Mehdi Mozaffari

ISLAMIST POLICY

I
Iranian *Ideological* Foreign Policy

II
Bin Laden's Foreign Policy
Paths of Amity and Enmity

Islamism and Radicalisation – *the Denmark School*

The ambition of the Denmark School is to remedy the fragmentation between different fields of research in Islamism. The Denmark School wants to explore the phenomena of 'Islamism' in its different manifestations and to highlight the mechanisms of radicalisation processes among Muslim youth in Europe. One of the innovative approaches is the linkage between 'soft security' and 'hard security'. While other projects mainly focus on terrorism, this project first of all focuses on Islamism. The identification of Islamism requires a distinction between three possible phases: 1) ideology, 2) movements and 3) political regimes.

The study of Islamism in international relations is usually limited to treating only one aspect of Islamism as a transnational actor, namely terrorism and the corresponding anti-terror measures. But Islamist ambitions and strategies are expressed through a number of other means, such as foreign policy, boycotts, crises, strategic alliances and perhaps even the acquisition of WMD. These must be mapped in order to provide an empirical basis for studying contemporary Islamist world views and conceptions of international relations.

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This fascicle contains two papers which are independent of each other and have been written at two different periods of time. The first one, *Iranian Ideological Foreign Policy,* is a new version of the paper that I submitted at the ISA convention in San Francisco (March 26-29, 2008). The second one, *Bin Laden's Foreign Policy*, is my paper from the ISA convention in New York City (February 14-18, 2009).

Mehdi Mozaffari

I

IRANIAN *IDEOLOGICAL* FOREIGN POLICY

IRANIAN *IDEOLOGICAL* FOREIGN POLICY

Mehdi Mozaffari, *Aarhus University, Denmark*

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Iran is the world's first power
President Ahmadinejad
Speech, February 28, 2008

The key issue with Iran is whether
it sees itself as a cause *or as a* nation
Henry Kissinger
Der Spiegel, 8/2 – February18, 2008

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The impact of ideology on foreign policy is generally acknowledged by scholars. That which is disputed concerns the modality and degree of ideological influence on the formulation and execution of foreign policy.

According to Goldstein and Keohane, three types of beliefs shape the outcome of foreign policy: worldviews, principled beliefs and causal beliefs. Worldviews are embedded in the symbolism of a culture and deeply affect modes of thought and discourse. They are not purely normative, since they include views regarding cosmology and ontology as well as ethics. Principled beliefs consist of normative ideas specifying the criteria for distinguishing right from wrong and just from unjust. Causal beliefs are beliefs about cause-effect relationships. Such causal beliefs provide guides for individuals on how to achieve their objectives.[1] In other words, we find the same elements in Thompson and Macridis, who opt for a similar point of view when they note that 'the term ideology applies not only to the manner in which objectives are shaped, but also to how given objectives will be pursued'.[2]

Inspired by Friedrich and Brzezinski[3], Walter Carlsnaes suggests that, 'ideology performs diverse functions. We may distinguish a cognitive function, serving as an 'analytical prism', and a normative function, providing specific policy prescriptions, a "guide to action"'.[4] The general functions of ideology are legitimizing the regime and justifying or rationalizing shifts in policy. More specifically, Barry Farrell draws a connection between the degrees of the impact of ideology on the nature of political regimes. He posits that ideology "in all probability plays a more important role in influencing the foreign policies of closed societies than it does open societies".[5] Based on this proposition, I presume that ideology plays a more important role in totalitarian regimes than in non-totalitarian closed regimes. This is because the legitimacy of totalitarian regimes is founded on ideology.

Marxism, especially in its Marxist-Leninist version, is often accused of overlooking the impact of ideology on international relations, foreign policy in particular, considering ideology a 'false conscience'. However, historical experience has very clearly demonstrated that when Marxism-Leninism is realized in state form, the

communist states become strongly ideological. Similar criticism is addressed to Neo-realism, which defines 'power' as an emanation of material capacities, especially in its military form. Departing from a systemic view, Alexander Wendt contests this approach by emphasizing that 'he meaning of power and the content of interests are largely a function of ideas'[6], and 'interests are themselves cognitions of ideas'.[7] As long as Neo-realism does not consider 'foreign policy' to be 'international politics'[8], however, one would tend to conclude that scholars such as Kenneth Waltz will not reject that ideas, culture and religion can influence the formulation and execution of the foreign policy of states.

On the issue of the tension between 'ideas' and 'interests', it appears as though there is room between Marxism and Neo-realism on the one side and constructivism on the other. This median, or conciliatory, position is defended by Goldstein and Keohane as well as by Carlsnaes. Referring to Max Weber, Goldstein and Keohane insist that they do not argue that ideas *rather than* interests (as interpreted by human beings) move the world. Instead, they suggest that ideas *as well as* interests have causal weight in explanations of human action.[9] By applying the Weberian position to the context of foreign policy, Carlsnaes also arrives at the conclusion that 'the ideological nature of foreign policy is often contrasted with the notion of interest … but ... these are not mutually exclusive but have, on the contrary, coexisted over the years, albeit with a tendency for agencies of interests to contain the agencies of ideology'[10] The present study is based on this interactional approach between ideas and interests. We assume that in the case of Iran, 1) ideology occupies a hegemonic place in the formulation of Iranian foreign policy, 2) tension between 'ideology' and the 'interest' of the *regime* (as distinct from *national* interest) is low, 3) in a time of crisis, the Supreme Leader is the only regulative instance to re-establish an equilibrium between ideology and interest and 4) only when the regime faces great danger, the question of 'interest/survival' comes to the surface as long as the threat occurs.

