

Contentious Politics in Iran: Factions, Foreign Policy and the Nuclear Deal*

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Abstract:

This paper endeavors to analyze the evolution of Iran's foreign policy in the post-revolutionary era by focusing on the 'historic nuclear deal' (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action- JCPOA) which is expected to ensure the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. The objective of the paper is to shed some light on Iran's striving to maintain a delicate balance between ideology and pragmatism and the elements of change and continuity in its conduct of foreign policy since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. In this regard, different foreign policy agendas adopted respectively by Khomeini, Rafsanjani, Khatami, Ahmadinejad, and Rouhani will be examined within the context of factional rivalries which emerged out of the political, economic and social structure of the country. With the ascent of the reformist cleric Khatami to presidency in 1997, the long lasting rivalry between the reformist faction that seeks 'Islamic democracy' at home and Iran's integration into the world politics, and the conservative faction whose guiding principle is the return to a revolutionary Islamic ideology, has become apparent in post-revolutionary Iran. While the hardliner Ahmadinejad's rise to power in 2005 meant flashback to revolutionary ideology both in domestic and foreign affairs of Iran, the victory of pro-reform cleric Hassan Rouhani in 2013 marked the beginning of a new era in Iran's relations with the West through nuclear negotiations.

Key Words:

Nuclear Deal, Factional Rivalry, Foreign Policy, Iran.

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the evolution of post-revolutionary foreign policies of Iran within the context of factional rivalries. Functioning as actual political parties, factions indeed reveal cultural, economic, and political orientations of various segments of society. As the bastion of political developments, factions are likely to modify their views depending on changing circumstances in Iran. Foreign policy goals and implementations of the reformist faction that emerged from the early revolutionary groups in the late 1980s, will be discussed within the context of final nuclear agreement between Iran and the six world powers.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), whose major points are outlined below, could be seen as the natural result of current domestic and international problems and developments. The failure of US policy in post-invasion Iraq, instability and ongoing upheavals in the Middle East, Iran's economic downturn, victory of democrats in the USA and mostly reform minded politicians in Iran with the elections of Barack Obama and Rouhani brought together world powers to the negotiation table with Iran. Focusing on the final deal, this paper tries to analyze the internal and external dynamics that gave rise to reformist and moderate groups in Iranian politics within the evolution of its foreign policies from the Islamic revolution up to present.

In line with this, the paper first discusses about the earlier divisions among the conservative wing, and the rise of reformists in Iranian politics. Different foreign policy agendas adopted by Iranian presidents from Khomeini to Rouhani are further examined through confrontational ideological positions of reformist and conservative factions. The paper finally elaborates on challenges to the reformist or moderate groups who strive for 'change' in Iran (reform from within), and the final nuclear agreement as a diplomatic victory of those reformers.

Emergence and the Rise of Reformists in Iranian Politics

While the early Tobacco Protest of 1890s and Constitutional Movement of 1906-1911 demonstrated the political power of the clergy, the democratic struggle of 1950s headed by Mohammad Mosaddeq revealed that the clergy did not adapt well into contemporary political developments. The only center unifying the clergy was *Fadayan-e Islam*

¹ led by Navab Safavi while the nationalist and communist groups were well organized under such parties as National Front and Tudeh². The contentious ideological stances of the traditional ulama and *Fadayan-e Islam* were the signs of the fragmented structure of the conservatives in Iran.³ Following the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the radical conservative faction did indeed declare other groups that participated in the revolution illegal in order to consolidate its power. Even the *Jomhuri-ye Eslami Party*, which was created by Khomeini himself, was liquidated to prevent divergences among the followers of the Supreme Leader Khomeini.⁴ Thus, in the absence of political parties, different emerging political factions and groups shaped the socio-political life in Iran.

