

## **Intellectual Bases and Practical Policy of the Iranian 9<sup>th</sup> Government in International Relations**

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*Foreign policy of every country has its own special features. Foreign policy in the Islamic Republic of Iran has been shaped in accordance with its revolutionary freedom-seeking ideals mentioned in its constitution; views of the Supreme Leader and based on own its principles of realization of dignity, wisdom and expedience. The 9<sup>th</sup> Iranian government led by President Ahmadinejad as its first run of presidency (2005-2009) believes that by adopting its special approaches have taken long strides toward realization of Iran's true status in the international arena. The most significant feature of this government has been fundamentalism which means here, a return to the ideals and principles of the Islamic revolution in international level that have special features. This article examines foreign policy features of the Iranian 9<sup>th</sup> government and its perspectives on international structures and also offers an evaluation of it from different aspects. It discusses how the current 10<sup>th</sup> government which is leading by President Ahmadinejad continues the same way in its foreign policy.*

***Keywords: Iranian 9<sup>th</sup> Government, Foreign Policy of President Ahmadinejad Justice-oriented Foreign policy, Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Revolution of Iran, Foreign Policy of America***

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Iranian foreign policy has been based on its revolutionary images. These perceptions stem from Islamic Shiite views. Imam Khomeini as the founder of Islamic Republic of Iran used them during the period of Iranian Islamic Revolution and these ideas have been realized in the first and the second Iranian constitutions after the victory of Islamic revolution. This paper analyses the logical paradigms in Iranian foreign policy during the government of President Ahmadinejad. The methodology or framework of this paper is based on explaining these logical paradigms. The main questions are as the followings: what are the most important features of this government? How is Iranian 9<sup>th</sup> government's perspective on international structures and how we can evaluate these perspectives? This paper confirms that the 9<sup>th</sup> government foreign policy is based on Islamic Revolution's values and principles as well as the guidelines set by the late Imam Khomeini. The most important aspects of this approach were disagreement with the American unilateralism and hegemony. It seems that in his second four year term, President Ahmadinejad will remain loyal to the principles of foreign policy in his first term.

### 2. LOGICAL PARADIGMS IN FOREIGN POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT AHMADINEJAD

Foreign policy of the Islamic republic of Iran from theoretical aspect is based on the methodology of Shiite Islam and ideas of the founder of the Islamic republic of Iran and it deals with interpretation of international relations based on the liberating framework.

Believing in the Divine rule and return to the Fitrat (pure nature) is a logical paradigm to move away from western intellectuality from one hand and commitment to fighting western hegemony as a political move on the other hand are among the most important liberating pillars of this ideology.<sup>1</sup>

This ideology is based on pure nature and this pure nature is considered the cornerstone of plans and world programs. Viewpoints of the late Imam (Ayatollah Khomeini) as the architect of this approach were based on the language of the pure nature. Among these theories the theory of the world justice is considered the core of this logical paradigm. "Justice is the fundamental axiom of the universality of the pure nature as it is the core of all theories of prominent Faqihs (Islamic Jurists). If pure nature is considered the engineer of man's environment in the world and also the roadmap for such a plan, then justice is the means for architecturing such idea and utopia." Utopia of the Fitrat (pure nature) is a utopia which its pillars are manifested by justice and mechanism of such Utopia, after being interwoven with justice can develop to a system.

Based on this viewpoint, "the world system today is a system based on discrimination, and justice in this world of oppression is nothing but an ideal, whereas realization of international peace and security without the assistance of justice is a baseless issue." Emphasis on fighting world arrogance and oppression, justice-seeking, progress-seeking, fighting economic, social, political, cultural and religious discrimination, which are embedded in the philosophy of the Islamic revolution, "can only be realized through above-mentioned potentials of pure nature (Fitrat)" (Mottaki 2006: 19-20).

There is no doubt that liberating thinking in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a function of ideals and existing facts of the Islamic Revolution, because foreign policy of a country is the outcome of domestic potentials and talents of that country which is designed and implemented by decision-makers of that system. Planners of foreign policy of Iran believe that "in the turbulent contemporary era which is the era of disappointment and wondering at the face of unfair international affairs, Islamic Republic will be able to quench the thirst of freedom-seeking nations and justice-seeking governments and offer a new approach" (Zarei 2009: 11-17).