Islamist Ideology and Foreign Policy

Ever since the Islamist revolution of February 1979, the Iranian Regime has remained strongly ideological. This ideology is deeply rooted in religious convictions with numerous mythical ramifications in which symbolism plays a crucial role.

Concerning the impact of ideology on IFP, my argument is that a number of very important decisions and actions by the Iranian authorities can only be understood when placed in the textual/discursive context. I am not saying, as Jacques Derrida does, that 'there is nothing outside the text'.[11] Instead, I assert that 'texts possess significant explanatory capabilities'. In other words, taking the foundational discourse of the Iranian regime as the point of departure is expected to elucidate – in a more comprehensive manner – the real meaning of its foreign policy. For instance, how to explain the extraordinarily vehement hostility of the Iranian regime towards Israel? Iran's national interest does not explain this attitude. On the contrary, Iran has fallen victim to Arab attacks and invasions in the past and hence might consider Israel a potential ally. There is absolutely no national dispute between Israel and Iran. Iran is a non-Arab country which has never been at war with Israel and Israel has never been a

threat to Iranian territorial integrity, neither to Iran as a country or as a nation. Therefore, instead of explaining Iranian anti-Israel policy in terms of 'national interest', which does not provide a rational explanation, we must therefore search for the explanation within the Iranian ideological foundation that shapes the worldviews of the Iranian regime. Foreign policy reflects the application of that worldview to the real world.

The Iranian ideological corpus is explicitly formulated in the Constitution, which stands as the foundational discourse of the regime. The Iranian constitution offers an excellent tool for studying the most fundamental characteristics of the Iranian Islamist Regime (hereafter 'the Regime'). In this document, we find the Regime's worldviews, principled beliefs and causal beliefs all in the same document. What is the extent of the validity of the Iranian constitution? This question is legitimate on the grounds that those countries in Middle East which have a constitution, stipulating principles such as human rights and free elections, usually violate these same principles. Furthermore, Iranians still remember the non-application – and outright violation – of the constitution under the Shah's regime. The current situation is quite different for one simple reason. The constitution of 1906, which remained formally valid until the Revolution of 1979, directly delegitimized the absolutism of the Shah, and he therefore systematically violated it. There is also the fact that the repetitive demands of various opposition groups in the period prior to the 1979 were precisely the application of the constitution (ejrây-e qânûn-e Asâsi). To day, the constitution, based on an ideologized religion, is fully applied, allocating legitimacy to the religious elites and their leadership as well as providing them with real power. The groups in power have therefore acquired a direct interest to implement the constitution. Violating or marginalizing the percepts of the constitution would amount to political suicide. In the Islamist constitution, any and every right is in accordance with religion. Judgment on such questions is allocated to the appointed religious authorities. It is also worth noting that the constitution itself defines its own role as follows:

The mission of the Constitution is to realize the ideological objectives of the Revolution (Nehzat) and to create conditions conducive to the development of man in accordance with the noble and universal values of Islam.[12]

This discourse, embodied in the Constitution, has been expressed and emphasized since 1979 in numerous and often repetitive ways, either via various declarations issued by the founding father of the current regime – Ayatollah Khomeini – or in the speeches and declarations made by his successor, Ayatollah Khamenei, and other prominent figures in the Iranian government (Rafsanjani, Khatami, Ahmadinejad), who have served as president. In parallel with these personalities, the ideological discourse is emphasized almost daily by imams in the mosques and in Friday prayer, the commanders of the Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran), as well as other Iranian authorities.

Pillars of Iranian Foreign Policy

The worldview of the Islamic Republic of Iran toward the outside world rests on four pillars:

The first pillar relies on its *revolutionary character*. In the words of Lenin, every revolution has an *ideology* or 'a revolutionary theory. The great revolutions have a *total ideology, a worldview* (e.g. Marxism, Nazism and Islamism), expressing the c*ore beliefs* of the revolution and providing answers to every essential question 'about cosmology and ontology as well as about ethics'.[13]

A revolutionary regime adopts a revolutionary foreign policy that is 1) revisionist, 2) active and threatening, and 3) strongly value-oriented. The great revolutions (e.g. the French, Bolshevik or Islamist) challenge the entire international system, the world *status quo*. Their aims include a complete transformation of the existing system, replacing it with an entirely different system. Khomeini's Islamist revolution challenged both the USSR (challenger) and the USA (challenged). The revolutionary slogan on foreign affairs was: *'Neither Eastern nor Western' (Na Sharqi, Na Gharbi)*.

Revolutions also embark upon an active revolutionary foreign policy, because the revolution itself is a highly dynamic and surprising enterprise. Its explosion surprises even the revolutionary leaders. Since a revolution constitutes a great challenge, the initiative belongs to the challenger, at least in the early stages. The challenge will continue until it meets resistance from those who are opposed to the revolution.

The foreign policy of Islamist Iran is also disenchanted and revisionist, because the structure of the current international system is perceived to be unjust and repressive. The existing corrupt rule must therefore be replaced by a true Islamic order, which is (by definition) just, fair and virtuous. Until the realization of the 'sublime universe', the world remains structurally divided into two antagonist spheres: the world of good and the world of evil – light and darkness. There is the Party of God (*Hibzollah*) on the one side and the Great Satan (*Shaytân-e Bozorg*) on the other. Compromise between the two is impossible. The struggle is constant until the first eliminates the second.

