PhhX5D0pYtCDmDnVV3Kw?docId=CNG.ec7f9d91f9219fe198c74432d20146a9.4b1> [Accessed 27 February 2013].

(2010). Brigades of Abdullah Azzam Warns Sunnis of Iran-Syria Alliance. SITE, Intelligence Group, Monitoring Service, Jihadist Threat, 14 October 2010, [Online] <http://www.news.siteintelgroup.com/component/customproperties/tag/Countries-Syria> [Accessed 27 February 2013].

(2010). Iran and the Arabs: Review the history and politics. Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies, The first symposium, 19-20 December 2010, [Online] <http://www.dohainstitute.org/content/0ddcf1a9-a2e4-40f2-9a7d-0e2af8ba2836> [Accessed 09 July 2013].

(2009). Bahrain rejects Iran comments on sovereignty. Todays Zaman, Turkey, 23 February 2009, [Online] <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-167742-bahrain-rejects-iran-comments-on-sovereignty.html> [Accessed 31 August 2013].

(2009). The Iranian revolution at 30. The Middle East institute viewpoint. Pp. 10-300, [Online] <http://www.mideasti.org> [Accessed 24 May 2010].

(2008). Iran. Church and Society Council, Church of Scotland, [Online] <http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/3777/iran_08.pdf> [Accessed 12 August 2013].

(2006). Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch, No:1210, [Online] <http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area> [Accessed 22 April 2010].

(2006). Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies (C.S.S), [Online] <http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/default.htm> [Accessed 08 January 2011].

(2005). The National Defense Strategy of The United States of America. Global Security, [Online] <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/dod/nds-usa_

mar2005.htm> [Accessed 09 August 2013].

(2003). Jihad and Terrorism Studies. The Middle East Media Research Institute, (MEMRI), 493, Special Dispatch, 11 April 2003, [Online] <http://www.memri.org/subject_ reports/en/50/6/1620/0/50.htm> [Accessed 17 January 2015].

(1979). Iran Government: The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Pars Times, Greater Iran and Beyond, Last Amended in 1989, [Online] <http://www.parstimes. com/gov_iran.html> [Accessed 05 May 2012].

(1987). Historical Setting. Source: The Library of Congress Country Studies, Pars Times, Greater Iran and Beyond, [Online] <http://www.parstimes.com/history/historical setting.html#top> [Accessed 23 December 2014].

Radio Programmes

(2015). Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty (01 May 2015)

(2013). Radio programs in Farsi, Farsi News from Voice of America (18 February 2013)

(2012). Iran's latest news, Radio Hamseda (02 October 2012)

(2012). 24-hour live, Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran (24 September 2012)

(2012). Radio news programs in Farsi, Radio Voice of Mojahed (18 August 2012)

(2012). National Public Radio, Talk of the Nation, Ray Takeyh (28 August 2012)

(2011). Persian (Iranian) Farsi Radio (09 July 2011)

(2011). Voice of Democracy, Peace & Socialism, Radio Aras (03 July 2011)

(2010). Live News, Radio Namaashoum (14 October 2010)

(2010). Radio Javan Online, Iranian Persian Radio (13 October 2010)

(2009). Real Audio, Radio Farda (23 February 2009)

(2006). BBC Persian Radio (28 November 2006)

(1987). America Audio Recordings of Broadcasts BBC (10 July 1987)

Press TV

Ahmadinejad, Mahmoud. (2009). Ahmadinejad's Interview. Al-Alam TV, Arabic news channel, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Wednesday, 14 January 2009, [Online] <http://www.english.irib.ir/bahrain/item/42972-ahmadinejads-interview-with-al-jazeera-al-alam-and-press-tv-news-channels> [Accessed 24 November 2015].

Al-Husseini, Mohammad. (2014). Yemen in the Hands of Iran and Saudi Arabia Shrinks. Arabi 21 TV, London, Arabic language, Tuesday, 30 September 2014, [Online] <http://www.arabi21.com/story/779032> [Accessed 04 March 2015].

Haddad-Adel, Gholam-Ali. (2008). Iran Powerful and popular in region. Press TV, Tuesday, 15 January 2008, 12:9pm, [Online] <http://www.edition.presstv.ir/detail/38855.html> [Accessed 27 April 2012].

(2016). Explosions in the Gulf: A Documentary Film of Al-Jazeera. Al-Jazeera Media, Friday, 11 March 2016, [Online] <http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/al-jazeeraspecial programs/2016/3/5/> [Accessed 20 March 2016].

(2016). NATO and Kuwait sign Transit Agreement. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Monday, 29 February 2016, [Online] <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_ 128684.htm> [Accessed 20 March 2016].

(2015). Iranian influence in the region between expansion and contraction. Aljazeera Mubasher, Reality TV News, Tuesday, 27 January 2015, [Online] <http://www.mubasher.aljazeera.net/reports/2015/01/2015127105013953138.htm> [Accessed 29 January 2015].

(2015). Hezbollah has arsenal of 50,000 missiles: Pentagon. i24 News, Middle East, 16 January 2015, [Online] <http://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/middle-east/ 57832-150115-hezbollah-has-the-capability-to-strike-deep-into-israel-says-nasrallah> [Accessed 21 January 2015].

(2013). Al-Nefisy, Abdullah's speech on the transformative power of Iranian external behavior. Alziadiq8 Programme, Video, Arabic language, 25 March 2013, [Online] <www.alziadiq8.com/17310.html> [Accessed 02 April 2013].

(2013). Al-Nefisy, Abdullah's speech on regional strategic roles for Iran's foreign policy. Alziadiq8 Programme, Video, Arabic language, 24 March 2013, [Online] <http://www.alziadiq8.com/17055.html> [Accessed 02 April 2013].

(2012). Nasrallah, Hassan's speech on strategic links and regional roles between Iran and Lebanese Hezbollah. Al-Manar TV station for Lebanese Hezbollah, Arabic language, 19 November 2012, [Online] <http://www.almanar.com.lb/main.php> [Accessed 04 April 2013].

(2012). Marching Black: Documentary Programme about the danger of the Shiites. Ahwazi Arabestan Site, Video, Arabic language, 21 March 2012, [Online] <http://www.arabistan.org/videoinfos.aspx?elmnt=96&ids=1395> [Accessed 09 November 2012].

(2010). The Iraqi Shiite thinker, Sabah Alkhozai discusses the escalation of Iranian influence in Iraq in particular, and its involvement in the Arab issues in general. The Opposite Direction programme in Al-Jazeera, Arabic language, 12 October 2010, [Online] <http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/pages/1b226c97-cdba-4ed9-bac5-f2b818fa0b8a> [Accessed 08 September 2013].

(2009). Debate on Iranian strategic role in the region particularly from the perspective of the Iraqi Shiite thinker, Sabah Alkhozai, Al-Mustakillah TV, Arabic language, 27 June 2008 and 24 January 2009, [Online] <http://www.almustakillah.com/> [Accessed 15 August 2013].

