

US-Iran Relations: New Shift

Naheed Anjum Chishti¹

Abstract

United States America has reviewed its policy towards Iran. United States intends to normalize the relations with Iran. The international communities have concern over this new development. The main emphasis of the research is to highlight the facts behind this shift. The study also focuses on the impacts on the allies of both sides due to this change. The approach is analytical and descriptive. The original and secondary data is collected for this purpose. The conclusion and references are in the end.

Introduction

In the aftermath of World War II and beginning of the Cold War, Washington sees Iran as a bulk war against Soviet expansion and a source of stability in the oil-rich Persian Gulf. It cultivated friendly relations with Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlvi. The partnership was threatened due to the appointment of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh in 1951. A CIA-backed coup ousts Mossadegh in 1953. The Shah returned from a brief exile and resumed control.

The United States provided the Shah hundreds of millions of dollars during the next quarter-century. The US helped to set up Iran's intelligence agency in 1957. Iran's oil exports expanded and the economy expanded. The Shah recognized Israel and became a dominant figure in the Middle East. Some tensions persisted. Iran refused to help the U.S. in the 1970s by lowering the price of petroleum. Toward the end of the shah's reign, the U.S. criticized his government's worsening human rights record and crackdown on democracy.

Iranians overthrew the Shah in 1979. They were frustrated by the monarchy's brutality, corruption and autocracy. They also faced economic slowdown. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returns from exile seizes power. In November 1979, during the Carter administration, militants storm the U.S. embassy in Tehran. Fifty-two American were held for 444 days. An American rescue operation ended in disaster. Washington frozen billions of dollars in Iranian assets stored in the United States. The U.S. ended diplomatic relations with Iran. The Shah went to Panama in December 1979 and died in Egypt on July 27, 1980. (CTV News)1.

Proxy Wars

Iraq's president Saddam Hussein invaded Iran in 1980, and the United States provided him with support, and an estimated 1.5 million people were killed during the next eight years. The Iranian government killed thousands of political opponents at home and assassinated several high-profile figures abroad. It involved in Lebanon's civil war to provide support to Hezbollah. The new Shiite militants group was blamed for the 1983 bombings of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut and of the Beirut barracks of the U.S. Marine Corps; the two bombings killed more than 250 Americans. Iran placed underwater mines in the strategic Persian Gulf. The U.S. responded by targeting Iranian oil installations in 1987 and 1988. The two countries approached to outright war. In July 1988, the U.S. mistakenly downed an Iranian passenger jet flying above the strait of homuz, killing 290 people. Two months later, Iran and Iraq reached a cease-fire.

¹ Chairperson, Department of Political Science, University of Balochistan, Quetta, Pakistan

Through the 1990s, the U.S. accused Iran of sponsoring terrorism attacks around the world. Iran and its proxy, Hezbollah, are blamed for a 1992 attack on the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina, that kills 29 people, and an attack on a Jewish community centre there two years later that kills 85. The U.S. and Israel said Iran provided the critical support for dozens of Hamas suicide attacks and other bombings. President Bill Clinton imposed far-reaching oil and trade sanctions on Iran in 1995.

The 1997 elections of Iran's reformist president Mohammad Khatami offered hope for a thaw in relations. Khatami promoted a "dialogue among civilizations" and reached out to Western leaders. The U.S. lifted some penalties against Iran.

Post 9/11

Limited U.S. –Iranian co-operation continued after al-Qaeda terrorists attacked the United States on Sept.11.2001. Official from both sides co-ordinate before the U.S. invaded Afghanistan to oust the Taliban. Months later, President George W. Bush enraged Iran by including it with Iraq and North Korea in his "axis of evil". Washington released information about Iran's nuclear program and rebuffed Khatami's offer of a "grand Bargain". To normalize U.S. –Iranian relations. After the U.S. ousts Saddam Hussein in 2003 and occupied Iraq, it accused Iran of providing Shiite militants with sophisticated weapons to kill American soldiers. The diplomatic effort yields three rounds of UN penalties between 2006 and 2008 demanding Tehran stop enriching uranium and exporting weapons. They also slap Iran with banking, trade and travel restrictions.