Similar to the Akhbari- Usuli debate prior to the revolution, the conflict among the Shiite scholars continued to increase after the Islamic Revolution. Among the proponents of *Jamiah-yi Ruhaniyat-i Mubariz*, (Society of Militant Clergy) the main organ of the conservatives, were some opposing stances before the third term elections. The radical left, who opposed the dominance of the right on politics of Iran, created their own group entitled *Mecme-yi Ruhaniyun-u Mubariz* (Union of Militant Clergy) in 1988, and thus the right and left wings were formed within the conservatives for the first time. Nateq Nouri, the rival of reformist cleric Mohammad Khatami during 1997 elections, and former foreign minister Ali Akbar Velayati were members of the Society of Militant Clergy, whose religious leader was Ayatollah Mehdevi Keni. Having close ties with traditional tradesmen, this group was skeptical about economic investments of foreign origin. The group tried to affect

socio-political life through conservative media organs such as Jomhuriy-e Eslami, Kayhan, Resalat and Abrar.⁵

With the pragmatic-cleric Hashemi Rafsanjani ascending to presidency, a group consisting of bureaucrats and government officials named 'the Servants of Construction' that supported economic and socio-cultural freedom emerged from the moderate right wing. One of the former ministers Ayatollah Mohajerani, former Tehran Mayor Gholamhossein Karbaschi, Mohammad Hashemi, and Hassan Rouhani were well-known members of this pragmatic group that strongly supported reformist President Mohammad Khatami during his electoral campaigns. Unlike the former conservative factions, this pragmatic faction, as an ardent supporter of free market economy, promoted improving relations with other countries and resisted against cultural isolation.⁶

In parallel with divisions among the conservative wing, the reform movement spearheaded by Khatami started to be influential in the political arena, which heightened expectations for political change in the country. Putting the idea of 'change' at the very center of the movement, those reformers (early revolutionaries) attempted to reconcile democracy, the product of Enlightenment, with traditions and experiences of Iranian society, and turned it into a strong social and political force by taking support of different groups.⁷ The primary objective of the reform was to make the system Islamic rather than fundamentalist⁸ and it consolidated power with the landslide victory of Khatami in 1997 elections. Thus, Khatami emerged as a powerful actor in Iranian politics. He explained his strategy as mobilization from below and negotiation at the top, which meant strengthening civil society organizations that would pave the way for legal and constitutional amendments. Despite this political success of Khatami and his followers, the highly-conservative-dominated state bureaucracy always posed a great challenge to those reformers.⁹

Conservatives, who perceived the reformists as a political and social threat, criticized the advocates of the movement for damaging the legitimacy of the regime, contradicting Khomeini's thought, and publishing against the sacred values.¹⁰ The weak organizational structure of the reform movement, the fragile nature of its voter base (mostly women and the youth), its inability to establish close ties with tradesmen and lower classes made it vulnerable to threats exerted by the conservative faction. Also, the elitist nature of the movement (highly restricted number of decision makers) and Khatami's passive stance on political issues undermined the goals of the movement. Even though the reformers did effectively use media, they were all the time faced with the threat of closures and punishments of the conservative forces.¹¹ With respect to the political achievement of the reform movement, conservatives, in order to weaken the socio-cultural influence of reformers, tried all possible means to prevent the leading names of the movement such as Abdollah Nouri and Karbaschi from politics.¹² While most of the reformist media organs were closed down on the grounds that they were un-Islamic, opponent thinkers and writers were either sentenced to imprisonment or executed.¹³

The conflict between two wings increased with the rejection of Khatami's reform bills by the Guardian Council (including influential unelected bodies and radicals who are firmly committed to preserving the status quo) and mass resignations of reformist politicians.¹⁴ Women, students, youth and the middle class, who casted their votes to Khatami, were disappointed by the failed attempt of reform in Iran.¹⁵ The declining political power of the reformists ended up with the victory of the hardliner Ahmadinejad, who was particularly backed by radical entities such as *Basij* (the state militia) and Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) during the elections.¹⁶ His demand to return to the revolutionary ideals meant anti-imperialism, strict state control on society and flashback to early Islamic ideals.¹⁷