The second pillar of the Islamist worldview is shaped by its *totalitarian character*, as expressly stipulated in article 4:

All civil, penal, financial, economic, administrative, cultural, military, political, and other laws and regulations must be based on Islamic criteria. This principle applies absolutely and generally to all articles of the Constitution as well as to all other laws and regulations, and the *fuqahâ´* [religious jurists] of the Guardian Council are judges in this matter.[14]

The totalitarian character of the Regime is reinforced by the institutionalization of an entirely religious leadership that commands total power – (article 110, the longest article of the Constitution).[15]

Ideology plays a predominant role in totalitarian regimes by shaping the perception of the world and designing operations in terms of ideological goals. Restrictions to this are accepted only reluctantly.[16]

Another totalitarian characteristic is the obsession with the presence of irreducible *enemies*, who are ceaselessly hatching conspiracies. To them, the situation is never normal; the state of emergency is the rule. They deliberately give the impression that they are constantly facing important threats requiring mobilization and readiness. They justify their actions and decisions by the state of exception. For the same reason, totalitarian regimes must create *'crises'* or maintain existing crises. Normality, appeasement and tranquility are the worst enemies of such regimes. Creating artificial and unnecessary crises therefore becomes a mode of government which is the case of the Iranian regime.

The hostage-taking in the US embassy in Tehran (November 4, 1979) was a purely provoked crisis. The prolongation of the war with Iraq prior to the Iraqi proposal for ceasefire in 1982 was also deliberate. The Rushdie Affair in 1989 and the vehemently hostile posturing towards Israel are solely motivated by the need to have an enemy. Conducting an enigmatic and thoroughly ambivalent policy in the very delicate and highly dangerous area of nuclear energy once again demonstrates the almost vital need of the Regime for crisis.

The third pillar is the *Non-Westphalian view*. Ideologically, the Iranian regime is *Islamist*-based on the notion of the *Islamic Umma (Ummat-e Islâm)* as opposed to the *Iranian Nation (Mellat-e Iran).*[17] The Iranian leaders rarely talk about 'Iran' in neutral terms; instead, they usually tie the name of the country to Islam, talking of 'Iran-e Islami', 'Mihan-e Islami', 'Vatan-e Islami' (*Islamic Land*), and so on. The non-Westphalian character of the Iranian regime is actually *pre-Westphalian*, which has been inherent to the classic Islamic state. As Professor Ann K.S. Lambton explains: 'The basis of the Islamic state was ideological, not political, territorial or ethnical and the primary purpose of government was to defend and protect the faith, not the state'.[18] According to the current Iranian Constitution, the Regime is precisely founded on the *faith* in Islam alone, not on the *nation.* The Preamble stipulates that:

In the view of Islam, government does not derive from the interests of a class, nor does it serve the domination of an individual or a group. Rather, it represents the fulfillment of a political ideal of a people who bear a common faith and common outlook…Our nation … now intends to establish an ideal and model society on the basis of Islam.[19]

The goal is to 'strive with other Islamic and popular movements to prepare the way for the formation of a single world community (*Ummat-e Whâed-e Jahani*)'.[20]

To achieve the goal of the 'single world community', the Leader/ Rahbar has an 'Ideological Army' (*Artesh-e Maktabi*) at his disposal. This is perhaps the only army (regular army and the Revolutionary Guards Corps) in the world with two duties: 1) 'guarding and preserving the frontiers of the country; and 2) fulfilling the ideological mission of jihad in God's way; that is, extending the sovereignty of God's law throughout the world'. In bald terms, military jihad is a constitutional duty of the Iranian army. The constitution stipulates that:

In the formation and equipping of the country's defence forces, due attention must be paid to faith and ideology as the basic criteria. Accordingly, the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps are to be organized in

conformity with this goal, and they will be responsible not only for guarding and preserving the frontiers of the country, but also for fulfilling the ideological mission of jihad in God's way; that is, extending the sovereignty of God's law throughout the world (this is in accordance with the verse from the Koran: *"Prepare against them whatever force you are able to muster, and strings of horses, striking fear into the enemy of God and your enemy, and others besides them"* [8:60]).[21]

On February 14, 1989, when Khomeini issued a death decree 'fatwa' on Salman Rushdie, many were shocked and found it difficult to understand how a (religious) leader can condemn a citizen of another state living in another country, all without the benefit of trial or justice. That which was incomprehensible to many was quite normal and even necessary to Khomeini and his followers. According to their convictions, Islamic law is universal and ought to be applied throughout the world; an indication of the *dhimmification* of the non-Muslim world and a manifestation of the imperialist character of the IFP line.

The fourth pillar of the Islamist worldview is based on its *imperialist ambition*. The imperialist ambition is expressed in two ways: *reactive* and *active*. The reactive character of Islamist imperialism is equivalent to the concept of 'hegemony' as described by Laclau and Mouffe. In their analysis, hegemony is not the majestic unfolding of an identity; rather, it represents a response to a crisis.[22] In this sense, Islamist hegemonic ambitions express the profound frustration of a *longue durée* Islamic stagnation. Islamists assign the responsibility for this to Western imperialists and their Muslim allies who are in power in Muslim countries. Keeping this perspective in mind, the zealous efforts by the Iranian government to acquire nuclear arms become fully understandable. It is a fact that Iran as a country possesses an important number of positive factors, including its geographical location between the Caucasus and Central Asia to the north and the Persian Gulf to the south, between Asia to the east and the Middle East to the west; it has a population of 66 million people (July 2007 estimate), most of which are quite young; and the country possesses massive reserves of gas (the second-largest gas reserves in the world/*The World Factbook/CIA*) and oil (third-largest in the world/*The World Factbook/CIA*). Moreover, Iran is a powerful actor in the region, regardless of who is in power. Iran, especially since Ahmadinejad became president, has also gained significant popularity in the Arab countries. This popularity can rightly be interpreted as Iranian *soft power*. Benefitting from these favorable factors, Islamist Iran is entitled to view itself as the coming of the new Muslim Super Power. President Ahmadinejad already pretends that Iran is 'the world's first power'[23] At the same time, Iranian ambitions meet serious obstacles. These obstacles are not only in the form of other Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Egypt, which nourish similar dreams; Iran also faces difficulties of another nature. Firstly, Iran is a Shi'a country, while the huge majority of Muslims are Sunni (roughly 90 percent). However, there has been a Shi'a empire – the Fatimids (973-1171) – in Islamic history. But the Fatimids were only recognized as a Shi'a dynasty of the Ismaíli sect, whereas the Sunni caliphate of Abbasids (750-1258) was regarded as the Islamic empire. Shi'a Iran can possibly become the new center of a Shi'a empire at some point in the future, but not the center of an Islamic empire. To sweep away this serious obstacle, Iranian Islamist leaders tried to tone