In this liberating approach, "belief, faith and human relations are major power software and among them virtue and wisdom sit at the top." In the realm of spirituality, pure nature of mankind is the common heritage of world community and the bullying powers will not be able to perish such ever-existing traditions. In this regard, the collapse of the Soviet Union which had thousands of atomic bombs and all prominent features of power was a great blow to theoreticians of international system. Therefore, it can be claimed that "era of material schools has come to an end and that we have entered a new era of thought and culture which is the period of monotheistic thinking. In the Shiite school of thought," believing in the advent of a universal Savior is comprehensible and very common, "but contemporary governments and ideologies can not accomplish that mission" (Burger 2003: 20-32). Universal government of Mahdi (the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam of Shiites who is believed to be in hiding) would be the defeat of materialistic schools and acceptance of divine and monotheistic worldview.

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<sup>1</sup> The international environment within which the Islamic Republic must operate today is very complex and multi-dimensional. The Iranian government cannot isolate itself from the conflict with the US. The US government will continue to be a major challenge for Iran, especially regarding Iran's nuclear capability and its political stance relative to the US interests in the region.

Regarding the realization of this doctrine, foreign policy of Iran believes that has “stepped beyond the concept of power and power balance and that it has set fighting with world hegemonic system and realization of justice and peace as major pillars of its policy” (Khamenei 2009). Here, the concept of resistance against domineering power and formation of solidarity front for peace has its roots in the theory of develop-seeking man who favors tradition and promotion of social justice.<sup>2</sup> It is fundamentally based on “spirituality, God-fearing and monotheism.” The culture of resistance is in line with the “story of man’s love of dignity and honor and anti-subjugation dialogue and revival of justice are among its elements.” (Moslehzadeh 2009: 76-79)

In this perspective, foreign policy of Iran is considered a medium which is aimed at reviving and strengthening lofty ideals of the Islamic Republic in the international level.<sup>3</sup> The origin of this liberating thinking lies in this theory that the world system is at the threshold of a new evolution and that we have entered a new era of thought and culture. “The ruling political and economic formulas of today’s world which have been presented by big powers and materialistic schools have lost their functionality and credibility and that they are on the verge of collapse” (Abootalebi 2004: 34-49). Following the victory of the Islamic Revolution “which was based on the Islamic values and inspired anti-imperialism movements, international and world system has been seeking new liberating ideas. Lofty and high values of the Islamic revolution can and should play a major and effective role in this liberating movement” (Moulana 2009: 44-49).

If love of justice and justice-seeking are to be the only route of human community toward peace and security, monotheism and God-fearing should be the other side of this coin. In the view of President Ahmadinejad man has just crossed a dangerous pass and “a new era with inclination toward monotheism, purity affection, and respect for others, justice and peace-loving has just begun.” The origin of some the discussions, can be understood based on the kind of viewpoint on man, rights of man, relations among people, social rights of man, ruling values of man and human society’s conduct (Fuller 2003: 12-27). In other words, based on this viewpoint, “the world has been created for man, because if not, the world would not be meaningful for the reason that God has held man accountable and has assigned him a special mission.” One of the missions of the nations is leading the world toward the establishment of justice, peace, friendship, exploring talents and realization of them. The intellect as an inner messenger is the criterion. Prophets have shown the righteous path to the mankind. In this stage “there is no dispute among the God-fearing because the motives such as truth-seeking and perfection-seeking are in the nature of human-beings.” The belief, faith, religion, human

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<sup>2</sup> Many times Iran’s officials have pointed out the possibility that the US itself is the promoter of terrorism. They claim that American politicians use terrorism as an excuse for intervention. They want to employ terrorism as a tool to perpetuate domination over world affairs. Peaceful and freedom loving countries of the world have been falling victim to American machinations one after the other. The old policy of ‘divide and rule’ continues even today. When the US tries to create conditions of friction in the fraternity of the peace-loving nations and then tries to resolve the issue and while resolving that, it tries to establish itself as the master of destiny of the Third World.