However, the radical conservatives started to lose grip on the government since the controversial election of Ahmadinejad in 2009. The international crisis over Iran's nuclear programme and economic difficulties due to sanctions and social turmoil resulted in the election of pro-reform cleric Hassan Rouhani, the moderate conservative candidate in the 2013 parliamentary

elections.¹⁸ The defeat of the ultra-conservative candidates such as Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Mohsen Rezaee also demonstrated the waning power of the conservative camp led by Mohammad Mesbah-Yazdi.¹⁹ Getting the support of reformist and pragmatist groups²⁰ as well, Rouhani, who was expected to establish good ties with the West, was elected president so that the devastating effects of sanctions on economy could be decreased to a considerable extent.²¹ As a mediator between the West and Iran as well as various factions in Iranian politics, Rouhani has been serving as a symbol of change for the better in Iran.

Rough Path to Deal: Factional Rivalries and Foreign Policies of Iran

Factional rivalries and elite polarization could be deemed as an integral part of political life and foreign policies of ideological states that are incapable of bridging the gap between dominant ideology and social reality. Therefore, the foreign policy orientations of Iran had been overshadowed by the conflict between the conservative faction, whose motto is a return to the revolutionary ideals, and the reformist wing that desires Iran's integration into world politics.²²

Foreign policy under Khomeini in the very early revolutionary years was shaped by his 'neither East nor West policy' which had its roots in Iran's domination by the great powers. Militant Third Worldism, (polarized conception of the world as arrogant powers against the downtrodden nations) anti-imperialist tendencies and anti-colonialism (characterization of the USA as the Great Satan) and the export of revolution were all signs of Khomeini's legacy on the conduct of foreign affairs in those years.²³ Iran- Iraq War of 1980-88 and the Hostage Crisis were the key events that sparkled the radicalization of foreign policy.²⁴

Following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, Rafsanjani, the leading name of pragmatism²⁵, was largely supported by technocrats and bureaucratic groups and came into power. Without changing the theocratic nature of the state, he championed the transformation of Iran into a modern state through economic reconstruction, privatization and industrialization. His desire to promote Iran's relations with other countries, particularly Middle Eastern and Western authorities, was the basis of his 'both North and South policy'.²⁶ The emerging alliance between Russia and Iran was crowned with an agreement on construction of nuclear reactor, which would pave the way for the formation of a strategic partnership between the two countries.²⁷

Introducing such terms as democracy, the rule of law, pluralism and human rights into Iranian politics, reform-minded cleric Mohammad Khatami marked the beginning of a new era in Iran's foreign policy. In line with two pillars of his policy- 'democracy at home, peace abroad', Khatami wanted to establish friendly relations with other countries unless they posed a threat to Iran's national unity and independence.²⁸ Protecting stability on both northern and southern borders, improving ties with Arab countries²⁹, increasing the effectiveness of country in Central Asian states, and turning Iran into a transit country between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf were among the primary objectives of Khatami.³⁰ His call for 'dialogue among civilizations' could be deemed as an important step for the reconstruction of relations with European powers.

The constructive attempts of Khatami with regard to Iran's relations with other countries were firstly damaged by the 9/11 attacks. Afterwards, the USA declared war on global terrorism and put Iran on its 'Axis of Evil' list, which in turn strengthened the position of the radical wing and subsequently gave rise to the victory of Ahmadinejad in Iran.³¹ As the strong supporter of early revolutionary ideals, Ahmadinejad was critical about the interventionist policies of the great powers, regularities on nuclear weapons, and the unequal relationship between North and South countries.³² His radical foreign policies frustrated the Iranian economy due to sanctions imposed by the West from 2005 to 2008.³³ The other candidates, conservative such as Mohsen Rezaee and reformist such as Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mahdi Karroubi harshly criticized the foreign policies of Ahmadinejad

during the disputed presidential elections of 2009 which erupted nation-wide protests. While Rezaee demanded that Iran abide by the international rules on uranium enrichment, the reformists emphasized the need to make further negotiations with the EU.³⁴