down their Shi'a credentials from the first days of the revolution. Khomeini systematically addressed all Muslims (excepted in particular ceremonies and events directly related to Shi'a), and he considered himself the supreme leader of the Islamic world. It was in this capacity that he delivered his death decree 'fatwa' against Salman Rushdi.[24] In the post-Khomeini era, Khamenei, the current leader, argues that it is not Iran which is seeking war with Sunni Islam, but the United States that is seeking war with the entire Islamic world.[25] In a speech in Qom on 8 January 2007, he emphasizes, 'The United States aims to portray the Islamic Republic of Iran as a Shi'a republic and try to set it against the great Sunni community. This is a very dangerous plot which their politicians are currently to carry out.' Animated by the same ecumenical spirit, the Iranian government tried to build a bridge between Shi'a and Sunni believers by organizing inter-faith gatherings in Iran. The most recent gathering of this kind took place in Tehran and involved representatives from 25 Islamic countries (10 October 2007).

Despite these efforts, the problem remains almost unchanged. At the Istanbul Conference on aid to Iraq (November 2008), a dispute arose between the Iranian foreign minister and his colleague, Prince Saud al-Faisal. While the former referred to 'Islamic unity', his Saudi counterpart replied vigorously by asking 'why the Islamic Republic of Iran limits itself to one sect [the Shi'a]?'[26] In addition to all of these disputes, Shi'a Iran faces a major obstacle: in the view of Muslims, Iran does not really represent a prestigious *Islamic* land. Tehran is a new and trivial city; it is nowhere near as prestigious as cities such as Mecca, Medina, Bagdad, Damascus, Cairo or Istanbul. The two holy Islamic cities in Iran – Mashhad and Qum – are only holy in the eyes of Shi'a believers. Conscious of these handicaps, Khomeini and his successor have made considerable efforts to seize control over some of the Islamic holy centers recognized unanimously by all Muslims. During the first years of the Revolution, Khomeini's attention was primarily oriented towards Mecca and Medina, the most sacred of Islamic cities. To reach this objective, he tried to destabilize the Saudi royal family's power by supporting unrest in the Kingdom, for instance in connection with the military occupation of the holy mosque of Mecca (20 November 1979) by Saudi Islamists and by provoking bloody manifestations during the hajj pilgrimages. Together with various other terrorist actions allegedly perpetrated by Iran (e.g. the attack on Khobar, the US military base in Saudi Arabia on 25 June 1996), these events created difficulties for the Saudi kingdom but did not bring it down. Parallel to these initiatives, Khomeini developed a Plan B consisting of the conquest of Jerusalem. After Khomeini's death (June 1989), Plan B became the master plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran. As stated earlier, the 'liberation' of Palestine has always been one of the Islamic goals of Revolutionary Iran. This trend has continued and was reinforced after 1990. During the eight years of war with Iraq, Khomeini attempted to justify the deliberate prolongation of the war by declaring that the 'the route to Jerusalem goes through Karbala' (a holy city in Iraq). Furthermore, Iran is the only country with a 'Jerusalem Day' (*Rouz-e Quds*, the last Friday of the month of Ramadan), and also the only country that has established a Jerusalem Army (*Sepah-e Quds*). To this we must add the indefensible and all-round Iranian assistance to the Hamas with leaders such as Ismail Haniyeh and Khalid Mashal, who are regular guests of honor in Iran. At the Holocaust conference in Tehran (11-12 December 2006), the repetitive and thunderous

declarations by President Ahmadinejad on the necessity of the 'wiping Israel off the map', coupled with Iranian hostility to peace negotiations with Israel, are positions, activities and policies reaffirming Islamist Iran's ambition to maintain a stranglehold on Jerusalem. In Tehran, the symbolic takeover of Jerusalem is perceived as a necessary step towards the realization of the new Islamic empire. Otherwise it is difficult to find rational reasons for this particular attachment of a country such as Iran to Palestine. Iran is not an Arab country, nor has it ever been in war or direct armed conflict with Israel. There is no clash between Israeli and Iranian national interests. On the contrary, they both have an interest in bilateral cooperation, as this could potentially render them more secure in the face of possible Arab ambitions. In contrast with common sense, the government of Ahmadinejad has deliberately reinforced the pro-Arab policies initiated under President Rafsanjani. For instance, for the first time since the creation of the Gulf Cooperation Council in 1981, an Iranian president participated in the 28th Summit meeting in Doha (3 December 2007), where he allowed himself to be photographed under the banner of the 'Arab Gulf'. Ahmadinejad's government has also addressed its demands to the Arab League, requesting compliance; this demand was politely rejected.

The same hegemonic logic explains the hitherto unshakable Iranian ambition to acquire nuclear capabilities. It is not that Iran will or can really use a nuclear device against Israel or other nuclear powers. The logic of dissuasion will prevent it from doing so. Rather, it is the prestige associated with possessing nuclear weapons that is interesting for a country with an ambition to become the center of an Islamic world power.

