

Foreign Policy of Iran after Islamic Revolution

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Abstract

This article is to explain the policies that have been undertaken by government of Iran in foreign affairs since Islamic Revolution (1979). Although principles underlined in Constitution of Iran have been followed by Islamic Republic of Iran; but elected presidents have interpreted the principles variously. So, different approaches of foreign policy with different outcomes have been followed by presidents that had been chosen in presidential elections. In this article, we tend to explain the changes that caused by the presidents in foreign policy of Iran since Islamic Revolution. The article is written in two main parts. In the first part, we are going to summarize the main approaches of foreign policy in Iran since Islamic Revolution and influence of them on Iran's foreign policy in different periods; and in second part, we will explain foreign policy of Iran during presidencies of Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, Seyyed Mohammad Khatami and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Keywords: Foreign policy, Islamic Revolution of Iran

1. Approaches of Foreign Policy in Islamic Revolution of Iran

Iran has followed different foreign policies since Islamic revolution of Iran for achieving its goals. Goals of Islamic government of Iran had been fluctuated between interests of Islamic world and interests of Iran; or in other word, between interests of Islam Umma (the nation of Islam) and national interests of Iran. Islamic principles have dominated on foreign policy of Iran but different conditions made the government to change its priorities of Foreign policy.

There have been four theoretical approaches of foreign policy since 1979 in Islamic Republic of Iran including realist, ideological, pragmatist, and reformist approaches (Azghandi, 2002). Following of realist approach began in Prime-ministry of Mehdi Bazargan and ended by capturing of American embassy in Iran. In this period, government of Iran tended to lead Iran foreign policy based on national interests not ideological priorities. So, national interests were prior to Islamic priorities. It was the contradiction between caretaker government of Bazargan and the Islamic principles that Imam Khomeini as supreme leader of Iran insisted on them. Government of Iran tried to respect international regularities and avoid interventionist policy in other countries to improve Iran relations with others, especially United States, which were damaged because of revolutionary conditions. But realist approach of foreign policy failed and did not last for long time because of differences in attitudes of Bazargan and Imam Khomeini.

Ideological approach was dominant from 1981 until 1989. Ideological approach believes that foreign policy should be based on Islamic principles and assumptions. In other words, idealists (those who were following ideological approach) of Iran believed that all decision-makers and politicians had to behave on the basis of ideological values. So, Islamic Republic of Iran tried to ignore international environment and replace regularities of dominant international system by Islamic norms of Iran. Supporters of idealist approach hoped that they would be able to expand assumptions of Islamic Revolution of Iran to other neighbors in the region and expansion of assumptions of Islamic Revolution would cause same revolutions in other countries. In other words, supporters of ideological approach followed interventionist approach towards other countries in the region. Interventionist approach caused hostility between Iran and other countries especially Persian Gulf states.

Pragmatist approach was followed by Hashemi Rafsanjani as president of Iran (1989-1997) by end of Iraq-Iran war. Iran tried to reconstruct post war-Iran and normalize its relations with other countries. Hashemi Rafsanjani realized economic conditions of Iran after the war and its need to economic reforms. So, the government followed the pragmatist policy against other countries and accepted that Iran should adapt itself with realities of international politics. So, Iran declared that it would respect international regularities and organizations. Briefly, during eight years of Hashemi Rafsanjani presidency; Iran's foreign policy was based on geo-political necessities and paid less attention to ideological assumptions.

Reformist approach began with presidency of Khatami (1997-2005). Khatami followed the policies of pragmatist approach but with political differences in domestic issues. In domestic sphere some new values such as civil society, freedom of speech, rule of law and pluralism were insisted by politicians. Iran tried to improve its reputation in international society; so, focus of Iran's foreign policy was on *detente*, dialogue and peaceful co-existence with other countries.

2. Iran Foreign Policy towards United States

United States supported Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as king of Iran from 1941 until 1979. Iran was very strategic country for United States against spread of communism on one hand, and was vital for oil energy transferring to Western block on the other hand. In 1970s, Richard Nixon (1969-1974) helped Iran to be regional gendarme (Yazdani & Hussain, 2006). Nixon believed that Iran (militarily) and Saudi Arabia (economically) together could be protector of United States' interests in the region and they would be able to minimize threat of communism without the need for direct intervention of the United States. So, on the basis of Nixon doctrine, United States with partnership of England made Iran as undisputable military power in the Persian Gulf region (Amirsadeghi, 1981). In other words, United States helped Iran to be the most powerful country in the region. This strategy made Iran strategic ally for United States before Islamic Revolution of Iran. Briefly, based on Nixon doctrine, Iran was representative of the United States in the Persian Gulf region for providing security and stability in the region (Sick, 1980).