Bearing in mind the increasing social upheavals following the 2009 election, Ahmadinejad tried to be more conciliatory than his first term in order to take back the support of the youth and lift the crippling sanctions.³⁵ Opening Iran's newly founded nuclear facility to international inspection, transferring low-enriched uranium to Russia and France and thus transforming it into a nuclear fuel for Tehran reactor were on the agenda of representatives of EU3 countries (USA, France, and Russia) and Iran during the negotiations held in Geneva on September 1, 2009.³⁶ However, even though the hardliner Ahmadinejad intended to come to an agreement with the Western authorities, the negotiations did not yield any result due to oppositions and rejections raised by radical factions. Therefore, after a short period of 'détente', Ahmadinejad returned back to his populist discourse and tried to suppress the opposition groups by force.³⁷

After the end of the Ahmadinejad era, one of the veteran political figures in Iran, Hassan Rouhani assumed office on August 4, 2013 and put special emphasis on problems of corruption and shrinking economy in Iran.³⁸ He firmly decided to solve the Iranian nuclear conflict with the West in order to get rid of the burden of sanctions on economy and enable Iran's re-integration into world politics.³⁹ Upon taking office, Rouhani fulfilled his promise to strictly adhere to the Additional Protocol of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) that required the suspension of nuclear enrichment activities.⁴⁰ By paying charm offensive to the UN General Assembly (UNGA), he declared his opposition to nuclear weapons and his support for peaceful nuclear activities.⁴¹ Unlike the traditional and hardline conservatives, it is obvious that Rouhani's foreign policy objectives are very well compatible with the interests of the reformist camp.

After a series of negotiations, the Geneva Interim Deal, officially titled as the Joint Plan of Action, was signed between Iran and the EU/ E3+3 (United Kingdom, France, Germany, USA, Russia and China) on November 24, 2013. According to this alliance, Iran agreed to restrict its nuclear programme in exchange for limited sanctions relief within six months.⁴² This interim agreement was faced with the opposition of hardliners, Iran's *Majlis* and Republicans in the US Congress who were skeptical about the enrichment technology of Iran and demanded the discontinuation of negotiations and increase in enrichment activities.⁴³

The framework agreement, the Lausanne Treaty, which was agreed upon on April 2, 2015, constituted the second step toward a final comprehensive deal. This framework agreement provided the International Atomic Energy Agency with inspection power and proposed reduction in Iran's enrichment capacity in exchange for phased sanctions relief.⁴⁴ This deal includes the reduction of all installed centrifuges by two-thirds and Iran's stockpile of low-enriched uranium, bringing back the EU and US sanctions unless Iran meets the requirements and the redesign of Arak heavy-water reactor so that it cannot produce weapons grade plutonium.⁴⁵ The deal was very well welcomed by the reformist groups who celebrated it throughout the country, yet the conservatives perceived the agreement as a total concession and criticized Iran's negotiation team.⁴⁶

The Iran Nuclear Deal: Regional and Global Reflections

Months of negotiations over Iran's controversial nuclear programme between Iran and the P5+1 (permanent members of the UNSC, plus Germany) came to an end on July 14, 2015 with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in Vienna. Since the implementation of the deal is expected to ensure the peaceful conduct of Iran's nuclear programme, it has been deemed as 'historic' by parties to the agreement.

Consisting of five annexes on nuclear development, sanctions, civil nuclear cooperation among the parties, joint commission and the implementation of the agreement, JCPOA is important first and foremost because the full implementation of it would prevent Iran from developing and acquiring any nuclear weapons.⁴⁷ However, the JCPOA provides Iran with the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to be engaged in civil nuclear cooperation projects with other parties to the agreement.⁴⁸ The deal not only requires the lifting of all UNSC sanctions, but also it covers the sanction relief on such relevant areas as trade, technology, finance and energy.⁴⁹ A Joint Commission including members of Iran and EU/ E3+3 is guaranteed with the agreement to be formed to control the implementation.

