

Iran, US and Islamic Awakening: Contingent Opportunities

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Abstract

In spite of the US government's tough sanction policies against the Islamic Republic of Iran, they have failed in changing the Iranian foreign policy in supporting the Middle East Muslim people, particularly Palestinian movement. On the other hand, the Islamic Republic of Iran's insistence on realizing the incontestable rights of Palestinian people and facing on Israel's occupation policy has culminated in raising Iran's justice-oriented character as a pattern for existing movements of the Middle East known as Islamic Awakening. The main notion of this article is that the enforcement of the so-called "the Greater Middle East" strategic plan by the US faces three serious obstacles: Iran, Iraq and Israel. Given the key and strategic role of the Islamic Republic of Iran, no plan in the region will be enforceable without Iran's cooperation; although the US-Iranian relations has not reached a point that arises a hope for Iran's cooperation and participation. Now given the Islamic Awakening process, Israel has been isolated increasingly. The main question of this article is: May the Islamic Awakening process create a change in the US-Iranian relations? The main finding of the article emphasizes on the trend of change in future and claims that "Islamic Awakening" creates better opportunities of which the US may use for managing its relations with the Islamic Republic; a trend in which the US will be persuaded to accept Iran's demands.

Keywords: The US, Iran, Foreign Policy, Greater Middle East Plan, Palestine

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Introduction

No doubt the recent events in international relations belong to the Arab Middle East more than any place and time. In this considerable process, the problems and crises of the region have been in the focus. This is while in the recent decades, the region has been the hottest hub of the world due to such conflicts as Arab-Israeli conflict, Iran-Iraq war, Kuwait's occupation by Iraq, Afghanistan's occupation by Communists and seizing power by Taliban and the US's opportunistic war against Al-Qaeda and the so-called "world terrorism". Now Iran's attempts at achieving peaceful nuclear energy, the West's conflict over this program and the US pretexts for preventing Iran from reaching the nuclear energy have caused the region goes towards being more crises (Daheshyar, 2008: 19-24).

This is while we should notice that the recent events of the Middle East in the form of Islamic Awakening are very different from other complicated issues in many respects. It heralds new and unprecedented processes in the Middle East and its ebb and tide at regional and international levels. All powerful actors in the international politics have engaged in the Middle East developments and challenges and their interests and policies have affected or been affected by these developments. Certainly the future of politics will be quite different from the past as the result of this process, particularly for a region that is intensely related to the Islamic Republic of Iran's national security and interest.

At the same time, Islam is more significantly raised as an important variable at the international level. The Islam World enjoys several parameters of power including a population over one billion and three hundred million, vast resources, geopolitical and geo-economic situation (Simbar and Ghorbani, 2010: 69-78). Meanwhile the Islamic Revolution of Iran and its aftermath in the world system have been able to be propounded as a serious factor in the developments of Muslim World. No doubt the Middle East movements have been inspired by the Islamic Revolution of Iran (Simbar, 2011: 34-38).

There are various viewpoints and perspectives about why and how the recent movements are formed in the Middle East. Some regard them as movements affected by nationalist trends of combating with dictatorship and domestic corruption and gaining practical independence in the foreign policy. Others regard Islamic currents and revitalizing

Islamic movements as the main variable in forming these developments. They claim that if we want to provide a correct analysis of these developments, emphasizing on Islamist factors will be inevitable (Simbar, 2012: 39).

Islamism and Islamic Awakening cause the confrontation between the US and Iran in the framework of this events. Given the irreplaceable role of Iran in the Middle East and Muslim World, Washington cannot deny Iran's role in these developments and given the gradual collapse of the Middle East equations, the US need Iran's cooperation in this regard. Without Iran's cooperation, every attempt at reconstructing security formulas in the Middle East will face many challenges. These challenges and crises will never let stability and security be formed in the region. In other words, the US attempt at omitting Iran from regional equations may ignore the problem but cannot solve it (Simbar, 2009: 90-92).

Nowadays the Islamic Republic of Iran's justice-oriented views have acquired many audiences among ordinary people, groups and political parties, and it seems that two phenomena have played an irreplaceable role in this regional paradigm in the Islam World: The first is Iran's insistence on supporting Palestinian people and attempt at challenging the Zionist regime which has gained many audiences not only among Muslims but also among all people with humanistic nature. Although the Islamic Republic of Iran has paid the price in this way but nowadays after thirty years still persists on its views in foreign policy about Israel. Also Iran's support for Lebanon's Hezbollah has caused Iran's popularity increases among the Muslim people in the region (Simbar, 2008: 56).

