

# The Influence of Leadership Character on the Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Amir Hussein Khodajou

**Abstract:** *The foreign policy is the intermediate between the internal and international policies. On the other hand, this policy possesses a direction from towards outside which is applied by the minister of foreign affairs regarding various countries. Nevertheless, the question is that does the character of a political leader of a country influence on its foreign policy or not? To answer the question the analysis level is individual on which the effects of the Iranian leader character have been investigated on the foreign policy of Islamic Republic of Iran since the characters of the founder Islamic Republic of Iran and the then Iranian leader have been formed in the religious family and educational location. When Imam Khomeini started his criticisms against the royal Pahlavi government and ended with a great revolution, the main factor of his campaigns has been assisting Islam religion. For instance, after the victory of Islamic revolution, all foreign and internal policies of the country were set according to the Islamic bases. The new Iranian leader performed those Islamic principles. He has determined all internal and foreign policies based on the Islamic bases. Whenever he has posed the issue of confronting enemies, he has asked for Muslims' unity and has introduced the Islamic Iran as the supporter of the Islamic nation; that is, the Iranian foreign policy is nothing but the tendency towards nation under the Islam shadow. Is the Iranian leaders or Communists won the revolution, we couldn't surely observe such policies. Consequently, it is obvious that the characters of the Iranian leaders are influential on the foreign policy; particularly, the fact that the members of the elite parliament who elect the Iranian leader possess characters which are similar to the Iranian leaders' one. Thus, the issue of the character features focus on the permanent ones and assume that when we figure out that person's characteristic, we are able to predict the leaders' actions and reactions<sup>1</sup>; that is, the foreign policy of the Islamic republic of Iran must be considered as a character originated from Islam like its leaders that is stable.*

**Index Terms:** Islamism, Foreign Policy, Leadership Character

## I. INTRODUCTION

The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran must be studied based on the quality and the method of politicians' decision making since the Islamic republic of Iran was formed based on the Islamic principles led by Imam Khomeini. Imam Khomeini's character is important to be investigated cos his had studies the Islamic sciences and the environment in which he had grown up, family and education place, had been religious ones; while the communist and westernized leaders who lived along with the Islamic Revolution were located at different educational, family and social elements (such as democracy liberal party). After the Islamic revolution, the doctrine of the political leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran

have been based on this factor and the leaders introduce Islam as their pattern in their decision makings. The late Iranian leader (Imam Khomeini) obeyed the Islamic school in all affairs; especially the foreign policy because his main aims were to establish Islam and to assist the oppressed government across the world. He performed and recorded the Islamic rules in the Constitution of Iran in order for these principles to be ruled on the country permanently; while nowhere in the Iranian history the kings' behaviors weren't based on the Islamic principles and Islam hasn't been applied for campaigning against the aliens particularly the Ottoman Sunni people.

After the victory of the Islamic revolution of Iran, the founder of Islamic Revolution founded the first basis of government using changing the name of the country. He determined the name of the Iranian Islamic republic for the country and introduced the basis of the country structure as Islamic in all affairs. Also, there were many disputes against the Islamic positions of the country in the international affairs during the newly-established revolution. For instance, Engineer Bazargan considered each kind of measure regarding expanding and exporting revolution, standing against America and the Islamic interpretation of international affairs as the stressful factors in the Iranian relationships with the world countries. The communist members and Monafeqin terrorist party considered fighting against the west and armed operation without considering the Islamic rules. While, the Islamic movement led by the founder of Islamic revolution founder ignored both views using the slogan of "not eastern, not western, the Islamic Republic" and empowered the Islamic behavior in the foreign policy establishing the Constitution.

of course, those who perform the decisions may misunderstands them and sometimes they may oppose the decisions and orders and so they perform them quite different from what had been aimed or they may easily ignore the order. Totally, between making a decision and its performing many events may be happened; that is, the foreign policy behavior isn't what the decision makers aim; for instance, in Islamic Republic of Iran, the president may act so that isn't expected by the leader; so the header's word is the last choice. For instance, the founder of Islamic Revolution's opposition with the then president of Iran, Bani Sadr. Additionally, UNESCO 2030 document whose declaration order was issued by the president nowadays; but the current leader of Iran prevented performing it. According to the above-mentioned statements, investigating the Iranian foreign policy can't be done without considering its leaders' characters. The basis of foreign policy;

**Revised Version Manuscript Received on March 03, 2018.**

Amir Hussein Khodajou, His Department Name, University/ College/ Organization Name, City Name, Country Name, Phone/ Mobile No., (e-mail: fisrtauthor@gamil.com)

# The Influence of Leadership Character on the Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

That is, the most important factor of decision making in the country has been investigated in the article.