Ahmadinejad's Arrival

The election of Iranian president Muhammad Ahmadinejad in 2005 weakened the case for better relations. Ahmadinejad called for the culmination of Israel, a key U.S. Ally, and declared the Holocaust a myth. He sent Bush an 18-page letter criticizing the U.S. response to the 9-11 attacks. With Iraq in Chaos, U.S, officials reach out to Iranian counterparts for help in stemming the violence. Anti-war sentiments rose in the United States and Bush and his advisors played down talk of war and joined nuclear negotiations between world powers and Iran. At the same time, the U.S. , the U.S. rallies international unity against Iran's nuclear activity. The diplomatic effort yielded three rounds of UN penalties between 2006 and 2008 demanding Tehran stop enriching uranium and exporting weapons. They also slapped Iran with banking and travel restrictions.

Reaction of Saudi Arabia

There is no doubt that there is irritation and anger at what may be the start of a rapprochement between Iran and America, according to Saudi officials, private individuals and foreign observers. Obama is the object of mistrust and contempt. Yet the sour mood long predates the Geneva deal and is neither directly nor exclusively about the nuclear issue.². (The Guardian)

The big picture is that the Saudis have spent the last three years defending the status quo against the turmoil of the Arab spring. King Abdullah was horrified when Obama dropped Hosni Mubarak and embraced the Muslim Brotherhood until Mohammad Morsi was overthrown by the Egyptian military. The Saudis were certainly delighted to see Egypt's first democratically elected president off and reward the generals who dispatched him.

King Abdullah was quick to call for the downfall of Bashar al- Assad, in 2011 and allowed sectarian incitement and weapons deliveries in support of the Syrian rebels. Syria is in some ways a Saudi proxy war with Iran- which is backing Assad to the hilt along with Hezbollah in Lebanon. Unease in Riyadh exploded in August when Obama leveraged the

Damascus chemical attacks into a deal with the Russians- abandoning the punitive air strikes the Saudis were rooting for.

Worries are growing about future US energy dependence and a strategic pivot to Asia. But the oil is still flowing and the defense relationship remains strong and to mutual benefit. The current levels of noise reflect profound discomfort at incipient geopolitical changes as well as capriciousness and rivalry in the places of Riyadh. As the US academic Gregory Gause has noted: “ The rhetorical volleys of the past few months are minor compared to the most serious episodes of tension between the two allies: the embargo imposed by Saudi Arabia in 1973 to protest against American support for Israel during the Yom Kipper war, which sent a permanent shock through global oil markets, and the aftermath of September 11,2001.”³. (Gregory Gause).

Is Iran Surrendering to the United States?

In Washington there has been a tug-o'-war over Iranian foreign policy. The political tug-o-war in Tehran has seen the reformists and pragmatists contesting the principalist and conservative camp about how to deal with the United States.

With the election of Hassan Rohani the balance in Tehran has changed and loosened the dominant hold of the principalists and conservatives in the Iranian political arena. Despite the fact that he received the endorsement of the reformist camp and all its supporters, Hassan Rohani is not the Iranian reformist that some have portrayed him as being. His supporters said that Rouhani would undo the damage that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's government had caused. In his first speech as the president of Iran, Rouhani highlighted, “Let our heart be cleansed of resentment. Let conciliation replace estrangement and let friendship take the place of animosity. Let Islam's compassionate face, Iran with its reasonable face, the Revolution with its human face, and the political system with its kind face continue to create epics.”⁴(Hassan Rouhani)

As soon as Rouhani became president, he selected Mohammad Javed Zarif to become Iran's foreign minister. Zarif was selected as foreign minister not only because he was an excellent diplomat: Rouhani shrewdly selected Zarif for his experience as Tehran's foreign minister, Zarif had served as the permanent representative of Iran to the UN in New York City, from where he served as Tehran's contact man with the US government and US officials. Foreign Minister Zarif himself has stated that he and US Vice-President Joe Biden shared a friendship. Rouhani dealt with the US as the secretary- General of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran during the presidency of Mohammad Khatmi.

Rouhani authorized Zarif to meet with US Secretary of State John Kerry. Rouhani himself held a brief, but historic, phone conversation with President Obama. Finally, an interim nuclear deal was reached between Iran and the P5+1, more specifically the United States.

Among the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and the political hardliners in Tehran, there are fears that the interim nuclear deal will lead to an even broader agreement and a normalization of relations with the United States that could potentially open the door for alterations in the political structure of Iran and give the reformists the upper hand. There were reserved statements released in November 2013 by Revolutionary Guard leaders, days before the interim nuclear agreement was reached, which assured the public that Iran's ideology would not change, and that Iran would not bow down to any foreign powers.⁵.(statement)

The different statements of Rouhani expresses, “We want to rebuild and improve our relations to European and North American countries on a basis of mutual respect. We are striving to avoid new burdens on relations between Iran and the United States and also to remove the tensions that we have inherited.”⁶(Reuters)

Israel's Concern

To the Israel, the preliminary deal with Iran that the Obama administration is trying to seal this week is a giveaway to a government that has spent two decades building a vast nuclear program. Every time Mr. Obama and his secretary of state, John Kerry, ask for a little time and space to test the new Iranian leadership's claims that it is ready for a new approach, and for compromise.