<sup>3</sup> Iran is a country with a rich culture, historical records and a stable government. These elements will in turn lead to national identity, social stability and a well-placed political culture. A vast land area, rich resources and strategic location impart to Iran a special standing in political calculations and a greater scope to attain a genuine position as a regional power as compared with other countries, like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

interchanges are some of the power software, of which wisdom and virtue lie at the top (Bendle 2003: 125-140).

### 3. CURRENT INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE VIEW OF THE 9<sup>TH</sup> GOVERNMENT

By studying Iran's history over the last two centuries, we can see how Iranian has usually felt deeply affiliated to their national, social and religious heritage. Iran's political and social movements in its contemporary history have been concentrated on keeping national sovereignty and independence. So, on one hand, Iran's geopolitical and geo-economic position carries it toward the great powers, but on the other hand, the Iranian orientation is to avoid their influence. Iran's contemporary history fairly demonstrates how its intellectual and religious movements had been shaped around this kind of resistance. The most challenging problem for Iranian policymakers has been to keep balance among national wealth and security, religious identity and independence, national sovereignty and political stability. Based on this, settling tensions arising from relations with the West presents the most paradoxical challenge for the Iranian government. Tehran neither would be able to manage politics in pre-revolutionary style nor can ignore the great international changes, the economic reason, and its geopolitical situation.

Now that we shed some light on the foreign policy of the Islamic republic of Iran, the structure of an international liberating thought which is based on beliefs, values and high ideals of the Islamic revolution of Iran, can be understood. This ideology is interwoven with a pure Quranic perspective which is based on offering a new plan and structure in the international system. It rules out the current system as unjust and oppressive, and calls for overthrow of the current system and establishment of utopia with the help of all Muslims and the oppressed people of the world.

Article 152 of the Islamic Republic of Iran's constitution emphasizes that the foreign policy of the Islamic republic of Iran should be based on rejecting all aspects of domineering (meaning Iran should not be a domineering power) and being dominated (Iran should never give in to domineering powers), maintaining full-fledged independence and territorial integrity, defending the rights of all Muslims and not yielding in front of domineering powers and finally establishing peaceful relations with non-hostile nations (Tajani 2009: 17).

It is emphasized in the article 154 of the constitution that "Islamic republic of Iran regards the happiness of mankind in the entire world community as its ideal, and regards independence, freedom, having a just government as the right of all people of the world." Therefore, at the same time that it tries to fully abstain from interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, Iran finds itself committed to supporting the rightful resistance of the oppressed people against the world arrogance all over the world (Tajani 2009: 18).

Iran enjoys a strategic situation at the crisis-friendly Middle East region and many experts regard Iran the geo-politic center of Asia. Being located at the heart of the Middle East and being in possession of major parts of two invaluable zones of energy hubs Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea, sharing the geo-political fates of Iraq and Afghanistan, central Asia and Caucasus and the stances of the country regarding Africa, Europe, Balkans, and other strategic parts of the world which affects Iran's regional policies, have made Iran a heavy weight in international arena and, hence, its viewpoints, regarding the world community are considered important (Afrasiabi 2003: 225-264).

In the view of the 9<sup>th</sup> government the international relations are at a crossroad at present. This crossroad is crossing past, present, and future of world policies and based on its calculations of the present time, presents different instructions. One of the challenging questions is “that are we supposed to depict and interpret world development in such a way that the international relations and foreign policy issues be in line with the desires of the world powers? Or vice versa, Shouldn’t we use the existing gaps in this process and the living memory of the past 50 years to break the silence and get rid of dependencies and special monopolies” (Kupchan 2005: 32).

Basically, countries design their foreign policies based on the ruling ideologies dominant values, geo-political situation of the country and the situation of the world community. The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been designed based on negating the dominance of East and West, as well as principles of dignity, wisdom, and expedience. Although, previous governments had also uttered such slogans but the government of president Ahmadinejad claimed that by taking long strides and special approaches has got very close to the true status of the Islamic republic of Iran’s system, in the world arena. The 9<sup>th</sup> government has outlined its foreign policy within the framework of 20-year perspective plan of the Islamic Republic and the implementation of the constructive doctrine mentioned in perspective plan (Simbar 2006).