## II. THE MENTAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE FOREIGN POLICY

The mental environment in the analysis of foreign policy was grown by Harold and Margaret Spraw. This approach emphasizes on foreign policy decision making instead of results. The answer to the government behaviors in events can't be done without decision making analyses. The foreign policy decision making is done by individuals. The understanding of decision makers regarding the international positions of their countries and events influences on the decision makings more than the affairs themselves. There is a distinction between the mental environment and the operational one.. the decision-makers act on their understanding. Thus, the understanding of foreign policy decision makers can help us analyzing their policy truly. While, the mind and understanding of decision makers are quite complex. Culture, history, geography, economy, the political foundations, ideology and other factors influence on the social behavior of decision makers. The individual features of leaders and decision makers influence on foreign behavior and policy dramatically. These features influence on both their recognition of the world, their country and processing date and selecting options. Especially when it is considered that in foreign policy or decision making in special cases usually many pressures, default date are dominated. In such conditions, the individual features of leaders and decision makers play a high role. Also, the extent of influencing people on the foreign policy of the countries is different in various political systems. In democratic political systems in which democracy has been deepened people play a less role. Joseph River tried in his study entitled "the psychological dimensions of the foreign policy" to establish a systematic bond between the individual and social behaviors in the foreign policy.

"The operational secret" was grown by Alexander George shows that how the decision makers' beliefs help the special foreign policy to be formed. In the operational secret, the leaders' political beliefs form an important note; specially, the belief: Do they consider the world as the seeking for fighting one or a comparative and peaceful one? They are seeking for creating fundamental changes in the world or seeking for keeping the current situation or for modifying it? Margaret Herman investigated the influencing of beliefs, motives and decision making styles and the styles of individual interaction of leaders and their governments in the international domain and he considered their individual features in a total image and explained the different directions in the foreign policy regarding these features. Taking each directions, we can explain their behaviors in various events. Regarding the developments in 1980s and 1990s, the analysts of foreign policy paid attention to the cognitive plans and their biographies were evaluated and searched.

The second part of the mental environment is related to the social psychology. In this domain, the investigators of foreign policy investigate the evaluation of the effects of public thoughts and the social groups and mass media on the foreign policy of governments. The effect of the above-mentioned factors in democratic societies is more than the despotic ones. The public thoughts, mass media, and the social groups aren't

entire; specially, if the usual trend dominates. The public thoughts or mass media possess more harmony in great events. In his book entitled "The president wars and the public thoughts" which investigates the Vietnam war and the influence of public thoughts on the behavior of the American government, Muller writes: "Although the public thoughts are changed in the international issues; but this change has logical reasons." Robert Doll tried to represent the theoretical concepts for the analysis of the foreign policy influenced by the interior pressures on the foreign policy of government. Representing a hostile image from others' behavior or creating argument and tension with other countries can be a factor for getting rid of interior pressures. Hultsy represents the national role concepts to describe the bond between the social psychological elements and the foreign policy. He considered it as useful for understanding this issue: Each nation consider a position for itself in the international domain. He believes that one of the products of the process of society acceptance of each nation is achieving a public understanding out of its international position and the social features have a remarkable effect on society acceptance. Forming this role in people's mind and decision makers has an undeniable role in the directionality of the foreign policy of that country. This understanding of the national role represents them definite options and the foreign policy and the behavior of government against the influenced events of that understanding are formed and manifested. The different outputs out of the national role in the international domain will be resulted in different behaviors.

Naomi B. Wish poses three roles of cooperation, competition and isolation and also economic, political, military and religious roles for each country in the international domain which can be focused on defensive, ideological, political/diplomatic, worldwide values and economic issues. The conclusion of decision makers out of their country position in the international domain has an effective role in the foreign policy.

