

Iran's Foreign Policy Approaches toward International Organizations

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Abstract

Iran's foreign policy toward international organizations has always oscillated between divergence and convergence, depending on the status of the country in question and the statesmen's point of the view. This study aimed to examine the status of international organizations in Iran's foreign policy. A divergent approach to international organizations was adopted during 1981-1988 and 2005-2013. This believe in a domination system in the world, and try to change the status quo and the fundamental rules of the international system. One could argue that the domination of this approach in Iran's foreign policy undermined the national interests and security. On the other hand, since 1979, it has been revealed that whenever Iran has had a convergent interaction with international organizations (i.e., 1979-1980 and 1988-2005); it has helped Iran's national interest and security. Furthermore, cooperation with international organizations in various fields has provided opportunities for political, economic and cultural ties of Iran.

Keywords: convergence, divergence, international organizations, Iran's foreign policy, UN.

1. Introduction

The number, scope, and activities of international organizations and institutions significantly increased in the 20th century. The establishment of the League of Nations and United Nations, as two international organizations, is considered as a milestone in the history of international organizations. At the regional level, the establishment of regional organizations has been viewed as a means for regional cooperation to prevent the growth of extremist nationalism in Europe and other regions of the world. In the second half of the 20th century, statesmen, politicians and researchers perceived that the problems and dilemmas at the regional and international levels are beyond the limits of governments, and the governments cannot solve them on their own. Global cooperation and convergence is essential for solving problems such as environmental pollution, spread of weapons for mass destruction, and economic crises. Theoretically, the main function of organizations is to provide international peace and security. Therefore, by considering the importance, extent and status of international organizations in global processes, it is necessary for global political units to attempt to guarantee their national interests and promote their international prestige by adopting the multilateral approaches.

International organizations in the realistic world will play one of the two roles: the first one is a marginal role for international organizations in global politics. In fact, international organizations promote the cooperation in non-controversial areas where states have common interests. Yet, they rarely limit the states' behavior in conflicts. In other words, international organizations have little or no role in maintaining the international peace and security. Second, international organizations can play an interventionist role in the calculations of great powers. International organizations are used by the great powers to advance their interests in the international

system. Weaker states also use the international organizations to achieve their goals. From the realists' point of view, the function of international organizations is merely considered as a reflection of regional and international balance of states.

International organizations and institutions have encompassed a high status in Iranian foreign policies multilateral and regionalism approaches (Khoshandam, 2015). Iran should consider the position of international organizations in its foreign policy because of its geopolitical status. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the position of international organizations in Islam Republic of Iran's foreign policy. The main question is that 'what position have the international organizations had in Iran's foreign policy?' It should be noted that the status of international organizations in foreign policy of Islamic Republic of Iran has been different based on the internal status of the country and viewpoints of statesmen's viewpoints at different periods.

2. Theoretical Framework

In international relations theories, international organizations and institutions have been given different significance. Some of these theories regard international organizations and institutes as marginal actors in international politics, while some other theories such as Liberalism emphasize their role in providing world peace and security. Realism is one of the dominant theories in the field of international relations. According to Mearsheimer (1994: 9-10), the assumptions of this theory are:

First, the international system is anarchic. The second assumption is that states inherently possess some offensive military capability, which gives them the wherewithal to hurt and possibly to destroy each other. The third assumption is that states can never be certain about the intentions of other states. Specifically, no state can be certain another state will not use its offensive military capability against the first. The fourth assumption is that the most basic motive

driving states is survival. States want to maintain their sovereignty. The fifth assumption is that states think strategically about how to survive in the international system. States are instrumentally rational.

Institutions are basically a reflection of the distribution of power in the world. They are based on the self-interested calculations of the great powers, and they have no independent effect on state behavior. Realists therefore believe that institutions are not an important cause of peace. They matter only on the margins. Institutions have minimal influence on state behavior, and thus hold little promise for promoting stability in the post-Cold War world (Mearsheimer, 1994: 7).

Liberalism is also one of the theories of international relations whose assumptions according to Moravcsik (2001: 4-5), are as follows:

1. The fundamental actors in international politics are rational individuals and private groups, who organize and exchange to promote their interests. Liberal theory takes on a "bottom-up" view of politics, whereby the demands of individuals and societal groups are treated as analytically prior to state behavior.
2. States (or other political institutions) represent some subset of domestic society, whose interest's rational state officials pursue through world politics. For liberals, representative institutions and practices constitute the critical "transmission belt" by which the disparate preferences and social power of individuals and groups in civil society are transmitted into the political realm, aggregated, and translated into state policy.
3. The configuration of state preferences determines state behavior. The distribution and interaction among the preferences of different states, liberals argue, is the determinate influence on interstate behavior.

The principal challenge to realism came from a broad family of liberal theories. One strand of liberal thought argued that economic interdependence would discourage states from using force against each other because warfare would threaten each side's prosperity. A second strand, often associated with President Woodrow Wilson, saw the spread of democracy as the key to world peace, based on the claim that democratic states were inherently more peaceful than authoritarian states. A third, more recent theory argued that international institutions such as the International Energy Agency and the International Monetary Fund could help overcome selfish state behavior, mainly by encouraging states to forego immediate gains for the greater benefits of enduring cooperation (Walt: 1998: 2).