(1981). Panorama Iran Archive: 1979. BBC sites News, English Language, Friday, 05 June 2009, [Online] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front_page/newsid_8083000/8083525.stm> [Accessed 09 February 2015].

B. Secondary Sources

1. Books

Acharya, Amitav. Buzan, Barry. (2010). Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and Beyond Asia. British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data, Library of Congress cataloging-in publication Data, No. 1, pp. 174-193.

Al-Aderous, Mohammad. (2002). The Arabian Islands and the Iranian occupation: Model of Arab-Iran Relationships. AL-Aderous Centre for Modern Book, No.2, pp. 26-45, pp. 56-94.

Al-Aderous, Mohammad. (1999). Arab-Iran Relationships. AL-Aderous Centre for Modern Book, No.1, pp. 5-40, pp. 183-206.

Albright, Madeleine. (2007). The Mighty and the Almighty. In association with Bill Clinton, Harper Collin Publishers, Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, Arabic Copyright by Arab Scientific Publishers, Interpreted by: Omar Alayoubi, Madbouly Bookshop, No.1, pp. 10-26, pp. 29-51, pp. 69-80, pp. 107-184, pp. 241-262

Algar, Hamid. (1981). Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini.

Translated and Annotated by Hamid Algar, Berkeley, CA: Mizan Press, No.1, pp.40-54, pp. 246-248.

Al-Ghareib, Abdullah. (2005). The role of the Parsee (Majous): historical, ideological and political dimensions of the Iranian Revolution. Arabic version, No.1, pp.103-198, pp. 297-375.

Al-Kulayni, Mohammad. (2001). Osul Alkafi: Part One. Encyclopedia of the four books for Prophet's Hadith and successor. Arabic version, No.1, pp.231-475.

Al-Nefisy, Abdullah. Abdullah, Adel. (2008). Drives of Persian policy in the Arabian Gulf Region. Arabic version, No.1, pp.3-79.

Al-Nefisy, Abdullah. (2014). Introduction to the Iranian Project in Arab and Muslim Region. Umayya Center for Research and Studies, Arabic version, No.2, pp.11-42.

AL-Sadeq, Ali. (2006). What Do You Know About Hezbollah. Arabic version, No.1, pp.21-72. pp. 79-99.

AL-Sader, Mohammad. AL-Fadily, Abdul-Hadi. (2004). Imam Al-Mahdi: Truth of his existence, the parameters of his state, and how will be awaited. Dar AL- Mortada Publishers, Inc, Lebanon-Beirut, Arabic version, No.1, pp.206-285.

AL-Sayyed, Radwan. (1997). Movements of political Islam and the Future. Emirate's lecture Series, The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, No.1, pp.1-27.

AL-Sobagha, Hussein. (2015). The New World Order. Strategic and Political Studies, That Al-Salasil Publisher: for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, Kuwait, Arabic version, No.1, pp. 11-24. pp. 83-103. pp. 244-246.

AL-Suwaidi, Jamal. (2014). Iran and the Gulf: A Search for Stability. The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, No.2, pp. 47-135. pp. 158-174. pp. 323-351.

AL-Suwaidi, Jamal. (2005). Iran and the Gulf: A Search for Stability. The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, No.1, pp. 16-27. pp. 173-268.

AL-Suwaidi, Jamal. (2005). Gulf and the Challenges of the Future. The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, No.1, pp. 35-43. pp. 181-203.

Al-Theyabi, Jamil. (2011). Iran and the dance of Crab. Library of King Fahd National Publishing, Obeikan Bookshop Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, No.2, pp. 16-52. pp. 78-109. pp. 124-151. pp. 164-170. pp. 185-191.

Ansari, Ali. (2006). Confronting Iran: The Failure of American Foreign Policy and the next

Great Crisis in the Middle East. Published by Basic Books, A member of the Perseus Books Group. A CIP catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress, No. 1, pp. 123-132. pp. 184-232.

Ashbee, Edward. (2007). The Bush Administration, Sex and the Moral Agenda. Manchester University Press, British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data, Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data, No.1, pp. 01-12. pp. 13-72. pp. 233-246.

Axelrod, Robert. (1997). The Complexity of Cooperation: Agent-Based Models of Competition and Collaboration. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data, No.1, pp. 03-12. pp 16-38.

Axelrod, Robert. (1984). The Evolution of Cooperation. NY: Basic Books, Revised Edition, pp. 1-40, pp. 50–59, pp. 83-86.

Bausell, Barker. (1986). A Practical Guide To Conducting Empirical Research. University of Maryland, British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data, No. 1, pp. 3–18.

Bergman, Ronen. (2008). The Secret War with Iran: The 30-Year Covert Struggle for Control of a Rogue State. One world Publications Ltd, British Library, No. 2, pp. xi-22, pp. 51-62, pp.76-89.

Berridge, G. (1992). International Politics: States, Power and Conflict Since 1945. Harvester Wheatsheaf, Printed by BPCC Wheatons Ltd, Exeter, British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data, No. 2, pp. 61-76, pp. 170–175.

Bilgin, Pinar. (2005). Regional Security in the Middle East: A critical perspective. British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data, Library of Congress cataloging-in publication Data, No. 1, pp. 1-7, pp. 123–130, pp. 144-201.

Booth, Ken., & Wheeler, Nicholas., (2008). The Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics. Palgrave Macmillan, No. 1, pp.1-41.

Buzan, Barry. Wæver, Ole. (2003). Regions and Powers; the Structure of International Security. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. No. 1, pp. 40-64. pp. 144-169. pp.187-200.

Buzan, B., Jones, Ch. & Little, R. (1993). The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism. Columbia University Press, Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data, No.1, pp102-113.pp 132-137.

Buzan, Barry. (1991). People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era. Printed and bound in Great Britain by TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall, No.2, pp 1-128. pp 190-291.

Chehabi, H., Abisaab, R., Harik, J., Hollinger, R., Hourani, A., Mneimneh, H., Samii, W.,

Tafreshi, M. (2006). Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the Last 500 Years. Centre for Lebanese Studies, Oxford in Associated with I.B. Tauris Publishers London, New York, No, 1, pp. 1-46, pp. 201-229, pp. 231-257, pp. 259- 308.

Cole, Juan. (2009). Engaging the Muslim World. Palgrave Macmillan, Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data, No.1, pp193-247.

Collins, Alan. (2007). Contemporary Security Studies. Oxford University press, Online Resource Centre, No.1, pp. 2-25, pp.132-143, pp. 249-277.

Cordesman, Anthony. Kleiber, Martin. (2007). Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities: The Threat in the Northern Gulf. Center for Strategic and International Studies, Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data, No.1, pp 23-38. pp 74-83. pp 202-208.

Cottam, Richard. (1979). Nationalism in Iran: Updated Through 1978. Published by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data, No, 1, pp. 1-22, pp. 134-157.