The reactive policy goes far beyond the borders of the Muslim world. The call of the Iranian Constitution is universal: to all the Deprived (*Mustaz´afin*) around the world, regardless of religion, race or other particulars. This call has provided Iranian foreign policy with a high degree of *solidarity* between the Regime and 'anti-Western imperialism' sentiments from throughout the world. Iranian alliance policy follows the same logic. Iran's friends represent a conglomerate of various and somehow contradictory tendencies. Most of them, countries such as Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Syria, belong to the left and extreme left and pursue an 'anti-imperialism' agenda. The extreme right wing is also among Ahmadinejad's friends, including groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, the Holocaust negationists and neo-Nazis such as David Duke, Willy Castro and Robert Faurisson.[27] All are extremists, whatever their political orientation may be.

What is particularly important here is to grasp the real reason for the anti-imperialistic discourse of the Iranian regime and other Islamists at large. The Islamist struggle against imperialism is not a principled struggle; the goal is not to put an end to imperialism as a harmful concept and as an erroneous political and economic construction. Rather, the real issue for Islamists is to *replace* Western imperialism with a new Islamic hegemony as a reminiscence of the golden age of Islamic world power.

The imperialist character of the Islamist regime also has an active side which is independent of the existing conditions of Muslims. This ambition emanates from the very ultimate goal of the Islamist revolution. According to the Constitution as well as

public declarations and the effective actions of Khomeini, Khamenei, Ahmadinejad and other influential personalities (including Rafsanjani and Khatami), the ultimate goal of the Islamist revolution is the establishment of a global Islamic government. According to the Shi'a, the united Islamic government will be realized with the reappearance of the Hidden Imam (al-Mahdi). This is the context in which the new Islamic world power in general, and the notion of Hidden Imam in particular, represent precisely the *empty signifiers* of the Shi'a Islamist doctrine that function as nodal points. In this manner, the emptiness is revealed as an important condition of possibility for its hegemonic success.[28] Such ambition appears to be utopian, but utopian ambition is not necessarily without real impact on the actions undertaken by mankind. On the contrary, utopia has motivated mankind throughout history for both bad and good: the conquest of Space, on the one hand, Gulag and Holocaust on the other. After all, utopianism is nothing but an ideological impetus to reform the international order.[29]

At the end of this part of the study, we may conclude that the four ideological pillars of Iranian foreign policy are related to each other in a positive and cohesive way without any internal, tangible tension between them. This internal cohesion renders the ideological socket stronger and protects the whole political construction from fluctuations and dangerous vibrations.

I now turn to the analysis of the Iranian decision-making process.


The Iranian Decision-Making Process

To some scholars, the nature of the political regime has a real impact on the main lines of foreign policy. As Kenneth W. Thompson and Roy C. Macridis stated almost four decades ago, 'a democratic regime pursues one type of foreign policy, an autocratic government another, a communist government a third, and a democratic socialist administration still another'.[30] I like to argue that the nature of the regime can also affect the decision-making process.

The main lines of foreign policy in liberal democratic regimes are determined by an elected government under the constant and decisive control of parliament together with public opinion. In such regimes, important changes in the orientation of foreign policy occur slowly and after intense debate and deliberation. In autocratic regimes, the autocrat – personally or as head of an oligarchy – determines the orientation of foreign policy. Unlike in liberal democratic regimes, critical change in the orientation of foreign policy happens quickly, almost overnight. That was for example the case in Egypt when President Anwar el-Sadat made a dramatic decision in 1971 by changing his country's strategic alliance with the Soviet Union, replacing it with an alliance with the United States of America. A few years later, President Sadat made another courageous decision when he surprised almost everybody by visiting Jerusalem (November 1977) and delivering a historic speech before the Knesset. Both decisions were Sadat's own personal decisions, and he paid the highest price: he was assassinated. The conduct of the late Shah of Iran offers another clear example of autocratic foreign policy, where the Shah alone decided on a broad spectrum of

important decisions, from oil production to the delimitation of Iran's borders, the choice of allied partners as well as the purchase of arms and even a nuclear industry. The views of the ministerial cabinet and parliament were purely deliberative and had no real impact on the Shah's decisions.

In contrast to both liberal democratic and autocratic regimes, totalitarian regimes cast their foreign policy in ideological terms. The leader in such regimes has almost unlimited powers, but exercising power and submission to the decisions made by the leader require ideological justification. Possibly the most important task for the bureaucracy and the huge propaganda machinery consists of providing ongoing ideological justification for the daily decisions of the leader. This is one reason why ideology occupies such a prominent place in totalitarian regimes; another is that ideology defines the road map for foreign policy. The most important decisions and actions towards the outside world are planned, justified and implemented in accordance with the ideology in power. Yet another role played by the ideology is to select and identify 'friends' and possibly inventing 'enemies'.