President Ahmadinejad has highlighted some elements based on above-mentioned principles. One of them is making efforts to revive slogans of the Islamic revolution such as standing against Israel and throwing the full support behind the movements of the oppressed people of the world (Dehghani Firoozabadi 2004: 211-212). In the view of the 9<sup>th</sup> government of these ideals are the key for maintenance of the system, the ideals which were emphasized by the late founder of the Islamic republic of Iran, Imam Khomeini. Regarding that the 9<sup>th</sup> government tried to redefine the foreign relations of the Islamic Republic to deal with the international system, global and regional developments.

The declared principles of the foreign policy of the 9<sup>th</sup> government distinguishes it from “the Construction Government” (the term used to refer to the 8-year post Iran-Iraq war government) of President Hashemi Rafsanajani and ‘the Reformist Government’ of Seyed Mohammad Khatami. Although, some of the principles of conduct such as justice-seeking and peace-seeking continued but there were significant differences in the procedure and approach.

The most important foreign policy feature of the 9<sup>th</sup> government is fundamentalism which means here, returning to the principles and ideals of the Islamic Revolution in the international level. Set of principles which can be defined in line with approach and doctrine of dynamic, active and effective policy. Anyway, according to the report of the foreign minister these policies and stances are within the framework Islamic Revolution, values of the Islamic republic system and ideas and teachings of Imam Khomeini. The government has set fundamentalism as its ideals in the foreign policy. Following that the government claimed that has especially prioritized maintaining Islamic dignity because in the view of the leader of the Islamic revolution this principle has not been properly taken into account (Mottaki 2006: 43-44). On the other hand, the 9<sup>th</sup> government, aiming the realization of articles 152, 154 of the constitution which refer to the regional balance and using the best of political, social, economic opportunities in the international venue, has put unification of idealism and realism at its agenda to challenge bullying powers and unfair international system. The government calls it “realistic idealism” (Ahmadinejad 2007: 4).

This idealistic interpretation which is based on good and flawless functioning, questions

organizations, international communities and world system, and calls for structural changes in some of world bodies such as the United Nations based on the axis of justice and on the other hand, despite the view of realists who rule out the possibility of realization of justice, calls for formation of justice-oriented organizations and necessities of world security and peace. The theory of “realistic idealism” in the view of the 9<sup>th</sup> government is an eclectic model in which ideals and realities have constant and meaningful relations in a way that uses the international capacities to promote its dialogue. It is based on this view that the 9<sup>th</sup> government brought up the idea of international justice and formation of solidarity front for peace in the UN and at the same time slams the existing structure and ruling system of the United Nations and Security Council.

Dr. Ahmadinejad in his speech which he made in the United Nations, September 26, 2007, said: “Some powers sacrifice all human values such as honesty, purity and loyalty to secure their objectives. They spread doubt and deception in the relations between governments and people. They blatantly say lies and spread accusations. They act against the laws and ruin the atmosphere of trust and friendship. They have openly set aside ethics and high values from the relations and have replaced justice, love and respect for people, honesty, and affection with selfishness, hatred, arrogance and oppression. They sacrifice all virtues and beauties of life in the way of serving their whims and caprice. Some of those who are international lawmakers openly violate the rules and impose double-standard measures. They pass nuclear disarmament laws and yet everyday test-fire and stockpile new generation of WMDs (weapons of mass destruction). They have set the United Nations Charter but do not respect independence and sovereignty right of people. They easily renege on their contracts by changing policies. They do not abide by the laws on environment protection. Most violations from laws are committed by few world powers. Some powers in the arena of world relations easily use the language of threat whenever they fail to rationalize their conduct. Heavy arms race has hung a cloud of threat over the world. European people who have been victims to two great wars and several other devastating wars as well as experiencing decades of cold war, are still living under threat, and their interests, security and lands are subject to threats because of the ongoing imposed arms race of some powers. One power finds itself entitled to establish a missile defense shield and make bitter the life of people of a continent and pave the ground for launching new arms race. Some apparently powerful rulers who imagine being in possession of strength, impatiently, in any time and place, use language of threat, consequently making the cloud of insecurity hang over people, nations and regions” (Ahmadinejad 2007a: 4-6).