Liberal institutionalism argues that emphasis should be placed on global governance and international organizations as a way of explaining international relations. Institutionalism places emphasis on the role that common goals play in the international system and the ability of international organizations to get states to cooperate (Devitt, 2011). When states can jointly benefit from cooperation, on the other hand, we expect governments to attempt to construct such institutions. Institutions can provide information, reduce transaction costs, make commitments more credible, establish focal points for coordination, and in general facilitate the operation of reciprocity. By seeking to specify the conditions under which institutions can have an impact and cooperation can occur, institutionalism theory shows under what conditions realist propositions are valid (Keohane & Martin, 1995: 42).

Constructivism is one of the theories of international relations for understanding world events. Hopf (1998: 172) stated that:

Constructivism offers alternative understandings of a number of the central themes in international relations theory, including: the meaning of anarchy and balance of power, the relationship between state identity and interest, an elaboration of power, and the prospects

for change in world politics. The constructivist research program has its own puzzles that concentrate on issues of identity in world politics and the theorization of domestic politics and culture in international relations theory.

An institution is a relatively stable set or "structure" of identities and interests. Such structures are often codified in formal rules and norms, but these have motivational force only in virtue of actors' socialization to and participation in collective knowledge. Institutions are fundamentally cognitive entities that do not exist apart from actors' ideas about how the world works. This does not mean that institutions are not real or objective, that they are nothing but beliefs (Wendt, 1992). As collective knowledge, they are experienced as having an existence "over and above the individuals who happen to embody them at the moment. On this view, institutionalization is a process of internalizing new identities and interests, not something occurring outside them and affecting only behavior; socialization is a cognitive process, not just a behavioral one. Conceived in this way, institutions may be cooperative or conflictual, a point sometimes lost in scholarship on international regimes, which tends to equate institutions with cooperation (Wendt, 1992: 399).

The ideational source of Iran's foreign policy to the international organizations has not been based on realistic or institutional theories. Thus, using the terms realism and liberal institutionalism is avoided in this paper. In this paper, two different approaches (i.e., convergent and divergent) to the international organizations and institutions after the Islamic Revolution in Iran are discussed.

2.1. Convergence

Theories that predict a trend towards political convergence can be traced back on the one hand in the economic theory of international trade, on the other to theories of intergovernmental

or inter-jurisdictional competition. This model was extended to accommodate the process of globalization and to explain the policy preferences of relevant domestic actors, the policies implemented and the development of domestic institutions (Busch, 2002: 3-4).

Convergence is a process of approximation of qualitative and quantitative characteristics; each country that is part of a trade group converges to its own growth path designed as the simple average of the per capita GDP of convergent Group (Wahiba, 2015: 510).

That the ability of interest groups to assert themselves covaries with the mobility of their production factor: those who can most credibly threaten with exit will increase their negotiating power and prevail. It follows that a consequence of globalization is the adaptation of government policy to the interests of capital (as the most mobile production factor), and since this will take place everywhere, a convergence of policies is the result. These theories postulate that growing international integration will have implications for domestic policy (once indirectly through a change in the domestic distribution of political power, once directly through influence on government policy) and will lead to a convergence of policies and institutions (Busch, 2002: 3-4).

Convergent components with the international system can be summarized as existence of realistic and rationalistic elements in Iran's foreign policy, acceptance of international order, acceptance of the status quo, and respect for the rules of international law. The convergent approach believes in cooperating with international organizations and institutions and respecting for international rules and norms to guarantee the national interests. The convergent approach emphasizes two points in relation to the international organizations. First, promoting the position of Islamic Republic of Iran in international organizations and

strengthening its influence in the process of coalition and decision-making are proposed as a target; therefore, it is necessary to replace the negative and isolationist view with an affirmative and positive one. Out of the approach which considers all the international organizations as a means for great powers, no solution would be found for convergence and effective role of Islamic Republic of Iran in international organizations. Second, this approach attempts to make a positive and desired image of Iran in the international system. Any change and transformation in the international image of Iran can lead to the change in the status of Iran's international capabilities that is very effective in increasing the presence of Iranian elite in international organizations, because the will that tries to make an image from Iran as a troublemaker in the international system is adjusted and can provide more space for Iran to influence and maneuver for the attendance of Iranian elite in the international elite (Tabatabaei, 1386 [2007 A.D]).

2.2. Divergence

Factors of regional divergence, in the sense that the elimination of tariff barriers between nations promotes the consolidation of economic activities in the rich countries which could strengthen the phenomena of polarization and unequal growth, these phenomena will result in a marked tendency to divergence of economies (Wahiba, 2015).

These approaches "focus on the stability of specific national characteristics such as differences in national policy styles, the stability of institutional arrangements and the importance of path dependence. Consequently, they predict constant or even increasing divergence in national policies and institutional structures" (Busch, 2002: 3).