The second is the US pressures and sanctions which are flowing against Iran in a hostile manner. The sanctions have been accompanied by vast propaganda against Iran and reinforcing Iranophobia followed by the media of the US and the West. This is while not only there is no pressure on Israel regime but also the West has chosen silence policy towards Israel's performance in the region (Walt, 2012: 13-15).

This article is an investigation into such a regional paradigm in which the US and Iran have faced each other regarding the Islamic Awakening and Islamist movements. It seems that in spite of all contending policies of Iran and the US both of them have common views regarding Salafi and extremist Islamism. Radical and violent Islam has imposed many costs on Iran which can be a foundation for negotiation

and reconciliation about some issues between the two nations. In this article, after presenting a framework for discussion, I will deal with exploring the two nation's different views in the foreign policy at both bilateral and regional levels, and I will provide different scenarios for cooperation and confrontation. The main notion is that the US has no choice except for reconciliation with Iran, and it cannot realize regional stability and security without cooperation with Iran. It seems that in recent developments of the Middle East and Islamic Awakening, the Islamic republic of Iran as the spiritual leader and axis of resistance is the main winner of these developments.

1. Analytical framework

Until recently the American statesmen considered change in the structures of their Middle East allied states dependent on progress in the Middle East peace process and solving Arab-Israeli conflict. They thought that any change may create alternative governments that may be affected by anti-Israeli populist policies and act against the U.S. interests and policies in order to gain popularity (Dekmejian, 2009, 112-114).

Reflections of the Bush Administration's policies in the Middle East, the occupation of Iraq, one-sided support for Israel and the Greater Middle East strategy on the threshold of presidential election were regarded as negative for the US prestige and its long-term interests (Brown, 2010: 133). On the threshold of Obama's seizing power, the American intellectual and strategic circles had categorized the challenges of the US Middle East policy in six axes: the US-Iranian relations; controversies about Iran's nuclear program and the possibility of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East region; military withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan; the Middle East peace process; combat against terrorism; political and economic development in the Middle East. These circles repeatedly recommended to the new US president that the Middle East has been disposed of radical changes and there is no hope for continuing status quo so the US government should have required preparedness for facing the changes (Simbar, 2010).

The US reacted cautiously towards the revolts in Tunisia and Egypt. Some conservative and rightist currents in the US made speculations in this regard and compared these events with the events of 1978 and 1979 that culminated in the Islamic Revolution of Iran. The US foreign policy experts found out that the trend beginning in Tunisia was

rapidly spreading to other countries. Raising Islamic thoughts, dissident masses and youth propounded the motto "Islam is the solution" (Simbar and Ghorbani, 2010: 103). They even dealt with foreign policy issues and targeted the US policies in supporting Israel. At the same time, they regarded their secular states that tried to enjoy popular support through nationalist mottos as incapable states and believed that neither nationalism nor secularism can solve their national and economic problems. They accused the West of supporting their authoritarian and corrupt governments for a long time. Therefore they were seeking a change in the rigid political, economic and social systems. Thus this Islamic Awakening movement was combined with the slogans of welfare, economic development and substituting idealist governments by pragmatist and development-oriented ones (Hussain, 2012: 46-49).

Consequently the US has always looked at these developments with anxiety. They have convinced that some new trends have started in the North Africa that may contain some threats against the US interests and policies. So they have confronted with these developments with double standards and tried to handle them (Rashid, 2011: 2-5). But at the other side of the Middle East, in the Persian Gulf region, the US viewpoints is strictly linked to the security of Israel, the future of the Middle East peace process, management and control of energy resources, and the security of military bases in the Persian Gulf region. In such countries as Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman, the US does not expect that they be affected by the developments of the other side of the Middle East (Burgat, 2011: 77).

In the region, the US policy has included supporting the rulers in repressing people. The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council led by Saudi Arabia has entered to solve Yemen, Bahrain and Syria which has reduced the US concerns about the future of power transition and substituting governments. The US trouble in Bahrain is that the Bahrain developments should not challenge the political ties and the situation of the US marine base in Bahrain coast on the one hand, and it does not want to be accused of supporting a Sunni minority and authoritarian Saudi-backed regime for preserving its security interests and against the legitimate demands of Shiite majority and also Iranian Sunnis, on the other (Hass, 2011: 32).