And finally, incapability of international structures to remove challenges and establish lasting peace and security “indicate that the existing bodies and system lack necessary capacities and capabilities to resolve problems, remove challenges and set up just relations and establish peace, brotherhood and security. There are few nations and governments to pin their hopes to these structures for realization of their rights or defending their independence, sovereignty and national interests” (Ahmadinejad 2007: 3).

The 9<sup>th</sup> government, who adopted an offensive and confrontational foreign policy approach, has set its approach and strategy based on the famous principle of “neither West, nor East-just Islamic Republic.” Feeling a revolutionary and ideological responsibility, the 9<sup>th</sup> government, besides maintaining independence from power centers and world powers, pursues change and evolution in the existing international system. This government believes that through making fundamental changes in the principles and structures of the existing inappropriate system such desired changes can be realized (IRNA 2006: 2).

Uprooting the inappropriate order of the international system can be realized through disclosing domineering and repressive structure as well as structural violence in the international level and calling for its abolishment. Therefore, in the area of conduct and execution can be manifested in several forms: Disclosing the unjust and illegitimate nature of uni-polar international system and confronting it, fighting and confronting with centers and agents of world dominant powers, especially the United States of America, pushing for fundamental reforms and changes in the international organizations, bodies and regimes who regulate and set the existing order and system, and finally redefining principles and values which are accepted at international level such as peace, security and rights of nations.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4. APPROPRIATE AND EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE VIEW OF PRESIDENT AHMADINEJAD

In the view of the government of President Ahmadinejad the existing international system should go through “fundamental changes” and an appropriate international system should replace it. The appropriate international system should have necessary motives and capacity to establish peace and security based on “justice and spirituality in the world.” It should have proper planning for economic development of all countries, especially “reducing the gap between poor and rich countries.” His government believes that the elements of force and dominance should be omitted from the international relations so that countries “couldn’t be divided into two groups of domineering and dominant anymore.” Following that the major challenges of today’s world such as environmental issues, racial discriminations, hunger and poverty and drugs should be eliminated through cooperation of all countries of the world.

Regional and territorial disputes should be peacefully resolved based on principles of justice, democracy and the sovereignty rights of nations and finally international system and relations should be designed based on the axis of justice and lasting peace.

In the view of the 9<sup>th</sup> government the approach of justice and mutual right constitute the core of diplomacy and foreign policy of pure-nature oriented government of President Ahmadinejad. Regarding that they are of the belief that world policy and lofty policy would not be realized without special causes. This view challenges most of the ideas of the recent century in the international relations such as theories of realism, idealism, liberalism, Marxism and etc., because finds them ineffective for multi-dimensional growth of human being and the world (Ghorbani 2009).

Justice in international relations is by no means idealistic or based on Idealism; it, rather, deals with ‘what is’ and ‘what should be.’ Today’s world and its developments have been founded on injustice, which is rooted in essence in imperialism and seeking domination. For instance, the United Nations Security Council, as the name donates, deals with international security and not with justice. Consisting of 15 countries, 5 of which are world powers

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<sup>4</sup> President Ahmadinejad wrote a letter to President Bush, claiming that it may pave the way for future negotiations. In his letter to President Bush, among other things, he claimed that US policies do not conform to the Christian values. Nearly three decades had passed since the leaders of Iran and the US communicated directly. Ahmadinejad wrote “all prophets speak of peace and tranquility-based on monotheism, justice and respect for human dignity,” Ahmadinejad added “do you not think that if all of us abide by these principles, we can overcome the world’s problems? Will you not accept this invitation?”

holding veto power, the council is indeed an un-democratic system based on discrimination, an institution which does not accept any accountability or supervision for breaching the law by its permanent members, and one which has been unwilling- or unable- to take decisions to guarantee the rights of UN member countries (IRNA 2007).

From the viewpoint of President Ahmadinejad's government, "in western thought the concept of international politics is equal to power, but elevated dignified politics is not realized without justice." Regular ways of looking at power have been seriously challenged in the past few decades. Indeed, most of the failures and difficulties stemming from inability to predict future events come from the fact that power is mostly interpreted and understood in the framework of materialistic schools of thought, western realism, political economy or political geography in its old sense (Ahmadinejad 2008: 3).