Important theoretical factors in the divergent approach to the international organizations are as follows:

1. This approach argues that international organizations and institutions are the Western agents, especially the USA, and the main function of these institutions is to guarantee the national interests of the USA. The divergent approach called for a change and reform in the international system and organizations, especially the UN. Lack of attention to the global reality and possibilities is the most important weaknesses of this approach.
2. Divergent approach to the international system with a suspicious and threat-based view caused by conspiracy theory minimized the influence of divergence and consistency processes among the domestic elite and international system (Tabatabaei, 1386 [2007 A.D]).
3. Divergent approach criticizes international organizations through absolutism and raising ideal expectations. Divergent approach also takes into account the success of international organizations as their least duty, and considers their failure as a disaster (Eslami, 1386 [2007 A.D]).
4. Duality in the behavior of international organizations towards Iran has caused distrust to them. For example, behavior of international organizations to Iran's nuclear program, human rights and double standards existing in international organizations formed a fundamental belief in the minds of Iranian elites that Iran has always been discriminated by these organizations (Zamani Nia, 1386 [2007 A.D]). Divergent approach believing in domination system in the world, tried to change the status qua and also the institutions and fundamental rules of the international system. Divergent approach dominated in Iran from 1981 to 1989 and 2005 to 2013.

3. Divergent Approach in Iran's Foreign Policy

After the Islamic Revolution of Iran, divergence of Iran from the international system was accelerated because of the western

nature of the international system, and contradiction between the components of Jurisprudential Islam with the nature of international system. Some of the factors that caused the divergence of Iran from the international system particularly the United Nations are mentioned as follows:

1. Outbreak of Islamic Revolution and its impact on foreign policy: Outbreak of Islamic Revolution in Iran strengthened the desire for *otherness* policy. Therefore, confrontation with the international organizations which had been established by the Western powers was followed.
2. Ideational and cognitive barriers: The interpretation of international events and also the political concepts of the divergent spectrum derived from juridical sources of Shi'a Islam are different and contrary to the ideational sources of dominant global discourse.
3. Undesirable historical background of great powers especially Western countries in Iran: The damage of great powers to Iran's independence caused the mistrust of Iran to these countries. Given that Western powers are the founders of international organizations particularly United Nations, Iran's distrust to these organizations was accelerated.
4. Undesirable function of the UN to the Iran-Iraq war: During the imposed war of Iraq against Iran, undesirable function of UN Security Council against Iran and failure to remain impartial while issuing the Resolution 479 strengthened the mistrust of Iran to the UN.

3.1. Revisionist Mir Hossein Mousavi's Foreign Policy toward International Organizations (1981-89)

Orientation of Iran's foreign policy at this point is deeply influenced by the nature of revolution and aftermath of the

victory of the revolution. Iran's state has defined the international organizations under control of the West leading by the USA and adopted a divergent policy toward them. In other words, the West was considered as *other* or *enemy* and America, as the symbol of Great Satan, was considered as the leader of the West imperialism or global dominance. International organizations were introduced as a tool serving to the imperialism. Therefore, by using such terminology, a strong protest would occur against international organizations especially the United Nations. Mir Hossein Mousavi was Iran's prime minister during 1980-1988 when Iran-Iraq war was ongoing. The most important components in Mousavi's foreign policy in relation to international organizations are as follows:

3.1.1. Protest against the Functions of the UN and Security Council

With the outbreak of Iran-Iraq war, when the control of Iran's foreign policy was in the hands of radicals, the international institutions had negative attitudes toward some internal functions of Iran's state. As a result, this pessimism on the international organizations led the Security Council to pass seven resolutions in this regard during the war. In addition, at various occasions, the Security Council issued some statements declaring withdrawal to internationally recognized borders, extradition of captives, etc. However, Iran's reaction was negative. In such situation, international organizations and superpowers were not in favor of Iran's victory in the war and spread of the political Islam. Thus, they never offered a peace proposal that would meet the minimum demands of Iran. Even, it seems that there was a tendency, especially among the politicians of the USA and Israel, to prolong the war and destruction of resources and forces of both countries (i.e., Iran and Iraq; Milani, 1379 [2000 A.D]).

Ali Akbar Velayati served as foreign minister from 1981 to 1997 and still holds considerable influence as chief foreign policy advisor to Supreme Leader Khamenei. In his addresses, Velayati repeatedly criticized the international order and accused the U.N. Security Council of maintaining double standards. In 1992, he condemned minimal international reactions to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, "decades-old aggression" by Israel against Palestinians, and Serbia's move against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bakhash, 2013).

During War, Iran attended the UN in two stages. First, Iran participated to be recognized by other governments. Second, as the fundamental issue of the imposed war was approaching its end and there was an international pressure on Iran by the UN channels to end the war without a victorious side, Iran's policy on participation in the UN assembly changed because the UN was considered as a place for important decision making. The ability of the UN in issuing a resolution, condemning the aggression, aiding the refugees, lending loans to different countries for their development and economic reconstruction, or helping resolve the imposed war, all were the factors that contributed Iran to change its attitude toward the UN as an international organization to guarantee its national interests.