Coughlin, Con. (2010). Khomeini's Ghost: The Iranian Revolution and the Rise of Militant Islam. HarperCollins Publishers, Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data, No.1, pp181-197. pp. 243-286.

Dake, Finis. (2010). The DAKE Annotated Reference Bible: The Holy Bible, Containing the old and new testaments of the Authorized or King James version text, Red Letter Edition. pp. 872-873.

Dawisha, Adeed. (1983). Islam in Foreign Policy. The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Cambridge University Press, Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 83-7458, British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data, No.1, pp. 1-22, pp 33-51.

Ehteshami, Anoushiravan., Zweiri, Mahjoob. (2008). Iran's Foreign Policy From Khatami to Ahmadinejad. Ithaca press, British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data, No.1, pp. 1-33, pp 115-138.

Ehteshami, Anoushiravan., & Zweiri, Mahjoob. (2007). Iran and the rise of its Neoconservatives: The Politics of Tehran silent revolution. I.B.Tauris and Co Ltd, No. 1, pp. 73-147.

Ehteshami, Anoushiravan., & Hinnebusch, Raymond. (1997). Syria and Iran: Middle Powers in a Penetrated Regional System. Routledge, printed and bound in Great Britain by TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall, pp7-24. pp. 26-54.

Ehteshami, Anoushiravan. (1998). The Changing Balance of Power in Asia. The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, No.1, pp.32-37.

El-Gogary, Adel. (2013). Bernard Lewis: an Executioner the Middle East and Engineer the Sykes–Picot Agreement/2. Arabic version, Arab Book House, Syria-Egypt, No.1, pp.17-32, pp. 35-63, pp. 165-192.

Fawcett, Louise. (2009). International Relations of the Middle East. Oxford University Press, British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data, Library of Congress cataloging-in-publication Data, No. 2, pp 150–173, pp 294-305.

Fawcett, Louise. (2005). International Relations of the Middle East. Oxford University Press, British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data, Library of Congress cataloging-in-publication Data, No. 1, pp 47–56, pp 195-214.

Feste, Karen. (1996). The Iranian Revolution and Political Change in the Arab World, The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, No.1, pp.8-33.

Forbis, William. (1980). Fall of the Peacock Throne: The Story of Iran. New York, Harper & Row, No. 1, pp. 17-92.

Freedman, Lawrence. (2008). A Choice of Enemies: America Confronts the Middle East. Published in Great Britain by Weidenfeld and Nicolson. The Orion Publishing Group Ltd Orion House, No. 1, pp. 10-17. pp. 433-436. pp. 373-511.

Fuller, Graham. (2003). US Policy Towards Political Islam. Emirates lecture Series, 45. The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, No.1, pp.1-27.

Gelvin, James. (2005). The Middle East : A History. University of California, Los Angeles, Oxford University Press, Inc, Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, No.1, pp. 1-3. pp. 9-11. pp. 247-260. pp. 278-297.

Gokay, Bulent. (2004). Turkey, Greece and Cyprus: Security Across the Borderlands of A New Europe. Keele European Research Centre, Keele Workshop: 16-17-July, 2004. No. 1, pp. 72-80.

Griffiths, Martin., Roach, C. Steven., & Solomon, M. Scott., (2009). Fifty Key Thinkers in International Relations. Routledge Key Guides. No. 2, pp. 123-159.

Griffiths, Martin., O'Callaghan, Terry & Roach, C. Steven. (2008). International Relations: The Key Concepts, Routledge Key Guides. No. 2, pp. 51-53, pp. 295-296.

Hagan, Joe., Neack., Laura., Hey., Jeanne., Haney., Patrick., (1995). Domestic Political Explanations in the Analysis of Foreign Policy. Foreign Policy Analysis Continuity and Change in Its Second Generation. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. pp. 117-43.

Hiltermann, R, Joost. (2004). Iran, Iraq and the Legacies of War. Edited by: Lawrence Potter and Gary Sick, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, No.1, pp. 151-163.

Hinnebusch Raymond., & Ehteshami, Anoushiravan. (2002). The Foreign Policies of Middle East States. Lynne Rienner Publishers, No.2, pp. 2-22, pp. 71-77, pp. 283-307, pp. 335-354.

Hollis, Rosemary. (1993). Gulf Security: No Consensus. Whiteball Paper Series 1993, The Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, Printed in Great Britain by Sherrens Printers. pp. 1-30, pp. 51-57, pp. 67-71.

Hollis, Martin., & Smith, Steve. (1990). Explaining and Understanding International Relations. British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data, Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data, No. 1, pp. 36-67, pp 104-118.

Horgan, John. (2005). The Psychology of Terrorism. Routledge, British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data, Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data, No, 1, pp. 1-34. pp. 42-48. pp. 112-120.

Howard, Roger. (2007). Iranian Oil: And its Role in Challenging the Influence of the United States. Translation by Marwan Saad Eddin, Copyright by Arab Scientific Publishers, Beirut, I.B. Tauris, No. 1, pp. 13-20, pp. 64-72.

Hunter, T, Shireen. (2000). Iran, Between the Gulf and the Caspian Basin: Strategic and Economic Implications. The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research. The Emirates Occasional Papers, 38, No.1, pp.27-36.

Huntington, Samuel. (1996). The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. Touchstone and Colophone are Registered Trademarcks of Simon and Schuster Inc, Library of Congress cataloging in publication Data, No. 1, pp. 207-217, pp. 254-258.

Ishiyama, John. Breuning, Marijke. (2011). 21st Century Political Science: A Reference Handbook. SAGE Publications, Inc. Library of Congress cataloging in publication Data, No. 1, pp. 568-575.

Jackson, Robert., & Sorenson, Georg. (2007). Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches. Oxford University Press, No.3, pp. 45-46, pp. 74-246, pp. 279-314.

Jawada, Ahmad. (2007). Who Are the Shiites. Dar Alameer Publishers, Inc, Arabic version, No.9, pp.5-20. pp 201- 213.

Jervis, Robert. (2005). American Foreign Policy in a New Era. Routledge, Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data, No, 1, pp. 37-58.

Jones, Clive. (2003). Sail Without Anchor: Determinations Current of U.S. Policy in the Arabian Gulf. Series Emirates Lecture 76, The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, No.1, pp.17-24.

Jones, Peter. (2003). Iranian Security Policies at the Crossroads? The Emirates Centre for

Strategic Studies and Research, the Emirates Occasional Papers, 50, No.1, pp.10-31.

Kamrava, Mehran. (2005). The Modern Middle East: A Political History since the First World War. University of California Press, Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data, No.2, pp. 7-168, pp. 215-256, pp. 399- 376.

Kennedy, Mary. (2010). The Qur'an: English Meanings and Notes by Saheeh International. Quran Translation. Published by AL-Muntada AL-Islami Trust 2001-2010, Abul-Qasim Publishing House 1997-2001, King Fahad National Library Cataloging-in-Publication Data. Pp. 69-94.

