

**FOREIGN POLICY CONCEPT OF ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN:
HISTORICAL VIEW**

Dilshoda Khodjimuratova*

*Base Doctoral Student,
Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies,
Tashkent, UZBEKISTAN
Email id: manutd-7@mail.ru

DOI: [10.5958/2249-7315.2022.00332.X](https://doi.org/10.5958/2249-7315.2022.00332.X)

ABSTRACT

According to the article, in the late XX and early XXI centuries, Iran's foreign policy strategy has suffered a number of changes under the influence of reforms in the country, and during this historical period, the political elite has changed the direction of Tehran's foreign policy based on the current situation. The sources of Iran's foreign policy development and the mechanisms of its implementation will be explored. The foreign policy of Iran's presidents and the methods of its implementation will be analyzed, and their aspects aimed at protecting the country's national interests will be compared. The article states that the Iranian Foreign Policy Office tried to show the world community that it supports the idea of liberalizing international relations at a time when Tehran gave priority to the development of Tehran's foreign policy based on the ideas of realism.

KEYWORDS: *Iran, Foreign Policy, Domestic Policy, Supreme Leader, "Soft Power", Islamic Revolution, Tehran, Concept, Ideology, Iranian President, Hezbollah, Foreign Policy Office, Diplomacy.*

INTRODUCTION

In the late XX and early XXI centuries, Iran's foreign policy strategy had a number of changes under the influence of reforms in the country, and during this historical period, the political elite focused on changing Tehran's foreign policy in light of the prevailing conjuncture. The new political elite, which came to power as a result of the 1979 revolution, reformed the previous system of foreign policy implementation and developed a new foreign policy concept for Iran.

Particular attention was paid to the formation of the concept of Iran's foreign policy based on the religious and political views of the country's leadership and taking into account socio-political trends in Iranian society.

After the 1980s, Iranian diplomacy was determined by the political stance of the country's supreme leader Khomeini, including his views on the implementation of inter-state relations. As a result, the Supreme Leader of Iran, R.Khomeini, became the supreme authority, defining the concept of foreign policy. According to Khomeini's conception, Iran's foreign policy was based on the ideas of "exporting the Islamic revolution" and "neither West nor East - only Islam". This comment is recognized as evidence that the Iranian foreign court has given priority to the foreign policy of official Tehran, based on ideas of realism in international relations.

The concept of foreign policy developed on the basis of these ideas by R.Khomeini includes:

- The revolution's intolerance for the oppression of the Muslim community by the countries of the world;
- Implementing Islamic values and introducing them to the world;

- The development and expansion of Iran's relations with foreign countries;
- The orientation of Iran's foreign policy on the need for cultural, economic and social interaction between countries and peoples;
- The use of foreign policy as a means of isolating Iran on the international stage, fighting aggressive propaganda against the Islamic Revolution;
- Using foreign policy as a means of identifying countries friendly and hostile to Iran [1].

Remarkably, the legal basis was created by the inclusion in the Iranian Constitution of the principles of foreign policy, including the foreign policy doctrine put forward by Supreme Leader R.Khomeini, and provisions on the role of the Supreme Leader in international affairs [2]. Khomeini's concept of foreign policy was also covered in a meeting in January 1981 with officials of the Iranian Foreign Ministry [1].

The period 1979-1989 is characterized by a number of difficult issues in Iran's foreign policy, including the conflict between local political elites over foreign policy issues, the war with Iraq, the severing of diplomatic relations with the United States, and the cooling of relations with leading Western countries.

According to Supreme Leader Khomeini, "exporting the Islamic revolution" and "supporting the liberation movement in Muslim countries" should form the basis of Iran's foreign policy doctrine [3]. Also as a result of Khomeini's "neither East nor West" foreign policy, Tehran's relations with the international community became more difficult, leading to Iran's political and economic isolation in the international arena. The foreign policy based on Khomeini's ideas was initially criticized by various political forces in Iran. The internal opposition accused Supreme Leader Khomeini of inconsistent regional foreign policy.