Regarding nuclear enrichment, enrichment research and development (R&D) and stockpiles, Iran is required to phase out its IR-1 centrifuges within 10 years, and accept certain limitations on R&D activities for the first 8 years and the storage of excess centrifuges at Natanz under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Additionally, Iran is required to keep its level of uranium enrichment up to 3.67, and not to use Fordow facility for enrichment purposes. Instead, it agrees to turn Fordow into a nuclear, physics and technology center.⁵⁰ Within the framework of the agreement, Iran agrees not to establish any additional heavy water reactor within the next 15 years and to sell the excess quantities of enriched uranium to any international buyer in return for natural uranium.⁵¹

With regards to Iran's relation with the USA, firstly it is not crystal clear that the deal would produce a long term agreement between the two countries.⁵² It is due to the fact that Rouhani lacks the power to totally depart from the policies of the Supreme Leader Khamenei who recently banned any further negotiations between Iran and the USA.⁵³ While the deal was seen as the victory of Rouhani, 'diplomatic sheikh' of Iran and his team, this ban has undermined the hopes of moderates and reformists for ending Iran's isolation to some extent. However, since the long term agreement between Iran and the USA would limit Iran's sphere of influence by means of Hezbollah and Assad regime in the Middle East, it is anticipated that Washington cannot miss such an opportunity in the region. Right after the initialization of the deal, Israeli PM Netanyahu called it as a 'historic mistake' for the world on the grounds that sanction relief would boost Iran's economy that finally support its allies in the Middle East, namely the enemies of Israel.⁵⁴ Also, it was the Israeli lobby who pressured the Republicans in the US Congress to reject a final deal while the negotiations were being held.⁵⁵

The comprehensive deal has been welcomed by EU powers because of their chief priorities in the Middle East. It is known that the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom David Cameron and the German Foreign Minister F. W. Steinmeier have warned against any unreasonable intervention of the US Congress into the deal.⁵⁶ This rests on the fact that they didn't want to damage the EU's interests on Iran regarding non-proliferation and the Syrian imbroglio which is directly related to refugee crisis and foreign fighters joining ISIS from Europe.⁵⁷

Regarding the economic cooperation and trade volume between the two countries, Turkish officials welcomed sanctions relief with the final deal. It was seen 'great news for the Turkish economy' as tweeted by the then Economy Minister, Mehmet Şimşek.⁵⁸ Moreover, another positive outcome is that Turkey always wanted to solve the 'Iranian nuclear puzzle' by diplomatic means, and the deal removed any possible US or Israeli military intervention in Iran.⁵⁹ On the other hand, Iran's rise as a regional and international actor worried Turkey about the possible growth of sectarian divisions which would accelerate the current turmoil in the region. Just after the signing of the deal, then Foreign Minister of Turkey, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu called for political dialogue with Iran, and stressed out that Iran should reconsider its role in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.⁶⁰

Ideological and political rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia has gained momentum with the recent territorial expansion of ISIS in Syria and Iraq, the current conflicts in Yemen, and finalization of nuclear negotiations with the West through which Iran had the upper hand in the region. From the standpoint of Saudi Arabia, Iran has already increased its influence on several

capitals such as Beirut through Hezbollah forces, Damascus through alliance with the Assad regime, Baghdad through a Shia-led government, and finally Sana through Houthis.⁶¹ Except for Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, the Gulf States welcomed the nuclear deal at least officially. Saudi officials tried to discourage Washington from negotiations by criticizing it as being ‘seduced by the Iranian president’s sweet talk’ just before the signing of interim agreement.⁶² Saudi officials ‘warned’ the USA against the Iran danger in the Western media by saying ‘US is shooting itself in the foot’.⁶³

While the comprehensive deal enhanced Iran’s position against most of the Arab/ Gulf states in the region, the ongoing civil war on ethnic and sectarian lines in Syria transformed into a proxy war in which Iran has already took part in the Eastern bloc along with Russia and China.⁶⁴ In this context, Ali Akbar Velayati’s words, a senior advisor to Khamanei, “*Syria is the golden ring of the chain of resistance against Israel*” could well shed light well on Iran’s alliance with the Assad government. As the conflict grew further between rebel militia groups and government forces, taking support of Iraq’s Maliki government, Iran started to send direct military assistance, weapons and advisors to the Assad government.⁶⁵

Concluding Remarks

It should be noted that the ascent of moderates (Rouhani and his like-minded advocates of reform) to power accelerated the negotiation process between Iran and the six world powers. However, taken into consideration the current confrontations in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq, the signing of the deal could be deemed as an obligation rather than a preference among the parties, particularly the USA and Iran.