In his address to the UN general assembly in fall 2005, President Ahmadinejad pointed to justice as a fundamental principle in the international order. He regarded "justice in the ruling structure" and "developing and guaranteeing justice at the international level" as necessary if governments and nations are to join in the efforts to realize peace and stability in the world. "We believe that steady order which creates peace and stability can be realized based on two pillars of justice and spirituality," he told the world in his second address to the UN Security Council (IRNA 2008).

During his third visit to New York, President Ahmadinejad again brought up the charter of justice in his meeting with the elite, researchers and media persons. "If our outlook is based on justice, based on seeking law, rights and justice for everybody, then fury will be uprooted," he underlined (IRNA 2009).

From this point of view, another element of a desired international order is implementing stable peace, and not 'armed peace'. According to the discourse adopted by the ninth administration, stable peace is far higher than the concept of armed peace, which is actually continuation of war under cover. This discourse call for eliminating the roots of wars, which requires establishing justice, convergence of human society, and putting an end to structural violence and institutionalized oppression at the international level. Because armed peace does not limit war and violence to political processes, but extends them to the wider social, economic and political contexts. Actually, political and physical violence are the manifestation of deep social and economic gaps and inequalities (Ahmadinejad 2008: 3).

## 5. CONFRONTING US HEGEMONY

The most obvious aspect of the 9<sup>th</sup> government's revision in foreign policy is its fundamental disagreement with the current world order. Accordingly, one of the top priorities in the administration's foreign policy is confronting "the uni-polar and empire-like world order" and "the monopoly of power in the world." Countering the uni-polar world order and the hegemony of the United States is pursued in two ways: first, through taking unilateral measures at the regional and international levels as well as boosting Islamic Republic of Iran's national power in all areas including military, economic and cultural; secondly, through multilateralism and outward balance (Simbar 2006).

Therefore, the 9<sup>th</sup> government, on the basis of its fundamentalist discourse, aims to make regional, ultra-regional and international coalitions to challenge the system of arrogance led

by the United States.<sup>5</sup> The expansion of Islamic Republic Iran's ties with Asian, African and, in particular, Latin American states, and also the "Looking towards the East" policy can be viewed in this context. The 9<sup>th</sup> government has made it the core of its foreign policy to enhance the multilateralism strategy at the international level, confront unilateralism in the international arena and expand relations with independent and non-aligned countries (Esposito 1990: 54-55).

Some of the manifestations of such an approach in the foreign policy of President Ahmadinejad's government can be seen in its international relations model and its policy of "Looking towards the East," namely expanding ties and cooperation with Russia, China, and India, getting observer membership at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, developing cooperation with regional and Islamic organizations, boosting bilateral and multilateral relations with the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, diversifying nuclear negotiations beyond European countries, especially by activating the role of non-aligned countries, and developing relations with anti-imperialist and anti-American countries all over the world.

Attempts to make an anti-imperialist, anti-arrogance and anti-hegemony front with the presence of such anti-American countries as Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Cuba and Syria was among special policies of Ahmadinejad's government during his first 4-year term. In his visit to Syria in February 2006, he told reporters, "A global front is being formed against the arrogance and hegemony and all the freedom-loving and justice seeking peoples of the world put hand in hand little by little to create this enormous front against the system and ideology of hegemony." During its first term, President Ahmadinejad's government tried to maintain special ties with these countries to challenge the current international hegemonic order (Ahmadinejad 2006: 5).

As for international organizations, the 9<sup>th</sup> government has spared no efforts to first of all clarify and shed light on the current unacceptable conditions in international organizations and secondly take measures to make fundamental and structural changes in them. In view of the 9<sup>th</sup> government in order for bringing change to the hegemonic international order, it is necessary to rectify the international organizations and institutions that are responsible for and regulate the current world order. Therefore, in his address to the 61<sup>st</sup> UN Assembly, President Ahmadinejad seriously criticized the structure and procedures of the United Nations and the Security Council and called for reforming them (Ahmadinejad 2007: 4-5).