Seyyed Ali Khamenei's President of Iran (1981-1988) attendance at the 1987 General Assembly marked the first visit by a senior Iranian official to the United Nations. Khamenei addressed fellow heads of state in the midst of the devastating Iran-Iraq war. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's military had invaded Iran in 1980 to overthrow the fledgling Islamic Republic. Iran was isolated and resented the U.N. Security Council's apathy toward the war. Khamenei had an opportunity to present Iran's case. Khamenei outlined his broader worldview, which centered on criticizing the prevailing international order since World War II. Khamenei begrudged the

status of the five permanent U.N. Security Council members- the United States, Britain, China, France, and Russia- and their ability to veto resolutions. Khamenei went on to repeat his call for a change in world order as president and later as supreme leader (Bakhash, 2013).

Bakhshayesh Ardestani (1996) mentioned the goals of Iran to attend the international organizations as follows:

1. Making the objectives and principles of Iran's foreign policy known to other states, in order to interact with them in common affairs.
2. Using the special facilities of the UN, especially several departments such as International Transport, Red Cross, World Food Organization, and International Monetary Fund, to strengthen the capacities of the country. Iran, particularly, considered the fact that the development of third world countries may require an international cooperation.
3. Supporting the oppressed people and defending the rights of Muslims through the podium of the UN.

3.1.2. Opposing the International Law and Rules

Regardless of the political and historical aspects, the opposing and ideological behavior to the international law and arrangements has some philosophical dimensions. Philosophically speaking, Iran believes that international institutions and norms are considered as means for cruel purposes and violent domination of Western colonial powers. Moreover, the rules and regulations of the international institutions are established based on the rational calculation of human and his recognition from his resources and material which is in contrast with the principles of religious and divine governance (Mosaffa & Norouzi, 1385 [2006 A.D]: 206).

Islamic republic of Iran's foreign policy toward the UN and human rights organizations has been based on pessimistic policy toward their activities. Moreover, mutual distrust has affected all human right interactions of Iran with these organizations. For instance, the following two resolutions against Iran can be referred to:

1. The UN Secretary-General's report in 2012 emphasized Iran had violated human right of journalists, women right activists, and human right defendants. Moreover, he was worried about the death penalty in Iran. On the other hand, he embraced the exclusion of stoning penalty (United Nations, 2012a).
2. General Assembly ratified a resolution on 19 December 2012 denounced the violation of human right in Iran. This resolution repeated the alleged human right issues in previous resolutions and reports (United Nations, 2012b).

The most important priorities and objectives of Iran's foreign policy are based on offensive strategy and revisionist changes in international order. Thus, the Islamic Republic is required to change the international system which is based on unfair and unequal distribution of power by using all its unilateral or multilateral capabilities and power. Achieving this structural and institutional change requires the relentless struggle with the global power poles as leaders of the domination system, and full support of Muslims and Islamic movements. An attempt to change the nature and structure of institutions and international organizations and consequently the principles and norms governing the international interactions is also one of the requirements of achieving this strategic goal. Hence, within the idealism discourse, the foreign policy of Islamic Republic towards the discipline and the status quo will be revisionist and revolutionary (Dehghani Firouz Abadi, 1388 [2009 A.D]).

3.2. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's Divergent Foreign Policy to International Organizations (2005-2013)

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was Iran's President from 2005 to 2013. During Ahmadinejad's presidency, the desire to *otherness*, being different from others, was cumulatively increased. In other words, he defined their identity through distinction with others. Extreme *otherness* means to create and make two separate poles by drawing boundaries which oppose these poles. It means absolute distinction between *us* and *them*, our culture and their culture. Therefore, an iron wall of identity is made between our identity and their identity (Adib Zadeh, 1387 [2008 A.D]). Ahmadinejad believed that Iran's political system is considered as a symbol of true democracy.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a symbol of true democracy. All officials including the Leader, President, members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, city and village councils are elected through the vote of the citizens. The Islamic Republic of Iran has held 27 national elections in 27 years. This showcases a vibrant and dynamic society in which people widely participate in the political life (Ahmadinejad, 2005: 6).

Ahmadinejad challenged the international norms which are under the domination of hegemonic powers, and questioned the norms of international order in the UN. He announced that the veto right in UN is caused by the collusion of great powers and is considered as a dangerous means in the hands of imperialism. Therefore, Ahmadinejad asked for a change in the existing world order.

From Ahmadinejad's view, the dominance of the great powers over global trends leads to jeopardizing the peace and security in the world. If some, relying on their superior military and economic might, attempt to expand their rights and privileges, they will be performing a great disservice to the cause of peace and in fact will fuel the arms race and spread

insecurity, fear and deception. If global trends continue to serve the interests of small influential groups, even the interests of the citizens of powerful countries will be jeopardized- as was seen in the recent crises and the even natural disaster such as the recent tragic hurricane (Ahmadinejad, 2005: 3).