Overthrowing of Pahlavi regime and beginning of Islamic revolutionary government in Iran (1979) changed nature of relations between Iran and United States. After Victory of the Islamic Revolution, Iran rejected being regional gendarme. Then president of Iran Hashemi Rafsanjani asserted that the Islamic revolution of Iran has upset the method of assigning a gendarme to the Persian Gulf; we are not ready, in any way, to be the guardian and protector of others...and yet we will not allow anyone to adopt the title of guardianship and gendarme of the Persian Gulf (Marschall, 2003). Strategic importance of Iran for United States made the relations of two countries more complicated. Crisis between Iranian new government and the United States arose when Iranian students attacked and captured embassy of the United States then took employees of the embassy as hostages on November 4, 1979 to January 20, 1981. United States re-acted the hostage crisis by enforcing sanctions against Iran which began with freezing Iran assets in the United States. United States prevented Iran's access to more than \$10 billion Iranian assets and canceled the loans expected to give to Iran before overthrowing of Pahlavi Regime (Fayazmanesh, 2003).

The hostility between Iran and United States was continued during and after the Iraq-Iran war. Economic reconstruction was Iran priority after the war; but United States put economic sanctions on Iran to overthrow Iran government by isolating it in economic and political spheres. United States criticized European countries because of their negotiations with Iran and tried to convince European countries to enforce sanctions against Iran and isolate Iran because of four reasons:

- Confrontation of Iran with peace in the Middle East.
- Attempts of Iran to achieve Weapons of Mass Destruction.
- Violation of human rights in Iran.
- Supporting of terrorism (Yaqubi, 2009).

Imam Khomeini named the United States "Great Satan" and "terroristic government (Yazdani & Hussain, 2006). Principles that had been cited in Constitution of Iran put some preconditions for beginning of relationships between Iran and United States. The preconditions were the same principles that had mentioned many times in Imam Khomeini speeches:

- United States have to respect Iran independency and interests.
- Following of non-interventionist policy in domestic affairs of Iran.
- Equality of two sides in relationships (Yazdani & Hussain, 2006).

European countries tried to convince Iran to change its policy towards the United States. Different policy of United States and European countries towards Iran caused disagreements between them. One of the most controversial

disagreements about Iran happened when the United States declared policy of “Dual Containment” against Iran and Iraq (Tarzjani, 2000). United States identified both Iran and Iraq as threats of United States’ interests in the region and designed policy of Dual Containment (1993) in order to isolate both Iran and Iraq. The purpose of Dual Containment policy was to cut Iran and Iraq off from international economy and accelerating regime change in them (GauseIII, March/April 1994). Domination of the United States on oil sources in Persian Gulf region did not include Iran oil sources; so, United States tended to force pressure on oil and gas industry of Iran and for achieving this purpose it needed cooperation of European countries.

3. Foreign Policy of Iran towards European countries

Iran and European countries have had continuous relations since Safavid dynasty in 16th century. In that era, Iran had been way of transferring necessary goods such as spices and textiles to Europe. The relations of Iran and European countries reduced during the World War II, but after the World War the relations continued. By developments in Europe and forming of European Common Market (ECM) after the World War II, many Iranian thinkers believed that ECM would enhance economic relations of the Iran and the European countries. But establishment of European Common Market and its specific economic regularities put troubles in economic and political Iran-European relations. In fact, Islamic revolution of Iran and establishment of European Union (EU-1993) changed nature of the relations.

3.1. Relations of Iran and Europe before Islamic Revolution

Iran was one of producers of primary materials for European countries before establishment of the European Economic Community. Iran began its political relation with European Unions including European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), and European Economic Community (EEC) in 1962. Then prime minister of Iran, Dr Amini, traveled to Belgium, West Germany, and France in 1962 for negotiation in order to promote relations between Iran and European countries. The first round of Iran negotiations with ECSC began after his travel but it was inconclusive (Ramazani, 1976). Finally after the second round of negotiations, Iran and ECM signed an agreement in 1963 in Brussels (Valdani & Ansari, 1995).