Figure 1: Iranian Foreign Policy
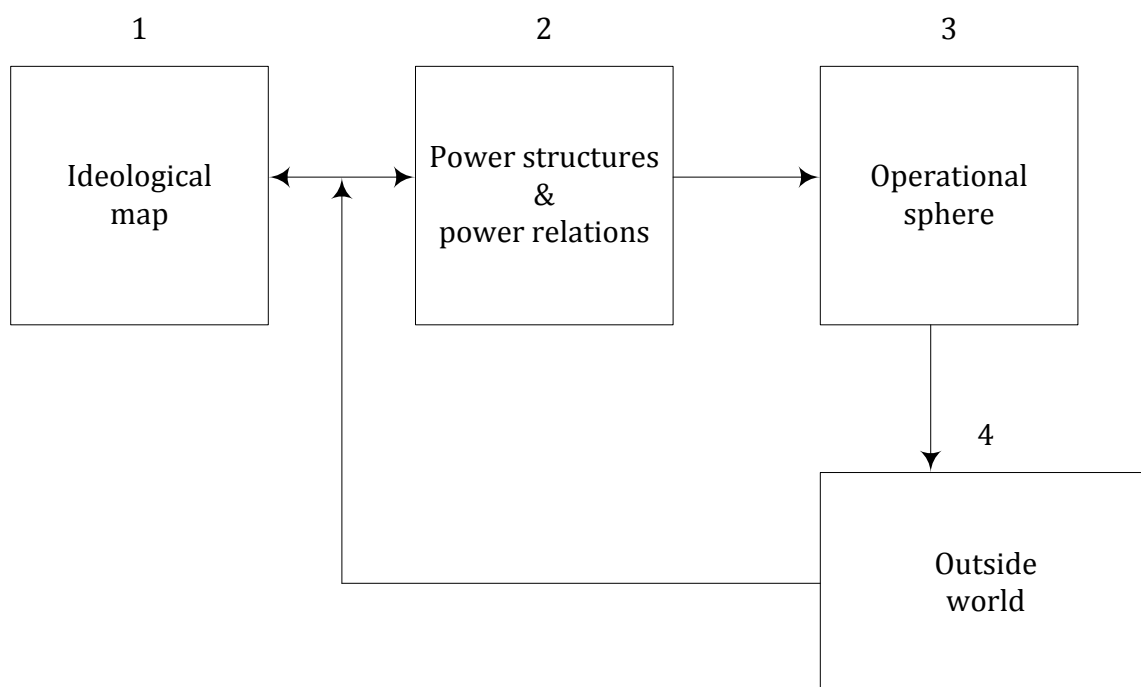
In this closed system (Figure 1), it is likely that the dislocation of ideological creed from the sphere of foreign policy becomes tangible: 1) When discord and tension within block 2 become real and profound, 2) pressure from the outside world becomes unbearable, and 3) a combination of high internal turmoil together with strong external pressure would lead to the breakdown of the whole system.

In the circuitous Iranian decision-making process (see Figure 1), the main goals are decided by Ayatollah Khamenei. All other instances fall under the auspices of the House of Leadership *(Beyt-e Rahbari)*. The department of foreign policy of the House of Leadership is headed by Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati, who served as the Minister of Foreign affairs for roughly 16 years in the 1980s and 1990s. In addition to this institution, which is functioning as the supreme arena for decision making, various other institutions are implicated in the study, analysis and elaboration of decisions. The main institutions in this category are:

* The *Supreme Council for National Security*. Its competence, composition and duties are defined in the Iranian constitution.[31] The goal of the Council is to safeguard national interests and to preserve the Islamic Revolution and the territorial integrity, and national sovereignty. The President of Republic is the Head of the Council with the participation of the Majlis' speaker and the chief judiciary as well as army commanders and two representatives nominated by the Supreme Leader. The decisions of the Council become effective after the confirmation by the Leader. Since 2003, management of Iranian atomic map figures as the most sensitive task for this Council. The former General Secretary of the Council (Ali Laijani) is now the speaker of the Majlis; Said Jalili is appointed as new General Secretary.

* The *Strategic Council for Foreign Relation* consists of former ministers (former Foreign Ministers Kamal Kharrazi and Ali Akbar Velayati, former Defense Minister, Admiral Ali Shamkhani, former Minister of Commerce Mohammad Shariatmadar, and a cleric, Mohammad H. Taremi-Rad, who had previously served as ambassador to China and Saudi Arabia). This assembly was established in 2006 by Khamenei as a polite gesture towards a number of high functionaries, who had served him impeccably for a long period and are now enjoying their leisure. That is why they are usually referred to as 'Senators', which in bureaucratic Iranian jargon means 'respected powerless'.

* The *Strategic Research Center of the Expediency Council* is chaired by Hasan Rowhani. This Center is under the direct control of Hashemi Rafsanjani, head of the Expediency Council and Chairman of the Expert Assembly (*Majless-e Khobregan*), which is entitled to designate the leader. Until Ahmadinejad's election as President, Rowhani was the chief Iranian negotiator on nuclear issues. Since then, he has become the unofficial spokesman for a pro-Rafsanjani team, which is dissatisfied with the manner in which the Ahmadinejad administration conducts foreign affairs. The Center has limited influence on foreign policy decisions.

* The *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, which is the administrative instrument of Iranian foreign policy with limited influence. The real influence of such a ministry generally depends to a great extent on the personality of the Minister. Current Minister Manouchehr Motakki is not among the most influential persons in the Islamic Republic.

* The *Majlis' Commission of Foreign Affairs*, chaired by Ala ul-Din Boroujerdi, has very limited influence on Iranian foreign policy. The Majlis deputies have the right to seek clarification from ministers. Using this mechanism, the deputies can influence foreign policy decisions, but this right has never been effectively used. The only

tangible channel remains the tribune of Majlis, which 'offers the deputies a unique opportunity to challenge presidential initiatives and policies by influencing public opinion'.[32] In a country such as Iran, however, where 'public opinion' is systematically ignored by authorities, the influence of deputies matters little. The passivity of Majlis, especially during the seventh legislature, has been so conspicuous that a website (www. Irdiplomacy.ir) administrated by Iranian diplomats serving in the Iranian foreign ministry published a long and critical article on March 13, 2008, on the inactivity of the seventh legislature Majlis in foreign policy. The article is signed by Mina Ali Islam. After the elections on March-April 2008, this legislature has been replaced by the eighth legislature.

* The *Revolutionary Guards* (Pasdaran, Basij and the Quds Army unified) under the command of General Mohammad Ali Jafari: in charge of sensitive areas: atomic and oil industries, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Russia. From September 2008, the command of Iranian forces in the Persian Gulf is also allocated to the Pasdaran.