In pursuit of the aforementioned concept, official Tehran sought to establish links with banned organizations in Syria and Libya. At the same time, from various regional and international platforms, the Iranian government has stressed its readiness to sever diplomatic relations with any country that oppresses Muslims. Based on this thesis, official Tehran announced the severing of Iran's diplomatic relations with Egypt and Jordan, drastically limiting its ties with Saudi Arabia.

In the late 1980s, with pragmatists and realists dominating Iran's domestic political scene, Tehran began to focus on achieving its foreign policy goals through a policy of "soft power" and "export of Islamic culture" [4].

In particular, Iran's constitutional reforms in 1989, the change of the supreme leader and the election of a new president, and the strengthening of his role in the country's domestic and foreign policy marked a new stage in Iran's foreign policy.

In foreign policy, Iran's new Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei paid special attention to the stability of political regimes in neighboring Muslim countries and the strengthening of cooperation with them.

As a result of the election of Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani as president of Iran in 1989, the concept of foreign policy based on the ideas of Supreme Leader R. Khomeini was revised. Official Tehran's foreign policy has become pragmatic, and relations with a number of countries have undergone a constructive review.

Protecting Iran's national interests, making it a political, economic, military, scientific and technical leader in the region, and the economic expansion of foreign markets were identified as one of the main objectives of the country's foreign policy during the Hashemi-Rafsanjani presidency (1989-1997).

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani loosened sanctions on Iran, established close cooperation with many countries (except Israel and the United States), and strengthened his image in the international community through active participation in regional and international organizations [5].

At the same time, Tehran itself sought to promote the country's national interests through organizations with strong positions. In particular, in 1996 he tried to use the Organization of Islamic Cooperation as a means of influencing the countries of the Near and Middle East region of Iran, transforming it from an economic union into a political and even military-political organization.

The presidency of Mohammad Khatami from 1997 to 2005 has been described by experts as a period of reformist-political domination, and the concept of Iranian foreign policy has acquired a new meaning. In particular, the Dialogue of Civilizations initiative was launched, aimed at bringing Iran out of international isolation and establishing multi-vector cooperation within a multipolar system. The concept of the Coalition for Peace through Justice was also developed to address military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and to create a collective system for combating emerging threats within the United Nations.

The above two principles form a theoretically coherent ideological platform, on the basis of which the main directions of M. Khatami's foreign policy were developed. The principles of Iranian diplomacy within the concept of "dialogue of civilizations" should be seen as a way of mitigating the situation, building trust, dialogue and turning threats into opportunities, the slogan of the "Coalition for Peace Based on Justice" is seen by Tehran as a consistent policy against terrorism, extremism and violence. During Khatami's presidency, Iran's Foreign Ministry priorities were as follows [6]:

- To approach international relations in a constructive way;
- Implementation of the policy of "dialogue of civilizations";
- Reliance on Iranian culture and values in foreign policy.

Another important element of President Khatami's foreign policy strategy has been his focus on a pragmatic, long-term perspective. Iran has shown itself to be a far-sighted state in a complex international and regional situation, without pursuing short-term interests. 1997-2005 Increasing internal divisions and confrontations among Iran's ruling elite have been one of the key elements that characterize domestic political life, dividing the Iranian political elite into reformers and conservatives. Nevertheless, these disagreements have not weakened Iran's foreign policy, and its main parameters and directions have been maintained.

From 1997 to 2005, the Supreme Leader instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to create a favorable international environment to strengthen the Islamic regime in Iran, secure the country's national interests abroad, and protect the rights of its citizens abroad. According to President Khatami, Iran's political, economic, cultural and social potential, as well as the broad support of the population based on Islamic norms, are important factors in ensuring Tehran's international prestige [7].

During his presidency (1997-2005), Khatami prioritized the development of Iran's foreign policy on the basis of liberal ideas in international relations, which President Khamenei strongly opposed, because this approach contradicted the conceptual ideas and principles laid down under the former Supreme Leader R.Khomeini (1979-1989).