Ahmadinejad, emphasizing the concept of justice and looking at international issues from this perspective, seriously censured the Western nature of the international relations. He also said that those who themselves establish the international rules obviously break it and apply a discriminatory and double-standard policy; great powers pass the law of nuclear disarmament, but they test the new generations of atomic weapons; great powers arranged the Charter of the UN, but do not respect the right of independence and sovereignty of nations; they violate their formal contracts easily; they do not conform to the rules of environment preservation. Some great powers use language of threat in international relations (Ahmadinejad, 1386 [2007 A.D]). The key factors of Ahmadinejad concerning the international institutions include:

- a) negligence for international norms and rules
- b) negligence for Security Council resolutions
- c) negligence for issues on human rights.

Ahmadinejad (2005: 8) delivered his speech in the General Assembly in 2005 declaring that discriminatory behavior of some great powers are against access of other countries to peaceful nuclear technology:

Some powerful states practice a discriminatory approach against access of NPT members to material, equipment, and peaceful nuclear technology, and by doing so, intend to impose a nuclear apartheid. We are concerned that once certain powerful states completely control nuclear energy resources and technology, they will deny access to other states and thus deepen the divide between powerful countries and the rest of the international community. When that happens, we will be divided into light and dark countries.

Dominating this view in Iran, the Security Council passed several resolutions within Chapter VII of Charter and imposed some sanctions against Iran. The influence of these sanctions was intensified along with the sanctions imposed by the western countries.

Ahmadinejad, president from 2005 to 2013, took a new approach to speaking in front of the U.N. General Assembly. The hardliner treated his appearances as an opportunity to play his preferred role as international bad boy, willing to challenge the West on almost any issue. Ahmadinejad's inflammatory rhetoric prompted many walkouts by Western countries each year. He predicted the collapse of American power, capitalism, and Israel. In 2010, Ahmadinejad suggested that the United States orchestrated the 9/11 attacks in order to "reverse the declining American economy" and "save the Zionist regime". In 2011, he claimed: "European countries still use the Holocaust after six decades as the excuse to pay (a) fine or ransom to the Zionists." Ahmadinejad also treated his U.N. audience to his bizarre religious views. He once predicted an early second coming of Jesus Christ side-by-side with the Shiite savior, the Mahdi. Ahmadinejad's performances were aimed at a domestic audience to an extent, but more importantly to a third-world one (Bakhash, 2013).

Therefore, Ahmadinejad opposed the international rules, norms, organizations and the discipline ruling the international system, and regarded them as serving to the great powers. In Ahmadinejad's point of view, the goal of Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy is to strongly implement the values and norms of Shiite Islam in the world. He believes that the time elapses in favor of the Islamic Republic, and sooner or later, the Islamic values, norms and rules will be disseminated

everywhere. In this period, in addition to negligence for norms and international institutions, the populist policies aiming at confronting with the international system was focused on.

4. Convergent Approach in Iran's Foreign Policy

In 1988, Iran's encounter with economic problems, strengthening the element of realism and pragmatism in foreign policy, and accepting of the order of the international system led to the Iran's convergence with international system. According to this approach, international organizations and institutions as important global actors which are effective in regional and global equations are not negligible and they are used to provide the national interest and security of Iran. In this approach, in addition to criticizing the dominance of power over justice in world relations, it believes in critical support of international organizations. This approach can be seen in the administration of Mahdi Bazargan, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Seyyed Mohammad Khatami. However, these three states have different ideational components and view points toward the internal and external issues.

4.1. International Organizations and Mahdi Bazargan's Foreign Policy (4 February 1979 – 6 November 1979)

Mahdi Bazargan was the first prime minister and the head of the interim government after the Islamic Revolution. The ruling period of the interim government lasted about nine months and during this period it failed to interact with the international organizations. By studying Bazargan's position toward various events especially occupation of the US embassy, we can analyze the Bazargan's view towards the international organizations. The most important behavioral rules of the interim government toward the organizations and international law are as follows:

1. *Respecting the international organizations to gain international credibility and trust*

The foreign policy goals of Bazargan's interim government were to gain the credibility and international trust as a responsible and reliable state. Thus, the interim government tried to act within the existing international system based on the international rules and law. This goal can be considered as gaining credibility through winning the trust of the international community and other countries. Therefore, the interim government after the victory of Islamic Revolution announced that it respects all international commitments and contracts of the previous regime. Gaining international credibility was obvious in the foreign policy of the interim government, especially in the human rights issue in a way that interim government opposed the execution and immediate sentence of the heads of Pahlavi regime. They argued that these sentences could damage the reputation and credit of Iran and Islamic Revolution in world public opinions. In particular, European countries and the USA had protested many times against the act of Revolutionary courts and called them the violation of human rights.

2. *Diplomatic Immunity of Ambassadors*

Bazargan was committed to obey the international rules and law. Thus, he regarded the protection of embassies and the immunity of ambassadors as the duties of his government. In the view of the interim government, interacting more with foreign countries and their embassies could reduce the costs of revolution. Bazargan, after the victory of Islamic Revolution, immediately announced that it wants to have friendly relations with the USA (Rubin, 1980). After the occupation of the US embassy by revolutionaries, Bazargan opposed this action in terms of the political and administrative responsibility of the country and protecting the rights of foreign courtiers' representatives according to international commitments.