Mr. Netanyahu responds that the proposed agreement is "a very bad deal", extremely dangerous, 'a mistake of historic proportions", or as he said an interview with CNN on Sunday, "an exceedingly bad deal."7. (The New York Times)

In interviews, both American and Israeli officials concerned that the terms of the preliminary accord reflect a difference in fundamental goals. Mr. Obama speaks often of his determination to prevent Iran from ever obtaining a nuclear weapon; Mr. Netanyahu sets a far higher bar of preventing Iran from gaining, or keeping, the capability to ever build one. Mr. Netanyahu "will be satisfied with nothing less than the dismantlement of every scrap of the Iranian nuclear infrastructure," one administration strategist said the other day. "And for us, the goal is to make sure that we are putting limits and constraints on the program, and ensuring that if the Iranians decided to race for a bomb, we would know in time to react."8(Statement)

The White House, alarmed by Mr. Netanyahu's outspoken opposition and by an effort in Congress to enact a new round of sanctions on Iran that Israel supports, is trying to shore up its own arguments. Mr. Obama is bringing the leaders and ranking members of the Senate foreign relations, intelligence, armed services and banking committees to the white house on Tuesday to make the case that if Iran is going to be coaxed into a deal, the country's new leaders must go home with some modest appetizer of sanctions relief-as an indications that the United states is ready to deal.9 (Middle East)

Albert Einstein, who was a great humanitarian and peace activist in addition to being one of the greatest scientist of all time. In his landmark letter to the New York Times in 1948, He clearly explained why the leaders of Israel were not to be trusted and did not deserve money or support from Americans, including American Jews who believe in equality and democracy for all human being. The letter was written by Albert Einstein, Hannah Arendt, Sidney Hook and more than 20 other prominent Jewish intellectuals, to alert Americans and the larger world to the dangers represented by the emergence of racism, fascism, terrorism and religious fanaticism among the Zionist leadership of the newly-formed state of Israel. 10. (Albert Einstein's 1948 letter to the New York Times).

Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, Ruhani's government has pro-business characteristics. In this regard, there are legitimate concerns that go beyond politics which fear that restored relations with the US could see an opening up of the Iranian economy based on the neoliberal economic policies that many of the reformists- and pro- business conservatives had embraced and favor that will see the state infrastructure and the public sector in Iran privatized further. If business ties are restored between the US and Iran, and there is a lot of talk about it, the Iranian government could entrench the Iranian economy on a path of neoliberal reforms and privatization.

Diplomatic relations between both countries should be started its not only good for Iran and America but also for the whole world because due to better relationships between both countries with off he tense situation and it will be really better for the Iran because Iran is already facing different kind of ban on itself.

Wish you good Luck to both Countries.

References

1. "Iran-U.S. relations: A brief history."(November 23,2013) Available at <http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/a-brief-history-of-u-s-iranian-relat...>
2. Ian Black (28/11/2013)_“Saudi Arabia irritated by the Changing US Relationship With Iran.” Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/28/saudi-arabia>
3. Gregory Gause. (2013) *Statement*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/28/Saudi-arabia>
4. Hassan Rouhani (2013)*Text from the first Speech as President of Iran.*_Retrieved from <http://rt.com/op-edge/relations-between-iran-and-us-739>
5. Statement of Revolutionary Guard Leaders(November 2013)retrieved from <http://rt.com/op-edge/relations-between-iran-and-asa-739>
6. Suddeutsche Zeitung((20130) *ReutersReport*._Retrieved from <http://world.time.com/2013/12/23/leader-say-iran-wants-to-repair>
7. David E. Sanger and Jodirudoren(November 18,2013) “Split on accord on Iran Strains U.S.-Israel Ties” in *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/19/world/middleeast/split-oa-ac...>
8. Statement of Administrative Strategist (November 18, 2013) Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/19/world/middleeast/split-ca-ac...>
9. The New York Times.(Middle East).Retrieved on (1/4/2014)from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/19/world/middleeast/split-oa-ac...pp-2-3>
10. Albert Einstein’s (1948) *Letter to the New York*. Retrieved from <http://www.thehypertexts.com/Albert%20Einstein%201948%20Letter%20New%20york%20times20Nakba.htm...>