Khomeini, Mousavi. (1987). Secrets Revealed. Arabic version, Dar Ammar Printing and publishing in Jordan. No.1, pp.115-155, pp. 175-180, pp. 209-246.

Khomeini, Ayatollah. (1985). The Little Green Book: Selected Fatawah and Sayings of the Ayatollah Mosavi Khomeini. The Astonishing Beliefs of the Man Who Has Shaken the Western World, Translated into English by Harold Salemson, pp. 1-70.

Khomeini, Mousavi. (1981). Islamic Revolution. Translated and Annotated by Hamid Algar, Mizan Press, Berkeley, Contemporary Islamic Thought, Persian Series, Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data, No.1, pp 40-125.

Khomeini, Imam. (1970). Islamic Government. Governance of the Jurist (Velayat-e Faqeeh, Publisher: The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini Works, International Affairs Division, Translator and Annotator: Hamid Algar, No.1, pp. 1-94.

Kinzer, Stephen. (2006). Iran: The Essential Guide to a Country on the Brink. Britannica, Encyclopedia Britannica, Published by John Wiley and Sons, Inc.Hoboken, No.1, pp. 1-30. pp. 93-112. pp. 117-120. pp. 146-162. pp. 186-188.

Knights, Michael. (2006). Troubled Waters: Future U.S. Security Assistance in the Persian Gulf. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Library of Congress cataloging-in publication Data, No. 1, pp. 17-47. pp. 49-87.

Lenczowski, George. (1990). American Presidents and the Middle East. Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, No.1, pp. 244–254.

Lobell, S., Ripsman, N., Taliaferro, J. (2009). Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy. Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York, No. 1, pp. 1-6.

Mansfield, Stephen. (2004). The Faith of George W. Bush. Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin a Member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc, No. 1, pp. 17-35, pp. 75-92, pp. 105-114.

Mansour, Ibrahim, Muhammad. (2001). The Nuclear Option in the Middle East. Center for

Arab Unity Studies, Works of Intellectual Symposium Organized by the Center for Future Studies at the University of Assiut, Egypt, No. 1, pp. 453-467.

Marschall, Christin. (2003). Iran's Persian Gulf Policy: From Khomeini to Khatami. London Routledge Curzon. British Library Cataloging in Publication Data, No.1, pp. 3-23. pp. 26-59.

Mason, Robert. (2015). Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia: Economics and Diplomacy in the Middle East. Library of Modern Middle East Studies 153, Library of Congress, I.B. Tauris, No. 1, pp. 1-15, pp. 20-27.

Mearsheimer, John. (2001). The Tragedy of Great Power Politics. Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data, No. 1, pp. 1- 28, pp. 138-154.

Melissen, Jan. (2005). The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations. Palgrave Macmillan, Studies in Diplomacy and International Relations, Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, No. 1, pp. 147-168.

Merriam, Sharan. (2009). Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation. Revised and Expanded from Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, No. 2, pp. 2-8, pp. 139-148, pp. 172-180.

Molavi, Afshin. (2005). The Soul of Iran: A Nation's Journey to Freedom. Originally published under the title Persian Pilgrimages, Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data, No.1, pp. 43-106.

Morgenthau, Hans. Revised by Kenneth, Thompson & Clinton, W. (1948, 1993). Politics among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace. 7th edition, brief, McGraw-Hill, pp. 1-15.

Muhafaza, Ali. (2013). Iran Between Persian Nationalism and Islamic Revolution. Arabian Foundation for Studies and Publishing, Beirut, No. 1, pp. 115- 170. pp. 191 261.

Myerson, Roger. (1997). Game Theory: Analysis of Conflict. Harvard University, Library of Congress cataloging-in- publication Data, No. 2, pp. 1-21. pp. 37-53. pp. 114-128. pp. 154-166. pp. 385-389. pp. 483-598.

Nye, Jr.,Joseph. (2004). Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics. New York Public Affairs, Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, No. 1, pp. 33-53. pp. 127-140.

Owen, Roger. (2007). State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East. Routledge, printed and bound in Great Britain by TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall, No.3, pp. 1-38. pp. 73-109. pp. 154-199.

Parker, Ian. (1992). Discourse Dynamics: Critical Analysis for Social and Individual Psychology. Routledge, British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data, No.1, pp. 3-15, pp. 23-41, pp. 132-143.

Poole, John. (2007). Tactics of the Crescent Moon: Militant Muslim Combat Methods. Published by Posterity Press, cataloging-in-publication Data, No. 1, pp 3-10. pp 29-45.pp 105-141.

Potter, Lawrence., & Sick, Gary. (2002). Security in the Persian Gulf: Origins, Obstacles, and the Search for Consensus. Palgrave, Library of Congress cataloging-in- publication Data, No. 1, pp. 69-167.

Said, Abdul Aziz. Funk, Nathan. Kadayifci, Ayse. (2002). Islamic Approaches to Conflict Resolution and Peace. Emirates Lecture Series 48. The Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, No.1, pp.4-12.

Savigny, Heather. Marsden, Lee. (2011). Doing Political Science and International Relations: Theories in Action, Political Analysis. Palgrave Macmillan. Available from the British Library and Library of Congress. No. 1, pp. 5-51. pp. 174-196.

Shams al-Din, Muhammad. (1996). Incident of Karbala in Popular Conscience. Arabic version, International Foundation for Studies and Publishing, Beirut, Lebanon, No. 2, pp. 13-15. pp. 27-46.

Shams al-Din, Muhammad. (1992). Islamic Political Community: Attempt Rooting Jurisprudential and Historical Concepts. International Foundation for Studies and Publishing, Beirut, Lebanon, No. 1, pp. 16-27. pp. 59-88. pp. 91-115. pp. 197-214. pp. 241-268.

Shams al-Din, Muhammad. (1985). Movement of History in Imam Ali's perspective: A Study at Rhetoric Approach. University Corporation for Studies and Publishing and Distribution, Beirut, Lebanon, No. 1, pp. 13-31. pp. 91-98. pp. 145-158. pp. 207-211.

Snyder, jack. (1991). Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition. Cornell University Press; Ithaca and London, No. 1, pp. 01-19. pp. 21-65.

Sutch, Peter., & Elias, Juanita. (2008). International relations: The basics. Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York, Press, British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data, Library of Congress cataloging in publication Data, No. 2, pp. 53-58.

Takeyh, Ray. (2010). Hidden Iran: Paradox and Power in the Islamic Republic. Authorised Translation from the English Language Edition by Ayham Al Sabbagh, Al-Obeikan Library, Saudi Arabia, No. 1, pp. 10–43, pp. 79-99, pp. 211-279, pp. 281-294.

Takeyh, Ray. (2009). Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the

Ayatollahs. Oxford University Press, Inc, Library of Congress cataloging in publication Data, No. 1, pp. 11-33.