3. Adoption of the Dominating Discipline in the International System

Foreign policy of the interim government, both theoretically and practically, tended to the West and concerned about the influence of the East in Iran, while the nature of Islamic Revolution was against both the King (Shah) and the United States which was considered as his main supporter. The interim government attempted to disseminate the belief that Iran is in need of technical and technological achievements of the West to pave the way for development and a better living condition than the period of the previous regime.

Liberals, emphasizing the approved international procedures and regulations, considered the insistence on the export of revolution and supporting the Islamic movements contrary to the principles of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries.

The primary attention of interim government to the national goals and interests rather than transnational goals and interests rooted in their general interpretation of politics and government. Although they accepted the doctrine of religious government with their own interpretation, they limited its performance scope to Iran. This general belief caused the priority of nationalism and national interests for the Liberals.

4.2. International Organizations and Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's Foreign Policy (1989-1997)

The end of Iran-Iraq war influenced Iran's foreign policy in some aspects and changed its behavioral pattern. In this period, the priority and hierarchy of the goals of Iran's foreign policy changed, so that the economic reconstruction became the top priority of foreign policy. Moreover, the priorities of national goals, especially the export of the Islamic Revolution changed.

Unlike the first decade of the revolution when the radical groups emphasized the export of the Islamic Revolution by any means even intervention in the affairs of others.

Hashemi was the Iran's president from 1989 to 1997. The cultural export of the Islamic Revolution was emphasized during Hashemi's presidency. It is also worth mentioning that the behavioral pattern and the external interaction of Iran with state and non-state actors underwent change and transformation. The manifestation of this influence was normalization and improvement of the relations with the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and European Union. Thus, the development and extension of the relations with international organizations is another manifestation of behavioral change of Iran's foreign policy. Some components of Hashemi's foreign policy are as follows:

- Acceptance of ideological differences, different values and norms among countries as a fact in international collective life
- Recognition of national interests and role of Islamic Republic of Iran in the global and regional issues and affairs alongside the other regional and international actors
- Existence of ideological and value differences and conflicting interests between Islamic Republic of Iran and other countries do not necessarily implies war and lack of cooperation and interaction with them.
- Establishing external relations and relationships based on mutual respect and interests of other countries
- Active participation in international organizations and institutions to gain interest (Dehghani Firouzabadi, 1388 [2009 A.D]).

4.2.1 Multilateralism in Hashemi's Foreign Policy

During Hashemi's presidency, multilateralism policy manifested as the behavioral pattern of active interaction with international organizations. Iran's active participation in the UN represented change in behavioral pattern of Islamic Republic and an initial point to cooperate with international organizations to promote the national interests of Iran. Below, some instances of Heshemi's multilateral policy are explained.

4.2.1.1. Cooperation with International Financial Institutions

During Hashemi's period, the inception of paradigm shift was marked from a planned economy to the market economy. Market economy was a step forward to link with the global economy, attract foreign investment and technology transmission which led to economic liberalization and privatization. As a result, an export development strategy was adopted proportional to this type of economy. Within this strategy, it was attempted to reduce the restrictions on imports of goods, and provide the necessary means to increase the exports so as to facilitate internalization of Iran's economy and industry.

Thus, Iran established strong relationship with international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Iran increased its share in International Monetary Fund in order to influence its decision-making process. Iran's cooperation with organizations was close until 1993 but when Bill Clinton ran the Dual Containment Policy against Iran and Iraq, Iran's relations with international financial organizations entered a stage of conflicts in a way that most of Iran's loan applications from World Bank faced numerous obstacles due to the dominance of the US on World Bank. However, Iran continued its technical cooperation in order to benefit from the experience of World Bank and recommendation of International Monetary fund. In addition, Iran requested membership in World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995. Mr. Kalantari, Minister of Agriculture, emphasized the membership of

Iran in WTO because he believed that Iran could not live apart from the world community and ignore the global developments in the agricultural and industrial sectors, and it is necessary to join the WTO to be able to gain a proper and worthy share in the world market (Azghandi, (1389 [2010 A.D])).

4.2.1.2. Respect for International Rules

The main indicators of pragmatic trend in Hashemi's foreign policy which are based on the practical interpretation of *neither the East, nor the West* principle, can be summarized as follows:

- To emphasize peaceful coexistence and avoid hostile actions and conflicting actions against the existing international system despite the discontent and fundamental criticisms against its principles
- To respect the norms of diplomatic behavior
- To pay attention to the role of international organizations and to encourage the developing countries to defend their interests
- To attract the foreign and international investments and facilities to participate in domestic economic activities and industrial projects in free economic zones and get loans from international institutions.

4.2.1.3. Cooperation with the UN

Indicators of measuring the expansion of relations between Iran and UN show that cooperation between Iran and UN increased in Hashemi's period. These indicators include participating in special commissions of the General Assembly, sending delegation to the UN, giving speech at the UN meetings, and most importantly, commitment to the implementation of General Assembly Resolutions. During the Hashemi's presidency, Iran cooperated with the Security Council in major issues that threatened and endangered the international peace and security

such as the issue of Palestine, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Herzegovina and Iraq (Yaghoubi, (1387 [2008 A.D])). In this regard, several practical actions were done that are mentioned in brief:

- Implementation of Resolution 598¹
- Speech by the Iran's foreign minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, in the 48th meeting of the UN General Assembly
- Islamic Republic's Full support of the Resolution 757 to impose heavy punishments against Serbia.