Iran as developing country was the first one that had signed economic agreement with the ECM in 1963. Fifth article of the agreement declared that agreement could be extended every year until 1973. But the agreement never extended after 1973 because of increasing in price of petroleum in the same year and disagreements on customs duties between Iran and European countries. Therefore, the mentioned agreement as the sole one did not extend after 1973 and expired before Islamic Revolution of Iran ("Research Representative, Economic Relations of Iran and European Union, ", 2003).

3.2. Relations of Iran and European countries after Islamic Revolution

Islamic Revolution of Iran changed arrangements between Iran and European countries deeply and replaced European countries as substitution of the United States for Iran. Iranian politicians believed that Europe could be the proper substitution to United States and Soviet Union; two countries that had exploited Iran during Pahlavi era. So, Iranian politicians hoped that revolutionary conditions of Iran could be new beginning for relations of Iran and European countries (Halliday, 2003). In general, Iranian politicians tended to replace United States and Soviet Union by Europe for following reasons:

- United States was symbol of West block and Soviet Union was symbol of the East block, so Iranian politicians in following policy of the “Neither East nor West” preferred Europe to United States and Soviet Union.
- Though Britain had near relations with United States and Soviet Union during Pahlavi era, but other European countries such as Germany were not carrying the history like the United States and the Soviet Union in Iran. Germany had been supposed as supporter of Iranian ambitions for independency. Other European countries such as Italy did not have exploitive precedent and was host of Imam Khomeini during pre-revolution era (Halliday, 2003).

Attitudes of Iranian politicians on European countries persuaded Europeans to recognize new government in Iran and promote their relations with new Islamic government. France, Britain, and Germany (1978-1979) recognized revolutionary government of Iran as legal government in international community (Nozani, 2002). Reactions of European countries to Islamic Revolution of Iran prepared the pre-conditions for leaning of Iran upon European countries. But the events after that changed the circumstances in reverse way and relations of Iran and European countries transferred into tension.

Capturing of American embassy was beginning of tension between Iran and European countries until end of the war of Iraq and Iran. Laying sage to American embassy by students in November 4 1979 that had been supported by new Iranian leader (Imam Khomeini), was condemned by the United States and European countries. Then

president of the United States, Jimmy Carter, asked for support of European countries in the hostage crisis and enacted economic sanctions against Iran (Valdani & Ansari, 1995). As a result, EEC condemned Iran and asked Iran to release American hostages. After that, European countries declared that they would support United States in UN against Iran. Then, they reduced their diplomatic relations with Iran and declared that if Iran did not respect international law; they would enact more economic sanctions; the sanctions which caused great economic and political damages to Iran. So, European countries as allies of the United States adopted same policy as United States against Iran. Some other events after capturing of American embassy including Iraq-Iran war and Salman Rushdie case deepened the tension.

Iraq-Iran war was one of important events that affected relations between Iran and European countries. Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980 and captured some parts of Iran's territory. European countries (ten members of EU) declared that they were worry about the war and insisted on solving of problem in peaceful way on the basis of UN resolutions and emphasized that they were ready for reconstruction of Iraq and Iran if they ended the war (Velayati, 1997). But in practice European countries supported Iraq during the eight-years war because in bilateral system they needed support of the United States against Soviet Union, so they followed policies of United States against Iran (Naghizadeh, 2003). They asked Iran to end the war while ignoring Iraq as beginner of war and in the same time supported Iraq politically, economically, and militarily. For example England, France, and Germany provided military equipment especially chemical ones to Iraq army (News agency of Islamic Republic Of Iran, War of Iran and Iraq, 1987); the chemical weapons that were used many times against Iranian citizens. European countries were supporting Iraq while they were bringing pressure to Iran by reducing trading of oil with Iran and limiting of their relations with Iran unilaterally. These events caused deepening of challenges in relations between Iran and European countries.