Also, it is fair to argue that while the implementation of the deal enhances Iran’s political clout in the region, it may undermine the strategic importance of Turkey who has regional ambitions and goals yet lacks the necessary military and economic capacity to prevail in the Middle East. While this does not signal Iran’s rise as a regional hegemon, the Syrian conflict now confirms the influence of Iran and its allies (Russia, China, and Syria) vis-à-vis the USA and its allies in Ankara, Cairo and Riyadh.

While the Iranian parliament passed the nuclear deal by 161 to 59 which was also adopted officially by all signatories and UNSC on October 18, 2015, what Iran needs most is internal healing. On one hand, the Iranian regime should urgently come up with solutions to the increasing socio-economic problems of the country such as unemployment, executions of people, violation of human rights and so on. On the other hand, it is faced with an increasing strife among various political factions. Conservatives and hardliners, who fear that economic engagement with the USA would lead to its socio-cultural penetration as well, criticized Hassan Rouhani on the grounds that he left his centrist position and mostly adopted reformist ideas. The threats of the hardliners in the *Majlis* to Iran’s Foreign Minister Javad Zarif and Ali Akbar Salehi, the Head of Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization, and detention of pro-reform journalists have further intensified the tension between Rouhani’s team and hardliner groups. The upcoming elections for the *Majlis* and the Assembly of Experts in February would be a great test for all political factions in the country.

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Notes

¹ Fayadayan-e Islam was an Islamic fundamentalist organization founded by Navab Safavi, who considered militant opposition to the Pahlavi dynasty as the only solution to the problems Iran was facing (Hani Mansourian, “Iran: Religious Leaders and Opposition Movements”, *Journal of International Affairs*, 61 (2007): 230, accessed November 14, 2015).

² Tudeh was the early Marxist formation in pre-revolutionary Iran founded by those who studied in Europe and were influenced by socialist and communist movements there. The main purpose of the party was to mobilize workers, peasants, progressive intellectuals and the tradesmen in Iran (Ervand Abrahamian, *Modern İnan Tarihi*, trans. Dilek Şendil, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009), 142).

³ Sami Oğuz and Ruşen Çakır, *Hatemi'nin İnanı*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003), 47.

⁴ Oğuz and Çakır, 48.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Oğuz and Çakır, 52-53.

⁷ Ali Mirsepassi, *Democracy in Modern Iran: Islam, Culture and Political Change*, (New York and London: New York University Press, 2010), 108.

⁸ Forough Jahanbakhsh, “Religious and Political Discourse in Iran: Moving Toward Post-Fundamentalism”, *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 19 (2003): 140, accessed June 14, 2015.

⁹ Asef Bayat, *Post- Islamism The Changing Faces of Political Islam*, (USA: Oxford University Press, 2013), 59.

¹⁰ Ziba Mir Hosseini and Richard Tapper, *Islam and Democracy in Iran: Eshkevari and the Quest for Reform*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 138.

¹¹ Abbas Abdi, “The Reform Movement: Background and Vulnerability”, accessed October 1, 2015, <http://www.worlddialogue.org/content.php?id=144>,

¹² Robin Wright, *Son Büyük Devrim: Humeyni'den Bugüne İnan*, trans. Şeniz Türkömer, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 2000). 48.

¹³ Geneive Abdo, “The Fragility of Khatami’s Revolution”, *The Washington Quarterly*, 23 (2000): 58, accessed January 27, 201, doi: 10.1162/016366000561349.

¹⁴ Ghoncheh, Tazmini, *Khatami's Iran The Islamic Republic and the Turbulent Path to Reform*, (London & New York, I.B. Tauris Publishers, Tauris Academic Studies, 2009), 124.