Thus, the pragmatic foreign policy was managed to improve cooperation with the Organization of Islamic Conference to its highest level which was unprecedented before the Hashemi's presidency.

4.3. International Organizations and Seyyed Mohammad Khatami's Foreign Policy (1997-2005)

Seyyed Mohammad Khatami became Iran's president in 1997. Peaceful policies and cultural reputation of Khatami's administration, especially after the expansion of *policy of détente* and *dialogue among the civilizations*, led to the increase of influence and authority of Iran in the international society. Khatami's efforts to change the image of Iran as a constructive actor to link Iran with world trends and relationships were among the components that improved the influence and image of Iran. Attitude of Khatami's administration toward international organizations can be summarized as follows:

4.3.1. Convergent Approach toward International Organizations

Theories that predict a trend towards political convergence can

1. The resolution emphasized cease-fire between Iran and Iraq. It became effective on 8 August 1988.

be traced back on the one hand in the economic theory of international trade, on the other to theories of intergovernmental or interjurisdictional competition. Moreover, Bucsh (2002: 2) stated: "These theories postulate that growing international integration will have implications for domestic policy - once indirectly through a change in the domestic distribution of political power, once directly through influence on government policy - and will lead to a convergence of policies and institutions."

During Khatami's presidency, it was tried to broadly interact with international organizations, especially institutions for human rights, and non-governmental organizations. In other words, Khatami's foreign policy was based on Universal Multilateralism. Khatami believed that the foreign policy should be based on positive international cooperation and constructive participation with states and international organizations as a means for gaining international prestige. Honesty and trust-making were the main goals of Khatami's foreign policy in the international system.

International society, like its constituent national societies, is full of diversity and plurality. In fact, it is a collection composed of thoughts, ideas, beliefs, traditions, and values that have led to the growth of culture and civilization. Progress toward a truly pluralistic international society is possible only through serious respect for the freedom and democratic values through understanding pluralism in all its national and international dimensions (Kharazi, 1380 [2001 A.D]).

4.3.2. Position of international organizations in Khatami's foreign policy of Khatami

Kharazi (2001), Iran's Foreign Minister in Khatami's administration, said that from the Khatami's point of view:

United Nations as a global organization needs to expand and

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strengthen its role. This organization whose activity has been increased after the Cold War should help solve the global problems. The Charter of UN, despite its shortcomings, should be respected as a document by all its members.

Kharazi (2001) also said in his speech at the International Relations Institute of Social and Political Sciences of Pantheon-Athens that the priorities of Iran's foreign policy in practice are relied on four principles:

1. Peace and security in the neighborhood of Iran
2. Close relationship with the Islam world
3. Political, cultural and economic cooperation with selected countries and organizations
4. Active participation in international organizations.

Khatami's foreign policy attempted to reform the international institutions and organizations, especially the UN. The reforms were based on increasing the role of the UN in the international affairs and maximum participation of its members. This goal could be achieved in two ways. First, elevating the position and role of General Assembly compared to the Security Council; second, increasing the permanent members of the Security Council so that developing and Islamic countries have some representatives in it.

4.3.3. Human Rights and Khatami's Foreign Policy

The concepts of *détente* and *dialogue among the civilizations* and other concepts that are somehow related to these two concepts such as trust-making, participation and entente welcomed by other countries, were underscored by Khatami's administration. The manifestation of this view can be seen in the Resolution of UN General Assembly in 1998 indicating 2001 as the International Year of dialogue among the civilizations.

From Khatami's view "the General Assembly of the United Nations has only recently endorsed the proposal of the Islamic

Republic of Iran for dialogue among civilizations and cultures. Nevertheless, this proposal is attracting, day after day, increased support from numerous academic institutions and political organizations. In order to comprehend the grounds for this encouraging reception, it is imperative to take into account the prevailing situation in our world and to ponder the reasons for widespread discontent with it" (Khatami, 2001: 23).

Main features and priorities of Khatami's foreign policy can be summarized as follows:

- Developing the relations with all countries based on mutual respect, common interest and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries
- Emphasizing the institutionalization of international law as the basis for world order and final judgment between states
- Trying to reduce the tensions in the regional and international levels and active participation in resolving the conflicts and establishing and keeping the peace
- Protecting the human rights and refusal of any movement towards the selective and unjust abuse of human rights as a political means
- Preventing armament competition in the regional and international levels, destroying the mass destruction weapons and controlling the conventional arms
- Active and constructive participation in the UN and other international organizations to have an effective contribution to the global issues such as sustainable development of human rights, establishing peace, war with terrorism, and reforming the internationally unjust arrangements (Kharazi, 1380 [2001 A.D]).