In this paradigm, Bahrain is in such a condition that every policy adopted by the US will involve considerable consequences for the US regional ties and interest. Also in Jordan, the US is not fond of seizing

power by the Palestinian majority because it will affect the US-Jordanian relations due to the priority of US-Israel relations over US-Palestinian ones. Regarding Saudi Arabia, the US has apparently reached the conclusion that the protests of Shiite minority have not become nationwide and at the moment, there is no efficient dissident that could threaten the future security of Saud family rule. But anyway Saudi Arabia suffers from an authoritarian regime.

Anyway the US confrontation with its traditional allies is different from Ghaddafi and Asad that have been the former Soviet Union allies and have oriental dictatorship structure. The US supports calm and gradual reforms with preserving military and security structures in the first group, and regime change and reconstructing military and security institutions in the second group; a policy which was adopted in Iraq and Libya and is adopting in Syria.

2.The US and deterring Iran

The main aim of sanctions and negative propaganda against Iran by the West, particularly the US has roots in one of the most important theories of international relations which trying to prevent from emerging regional hegemony and destabilizing status quo. In the system based on Westphalia thought, nation-states are the main actors in the anarchic international system. In this anarchic system, powerful states seek to impose their hegemony in their region and try to ensure that other rival great powers will not dominate the region because the goal of great powers is to enhance their share of world power and ultimately gaining hegemony in the international system. From a realist viewpoint, all world powers enjoy military capabilities. No state knows other states' intentions and goals thus in such a system, based on self-help not cooperation, the best way for survival is to gain more power compared to other potential rivals (Waltz, 2002: 19-23).

According to realist viewpoint in international relations based on Westphalia the powerful state is a state that there is the least probability of being attacked by other states. In other words, the great powers do not try reach the position of the most powerful state but their ultimate goal is being hegemonic power in their intended security system. The regional powers aim at preserving regional hegemony not world hegemony. In other words, the best situation is that the state dominates its backyard (Little, 2008: 24-91).

In this regard, we can claim that the West, particularly the US's severe reaction combined with pressure against Iran is an attempt at preventing Iran from dominating the Middle East and gaining hegemony in the region. Naturally Iran tries to maximize its power gap with its neighbours in order to be so powerful in the region that no state can threaten it. In other words, Iran attempts at resisting the hostile policies of the West, including the US and EU provocations. Fearing from its position in the region, the US is worrying about Iran's increasing influence on its neighbours and seeks to boot the US out of the Middle East because principally a regional hegemonic power cannot tolerate the presence of other powers in its backyard because regards them as a potential threat against its security (Rahnema, 2008: 79).

According to this power-oriented thought, the US struggles to use deterrence policy for restricting Iran's regional power. As a unique world power, the US does not want to let other regional powers like Iran who enjoy a specific thought in international relations have the power of manoeuvre. The US behaviour in the Middle East region is shaped by this realist viewpoint. In this direction, the US has struggled to exaggerate Iran's threat. In recent years, various media and newspapers have published different matters about Iran's attempts at gaining hegemony. For over three decades, the US theorists and think tanks have focused on Iran's hegemony and exaggerated it.

In this relation, we can point out to an article entitled "the Middle East" written by Richard Hass, the head of CFR who argues that a new age has begun in the region whose most prominent feature is the end of the US dominance and the change of power balance for the benefit of Iran; an issue that should be prevented (Hass, 2006: 34-36). Such an attitude and literature has been repeated in other articles such as the article "The Shia Revival" (Nasr, 2006:19) and other books and articles mainly published in the US, Europe and Israel. In all of these cases, there is a dominant thought that is "Iran is seeking regional hegemony and it should be prevented". Nowadays the thought has become the dominant discourse in the US Middle East policy. This exaggeration has involved many benefits for the US one of which is the acceleration of weapons sale in the region (Petras, 2007: 65).

Such viewpoints and statements are expressed in order to prevent from emerging a regional hegemonic power. The US officials have talked about a nuclear umbrella in the Persian Gulf. Since the Cold War era, the

US has used nuclear umbrella only for Japan and South Korea against the Soviet Union, so the expansion of this umbrella demonstrates a significant change in the US strategic behaviour and shows that how much the US will pay for the prevention from emerging a regional hegemonic power.