He regards the unjust and unfair structure of the international organizations and the dominance of great powers over them after the Second World War as the reason behind their inefficiency and illegitimacy. He believes that the only way out of the current situation is reforming the structure of the United Nations and the Security Council based on democratic principles and observing the rights of all member states. He says, "The United Nations should move towards really defending the rights of nations and being dominated by one country or center. In order for this to happen, we need to make fundamental changes in the structure of the UN. Again, in his address to the 62<sup>nd</sup> UN Assembly he stressed the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the international mechanisms, especially the Security

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<sup>5</sup> It seems that since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution, has never been ready to accept the reality of changes taking place in Iran. The US adopted a policy of force and sanction against Iran, in order to achieve the goal of changing the Iran's regime and strengthening the opposition groups, who support Western liberal democracy. But it is very hard to believe that a popular uprising against the Islamic Republic of Iran lies around the corner. Unlike the Pahlavi period, the current regime enjoys genuine support from important sectors of the population, including some who strongly oppose its policies.

Council, and that the reason behind it is the dominance of the World War II victors over this organization based on the situation coming from that war (Ahmadinejad 2008: 4).

## 6. SPECIAL APPROACHES IN FOREIGN POLICY OF PRESIDENT AHMADINEJAD

In outlining its foreign policy doctrine, the 9<sup>th</sup> government has stepped beyond the concept of “power and balance of power” and set it as one of the main pillars of its policies to combat the global hegemonic order and establish justice and peace in the world. In line with this, President Ahmadinejad’s government tried to initiate a solidarity front for peace as a new factor in its foreign policy.

The 9<sup>th</sup> government also tried to leave the submissive policy behind it and move toward being a claimant not a defendant. For almost three decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been facing accusations on issues like human rights, rights of minorities and women as well as its revolutionary activities. In a reciprocal move, President Ahmadinejad’s government in its foreign policy has questioned human rights mechanisms and the west’s violating international treaties and political and economic discriminations, thus presenting itself as a claimant in the international order rather than a defendant. In line with this move, President Ahmadinejad, as Islamic Republic of Iran’s main diplomat in the international scene, has tried to be more influential through active participation in international assemblies, as well as travelling to different countries and making use of the media to get the message across to nations and to the public opinion of the world.

The social facets of international relations have also been taken into account by the 9<sup>th</sup> government. From the classical, traditional and historical point of view, the structures in international relations have been mainly based on political, economic and military factors. Relations between governments have always constituted the bulk of diplomatic activities in international relations. With the growth of grassroots and non-governmental organizations, and with the arrival of ultra-national and giant trade and commercial institutions, international relations entered a new era, though until very recently social factors in the world have been affected by traditional factors.

In the 1950s and 1960s, it was such leaders as Titu and Nehru who mobilized other world leaders like Castro, Nasser, Sukarno, and Nkrumah against the United States and former Soviet Union. But the core of these leaders’ campaign idea was secularism, nationalism or socialism and they did not talk of religion, spirituality and things like these that are spoken about today. But the 9<sup>th</sup> government from a religious point of view brings up issues at the international gatherings today like the collapse of the institution of family, the physical and cultural environment, and nuclear energy, decline of women’s dignity in the world and the harms of narcotics. During President Ahmadinejad’s first 4-year term, these social issues have been pointed out and clarified at the international level (Dehghani Firoozabadi 2004: 32-33).

Iran’s nuclear issue has also been viewed by this government from a special point of view.<sup>6</sup> In view of the 9<sup>th</sup> government, especially in the framework of big projects for

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<sup>6</sup> The US, Israel and other Western powers have claimed that Iran works for obtaining nuclear weapons capability. Tehran officially denied these claims and declared that its nuclear plants are for energy purposes and not for military ones. These claims and denials have been more intensified since the early 2000s with some more nuclear activities by Iran. The International Atomic Energy Agency

economic, industrial and technological development, the decision to continue the development of the country's peaceful nuclear program was one of the greatest and most important decisions made in the Islamic Republic of Iran and one of the most outstanding elements of the foreign policy. President Ahmadinejad tried to stand against various pressures imposed by great powers regarding Iran's nuclear issue, and introduced attaining the knowledge to use peaceful nuclear energy as the inalienable right of the Iranian people and government. The Iranian government has emphasized that it is not seeking any more rights than those guaranteed under the NPT and that it only seeks to secure its legitimate rights based on the treaty while fulfilling its obligations. The Islamic Republic of Iran will respond with good will to initiatives which are based on good will.<sup>7</sup> By the same token, it will take appropriate measures against policies that are based on threats and pressures (Kupchan 2005: 11-14).