5. Conclusion

After three decades of the Islamic Revolution, studying the relation between Iran and the UN shows that Iran does not have an active role proportionate to its status in the UN. This issue is driven from political elites' insight toward the UN, great powers' disapproval of promotion of Iran's role in the international system, and lack of proper strategy in Iran's foreign policy toward international organizations.

Islamic Republic of Iran did not adopt the same policy to international organizations from 1979 to 2013. Change of agents and domestic situation of Iran, particularly economic and political problems, led to the transformation of attitudes and perceptions towards international organizations.

Bazargan's interim government, regardless of the revolutionary situation, attempted to promote the national interest of Iran by accepting the rules and norms of the international system through interaction with international organizations and institutions. Therefore, Bazargan opposed the occupation of the US Embassy because of the international law and the principle of ambassadors' immunity.

In this period, Iran attempted to establish trust with the international system through confirming and accepting the international organizations. The interim government tried to expand its relations with other world actors. Therefore, to gain prestige and trust in Iran's foreign policy, there was a need to show that the incumbent state after the Islamic Revolution was not belligerent. For example, Mr. Ebrahim Yazdi, Iran's foreign minister, attended the UN summit. He believed that Iranian people aim to combat for gaining independence and freedom, and this is the legal right of all nations. On the other hand, the interim government abandoned CENTO¹ and increased its

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activity in Non-Aligned Movement by following a negative balance strategy in foreign policy.

Iran's foreign policy in 1980s toward the international organizations, affected by Islamic Revolution ideology, considered international organizations as an instrument for great powers. Moreover, Iran's ideal policy was to replace western rules with Islamic ones by excluding international organizations. From 1981 to 1988, Iran by adopting ideological politics viewed the international organizations as agents for the superpowers.

Islamic Republic of Iran considered the veto right as contrary to its Non-Aligned policy with regard to "Nafe-ye Sabil" principle. Hence, Iran regarded the UN as a means for legitimize the great powers' decisions. The best-known example is the Iran-Iraq war through which the UN did not pass any resolution against Iraq in spite of Iraq invasion to Iran. Moreover, Iran's policy became against the international organizations like NATO due to their lack of adaptability with the norms and standards of Islamic system.

By the end of Iran-Iraq war, taking power by Hashemi's pragmatic administration and some changes in international system in 1990s led to a gradual change in Iran's attitude towards international organizations. Moreover, an interactive policy with international organizations, especially agencies related to the UN, were emphasized in Iran's foreign policy. Iran's cooperative policy with the UN in Kuwait crisis in 1991 and the recognizing Iraq as the aggressor to Iran were the result of Hashemi's engagement policy.

President Hashemi Rafsanjani aimed to improve the relations with the UN and Security Council by pursuing a pragmatic foreign policy. In this period, Iran's foreign policy tended to retain the status quo in the international system. Pragmatism motivated Iran to largely cooperate with the international,

regional, and global organizations; thus, Iran had an active role in OPEC, ECO, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and Non-Aligned Movement so that this could reduce the US pressures and restrictions on Iran.

From the view of Khatami's administration, cooperating with international organizations, especially human rights organizations, strengthened Iran's prestige, national interest, and security. Confirming the *dialogue between civilizations* policy by the General Assembly in 2001 changed the Iranians' attitude towards the function of the UN. The year 2001 can be seen as a turning point for Iran's policy towards international organizations.

In this period, Iran's relation with the international organizations was at a satisfactory level. Détente and Dialogue among Civilizations were compatible with the charter of the UN, and Iran tried to change the past attitudes in order to show Iran's real position to the international organizations. Iran's participation in regional and international organizations such as Organization of Islamic Cooperation and ECO indicates Iran's extensive relations with international institutions.

Iranian pragmatic elites were to enhance their relation with international organizations after accepting Security Council Resolution 598, international sanctions, resolutions and reports on human rights in Iran, and Security Council resolution on the Iran's nuclear problem. From the pragmatic elites' point of view, international organizations are considered as both an opportunity and threat.

Ahmadinejad pursuing an idealistic and revisionistic policy supported Islamic convergence and establishing the Union of Islamic Countries to improve the cooperation and consolidation among the members. Moreover, Ahmadinejad emphasized supporting attitudes against the dominant system and

Unilateralism. Ahmadinejad also considered the establishment of the Union of Islamic Countries as the most effective measure for changing the structure and nature of the international system. He believed that Islamic convergence could be a practical method against Unilateralism and dominant system. From Ahmadinejad's point of view, Islamic countries by having one fifth of the world population should have an effective role in world decisions. Thus, he believed that Islamic nations should have one permanent member in Security Council to defend justice and peace.

However, during Ahmadinejad's presidency, the status, nature and function of international organizations, especially the UN and the Security Council, were neglected regarding Iran's national security and interests. This led to the passing resolutions against Iran within the framework of Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

More than three decades of experience in Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy has revealed that the convergent and cooperative policy of Iran with international organizations elevated the status and improved the image of Iran in the world. Therefore, the participation of Iranian agents in the decision-making of these organizations increased and the national interest and security of Iran were better guaranteed.

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