End of Iraq-Iran war and adopting of UN resolution 598 by Iran was new era in relations of Iran and Europe countries. Iran's initiatives to release American hostages in Lebanon (Parsons, 1990), and political stance of Iran against Iraq invasion of Kuwait which was based on UN Security Council legislations changed political environment between Iran and European countries positively. Aftermath, foreign ministers of Luxembourg, Netherlands, and Italy came to Iran (1991) to negotiate Iran bilaterally and declared their readiness for promoting of political and economic relations with Iran (Sanaie, 2001). Then, Iran and European countries had negotiations on Salman Rushdie and his book in seven meetings in Copenhagen, Tehran, Athens, Bon, Paris, Madrid, and Dublin (khaloozadeh, 2004). These negotiations resulted in normalization of relations between Iran and European countries.

4. Presidency of Hashemi Rafsanjani

Rafsanjani won presidency election and became president of Iran in 1989. Conditions of the post-war period in Iran indicated to necessities of change in priorities of foreign policy on the basis of economic needs. Disorders in Iran that rooted in the eight-year war made reconstruction of Iran necessary. In addition, end of the Cold War and collapse of Soviet Union changed nature of international system in which many countries needed to re-form their policies toward other countries. So, Hashemi Rafsanjani applied pragmatic policy and attempted to combine traditional principles of Islamic Republic of Iran with needs of Iran for economic changes on the one hand, and make balance between realism and ideology of Islamic Republic of Iran on the other hand (Yaqubi, 2009). The pragmatist policy of Mr. Rafsanjani had two pillars:

- Solving economic problems that war had caused.
- Improving of Iran relations with other countries.

Solving of economic problems of Iran after war was priority of Hashemi Rafsanjani in domestic issues. The first priority of Hashemi Rafsanjani was reconstruction of Iran's economy. Problems in Iran including unemployment, inflation, and instability of prices were at the center of Hashemi Rafsanjani pragmatic policy (Amiri, 2006). Achieving mentioned goals depended on improving of Iran relations with other countries. Therefore during presidency of Hashemi Rafsanjani, Iran tried to improve its relationship with European countries because they had two influential members in Security Council of United Nations. Iran kept its economy open to European countries in order to make distinction between them and United States. But the cases of Salman Rushdie and event of Mikonos made problems in process of improving relations of Iran and European countries.

Ahmed Salman Rushdie, citizen of England, published his book titled "Satanic Verses" (1988) in which insulted prophet of Muslims. His book faced protests of all Muslims in different countries. Imam Khomeini issued "Fatwa" (religious decree) in which he declared that Salman Rushdie had to be killed. European countries' re-action against stance of Iran about Salman Rushdie increased tensions between Iran and Europe especially England. European countries declared that Imam Khomeini's Fatwa was radical reaction, and was Shiite' opinion not Sunni's, and was

against freedom. They attempted to ignore and nullify Fatwa (Valdani & Ansari, 1995) by limiting diplomatic relations and issuing of resolution against Imam Khomeini's Fatwa about Salman Rushdie in Strasbourg, France. In response to European countries, Iran asked its ambassadors to leave Sweden, Italy, and Spain and asked England to apologize for publishing Satanic Verses (Babaie, 1999). Moreover, Iran declared rupturing of its political relations with England and consequently England closed Iran's embassy down in Hog Kong. Salman Rushdie crisis had been one of events in Iran's foreign policy that challenged relations of Iran with European countries.

In December of 1992, four political activists including Sadegh Sharafkandi, secretary general of Iranian Democrat Kurdistan party that opposed Islamic Republic of Iran were assassinated in Mikonos restaurant of Berlin. One Iranian citizen and four Lebanon citizens were arrested in Germany. The process of judicial court took more than three years long and finally the judicial court of Berlin condemned many officials of Iran government that caused crisis in relations of Iran and Germany (Mousavian, 2008). Mikonos crisis ruined relations of Iran with European countries until victory of Seyyed Mohammad Khatami in presidential election in 1997.

5. Presidency of Seyyed Mohammad Khatami

Victory of Seyyed Mohammad Khatami in presidency election of 1997 was turning point in relations of Iran and European countries. Since victory of Islamic revolution to presidency of Khatami, Iran had followed ideological and realist policy or combination of them. Khatami chose reformist approach which had two pillars (Amiri, 2006):

- Detente in foreign policy for solving problems of Iran with other countries.
- Political reforms in domestic affairs.