The US has followed two strategies for enforcing this policy: firstly the mobilization of regional states and balancing them with Iran, and secondly entering the system for preserving desirable balance and preventing from Iran's hegemony in the region. It seems that the Obama Administration prioritize the second choice so the establishment of missile shield in the Persian Gulf makes sense in this direction. The goal of this system is to restrict Iran that is increasingly becoming the most powerful actor of the Middle East.

3.Iran, the Middle East and US

With almost 75 million population and 400 billion dollar GNP, Iran is regarded as a middle and independent power. Life expectancy which was 55 years in 1970 has reached 75 years nowadays. This is while Iran is regarded the most powerful actor in the Persian Gulf region and plays a prominent role in the Muslim World in terms of popular participation in the region and being a model for other countries. Iran has tried to preserve its revolutionary values and religious principles of the Islamic Revolution led by Imam Khomeini. In this framework, Iranian government continues its efforts for economic development and integration in the world economy and international system. Iran is going to become a world power and no one actor at the international level can deny this reality (Simbar, 2009).

Three decades after the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, now Iran plays as a prominent actor in the Middle East, from the East Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. In the Persian Gulf region, Iran is regarded as the most important state in strategic, geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-culture terms. Iran is dominant on the Hormuz Strait which is the oil passage of the world. Also Iran links the Middle East to Central Asia and South Asia. At the same time, as the greatest state based on religious foundation, Iran is the leader of world Shiites and its influence in Lebanon Hezbollah is one of obvious examples. Iran enjoys rich resources of oil and gas and it is the most populous country of the region that has a good industrial infrastructure.

Besides the above-mentioned parameters of power, Iran's influence and presence is considerably obvious as the result of the downfall of Taliban and Ba'ath regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq. We should pay attention to this key point that the US presence in Iraq and Afghanistan will end sooner or later but Iran will remain as a strategic and powerful neighbour in the region. Also we should remember that the Islamic revolution of Iran has radically changed the foreign policy of the country and has increased the prestige of Iran among Muslim people of the region and Muslim World (Jansen, 2011: 54-57).

Iran's geopolitical position in terms of world energy resources and its routes, particularly in the Persian Gulf region and Hormuz Strait has increased the sensitivity of regional and trans-regional actors towards Iran's behaviour. This geopolitical importance has placed Iran in the focus of regional and international politics. These mentioned power factors are also structural and hard ones.

Beside hard power factors, Iran's soft power factors such as Islamic ideology which is reflected in its foreign policy should be mentioned too. Beside hard power factors, after the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, Iran has also enjoyed ideological factors. At the same time we should pay attention to this delicate point that during their long history, Iranians have been mainly a peaceful nation and have never launched a war but they have been victims of invasion by neighbours and aliens. In this regard, the last case of invasions was the invasion by Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath regime that culminated in eight years of Iran-Iraq war.

This is while after the Islamic Revolution, Iran has looked at the international system with a new approach. The Islamic Revolution caused the downfall of Pahlavi regime which was dependent on the Western capitalist system, and propounded its own claims as an ideological actor; an actor with Islamic thought. One of the most important features of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been its critical and justice-oriented viewpoint towards the world system. Several cases can be mentioned in this regard including: Iran's insistence on realizing Palestinian people's rights against Israel occupation policies; supporting Lebanon Hezbollah against Tel Aviv invasion; supporting Afghan people against the former Soviet Union and so on (Simbar, 2011: 45).

The most interesting and innovative point in Iran's diplomatic acts is that in many cases, according to Westphalia system principles, Iran could withdraw from its fundamental stances but it did not do that and

continued its new diplomatic trend which is existent in the constitution of the Islamic Republic. The consequences of this new kind of Islamic and justice-oriented action by Iran after the Islamic Revolution have been Iranophobia and formation of an anti-Iran coalition led by the US in order to strict and deter it.

Although it may seem that Iran's revolutionary policies in the diplomatic arena and its confrontational logic are not rational but Iran seeks its authentic and deep-rooted role in the international system as an ancient and powerful state. The Islamic Revolution legacy and Imam Khomeini's thoughts have caused that Iranian leaders seek to fix and deepen their viewpoints based on independence and sovereignty and at the same time, propagating their ideological and religious mission.

Given that many material parameters of power are at the world powerful actors' hand, Iranian leaders have shown a considerable skill and intelligence in such a way that they have been able to demonstrate flexible stances towards different powers. Iran has succeeded in entering world coalitions and preserved its interests at regional and world levels (Simbar, 2010).