Takeyh, Ray. (2007). Hidden Iran: Paradox and Power in the Islamic Republic. Display Kamil, M. Arabic version, The House of Arab Book Publisher, Syria and Egypt, No. 1, pp. 9–40, pp. 43-71.

Takeyh, Ray. (2006). Iran at the Strategic Crossroads: In Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East. Directions and Policy Options in the New Century, ed. James A. Russell, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 51-61.

Twain, Mark. (1906). What is Man? And other Eassays. 2010 The Floating Press, No. 1, pp. 137-140.

Waltz, Kenneth. (1979). Theories of International Politics. University of California, Berkeley, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, No.1, pp.38-46, pp. 102-115.

Wenger, Andreas. (2004). The Transformation of Terrorism: The New Terrorism, Impact Scalability and the Dynamic of Reciprocal Threat Perception. Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich, Nr. 67, pp. 25–29, pp. 31-44.

Williams, Paul. (2008). Security Studies: An Introduction. Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada, No.1, pp.17-28, pp.141.

2. Journal and Book Articles

Abadi, S. J. Dehghani Firozab. (2008). Emancipating Foreign Policy: Critical Theory and Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Policy. The Iranian Journal of International Affairs, Vol. XX, No. 3, pp. 1-26 [Online] <http://www.dermfa.ir/pdf/The_Iranian_Journal_Summer_2008/2/1-IranFPand-Critical-Theory-final.pdf> [Accessed 23 June 2013].

Allwood, Jens. (1977). A Critical Look at Speech Act Theory. In Dahl, (Ed.) Logic, Pragmatics and Grammar. Lund. Studentlitteatur, pp. 53-99. [Online] <http://www.ling.gu.se/~jens/publications/docs001-050/012.pdf> [Accessed 05 May 2012].

Alvandi, Roham. (2010). Muhammad Reza Pahlavi and the Bahrain Question, 1968–1970. British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Publisher: Routledge, 37:2, pp.159-177, [Online] <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13530191003794723> [Accessed 05 May 2012].

Axelrod, Robert., Dion, Douglas. (1988). The Further Evolution of Cooperation. 09 December 1988, Vol. 242, pp. 1385-1390, [Online] <http://sdl.soc.cornell.edu/curricular/axelrod

_Evol_Extensions.pdf> [Accessed 05 September 2013].

Axelrod, Robert. Keohane, Robert. (1985). Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions. Cambridge University Press and Trustees of Princeton University, JSTOR, World Politics, Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 226-254, [Online] < http://www.artisresearch.com/articles/Axelrod_Achieving_Cooperation.pdf> [Accessed 05 September 2013].

Bahgat, Gawdat. (2007). Iran and the United States: The Emerging Security Paradigm in the Middle East. [Online] <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/USAWC/parameters/ Articles/07summer/bahgat.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2011].

Barzegar, Kayhan. (2010). Iran's Foreign Policy Strategy after Saddam. The Washington Quarterly, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 173-189 [Online] <http://www.twq.com/10january/docs/10jan_barzegar.pdf> [Accessed 28 November 2010].

Barzegar, Kayhan. (2010). Regionalism in Iran's Foreign Policy, Centre Eurasia Studies, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 23-40 [Online] <http://www.iranreview.org/content/Documents/ Regionalism_in_Iran_s_Foreign_Policy.htm> [Accessed 21 May 2010].

Barzegar, Kayhan. (2009). Iran, the Middle East, and International Security. Vol. 1, No 1, pp. 27-39 [Online] <http://www.orsam.org.tr/en/enUploads/ Article/Files/20091016_barzegar.pdf> [Accessed 23 February 2012].

Barzegar, Kayhan. (2008). Iran's Foreign Policy in Post-Invasion Iraq, Middle East policy, Vol. XV, No.4, pp. 47-58 [Online] <http://belfercenter.ksg. harvard.edu/publication/18770/irans_foreign_policy_in_postinvasion_iraq.html> [Accessed 22 June 2010].

Barzegar, Kayhan. (2008). Iran and the Shiite Crescent: Myths and Realities. Belfer Centre Programmes or Projects, Brown Journal of World Affairs, Vol. XV, No. 1, pp. 87-99 [Online] <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/18724/iran_ and_the_shiite_crescent.html> [Accessed 07 March 2012].

Bazargar, Kayhan. (2007).Iran, New Iraq and the Persian Gulf Political-Security Architecture, The Iranian Journal of International Affairs Vol. XX, No. 1, pp. 93-110 [Online] <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/ISIP.pdf> [Accessed 23 February 2012].

Berti, Benedetta. (2012). Hizbullah, Hamas, and the Arab Spring: Weathering the Regional Storm? Institute for National Security Studies, Israel Journal of foreign Affairs, Vol. 3, pp. 21-29, [Online] <http://israelcfr.com/documents/6 -3/6-3-4-BenedettaBerti.pdf> [Accessed 25 August 2013].

Bilgin, Pinar. (2004). Whose 'Middle East'? Geopolitical Inventions and Oractices of

Security. International Relations Copyright, SAGE Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi, Vol 18, No. 1, pp. 25-41.

Bowman, L. Bradley. (2008). After Iraq: Future U.S. Military Posture in the Middle East. The Washington Quarterly, Vol 31, No. 2, pp. 77–91 [Online] <http://csis.org/files/publication/twq08springbowman.pdf> [Accessed 25 June 2013].

Byman, Daniel. (2008). Iran, Terrorism, and Weapons of Mass Destruction. Center for Peace and Security Studies Georgetown University, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 31: pp 169-181.

Cal, H. Colin. (2012). Do you make the Middle East a nuclear Iran safer: Iran and the Bomb. The Majalla, The Leading Arab Magazine, 22 September 2012, [Online] <http://www.majalla.com/arb/2012/09/article55238646> [Accessed 10 September 2013].

Collins, Alan. (2004). State-Induced Security Dilemma: Maintaining the Tragedy. Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association, Published by SAGE, Vol. 39, No. 1, pp. 27–44.

Cordesman, Anthony. Al-Rodhan, Khalid. (2006). Iran's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Real and Potential Threat. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Washington, D.C., Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, Vol. 28, No 3, pp. 99-159 [Online] <http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/introduction.pdf> [Accessed 11 August 2013].

David, Elkins. Richard, Simeon. (1979). A Cause in Search of its Effect, or What Does Political Culture Explain? Comparative Politics, JSTOR, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 127-145.

Dehshiri, M. Majidi, M. (2008). Iran's Foreign Policy in Post-Revolution Era: A Holistic Approach. Institute for Political and International Studies, The Iranian Journal of International Affairs, Vol. XXI, No.1-2. Winter-Spring 2008-09, pp. 101-114, [Online] <http://www.ensani.ir/storage/Files/20120325151030-1032-5.pdf> [Accessed 14 January 2015].

Devenny, Patrick. (2006). Hezbollah's Strategic Threat to Israel. Middle East Quarterly, Winter 2006, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 31-38, [Online] <http://www.meforum.org/806/hezbollahs-strategic-threat-to-israel> [Accessed 21 January 2015].