The word detente indicates to existent tension in which one tries to reduce the existent tension. On the basis of detente policy, Khatami behaved less ideologically and followed an active policy towards European countries and United States. The principles of Khatami's detente policy were:

- Promoting of Iran relations with European countries.
- Promoting stability of Middle East region.
- Active participation of Iran in international organizations.
- Reconstructing of Iran's relations with other countries.
- Protecting of national identity and values.
- Providing peaceful environment in the world.
- Strengthening dialogue among civilizations.
- Strengthening of Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Non-Aligned Movement, and cooperation of North-South (Tajik, 2003).

Goal of *detent* was to change policy of European countries towards Iran. Detente policy had three elements including "de-containment, deterrence, and detent"(Ramezani, 2007). Khatami attempted to avoid ideological priorities because it could make troubles in the process of improving Iran relations with other countries. In addition, detent policy was response to pressers of United States' containment policy. Detente policy caused European countries to change their policy towards Iran; they tried to convince United States to change its offensive policy. Changing in European attitudes toward Iran strengthened Iran's position and power in the region and in result caused success of the Eighth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference. Session of "Dignity, Dialogue, and Participation", held in Tehran, from 9 to 11 December 1997, in which Islamic countries declared that they would attempt to solve global crisis by cooperation of other countries of the world.

Different centers of power in Iran made reforms difficult in both foreign and internal affairs. Khatami's goal in political reforms was to reduce ideological character of Iran government and strengthen democracy. As a result, he insisted on local councils and formation of civil institutions. Khatami tried to create balance of power between authority of president, parliament (Majlis), local councils and religious institutions. Encouraging independent media from government was another element in process of political reforms.

Detent policy was not able to make European countries and United States to trust Iran peaceful goals in nuclear program. Nuclear facilities of Iran were challenging issue in relations of Iran and European countries. United States and European countries opposed nuclear programs of Iran because:

- They believed that peaceful intentions that Iranian officials insisted on them were not real goals of Iran and government of Iran was going to produce nuclear weapons.
- Close geographical distance of Iran to Europe made Europeans to suppose nuclear Iran as great threat to their security.
- European's experience of nuclear terror during the Cold War was another reason. They were afraid of experiencing the same circumstances by nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

- Nuclear error was another reason. European believed that keeping safe nuclear arsenals needed high technology facilities that Iran did not have it.
- Events of September the 11th spread fear throughout the Europe. They were afraid that spread of nuclear weapons would enable terrorists to use nuclear weapons.
- European countries argued that Iran's achievements in nuclear technology would encourage other countries in the region to get same achievements.
- European countries did not trust Iran. They were concerned that nuclear Iran would be able to destabilize transferring of oil from Persian Gulf to Europe.
- European countries argued that violation of Iran from NPT could destroy it; because North Korea, Pakistan, and India already violated NPT and violation of another country could cause destroy of NPT (Jafari, 2004). Khatami endeavored to convince European countries that Iran was not trying to produce nuclear weapons but following peaceful policy in nuclear case. So Iran followed the policy that had two elements including:

- Negotiation with European Union.
- Cooperation with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)(Baeidi, 2005).

Khatami's goal was not to cut negotiations with European countries on nuclear programs of Iran. But more important for Iran, was to avoid impact of domestic problems in process of negotiations. Iran faced many social and political problems in domestic issues; so, Iran tried not to lose the negotiations with European countries. In other word, Iran recognized that cannot be the winner of the negotiations but tried not to be the looser too.

Human rights in Iran were also the challenging issues in relationships of Iran and European countries and United States. Mr. Khatami tried to solve the human rights problem by insisting on justice, freedom of speeches and political developments in Iran but the main problem between Iran and European countries and United States remained because Islamic Republic of Iran was following the Islamic principles in human right issues that were not possible for president to change them. The Constitution of Iran have declared that all social, penal, fiscal, economic, administrative, military, and political laws and regularities in Islamic Republic of Iran have to be based on Islamic principles (Constitution). European countries focused on social problems of women in Iran and wanted Iran to change its policy on women issues. They argued that there was segregation against women in favor of men. Other issues that European countries Stressed on them were torturing, freedom of speech and media, minority rights, and children rights (UN, 2000).

6. Presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won the presidency election in 2005. His slogans showed differences in his priorities of foreign and domestic policy compared with the two ex-presidents of Iran. During his presidency, Iran's foreign policy was flashback to principles and values of early years of Islamic Republic of Iran. Ahmadinejad criticizes the status-qua of international system and insists that it is not proper and have to be changed. In his speech on 10th October 2009; he declared that "Islamic revolution of Iran will never withdraw from goals of Islamic Revolution of Iran and will respond to schemes of West and East" (Ahmadinejad, 30 Apr 2008); in other word, he brought the hostility of Iran with the West and the East in center of Iranian policy again. The mentioned attitude indicates deep differences in foreign policy of Iran during presidency of Ahmadinejad and pragmatic and reformist approaches of the two ex-presidents of Iran. Elements of Iranian foreign policy during presidency of Ahmadinejad are:

- Ignoring of international organizations.
- Hostile policy against Israel.
- Criticizing great powers for their interventionist policies.
- Criticizing regularities on nuclear weapons.
- Criticizing the ways of relationship between the North-South countries (Mowlana & Mohammadi, 2008).

Ahmadinejad stressed that international organizations were tools of United States and Soviet Union during Cold War and collapse of Soviet Union has not changed the nature of the international system. They are the tools that United States uses on behalf of its own interests. The center of his critic lays on structure of Security Council in the United Nations with veto right of the great powers including United States, Russia, England, France and China. Intervention of the great powers is the subject that Ahmadinejad calls as segregation that has to be vanished. He asserted in many speeches that national interest is not acceptable justification for interventionist policy and they should not intervene in domestic issues of other countries. He criticizes human rights because of its selective and instrumental application. He believes that human right is another tool for putting pressure on countries that are against United States. He asserted that great powers don not pay attention to human dignity and decide about destiny of different regions of the world just on the basis of their own interests.

Israel has been viewed as enemy of Iran since Islamic Revolution. But among Iranian presidents after Islamic Revolution; Ahmadinejad dealt with Israel more radically and asserted that Israel has been cause of crises in the region and insists on demolishing of the Israeli regime. He stated that Imam Khomeini “ordered destroying of Israel... destroying of Israel is an attainable goal” and the great powers have created Zionist regime as a tool to dominate countries and people in the Middle East (Ahmadinejad, 26 Oct 2005).

In following, he declared that Iran would continue its nuclear programs and would never limit himself to any unjust regularities (Ahmadinejad, 25 Sep 2009). He declared that the great powers don't have the right of deciding about Iran's nuclear programs. Security Council is under influence of its permanent members and is making wrong decisions; the decisions which Iran will not accept them. Nuclear energy is un-disputable right of Iran (Ahmadinejad, 11 Feb 2008). Ahmadinejad added that “United States and some European countries are trying to destabilize security of Iran because Iran does not accept unjust and unilateral system” (Ahmadinejad, 20 Apr 2009). These statements show his policy about United States and some European countries such as England and France which are allies of the United States. Ahmadinejad has put the mentioned countries in the position that Iran had done in early years of Islamic Revolution.

He criticizes the ways of relationship between rich and poor countries that is called relations of North-South. He declared that the “world needs great developments in favor of all nations and peoples” (Ahmadinejad, 25 Sep 2009). He emphasized that the unfair regularities between the rich-poor countries have to be changed and Iran will stand against it. Therefore, goals of foreign policy during presidency of Ahmadinejad are demolishing of Israel, accomplishing nuclear programs for peaceful purposes, unity of Islam world, and unity against imperialism. These ideas show Iran flashback to Ideological assumptions of foreign policy.

7. Conclusion

Foreign policy of Iran has its roots in Islamic assumptions. Some changes in priorities of foreign policy happened in different presidencies but the nature of goals has not changed. Except first year in Prime-ministry of Bazargan (1979-1980) that realistic approach was followed by government of Iran; Iranian politicians have followed ideological approach in foreign policy until presidency of Hashemi Rafsanjani. Ideological approach caused isolation of Iran in international society. However, Rafsanjani realized that Iran needed to reconstruct its economic conditions of post-war period and reconstruction was not possible without having relations with international society. Thus, he followed pragmatic approach to improve Iran's relations with other countries. Rafsanjani tried to invite European investments and solve the problems of Iran with European countries. Khatami followed the same policy but with some changes in political aspects. He pursued reformist approach and policy of detente and dialogue among civilizations in order to improve political relations of Iran with European countries and even with United States. But this process erupted by presidency of Ahmadinejad. He persisted on ideological approach of first years of Iranian Islamic Revolution and the needs of international political system for change.

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