¹⁵ Mohsen M. Milani, "Reform and Resistance in the Islamic Republic of Iran", in *Iran at the Crossroads*, eds. John L. Esposito and R. K. Ramazani, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 53.

¹⁶ Kazem Alemdari, "The Power Structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Transition from populism to clientelism, and militarization of the government", *Third World Quarterly*, 26, (2005): 1297, accessed January 27, 2015, doi: 10.1080/01436590500336690.

¹⁷ Alemdari, "The Power", 1298.

¹⁸ Yulia Sveshnikova and Amir Roknifard, "Iranian Election Results: Change on Horizon?", *Security Index: A Russian Journal of International Security*, 19 (2013): 71-72, accessed September 29, 2015, doi: 10.1080/19934270.2013.846083.

¹⁹ Sveshnikova and Roknifard, "Iranian", 75.

²⁰ Mohammad Reza Aref, the reformist candidate, withdrew from the elections in favor of Rouhani upon the request of Khatami in order to strengthen his voter base.

²¹ Sveshnikova and Roknifard, "Iranian", *Ibid.* (With regards to social reflections of sanctions, Rouhani's words are as follows: "It is a good thing that our centrifuges are spinning; we now need to make sure that our people's lives can spin just as merrily")

²² Eva Patricia Rakel, "The Iranian Political Elite, State and Society Relations, And Foreign Relations Since the Islamic Revolution," (PhD diss., Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, 2008), 147.

²³ Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Resisting the New International Order*, (California: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2010), 25-28.

²⁴ Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri, *Iran's Foreign Policy from Khatami to Ahmedinejad*, (Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2008), 134. (In parallel with the transformation of foreign policy, leftist and liberal groups started to leave the country and thus primary opposition parties of Tudeh and Mojahedin-e Khalq continued their activities illegally) (Ünal Gündoğan, *İran ve Ortadoğu 1979 İran İslam Devrimi'nin Ortadoğu Dengelerine Etkisi*, (Ankara: Adres Yayınları, 2010), 241).

²⁵ Rafsanjani's following words could perhaps best summarize what he understands from pragmatism: "Our ideology is flexible. We can choose expediency on the basis of Islam" (Ray Takeyh, "Iranian Options: Pragmatic Mullahs and America's Interests", *The National Interest*, 73 (2003): 51), accessed January 29, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42895640>

²⁶ Eva Rakel, "Paradigms of Iranian Foreign Policy in Central Asia and Beyond", *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, 2 (2003): 553, accessed March 17, 2015, doi: 10.1163/156915003322986398.

²⁷ Ed. Barış Adıbelli (Ed.), *Doğu- Batı Yol Ayrımında İran: İdeoloji, Devlet ve Dış Politika*, (İstanbul: Bilim Gönül Yayınları, 2012), 257.

²⁸ R. K. Ramazani, "The Shifting Premise of Iran's Foreign Policy: Towards a Democratic Peace?", *Middle East Journal*, 52 (1998): 181, accessed January 27, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329184>.

²⁹ With regard to his policy of detente, Khatami's following words shed light on his regional foreign policy goals: "We have taken some positive steps in relation to the policy of détente- steps which must be sustained. We must progress from the stage of détente to that of building trust and subsequently to the establishment of lasting regional cooperation". (Shah Alam, "The changing paradigm of Iranian foreign policy under Khatami", *Strategic Analysis*, 24 (2000): 1631, accessed December 19, 2014, doi: 10.1080/09700160008455310.

³⁰ Rakel, "Paradigms", 556.

³¹ Daniel Heradstveit and Matthew G. Bonham, "What the Axis of Evil Metaphor Did to Iran", *Middle East Journal*, 61 (2007): 430, accessed March 17, 2015, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3751.61.3.12>.

³² Fakhreddin Soltani and Reza Ekhtiari Amiri, "Foreign Policy of Iran after Islamic Revolution", *Journal of Politics and Law*, 3 (2010): 201, accessed January 27, 2015.