Ehteshami, Anoushiravan. (2003). Iran-Iraq Relations after Saddam. Durham Research Online. The Washington Quarterly, 26 (4). pp. 115-129.

Freedman, Lawrence. (2004). War in Iraq: Selling the Threat. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Survival, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 7-50, [Online] <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00396338.2004.9688597> [Accessed 11 February 2013].

Freedman, Lawrence. (2003). Prevention, Not Preemption. The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, The Washington Quarterly, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 105-114, [Online] <http://asr2.myweb.uga.edu/Fall%20 2004/Readings/prevention%20not%20preemption.pdf> [Accessed 09 March 2013].

Freedman, Lawrence. (1998). International Security: Changing Targets. Foreign policy, Special Edition, Frontiers of Knowledge, JSTOR Archive, No. 110, pp. 48-63, [Online] <http://www1.georgetown.edu/sfs/cpass/documents/freedman.pdf> [Accessed 11 February 2013].

Fuller, E. Graham. (2006). The Hizballah-Iran Connection: Model for Sunni Resistance. The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, The Washington Quarterly 30, Vol. 1, pp. 139-150.

Gambill, Gary. (2002). Hezbollah's Strategic Rocket Arsenal. Middle East Intelligence Bulletin, November-December 2002, Vol. 4, No. 11, [Online] <http://www.mefor um.org/meib/articles/0211_l2.htm> [Accessed 21 January 2015].

Gelman, di Andrew. (2008). Methodology as Ideology: Some Comments on Robert Axelrod's the Evolution of Cooperation. Vol. 1, pp. 166, 177, [Online] <http://www.stat.columbi a.edu/~gelman/research/published/gelmanaxelrod_001.pdf> [Accessed 03 September 2013].

Gokay, Bulent. (2006). Iraq, Iran and the end of petrodollar: The waning influence of the USA in the Asian century. VT, Military and Foreign Affairs Journal, Veterans Today, 17 May 2006, [Online] <http://www.veteranstoday.com/2006/05/17/iraq-iran-and-the-end-of-petrodollar/> [Accessed 20 November 2012].

Gokay, Bulent. Whitman, Darrell. (2004). Ghost Dance: The U.S. and Illusions of Power in the 21st Century. Alternatives, Turkish Journal of International Relations, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp.60-91, [Online] <http://www.alternativesjournal.net/volume3/number4/gokay2.pdf> [Accessed 23 October 2011].

Grieco, M. Joseph. (1988). Realist Theory and the Problem of International Cooperation: Analysis with an Amended Prisoner's Dilemma Model. The Journal of Politics, Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Southern Political Science Association, Vol. 50, No. 3, pp. 600-624, [Online] <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2131460> [Accessed 09 March 2012].

Hancock, Beverley. (1998). Trent Focus for Research and Development in Primary Health Care: An Introduction to Qualitative Research. Trent Focus Group, Updated 2002, pp.1-27, [Online] <http://www.classes.uleth.ca/200502/mgt2700a/Articles/Qualitative %20Research.pdf> [Accessed 09 December 2014].

Heywood, Andrew. (2007). Political Ideologies: An Introduction. Palgrave, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 303-326, [Online] <http://www.muhammadgozyali.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/

politics-ideologies.pdf> [Accessed 31 December 2014].

Hopf, Ted. (1998). The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory, International Security, Vol. 23, No.1, pp. 171-200, [Online] <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2539267?uid=27461&uid=3738032&uid=2129&uid=2&uid=70&uid=3&uid=5910784&uid=67&uid=27459&uid=62&sid=47698758239507> [Accessed 14 March 2012].

Jervis, Robert. (1988). Realism, Game Theory, and Cooperation. Research Article, World Politics, Columbia University, Published online: 13 June 2011, Vol. 40, No. 3, pp 317-349, [Online] <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract;jsessionid=CE4DB1DDB951939ED31ECBCC661B1F72.journals?fromPage=online&aid=7655104> [Accessed 05 September 2013].

Jervis, Robert. (1978). Cooperation under the Security Dilemma. World Politics, Johne Hopkins University Press, January 1978, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp 167-214, [Online] < http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/trachtenberg/guide/jervissecdil.pdf> [Accessed 29 December 2014].

Joscelyn, Thomas. (2011). State Department: Iran the 'most active state sponsor of terrorism'. The Long War Journal, A Project of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, 19 August 2011, [Online] <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/08/state_department_ira_1.php> [Accessed 09 March 2013].

Karagiannis, Emmanuel. (2009). Hezbollah as a Social Movement Organization: A Framing Approach. Article first published in Mediterranean Politics Journal, 14: 3, 365 - 383. [Online] <http://www.ict.org.il/Articles/tabid/66/Default.aspx> [Accessed 24 January 2011].

Lapid, Yosef. (1989). The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era. International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 33, No.3, pp. 235-254.

Lee, Sean. (2008). The Second Iranian Revolution: Why Iran's modern radicalism should ease US fears, Stanford Journal of International Relations, vol. X, No.1, pp. 44- 51, [Online] <http://www.stanford.edu/group/sjir/pdf/Iran_REAL_final.pdf> [Accessed 28 April 2011].

Leuprecht, Christian. (2010). The Demographic Security Dilemma: Yale Journal of International Affairs, pp. 60-74, [Online] <http://www.yalejournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/105207leuprecht.pdf> [Accessed 01 June 2010].

Lobell, Steven., Ripsman, Norrin., Taliaferro, Jeffrey. (2009). Taking Stock of Neoclassical Realism. International Studies Review, Vol 11, 799–803, [Online] <http://www.sirpa.fudan.edu.cn/picture/article/56/88/ac/7c64a8d340368df7c344a544924c/80d7a806-42c7-49bd-8396-f1dc9d5502b9.pdf> [Accessed 12 September 2011].

Lobell, S. Ripsman, N. Taliaferro, J. (2009). The High Cost of Theory in Neoclassical Realism. Cambridge University Press, 322, 1-4, [Online] <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showpdf.php?id=24339> [Accessed 12 September 2011].

Lobell, S. Ripsman, N. Taliaferro, J. (2007). The Statesman, the State, and the Balance of Power: Neoclassical Realism and the Politics of Grand Strategic Adjustment. The International Security Studies Section—International Security and Arms Control Annual Conference, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, pp. 1-49, [Online], <http://ase.tufts.edu/polsci/faculty/taliaferro/statesmanState.pdf> [Accessed 12 September 2011].

Mearsheimer, John. (1990). Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War. International Security, by the President and Follows of Harvard College and of the Messachusetts of Technology, Vol.15, No.1, pp.5-56, [Online], <http://www.mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/A0017.pdf> [Accessed 28 November 2015].