## III. DECISION MAKING IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

The founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran selected the name of Islamic Republic of Iran exactly in the first phase after victory of Revolution which was criticized by the politicians supporting America and Russia. This difference of views is originated from the position and origin of leaders of each sect. in one side, people such as Engineer Bazargan who had learned in France opposed the issue of jurisconsult guardianship and; on the other side, the leaders of Toudeh party such as Nooruddin Kianouri who had learned in Akhen university of Germany opposed the decisions of the leader of Iran dealing with having relationships with the European countries.

Regarding such cases, the founder of Islamic republic opposed the ideas which were against Islam. The question is that: would the process of decision making in the foreign policy differ if one of the headers who turned to the west and the soviet unions became the leader of Iran? Definitely, yes.

The decisions (in foreign policy and maybe not interior one) which was made by Engineer Bazargan could be against the Islamic pattern as he didn't believe in tendency towards Islam and jurisconsult guardianship. Another question is that: would the founder of Islamic Revelation's decisions differ if he weren't literate in the Islamic sciences? Or would a revolution be basically happened? Definitely, the decisions differed. As a matter of fact, the structure of tendency towards Islam and the society environment had affected the founder of Islamic Republic and led to such different decisions.

Nowadays, we observe that our constitution have influenced the politicians' decision makings. Our constitution have been formed based on the individual decisions of the revolutionary-religious elites; while, these people are influenced by the structures of a collection of the religious education, family and society bearing the Islamic tendencies and they consider the tendency towards Islam as their pattern and aim confronting others.

The question is that why do the politicians of the government of Islamic republic of Iran such as Dr. Zarif who have educated and lived out of the above-mentioned environment make their decisions based on the tendency towards Islam? As mentioned above, Margaret Herman points out this note that the psychological investigation of the individual characteristics of elites evaluates the influences of the public thoughts, social groups and mass media via the foreign policy of governments. Consequently, the taken decisions by elites such as Dr. Zarif can be classified in these limitations.

As explained above, it can be concluded that the general rule of decision making in the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on the orders of the main decision makers; that is the leadership of Iran. Continuing the Islamic pattern he determines the decisions of the foreign policy. The politicians act based on the psychological environment of the society; so that, everybody who violated the principles and regulations in the foreign policy, he/she will be inquired.

The current leader of Iran interprets the aims of the foreign policy in his speech dates 1377/7/2:

"Our aim is the one determined by Islam in which there is no tyranny, no violation of human rights and no oppression against oppressed people. The human right have been regulated. This is our path. We have follow the path so far, thank goodness."

#### IV. THE PRIORITIES OF THE FOREIGN POLICY

The diplomatic relationship is the peak in the just and intimate relationships of two countries with each other since two independent countries establish diplomatic relationships after reaching an agreement and understanding, mutual nice behaviors, not meddling with the interior affairs of each other, not planning for each other and establishing good relationship between two countries which cause intimacy between two countries.

Theoretically, the diplomatic relationships between two countries are the intact ones on which some principles are governed based on many regulations, contracts, traditions and international diplomacies. When two countries establish diplomatic relationships with each other, it means that both countries are to behave based on good mutual behaviors, respecting the international known principles in the framework of international rules

The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran has clearly clarified the priorities of the policy of the Islamic republic of Iran. Four groups of countries are respectively preferred:

- 1) The neighbors of Iran
- 2) Muslims countries
- 3) Third world countries
- 4) The countries which provide one of the political, economic, social or military of Iran.

The Iranian leader has distinguished the priorities of the foreign policy based on the Constitution in his speech dated 1361/3/3.

The Iranian foreign policy is generally based on the following principles: We don't have any hostile relationship with any country. Those who are our enemies are encountered by hostile behaviors. If their enmity is military, we will show them the military enmity. However, the countries who are our friends and are willing to establish a friendly and brotherly relationships, we will be their friends and brothers, too.

Strengthening the relationships of the Islamic republic of Iran with the Asian and European countries has been confirmed by the leader addressing the ambassadors of the foreign policy dated 1379/6/6

"... Having relationships with Europe must be seriously considered. Of course, I consider having and strengthening relationships with Asia as an important principle... We should be serious with Asia. Of course, this is not our today policy. This was the policy of the late leader of Islamic republic of Iran. We must make the European understand that the west isn't equal to America. The European themselves know this issue, too."