³³ Shahram Chubin, "The Iranian Nuclear Riddle after June 12", *The Washington Quarterly*, 33 (2010): 167, accessed April 14, 2015, doi: 10.1080/01636600903424908.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Volker Perthes, "Ambition and Fear: Iran's Foreign Policy and Nuclear Programme", *Survival Global Politics and Strategy*, 52, (2010): 102, accessed January 29, 2015, doi: 10.1080/00396338.2010.494879.

³⁶ Perthes, "Ambition", 99-100.

³⁷ Perthes, "Ambition", 105.

³⁸ Sermin Przewczek. "Iran's Foreign Policy under President Rouhani: Pledges versus Reality." *Middle Eastern Analysis*, 5 (2013): 68, accessed March 11, 2015, doi: 91671468.

³⁹ Chintamani Mahapatra and Shebonti Ray Dadwal, "New Directions in Iranian Foreign Policy: Impact on Global Energy Security", *Strategic Analysis*, 38 (2014): 259, accessed March 11, 2015, doi: 10.1080/09700161.2014.895226.

⁴⁰ Masoud Kazemzadeh, "Hassan Rouhani's Election and Its Consequences for American Foreign Policy", *American Foreign Policy Interests: The Journal of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy*, 36, (2014): 134-35, accessed March 11, 2015, doi: 10.1080/10803920.2014.905355.

⁴¹ Makapatra and Dadwal, *ibid*.

⁴² Shashank Joshi, "Iran and the Geneva Agreement", *The RUSI Journal*, 159 (2014): 58, accessed September 29, 2015, doi: 10.1080/03071847.2014.895259.

⁴³ Joshi, "Iran and the Geneva", 63.

⁴⁴ "Iran nuclear talks: 'Framework' deal agreed", accessed October 7, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32166814>.

⁴⁵ "Iran nuclear talks: 'Framework' deal agreed".

⁴⁶ "Anlaşma tamam, yaptırım tartışması sürüyor", <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/anlasma-tamam-yaptirim-tartismasi-suruyor>, (accessed online 08.10.2015).

⁴⁷ Full text of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/2165399/full-text-of-the-iran-nuclear-deal.pdf>

⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*.

⁵¹ *Ibid*.

⁵² Jonathan Stevenson, "The Syrian Tragedy and Precedent", *Survival Global Politics and Strategy*, 56 (2014):125, accessed September 29, 2015, doi: 10.1080/00396338.2014.920151.

⁵³ "Iran's supreme leader bans negotiations with the United States", accessed October 8, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/07/us-iran-us-talks-idUSKCN0S10P220151007?utm_source=twitter.

⁵⁴ Joshua Mitnick, "Netanyahu Calls Iran Deal Historic Mistake", accessed October 8, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/netanyahu-calls-iran-deal-historic-mistake-1436866617>.

⁵⁵ Ellie Geranmayeh, "Towards and Beyond a Final Nuclear Deal with Iran", *The International Spectator*, 50 (2015): 4, accessed September 29, 2015, doi: 10.1080/03932729.2015.1047599.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁵⁸ Dorian Jones, "In Turkey Mixed Reactions to Iran Nuclear Deal", accessed October 8, 2015, <http://www.voanews.com/content/mixed-reactions-in-turkey-about-iran-nuclear-deal/2862966.html>.

⁵⁹ "Turkey welcomes Iran's nuclear deal with West", accessed October 8, 2015, http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_turkey-welcomes-irans-nuclear-deal-with-west_393718.html.

⁶⁰ Cengiz Çandar, "How Turkey Really Feels About the Iran Deal", accessed October 8, 2015, <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/07/21/how-turkey-really-feels-about-the-iran-deal>.

⁶¹ Yoel Guzansky, "Iran and the Arab Gulf States: Change amidst Continuity", *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 9 (2015): 65, accessed September 29, 2015, doi: 10.1080/23739770.2015.100643.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 69.

⁶³ *Ibid*.

⁶⁴ Mohsen M. Milani, "Why Tehran Won't Abandon Assadism?", *The Washington Quarterly*, 36 (2013): 84, accessed September 29, 2015, doi: 10.1080/0163660X.2013.861715.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 85-86.