ABSTRACT

The foreign policy of a country is never determined by one single factor. A cluster of factors exercise their influence over the formulation and implementation of the foreign policy at different periods, through different means and in various circumstances. Therefore, the foreign policy is subjected to both continuity and change. Iran is no exception. The Islamic Revolution brought a remarkable shift in the foreign policy of Iran. The present work is an attempt to understand the aims, objectives and goals of the foreign policy of Islamic government of Iran. The work is broadly divided into three parts: (a) Foreign policy under Imam Khomeini (1979-89), (b) Foreign Policy after Khomeini (since 1989), (c) conclusion. The first part is further divided into six chapters.

Chapter I briefly deals with those factors which by and large exercise their impact over the formulation of the foreign policy in Iran. A brief profile of Iran concerning the political system, topography, economy, natural resources and culture are described. The revolutionary ideology, Imam Khomeini's views on Islamic government and the nature of an Islamic Republic are briefly presented. The foreign policy before the Islamic Revolution as a historical factor and basic principles of the foreign policy as enshrined in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, beside some important factors which had been influencing the decision
making of the foreign policy and diplomacy at different periods are also covered in this chapter.

The one of the important features of the Islamic Revolution have been to denounce the superpower domination and totally eliminate their interference. In order to achieve this aim Imam Khomeini, the leader of the revolution, gave the slogan of 'Neither East Nor West' and adopted it as basic goal, and main objective of the foreign policy. This aspect of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is discussed in the second chapter. The policy of 'Neither East Nor West' has many similarities with the aims, objectives and principles of Non-aligned movement. These similarities and differences between the two ideologies are also analysed. The areas of conflict and accommodation in Iran-U.S. relations are also studied with a view to understand their implications. Iran was under the direct influence and domination of the United States since the reinstallation of Reza Shah Pahlvi as monarch of Iran in 1953. Islamic Republic out rightly rejected the domination and interference of the United States in its affairs and refused to act as an agent of the United States in the region. If any country which seemed adversely effected by the Iranian Revolution was no one but the United States. The militarisation of Iran together with its support to the so called Islamic fundamentalism and the alleged support to terrorism abroad has given Washington sleepless mights. The American interest in the region was badly damaged by the
Iranian Revolution. The Islamic Republic of Iran joined the Non-aligned Movement, withdrew itself from the CENTO, abrogated the 1959 treaty with the United States and 1921 treaty with the Soviet Union. The strong anti-American stand taken by the Islamic Republic was due largely to the Iran's long experience with American imperialism, the United States continuous support to Shah throughout the period of revolution and above all its support and encouragement to anti-revolutionary forces in Iran with the aim of subverting the revolution.

The worsening of relations with the United States to some extent affected Iran's relationship with the countries of the Western Europe. Although the seizure of the American embassy which resulted into economic sanctions did adversely influence her relations with the countries of the Western Bloc.

In the third chapter, Iran-Soviet relations and relations between Iran and the countries of Eastern Europe are discussed. There was a clear chance for Iran to come closer to the Soviet Union after severing relations with the United States. However, Iran equally criticised Soviet Union and decided to maintain equidistance from both the power blocs. But Soviet Union was not as much objectionable to Iran as the United States. There were many reasons to come closer to the Soviet Union such as: Soviet Unions support to the Revolution; it was a neighbouring superpower and shared a long common boundary with Iran and, it might become an
important supply route for Iran. Despite all these positive factors there were many reasons to maintain distance from the Soviet Union such as: Russian's long record of imperialism in Iran particularly during the two world wars; Soviet Union's continuous support to Iranian leftists and ethnic minorities; and, above all the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan which was regarded as a direct threat to the sovereignty and integrity of Iran.

But the Iran-U.S. rifts and Iran-Soviet rifts provided opportunity to improve relations with the countries of the Eastern Europe. Iran remarkably improved its economic relation with a number of the East European countries during the Iran-Iraq war.

Chapter IV deals with the Iran's policy towards the Persian Gulf region and the Muslims world. The basic issues and problems involved in Iran's relations with the Muslim countries and regional states are analysed in this chapter. Iran's policy towards region has been guided by many considerations such as: it give priority to the regional peace and security; oppose all types of outside interference in the region; advocates for the unity of the Muslim people and countries of the region; denounce the superpowers domination and imperialism in the region; severely criticises those countries who are closely allied with the superpowers; asked the Muslim people and countries to follow the principles of Islam in running the government and provoked the people to overthrow their governments and
establish governments of Iranian model in their respective countries as other governments are not according to the laws of the Islam. The Iranian revolution posed a great threat to the rulers of many countries in the region as they were afraid of an Iranian type of revolution in their countries. The fear of an Iranian type of revolution was also one of the main reasons of Iraqi attack over Iran.

Throughout the Iran-Iraq war Iran's regional policy was directed by the war considerations. Its relations with most of the regional states, particularly the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council were adversely affected. Despite many differences Iran developed political and economic relations with the countries of the Steadfastness Front (Algeria, Libya, Syria, P.L.O., Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen). Other than Iraq, with her three neighbours -- Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan (with whom Iran shares common boundaries) -- Iran improved relations with Turkey and Pakistan while relations with Afghanistan deteriorated due to Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Turkey and Pakistan both did not fit in the ideological frame work of Iran but the war with Iraq, hostages crisis, economic sanctions, deteriorating relations with countries of Western Europe, Persian Gulf region and the Soviet Union, compelled Iran to improve relations with Turkey. The main reason of coming closer to Pakistan was the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan.
In chapter V, Iran's attitude towards Zionism as well as Arab Israel conflict is explained. Imam Khomeini from the very beginning had been opposing the ideology and principle of Zionism. He always extended support to the Palestinians. Imam Khomeini never hesitated to criticise Shah for his friendly attitude towards Israel. That was the reason that immediately after the Islamic Revolution, Iran severed diplomatic relations with Israel and stopped selling oil to that country. Khomeini considered Israel as an agent of imperialist power to create problems for the regional Muslim countries. Thus he considered Israel as enemy of Islam and Muslims.

The deterioration of relations with most of the Western countries left Iran to improve relations with the countries of the third world. Improving relations with the developing countries of the Asia, Africa and Latin America is one of the basic principles and objective of Iran's foreign policy. Iran improved diplomatic relations with most of the third world countries and established fresh diplomatic relations with many of them.

Part II, Chapter VII, deals with the political developments in Iran after the death of Imam Khomeini and its implications for foreign policy. Many observers expected a radical change in the domestic and foreign policy of Iran after the death of Imam Khomeini. They also hoped that Iran's relations with the United States would improve. But all their speculations failed as the new leadership in Iran,
by and large, continued to follow the earlier policies. In the post Khomeini era, Iran's main emphasis has been to reconstruct the economy of the country which was badly shattered during the prolonged war. For this purpose Iran signed contracts with a number of countries throughout the world including the countries of the Western Europe. During this period the Persian Gulf States experienced the Gulf War due to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Iran adopted a reasonable approach towards the conflict. While on the one hand, Iran denounced the Iraqi invasion, on the other hand, it also opposed the stationing of multinational forces in the region and did try to resolve the problem peacefully through negotiations in regional perspective.