In this context, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who represented the neoconservative forces in the June 2005 presidential elections and advocated a radical revision of Iran's foreign policy concept, was elected president. Neoconservatives have put forward a strategy of focusing on the principle of

“justice” in international relations, maintaining fair and equitable relations regardless of the authority and power of states, while maintaining the basic principles of Iran’s foreign policy.

Under President Ahmadinejad, Iranian diplomacy has tightened its foreign policy rhetoric. It has been noted that the principle of “justice” has greatly intensified in Iran's international relations. The main objective of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was to create a favorable external environment to bring Iran to the forefront of the region in terms of economy, science and technology by 2025. However, Tehran’s new foreign policy has not yielded the expected results due to the fact that the Iranian political elite has different views on the international situation of the country.

As a result of these efforts, the years 2005-2007 were marked by regional changes in Iran’s foreign policy, particularly in its relations with the countries of South America and the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization [7]. In particular, diplomatic relations have been established with Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba and Nicaragua, and high-level visits have been made to such African countries as Sierra Leone, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania and Senegal [8].

In 2009, President Ahmadinejad will promote a new foreign policy concept called “Creative Cooperation” [9]. Realizing and understanding the complex political processes inherent in international relations, conducting an active, purposeful, constructive, effective foreign policy, moving away from directions that harm Iran’s foreign policy, and strengthening Tehran’s activities in regions that promote national interests as a strong and influential state in world politics, what is happening, taking international relations to a new level were identified as the main objectives of this concept. “The concept of creative cooperation” provides for the phased implementation of relations with neighboring and developing countries at the regional and international levels [10].

At a time when Iran’s efforts to pursue its nuclear program have met fierce international opposition, a new strategic direction has emerged in Tehran’s foreign policy: nuclear diplomacy. Since 2010, Tehran has skillfully used the topic of “Iran’s nuclear program” to get rid of international restrictions and increase its influence in world politics.

Iran’s foreign policy concept for 2005-2009 noted the extensive use of “aggression” and “escalation” as effective deterrents to the United States and Israel [8]. In particular, this period was marked by the leadership of radical conservatives in the Iranian parliament, the executive and the judiciary, which provided President Ahmadinejad with a favorable domestic political environment for the implementation of the above-mentioned concept [8]. As a result of President Ahmadinejad’s foreign policy in the Middle East, Iran’s relations with the leading Arab states, particularly the Egyptian and Persian Gulf monarchies, have improved.

During Hassan Rouhani’s presidency from 2013-2021, Iran became recognized by the international community as one of the leading countries in the region. President Rouhani’s activities in the foreign policy arena, in particular his pragmatic views, have been supported by the Iranian people and described as a reformist movement aimed at strengthening the country’s international position. The development of national economy in the foreign policy concept in the new perspective put forward by President H. Rouhani. The main topics were the strengthening of regional cooperation, the implementation of Iran’s nuclear program, the release of international sanctions. At the same time, he attracted like-minded, pragmatic politicians to the government [8]. It is noteworthy that in the early years Rouhani’s activities were fully supported by Iran’s supreme leader Ali Khamenei.

As a result of President Rouhani’s efforts in this regard, Iran’s relations with the United States have shown a cer

tain positivity, mutual trust in relations with countries in the region, and calmness in political negotiations has become a priority.

President Rouhani sought to have Western sanctions on Iran lifted through constructive negotiations with U.S. officials and the use of compromise tactics in some policy areas. As a result of these efforts, Tehran signed an agreement on Iran's nuclear program with representatives of the United States, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany in Geneva on November 24, 2013. The document also developed a "Joint Action Plan" on July 14, 2015, which was approved by the UN Security Council on July 20, 2015. However, the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the agreement signed with Iran after President Trump came to power in the Washington administration in 2018.

According to President Rouhani, the current situation in the regional and international arena requires Iran to pursue a "moderate" foreign policy:

1. "Moderation" - developing a foreign policy course with an objective assessment of the current situation and ensuring that the principles and interests of foreign policy are taken into account.
2. Enhancing Iran's political prestige by abandoning rigid approaches and various slogans in foreign relations.
3. Achieving effective foreign policy by establishing constructive cooperation with foreign countries by building mutual trust between nations.
4. Priority of economic development in foreign policy [11].