## 7. CONCLUSION

Iranian government can not isolate itself from the conflict with the US. The Obama administration will continue to be a major challenge for Iran, especially regarding Iran's nuclear capability and its political stance relative to US interests in the region. If the US is unable to agree with Europe on a common strategy, it can be reasonably assumed that there will be few other countries aside from Israel that would be prepared to take unilateral action against Iran. Moreover, when it comes to unilateral action, there is no guarantee that even the massive use of force would do anything other than delay an Iranian bomb. For this reason, the most likely outcome would be that the US would have to learn to live with an Iranian nuclear option and construct a deterrent policy that would be effective against the range of threats associated with an Iranian nuclear capability.

Indeed, it can be said that the 9<sup>th</sup> government adopted a new approach in foreign policy- especially with regards to the international order- which is based on Islamic Revolution's values and principles as well as the guidelines set by the late Imam Khomeini. On the one hand such fundamental principles as fighting the arrogance, rejecting the dominance of others, defending Muslims and the oppressed, having an optimistic outlook towards the world nations, and the strategy of "neither the East nor the West" were adopted as the bases

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(IAEA) and European Union (EU) have engaged in lengthy talks with Iran to verify adherence to its Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) commitments. In short, the Iranian case represents one of the most serious challenges to the non-proliferation regime.

<sup>7</sup> Negotiations with Iran would address Iran's increasing regional responsibility, including its nuclear ambitions, its role in stabilizing Iraq, and in disarming Hezbollah in Lebanon. Making progress on these issues serves larger American strategic objectives for regional stability, especially America's imperative to secure the free flow of energy across Eurasia. Washington must therefore carefully consider the following strategic concerns before doing on any course of action. First, in the Caspian Sea, the US needs Iran to counter Russia, Washington's main rival on the world stage of energy marketing and transportation. The US is interested in the Caspian primarily because Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan are major hydrocarbon producers. If the US attacks Iran, it will lose its leverage against Russia, bringing Moscow even closer to Tehran, seriously threatening US interests in Central Asia and Caspian. Also, Iran can foment trouble inside Azerbaijan, which is three-quarters Shia, by exploiting a simmering territorial dispute to weaken Baku's US-friendly government and disrupt American regional operations.

of the administration's foreign policy. On the other hand, from early on it took a forceful approach to confront the unjust world order. The most important features of this approach were disagreement with the American unilateralism and hegemony and making attempts to change the structure of international organizations. According to this approach, three factors, namely fundamentalism, seeking justice and seeking peace- as defined in this paper- were adopted as the basis of the 9<sup>th</sup> government's foreign policy. And steps were taken not in the privative sense, that is negating the current world order, but in the affirmative sense, namely introducing a desirable world order.

The 9<sup>th</sup> government is now the winner of Iran's presidential elections, and it seems that in his second 4-year term, President Ahmadinejad will remain loyal to the principles of foreign policy in his first term. However, it should be noted that due to the power structures at the regional and international levels, President Ahmadinejad is facing numerous challenges. Although President Obama and his secretary of state have talked of direct negotiation with Iran, the radical groups within the American administration and the Zionist lobby will create obstacles in the way. An improvement in the issue of Palestine and the situation of this country can also affect Iran-US relations.

Another important – and challenging- issue in the 10<sup>th</sup> government's foreign policy is Iran's nuclear challenge. It has been the most serious issue for Iran after the 8-year imposed war (with Iraq). The United States and the west have come to the international scenes in full force making accusations against Iran and focusing all their efforts to stop nuclear drive of Iran. Peaceful and cost-effective resolve of this issue would be one of the major challenges of the 10<sup>th</sup> government. Islamic Republic of Iran, being a regional power and having sensitive geopolitical situation as well as having abundant oil resources have good leverages that can use in its negotiations with the west and the United States. Regarding the special situation of Iraq and Afghanistan and extensive influence of Iran in these two countries, the 10<sup>th</sup> government can enjoy this condition to improve its status in both regional and international levels.

**Article Received: 08-Nov-2010    Revised: 16-Mar-2010    Accepted: 24-Mar-2010**

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