Miller, Benjamin. (2006). Balance of Power or the State-to-Nation Balance: Explaining Middle East War-Propensity. Security Studies, Vol.15, No.4, pp.658-705, [Online], <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09636410601184587> [Accessed 28 March 2012].

Miller, Laura. (2002). War Is Sell. Public Interest Reporting on the PR/Public Affairs Industry, PR Watch, Fourth Quarter, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 1-12, [Online] <http://www.prwatch.org/files/pdfs/prwatch/prwv9n4.pdf> [Accessed 16 September 2013].

Moran, Daniel. Russell, James. (2009). Special Issue on Extended Deterrence, Security Guarantees, and Nuclear Proliferation: Strategic Stability in the Gulf Region. Strategic Insights, The Centre on Contemporary Conflict, Vol.8, No.5, pp.1-4, [Online] < http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA534512> [Accessed 17 July 2013].

Mousavi, Mohammad. Norouzi, Yasser. (2010). Iran-US Nuclear Standoff: A Game Theory Approach. Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs, Vol. 1, No, 1, pp. 122-152, [Online] <http://www.campaigniran.org/casmii/files/Mousavi%20(2010)_-_Iran_US%20Nuclear%20Standoff.pdf> [Accessed 07 September 2013].

Nasr, Vali. Takeyh, Ray. (2008). The Costs of Containing Iran: Washington's Misguided New Middle East Policy. Journal Article, Foreign Affairs, Belfer Centre for Science and International Affairs, [Online] <http://belfercenter.hks.harvard.edu/publication/17731/costs_of_containing_iran.html> [Accessed 3 July 2013].

Neumann, Peter. Smith, M. (2005). Strategic Terrorism: The Framework and its Fallacies, The Journal of Strategic Studies, Routledge, Vol. 28, No. 4, pp. 571–595, [Online] <http://www.polsci.wvu.edu/faculty/hauser/PS461/NeumannSmithStrategicTerrorismJSS2005.pdf> [Accessed 14 February 2013].

Nia, M. Mahdi. (2011). Title: A Holistic Constructivist Approach to Iran's Foreign Policy. International Journal of Business and Social Science, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 279-294, Centre for Promoting Ideas, USA, [Online] <http://www.ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol._2_No._4;_March_2011/31.pdf> [Accessed 22 June 2013].

Nia, M. Mahdi. (2010). Understanding Iran's Foreign Policy: An Application of Holistic Constructivism. Alternatives, Turkish Journal of International Relations, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 148-180, [Online] <http://www.alternativesjournal.net/new/index.php?menu=pages&p=editorial_board> [Accessed 09 July 2013].

Norton, Augustus. (2007). The Role of Hezbollah in Lebanese Domestic Politics. The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 42, No. 4, pp. 475-491, Publisher Routledge, [Online] <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03932720701722852> [Accessed 15 April 2012].

Oishi, Etsuko. (2006). Austin's Speech Act Theory and the Speech Situation. Esercizi Filosofici1, 2006, pp. 1-14 ISSN 1970-0164, [Online] <http://www.univ.trieste.it/~eserfilo/art106/oishi106.pdf> [Accessed 29 November 2011].

Pape, A. Robert. (2003). The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. American Political Science Review, Vol. 97, No. 3, pp. 343-361, [Online] <http://www.apsanet.org/imgtest/apsraug03pape.pdf> [Accessed 22 August 2013].

Pollack, Kenneth. Takeyh, Ray. (2005). Taking on Tehran. Foreign Affairs, Vol. 84, No. 2, pp. 20-34, [Online] <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/60619/kenneth-pollack-and-ray-takeyh/taking-on-tehran> [Accessed 22 August 2013].

Reissner, Johannes. Whitlock, Eugene. (2004). Iran and its Neighbors: Diverging Views on a Strategic Region. German Institute for International and Security Affairs, SWP Berline, Royal Institute for International Affairs, Vol. 2, pp. 1-59, [Online] <http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/arbeitspapiere/tfpd_iranneighbors_II_wlk_rsn_ks.pdf> [Accessed 04 December 2014].

Roach, Jason. Ekblom, Paul. Flynn, Richard. (2005). The Conjunction of Terrorist Opportunity: A Framework for Diagnosing and Preventing Acts of Terrorism. The Security Journal, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 7-25, [Accessed 09 August 2010].

Rogers, Paul. (2014). Islamic State vs its far enemy. Open Democracy, 21 November 2014, pp. 1-3, [Online] <https://www.opendemocracy.net/paul-rogers/islamic-state-vs-its-far-enemy> [Accessed 04 December 2014].

Rogers, Paul. (2014). Islamic State: power of belief. Open Democracy, 6 November 2014, [Online] <https://www.opendemocracy.net/paul-rogers/islamic-state-power-of-belief> [Accessed 04 December 2014].

Rubin, Barry. (2010). Iran: The Rise of a Regional Power. The Global Research in

International Affairs, GLORIA, The Middle East Review of International Affairs, Vol. 10, No, 3, [Online] <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2006/issue3/jv10no3a10.html> [Accessed 02 November 2011].

Russell,James. Bravo. IIiana. (2002). U.S. Security Architecture in the Gulf: Elements and Challenges, Strategic Insights, Vol. I, No. 1, [Online] <http://www.nps.edu/Academics/centers/ccc/publications/OnlineJournal/2002/mar02/persianGulf.html> [Accessed 22 February 2011].

Sevilla, A. Jr. Henelito. (2011). Re-constructing the Political Mindset of the Persian Gulf Security. International Journal of West Asian Studies, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 49-67, [Online] <http://journalarticle.ukm.my/2036/1/index.pdf> [Accessed 09 July 2013].

Schelling, Thomas. (1980). The Strategy of Conflict. Journal of Politics, Harvard University Press, Library of Congress Catalog, pp. 1-309, [Online] <http://elcenia.com/iamapirate/schelling.pdf> [Accessed 04 September 2013].

Schelling, Thomas. (1958). The Strategy of Conflict Prospectus for a Reorientation of Game Theory. Conflict Resolution, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 203-246, [Online] <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/172793?uid=3739560&uid=2&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=21102614172713> [Accessed 04 September 2013].

Soares, Marta. Bshary, Redouan. Fusani, Leonida. Goymann, Wolfgang. Hau, Michaela. Hirschenhauser, Katharina. Oliveira, Rui. (2010). Hormonal mechanisms of cooperative behavior. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, Vol. 365, Review, pp. 2737-2750, [Online] <http://rstb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/365/1553/2737.full.pdf+html> [Accessed 03 September 2013].

Soltani, Fakhreddin. Amiri, Reza. (2010). Foreign Policy of Iran after Islamic Revolution. Journal of Politics and Law. Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 199-206, [Online] <http://ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/jpl/article/viewFile/6433/5533> [Accessed 04 December 2014].

Taliaferro, J. (2006). State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State. Security Studies Vol 15, No. 3, pp. 464–495, [Online] <http://ase.tufts.edu/polsci/faculty/taliaferro/futureWars2006.pdf> [Accessed 10 September 2011].