In reviewing the Iranian governmental institutions that are dealing with questions related to Iranian foreign policy, it became clear that, due to a strong personalized decision-making system, these institutions are more and less a kind of *Think-Tank* instances rather than genuine organs having elaboration of decisions as their task.

Is Change Possible in Iranian Foreign Policy?

Since the 1979 revolution, the world has undergone dramatic changes. The Cold War has ended; the Soviet empire imploded; apartheid in South Africa has been replaced by a democratic pluralistic regime; the countries of Eastern Europe became democratic; China is opting for a capitalist economy, and so on and so forth. Despite this vast array of changes, the Iranian regime remains almost as it was under Khomeini. I am talking about the 'regime' – not 'society'. Iranian society has also been transformed: new classes have arisen, Iranian youth – female and male – is pushing for opening towards the modern world, and cultural plurality, or more correctly cultural schizophrenia, has become evident. What is truly astonishing; however, is that the Islamist 'regime' as a political and governmental organization has not changed much. It has retained its main revolutionary characteristics, its revolutionary institutions and its revolutionary ambitions. The leader is still the leader of the *revolution* in addition to being the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the leader of the Islamic Umma. One of his websites goes so far as to declare him to be the leader of the world. The *revolutionary* tribunals are still functioning, the parliament has remained under Islamist control, and the *Revolutionary* Guards are today much more powerful than ever before. On foreign policy, the main goals of the Revolution have remained unchanged.

Has this revolution any *thermidor*? In 1999, using a non-essentialist approach, I published an article in *International Relations*/UK[33] in which I outlined a number of evolutionary trends and distinct phases in Iranian foreign policy. Accordingly, I analyzed the IFP after dividing it into three different phases: Revolutionary (1979-1988/9), *Thermidorian*/Pragmatic (1989-1997) and Enigmatic (1997-2005). In retrospect, I observe that the above phases reflected changes in *style* rather in

substance. 'Style' is of course important in foreign policy; it is about sending signals – positive or negative, friendly or unfriendly – to the external and internal world. Under the presidency of Rafsanjani, it is a fact that the revolutionary atmosphere was tempered and the country began to return to normality. Parallel with the 'normalization' track, state-sponsored terrorist actions continued at home and abroad (e.g. the assassination of leaders of Iranian Kurdistan in Berlin in 1989 and the assassination of Chapour Bakhtiar, the last prime minister before the Revolution, in Paris in 1991). Islamist Iran also continued to support various revolutionary and insurrectionary movements. It is also correct that President Khatami had used a different language and sent signals that could be interpreted as 'dialogue', 'rapprochement' and 'moderation'. At the same time, however, the *revolutionary* machinery continued its work, ignoring the friendly face and celebrated 'smile' of the President. Any of these elements would have produced tangible change in Iranian foreign policy. Under his presidency, Iran continued to support extremist movements in the Middle East (Hamas and Hizbollah in particular) and pursued its clandestine nuclear program. The positive elements were the beginnings of a *détente* with Saudi Arabia and the Arab world at large, which was a slight violation of Khomeini's Last Will. Nevertheless, the revolutionary repression continued as usual and even gained in intensity and brutality (the assassination of writers, fierce crackdowns on student unrest, and so on). President Ahmadinejad, Khatami's successor, is a very different type of person prone to harsh rhetoric and undiplomatic behavior. Adopting Mahdism[34] as his doctrine and conducting an 'apocalyptic foreign policy'[35], he claims to have returned to the authentic sources of Khomeini's revolution where 'building a model society and introducing *Islamic Revolution* are our nation's missions'.[36] What President Ahmadinejad is saying here is nothing but a repetition of what his mentor, Ayatollah Khamenei, the leader of revolution, has repeatedly emphasized. In his speech in Yazd (central Iran), for instance, he forcefully reaffirms that '[t]o day, the advanced socio-political doctrine of Islam, presented by the Islamic Republic of Iran, stands as a model and guide for the nations which keep thirst for spirituality and salvation' (5 January 2008). Two questions then arise: first, is it realistic to expect Islamist Iran to distance itself significantly from its ideological roots in a bid to becoming a 'normal' state? Second, under what conditions will the Islamist regime revise its revolutionary, revisionist, totalitarian and non-Westphalian foreign policy?

These questions lead us consider the relational landmarks of the Islamist regime. The fact is that this regime, which is ideologically and institutionally monistic, is not monolithic *politically* speaking. In fact, there are various voices, tendencies and forces within the Iranian political system that are competing for power sharing. Roughly, there are those who refer to themselves as *Fundamentalists (Usul Garâyân)* and those who refer to themselves *Reformists (Eslâh Talabân)*. Their differences, however, are limited to the *functionality* of the entire system. By 'functionality', I mean all of the practical aspects related to the exercising of power or, in Goldstein and Keohane's vocabulary, the struggle is about the 'causal beliefs' and the modality of implementation of the 'road map' rather than the substance of politics. The dispute is about finding the appropriate policy to attain the goals. More specifically, the fundamentalists (the hawks) favor a more rigorous policy, while the reformists (the doves) want to introduce a degree of moderation in the exercise of power. Otherwise,

all agree on fundamental aspects of the regime as well as the ideological goals to be pursed. Even if some voices are heard among reformists in favor of a more rational, let us say less ideological foreign policy, these voices are not strong enough to help modify the main course of policy. Parallel to the internal antagonism between fundamentalists and reformists, there is possibly a more important antagonism that may have considerable consequences in the future: the unprecedented success of Pasdaran in winning political power. Some scholars have termed Pasdaran's move a 'Revolutionary Guard's Creeping Coup d'état'.[37]