4.Iranian diplomacy and Islamic Awakening trend

The recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa are rare historical developments to which many have different views. Formation of these events and developments in the Middle East and North Africa was unpredictable, even for the Islamic Republic. Notwithstanding if we want to compare the reaction and preparedness of different actors, the Islamic Republic of Iran has had more preparedness for these developments due to sociological and cultural common contexts and spiritual influence in many countries. Americans, the Zionist regime, Europeans, Arab countries, even Western and Arab study centres did not predict these developments and had not a correct knowledge about them.

In the US as the origin of the Greater Middle East Plan, some believed that what happened in the region is the continuation or consequence of the Greater Middle East Plan. On this basis, those who seek reforms within the framework of the Greater Middle East Plan followed slow power shift in these states in order to gradually place new actors among educated people, particularly those familiar with western methods and liberal democracy at the top of regimes. The main reason for following this thought was to get more influence in the Middle East and

North Africa. Therefore these states had a red line regarding the developments of the region which was these developments should not culminate in revolution. While practically most of these developments culminated in revolution therefore the Western states are still in a political dilemma regarding the developments of the region. But the Islamic Republic of Iran entered these developments with more preparedness due to the mentioned factors.

The Islamic Republic of Iran held two great international conferences entitled "Islamic Awakening" and "role of youth in the Islamic Awakening". In the first conference, more than eight hundred intellectuals, statesmen and new actors of Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Yemen and many other countries that were engaged in these developments, participated in the event. In the second conference, more than 1200 youth as the new actors of the Middle East developments gathered in Iran. Gathering more than eight hundred leaders and actors of these developments in Iran entails an active diplomacy. If Iran had not effective communication and influence among new actors, it would be impossible to gather these people in Tehran.

Iran believes that the Islamic Awakening belongs to the masses in Arab countries and is originally a social movement so like every other social movements, it needs time for realizing its goals. Naturally these developments will face many challenges in future; both domestic and foreign challenges that intend to defeat them. Iranian diplomacy like other cases in the past three decades establishes its manoeuvre and investment on ordinary masses of these countries and tries to reinforce these movements through lower layers of these societies.

5.Solutions of the US

Americans should know that a considerable part of violence and terror in different countries has roots in the Third World, particularly the Middle East which is the result of the West's political, economic and military performance in violating their interests and repressing their old ideals, particularly formation of an independent Palestine. In this direction, the US national security strategy for facing asymmetrical threats is to revive free trade and free market and expanding development cycle through creating open space and democratic infrastructure in the Middle East (Pourahmadi, 2005: 55).

After 9/11, under the pretext of expanding democracy and deterring from terrorism, the US used iron fist policy in which Iraq and Afghanistan wars were taken place. The US regarded Iraq and Afghanistan states as insurgents due to violation of human rights and threatening regional and international peace and security so it invade them in order to realize its democracy but after military occupation, internal unrests have been more widespread and the US is unable to establish stability and security in these countries. On the other hand, in the US allied states such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar where authoritarian and repressive regimes are in power, the Islamist movements are prevalent. During the developments of last year and Islamist movements, these states have shown and proved that they are very far from the US criteria for democracy, popular participation and human rights but as they preserve the US and West interests, they enjoy the US support. In fact, when encountering these states, the US government has set aside pressures for promoting democracy, freedom and liberalism and supported these states in order to expand its realistic interests. Even in a double-standard policy in different occasions, the US introduces these states as successful models for reform process and human rights promotion while they are at the zenith of suppressing people (Simbar, 2008).

Islamists and other fair intellectuals have witnessed the paradox of the US human rights policy regarding Iran and the sanctions imposed on it. Because Iran does not accept the structure of regional order in the Middle East and the US support for Israel which is against Arab Muslims' justice-oriented demands, it is under severe pressure and introduced as a terrorist and authoritarian regime. In this regard, Islamists observe that Washington seeks democracy and human rights promotion in the Middle East and Iran in order to realize its unilateral and instrumental policy. One can claim that human rights and democracy promotion in the Middle East, particularly regarding Iran have political function, not legal one.

In the process of Islamic Awakening, Islamists know very well that the US faces a great paradox in realizing the Greater Middle East policy. Firstly integration of Muslim countries of the Middle East into Western liberal political and economic system entails democratization but the point lies here that imposed democracy cannot be useful without considering domestic conditions. The cases of Iraq and Afghanistan have proved the claim.