Taliaferro, Jeffrey. (2001). Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited. International Security, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 128-161, [Online] <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2626708?uid=27461&uid=3738032&uid=2134&uid=2&uid=70&uid=3&uid=5910784&uid=67&uid=27459&uid=62&sid=47698996555417> [Accessed 13 May 2012].

Talmadge, Caitlin. (2008). Closing Time: Assessing the Iranian Threat to the Strait of Hormuz. International Security, Vol. 33, No. 1, [Online] <http://www.belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/IS3301_pp082-117_Talmadge.pdf> [Accessed 23 February 2011].

Tang, Shiping, (2009). The security Dilemma: A Conceptual Analysis. Security Studies, Publisher: Routledge, Vol.18, No. 3, pp. 587-623, [Online] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09636410903133050> [Accessed 13 May 2012].

Nasr, Vali. (2004). Regional Implications of Shi'a Revival in Iraq. The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Washington Quarterly, Vol.27, No. 3, pp. 7-24, [Online] < http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA523189> [Accessed 26 June 2012].

Van Dijk, Teun. (2006). Ideology and discourse analysis. Journal of Political Ideologies, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 115-140, [Online] <http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Ideology%20and%20discourse%20analysis.pdf> [Accessed 07 December 2014].

Wahib, Hussain. (2014). The New US Administration's Strategy on the Middle East. University of Baghdad, International Studies, Repository of Research and Academic Data, Arabic version, 20 May 2014, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 49-75, [Online] <http://repository.uobaghdad.edu.iq/ArticleShow.aspx?ID=1511> [Accessed 31 December 2014].

Waltz, Kenneth. (1993). The Emerging Structure of International Politics. International Security, JSTOR, The MIT Press, Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 44-79, [Online] <http://ir.rochelleterman.com/sites/default/files/Waltz%201993.pdf> [Accessed 17 September 2013].

Wendt, Alexander. (1998). On Constitution and Causation in International Relations. Review of International Studies, 24 (special issue), Vol. 24, pp. 101-118, [Online] < http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=71466&jid=RIS&volumeId=24&issueId=05&aid=71465> [Accessed 22 May 2012].

Wendt, Alezander. (1992). Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics. Cambridge University Press and International Organization. Vol.46, No. 2, pp. 391-425. [Online] < http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-8183%28199221%2946%3A2%3C391%3AA IWSMO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-9> [Accessed 13 May 2012].

Wright, Robin. (1992). Islam and liberal democracy. Foreign Affairs, Vol. 71, No. 3, pp. 135.

Wu, Jianzhong. Axelrod, Robert. (1995). How to Cope with Noise in the Iterated Prisoner's Dilemma. Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 39, No. 1, pp. 183-189, [Online] <http://141.213.232.243/bitstream/handle/2027.42/66566/10.1177_0022002795039001008.pdf?sequence=2> [Accessed 05 September 2013].

Zalman, Amy. Clarke, Jonathan. (2009). The Global War on Terror: A Narrative in Need of a Rewrite. Ethics and International Affairs, Vol. 23.2, pp. 1-7. [Online] <http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/resources/journal/23_2/essays/002> [Accessed 19 February 2012].

Zweiri, Mahjoob. (2007). Iranian Foreign Policy: Between Ideology and Pragmatism. The Centre for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan. [Online] <http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=Article_C&cid=1175008641586&pagename=Zone-English-Muslim_Affairs%2FMAELayout> [Accessed 10 December2010].

(2005). Confronting Terrorism. The Club de Madrid Series on Democracy and Terrorism, Volume II, The International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security, 8-11 March 2005, Club de Madrid, pp. 5-55, [Online] <http://media.clubmadrid.org/docs/CdM-Series-on-Terrorism-Vol-2.pdf> [Accessed 11 February 2013].

3. Working Papers

Aggestam, Lisbeth. (1999). Role Conceptions and the Politics of Identity in Foreign Policy. ARENA, Centre for European Studies, Working Papers, 99 (8), [Online] <http://www.sv.uio.no/arena/english/research/publications/arena-publications/workingpapers/working-papers1999/wp99_8.htm> [Accessed 06 December 2014].

Alagha, Joseph. (2006). The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology and Political Program. Amsterdam University Press, No. 1, pp. 19-66. pp. 115-147.

Axelrod, Robert. (2000). On Six Advances in Cooperation Theory. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109, USA, Published in Analyse & Kritik, 22 July 2000, pp. 130-151, [Online] <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~axe/research/SixAdvances.pdf> [Accessed 01 September 2013].

Black, Amy. (2004). With God on Our Side: Religion in George W. Bush's Foreign Policy Speeches. In The Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Illinois, 2-5 September 2004, [Online] <http://www.ucs.louisiana.edu/~ras2777/relpol/bushreligion.PDF> [Accessed 03 January 2015].

Dodge, Toby. (2009). What were the causes and consequences of Iraq's descent into violence after the initial invasion? International Politics, Department of Politics, Queen Mary University of London and Senior Consulting Fellow for the Middle East, International Institute for Strategic Studies,10 November, 2009, [Online] <http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/media/37045/dodge-submission.pdf> [Accessed 25 January 2015].

Posch, Walter. (2013). The Third World, Global Islam and Pragmatism: The Making of Iranian Foreign Policy. Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) Research Paper, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, 03 April 2013, No. 1, pp. 1-31, [Online] <http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/research_papers/2013_RP03_poc.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2015].

Rakel, Patricia, Eva. (2008). The Iranian Political elite, state and Society relations, and Foreign Relations since the Islamic Revolution. No. 1, pp. 51-62. pp. 185-186.

Further Reading

http://fis-iran.org
www.bsigroup.com
www.asisonline.org
http://www.tabnak.ir
www.ncr-iran.org/en/
http://tehrantimes.com
www.iraqbodycount.org/
www.egmontinstitute.be/
www.securitycertified.net
http://www.parstimes.com
http://iranprimer.usip.org/
www.iranintelligence.com/
http://www.irantracker.org/
http://english.farsnews.com
www.worldsecuritynetwork.com
www.armed-services.senate.gov/
http://europe.wsj.com/home-page
www.cna.org/centers/strategic-studies
www.defense.gov/home/.../Index.html
http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/satoc.html
www.liveleak.com/view?i=791_1188396928
www.globalpolitician.com/22449-foreign-iran-iraq
www.cfr.org/issue/136/us_strategy_and_politics.html
www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2008/03/iran-byman
http://tmtv.shiatv.net/search_result.php?search_id=ummah
www.sana-syria.com/gallery.html?&gid=309&newlang=eng
www.georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/08/20070828-1.html
www.stratfor.com/weekly/20110307-bahrain-and-battle-between-iran-and-saudi-arabia
www.nps.edu/Academics/centers/ccc/publications/OnlineJournal/2007/Mar/russellMar07.html