According to experts, Tehran's policy of "soft power" through charitable foundations in various countries has played an important role in achieving results in this area [12]. However, despite Rowhani's efforts to forge a constructive approach in the new foreign policy, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has faced strong opposition in domestic politics as a result of his changing attitude toward the president [11]. In particular, the Supreme Leader and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps sought to limit President Rouhani's free activity in the international arena [13].

Based on the above, the following conclusion can be made:

Remark that after the 1980s the Islamic factor played a key role in the development and implementation of Iran's new foreign policy, but since the 21st century globalization is at the heart of the process.

An analysis of Tehran's foreign policy in the late XX and early XXI centuries showed that the reformist class (A.A.Hashemi-Rafsanjani, M.Khatami, H.Rouhani) within the Iranian political establishment favors a pragmatic and balanced foreign policy against conservative politicians (R.Khomeini, A.Khameneiy, M.Akhmadinejad) in international affairs.

The principles and priorities of Iran's foreign policy concept have been revised with the change of the country's presidents. Over the past period, the concept of foreign policy set by the supreme leader of Iran, R.Khomeini, has not undergone radical changes, but it has acquired a new image of presidents based on their electoral programs.

Khomeini's foreign policy views are enshrined in the Iranian Constitution. The principles of foreign policy set forth in this Basic Law are still relevant to the Iranian leadership today.

Since Iran's foreign policy is based on ideas of realism in international relations, we can say that the priority in foreign policy is to ensure the country's national interests.

Based on a study of the evolution of Iran's foreign policy, Tehran has shown its readiness to develop constructive cooperation with countries that have chosen the path of secular development. The influence of the Islamic factor on Iran's foreign policy is relatively reduced due to the realistic

and pragmatic approach of the new generation of political elites, and Iran's expansionism is more reflected in trade and economic relations with neighboring countries.

REFERENCES

1. Vartanyan A.M. Transformation of Iran's Foreign Policy Doctrine in 1979–2005. Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan: the time of elections and changes / ed. ed. M.R. Arunova. - M., IV RAN, 2006, p. 93. (in russian)
2. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. http://rc.majlis.ir/fa/content/iran_constitution
3. Feroz Dehghani Abadi Seyyed Jalal. Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran - Tehran: Humanities Studies and Compilation Organization of the University, 2009, p. 458. (in persian)
4. Ushakov V.A. The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran after the revolution of 1978-1979. Institute of Oriental Studies RAS. - M., 1997, pp. -542. (in russian)
5. Kozhanov N. Iran's Strategic Thinking – The Evolution of Iran's Foreign Policy 1979-2018. Berlin: Gerlach Press, 2018. 190 p.
6. Sanai Mehdi. Dialogue of Civilizations and the Islamic Factor. Dialogue of civilizations: Reports and speeches. Russian-Iranian International Scientific Symposium April 2001 - M., 2003, p. - 10-15. (in russian)
7. Yurtaev V.I. Features and implementation of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran (1979 – 2010. Dis. ... Doctor of Historical Sciences / RUDN. - M., 2012, - 439 p. (in russian)
8. Mehmet Bora Sanyurek. Devrim sonrasi Iran dış politikasi. The Journal of Academic Social Science Yıl:6, Sayı: 86, Aralık 2018, s. 212. (in turkish)
9. Maaiké Warnaar. Iranian foreign policy during Ahmadinejad: Ideology and Actions. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. 304 p.
10. Seyed Hameed Molana, Manouchehr Mohammadi. The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Ahmadinejad government. Tehran: Dadgstar, 2008, p. 116. (in persian)
11. Akbarzadeh, Shahram and Dara Conduit. Iran in the world: President Rouhani's Foreign Policy. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, 214 p.
12. Vali Golmohammadi. The Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Prospects for Change and Continuity. All Azimuth V 8, N 1, 2019, P 97.
13. Khandogin K. The ideology of Khomeinism and its influence on the formation of the conceptual foundations of Iran's foreign policy. Vlast. 2011. No. 10. pp. 111-114. (in russian)