Secondly by accepting democracy in the Middle East countries, the US and the West should prepare for admitting its consequences too. I mean if Islamic fundamentalist groups or Iran-backed regimes take power, they should not show reaction and they should accept popular votes because if they did not, they would lose their prestige among Muslim people of the Middle East. At the time, in this occasion, they would have acted against their own goals.

In fact, reform of the US foreign policy in the Middle East is dependent on continuation and redefinition of democracy promotion strategy, reformation of social system and expansion of economic free system in the region. The realities of the region are the most important strategic aspects of the US foreign policy including the issues related to Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon and occupied territories, democracy promotion, conducting political and economic reforms, making distinction between regime change and democracy promotion, controlling the Zionist regime's expansionist and repressive policies.

The US attempts have continued for exploiting political opportunities and isolating Iran in different occasions. The US strategic attempt is obvious to isolate Iran in political and economic spheres through imposing severe sanctions and preventing from energy transfer of the south eastern Asia through Iran. The US military presence in the Persian Gulf and economic sanctions against Iran, particularly in oil fields demonstrate other threats against Iran. Also the US plays an important role in forming anti-Iran coalitions in the Middle East and Persian Gulf political and security developments which is an important factor in the regional security equations led by the US for providing security of crude oil for the Western Europe, Japan, China and other industrial countries of Asia-Pacific region.

Regarding the Islamist wave, it seems that democracy promotion in the Arab Middle East will not guarantee the US interest in the region because like previous experiences, a free election does not guarantee the US and the West interest. Therefore the status quo i.e. the US support for authoritarian states such as Bahrain, Yemen and Saudi Arabia is the best choice because it will preserve the interests of these states and the US allies and this is the behaviour the US has adopted towards such states.

Of course, we should say that the developments that happen in the Islamic Awakening trend have a manifest layer and many latent layers. The manifest layer is those actors that play role in the scene, for example

in Egypt the military council, remainders of Mubarak regime and security forces and bureaucratic structure and interim government constitute the manifest layer. While in the revolutionary Egypt, people are still at the beginning. The people face a new development every day; developments which can be regarded as the second revolution of Egypt. In this country, Israel embassy is attacked one day and the military council is challenged another day.

Conclusion

So far, Iran has had many achievements regarding the Islamic Awakening in the Middle East movements. The US hostile policies against Iran and Iran's support for Palestine issue has caused the latter be considered as a "spiritual actor" in these movements. The US foreign policy towards Iran that has used pressure and threat has not succeeded in changing the Islamic Republic's behaviour. Iran has not changed its behaviours to which the US pays attention including supporting Islamist groups such as Lebanon Hezbollah, securing long-range missiles and challenging Israel. This is while the sanction policy has caused that the US prestige is depicted as an inappropriate one among Iranian people.

Therefore given the recent developments of Islamic Awakening in the Middle East countries, the US needs a change in its foreign policy in order to reach comprehensive peace and security. The US needs an appropriate knowledge about Iran, Iranian society and Iranian foreign policy. The Iranian people and government have mainly a strong sense of independence and they have a rich history of confronting dominance. Nowadays this resistance moral of Iranian people is transmitted to the Muslim World and Islamic Awakening movement.

The US should accept Iran's role and action in the Middle East developments. Iranian people do not forget their bitter experience relating to the US interventions into their domestic affairs. Therefore they never accept any kind of pressure, threat and terror in their negotiations with the US. They will only attend negotiations, if they are respected. The US should recognize the identity and legitimacy of the Islamic Revolution and Iran's national interests. It should assess Iran's role in the Middle East realistically.

The US should learn a lesson from Iran and Islamic Awakening experience. Washington should not rely on pressure, force and sanction policy anymore because these policies not only have not culminated in

weakening Iranian government but also have created pessimism towards the US among Iranian people. Convicting Iran into entering the Middle East peace process through putting pressure, direct or indirect economic, military or diplomatic threats will be unconstructive and will enhance pessimism among Iranian and Muslim people.

The US needs to abandon the paradoxes of its foreign policy and double standard policy. If the US continues its support for Israel's apartheid policies, it cannot claim human rights and fundamental liberties in the region. Our era is the era of consciousness and communications, so no one can ignore people's consciousness and reason through agitation and propaganda.

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