As understood, the tendency towards Islam is confirmed and the main path of the foreign policy has been considered in the continuation of Islam path and the late leader of Islamic Republic of Iran.

#### V. CONCLUSION

If we want to understand the process of forming the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we should pay attention to this issue that the foreign policy of the Islamic republic of Iran has based on the constitution, the idea of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and that of the current leader of Iran. As a matter of fact, the personality of the late leader of Iran was an important factor of this process. On the other side, various factors which constitute a person which manifest in a form or body called character. Various samples have been observed in history in which the leader character could change the history fate. For instance, Hitler, Czars and etc. Each had his/her own special character. Whenever the historians referred them to find the reason for their behaviors, they have discussed about their character and their infancy period of time.

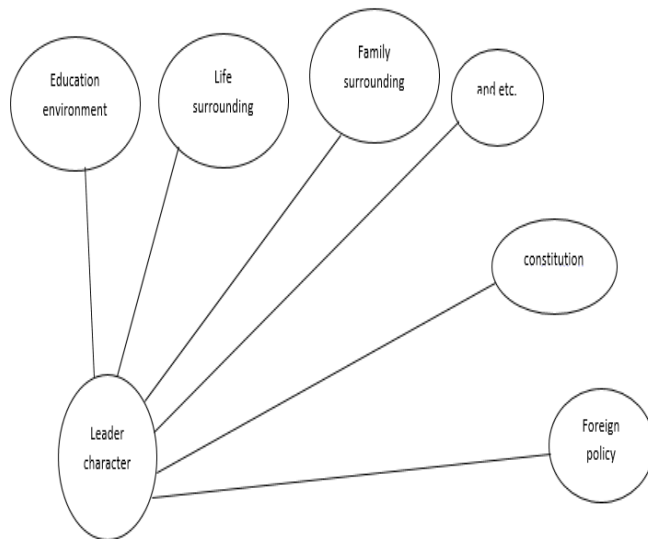
There are two views in the Islamic Republic of Iran which possess different interpretations regarding Islam. In one view, it is believed that Islam has no way but opening door for all the worlds and tries to show Islam along with the available order and the next one has a harder look and tries to set the relationship of the Islamic Iran with the world so that to establish bits order.



# The Influence of Leadership Character on the Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Each of these views have different interpretations with each other; but they can't be out of the Iran leader's decisions and the existent structure. Thus, the view of each one in the country shows that although there are various interpretations of Islam, the tendency towards Islam isn't forgotten in the policy. While, Islam is also existent in the Arabic countries; but their behavioral method is so that they have relationships with all countries in the world because the existence of Islam in each country doesn't mean the tendency towards Islam in the foreign policy. Although Islam exists in the Islamic countries, the characters of the leaders of these countries are different and there are many differences among them.

## VI. APPENDIX



## REFERENCES

1. Shafer, "Issue in Assessing Psychological Characteristics at a Distance," 517; see also Greenstein, Personality and Politics
2. Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis."
3. Contending Theories of International Relations by James E. Dougherty; Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1971.
4. Michael J. Shapiro and Matthew G. Bonham; "Cognitive Process and Foreign Policy Decision-Making", International studies Quarterly, Vol. 17, No. 2 (June, 1973) pp. 147-174
5. Joseph de Rivera; the Psychological Dimensions of Foreign Policy, (Columbia:OH:C.E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1968) p.54.
6. Hudson and Vore; OP. Cit., p. 218.
7. Margaret G. Hermann and Charles F. Hermann; "Who Makes Foreign Policy Decision and How: An Empirical Inquiry", International Studies Quarterly, Vol.33, No. 4 (Dec., 1989) pp. 367-368.
8. Douglas C. Foyle; "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Elite Beliefs as a Mediating Variable", International studies Quarterly, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Mar., 1997) pp. 141-169.
9. Hudson and Vore; OP. Cit, p. 219.
10. Ibid
11. Ibid
12. Naomi B.Wish; "Foreign Policy Makers and Their National Role Conceptions", International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Dec. 1980) p.540.