It is true that the Islamist regime has followed a political line since the revolution that conforms to its proclaimed ideological principles and goals. This line is characterized more by confrontation than by accommodation. However, we can observe that the regime has been obliged on some occasions to demonstrate some degree of flexibility and accepting an outcome that was not the solution the regime preferred. Let us briefly mention three cases in this connection. The first case is the Iran-Iraq war. In 1988, Saddam Hussein's attack on Iran was celebrated by Khomeini as a 'divine gift/*ne'mat-e elâhi'*. Ultimately, however, due to the extreme fatigue of the population and lack of adequate armaments, the same divine gift turned out to be 'recipient of poison/*jâm-e zahr'* that Khomeini had to take in accepting UN resolution 598 of July 20, 1987, and the subsequent ceasefire with Iraq. This was not a unique case. We saw a similar scenario in the Rushdie affair. Iranian authorities firmly rejected granting any concession in connection with Khomeini's death decree. Faced with a unanimous decision of the then-twelve members of the EU to recall their ambassadors from Tehran, the Iranian foreign minister declared that Iranian *government* will not make any attempts on Rushdie's life. Another example is the suspension of the uranium enrichment program in 2003. According to a US Intelligence Council report from November 2007, there are indications that Iran suspended the military aspect of its nuclear program in 2003. If this information can be verified, the year 2003 clearly indicates Iranian attempts at following a preventive policy in a bid to avoid being placed under unbearable pressure – perhaps even military aggression – by USA as the consequence of the first year of military success during the invasion of Iraq.

In all three cases, *pressure* was the real cause of the change in Iranian attitudes. In the first case, exhausted resources forced Khomeini to end the war with Iraq. In other two cases, fear and international pressure were the decisive factors for the change to Iranian policy.

It is also worth noting that the Islamic Republic of Iran has actually pursued prudent policy in some geographical areas and towards a few specific states. This is the case in Caucasia, where Iran did not support the Muslim rebellion in Chechnya. Similarly, in the Armenia-Azerbaijan dispute over Nagorno-Karabagh, it adopted more of a pro-Armenia policy than a pro-Azeri policy, despite the fact that Azerbaijan is a Muslim country. Nor has Iran supported Islamist movements in Central Asia. Different factors explain this 'anomaly'. Iran's close relation with Russia, Azerbaijan's ambitions concerning the Iranian provinces of Azerbaijan, and the anti-Shi'a character of pro-Wahhabi Islamist movements are among elements explaining specific Iranian policy on these issues.

To assessing possible scenarios for a gradual substantial change in IFP, the following factors will be taken into consideration. The change will happen when serious contradictions arise between the ideological creeds and tangible material interests of the current rulers. This has not yet happened. On the contrary, the election of Ahmadinejad to the presidency has served to further radicalize the ideological character of the Islamist regime. At the same time, however, the rise of new radicalism and the proclaimed return to Khomeinism has provoked internal divisions and new political fragmentation. Faced with Ahmadinejad's sharp rhetoric and radicalization of foreign policy in general, reformists had no other choice than to harden their criticism, albeit without directly challenging the Supreme Leadership or proposing an alternative program for a different foreign policy; or for that matter for a different general policy. This means that further radicalization of policy by Ayatollah Khamenei and his hitherto protégé, Ahmadinejad, will probably open the political scene to more confrontations, resulting in a deeper and more direct conflict that may ultimately produce change in IFP. For example, suspending their uranium enrichment program or entering into direct dialogue with the USA could be major changes in IFP. A resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state next to the state of Israel will certainly deprive Iran of this conflict as a reason for supporting extremism, and it would also be a serious below to their dream of establishing Jerusalem as the metropolis of an Islamic world empire. If the economic sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council on Iran[38] combined with US and EU sanctions reach a level that creates an economic crisis in Iran, this will provoke political and social unrest to which the government will have to respond; either by draconian measures such as the disruption of oil transport from the Persian Gulf region, accompanied by imposing strict controls on Iranian citizens, or it may choose a moderate and flexible line by joining the international community. In either case, a new situation will arise requiring a new policy. What makes this scenario plausible is that the two wealthiest social categories in Iran are the Bazaar aristocracy and the Pasdaran Generals. The first group, having accumulated massive wealth after the revolution, stands as the civilian guardians of the revolution. Precisely because of its wealth, some of which is invested in Dubai and elsewhere, it is vulnerable to economic sanctions. The same argument is valid for the Pasdaran, which has *de facto* control over oil revenues and militarized industry as well as the nuclear complex. To this point, we must add the age and social status of the Generals. The Pasdaran Generals who participated in the Iraq-Iran war as young men and rather poor officers are now well-established generals of fifty years of age or more residing in palaces. Some of them have occupied high political positions as President of the Republic, Mayor of Tehran, various ministry portfolios, as members of parliament or as wealthy businessmen. In this situation, any radicalization will force them to pay a high price, putting their position and wealth at risk[39]. The question is: are they ready to pay the price or will there come a time when they make a historic choice by pursuing a non-ideological line of conduct? A real rift between the rising Pasdaran and the increasingly discredited priesthood currently in power would ultimately put an end to the Islamist theocracy, which would be replaced by a military caste, probably with secular and nationalist tendencies.

The final scenario is that which has happened to despotic and totalitarian regimes that sacrificed the well-being and happiness of their peoples in their pursuit of a utopian cause. The results were disastrous. Nazi Germany is but one example.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the application of ordinary tools such as 'national interests' and purely 'materialist gains' on the particular Iranian case have very limited explanatory capacity for rendering the political complexities of Iran fully understandable. On the other hand, it appears at taking ideology as the point of departure is a more appropriate method for grasping the real sense and orientation of Iranian foreign policy. The paper has also highlighted Iranian matrices of capabilities and sensitivities (hard and soft). In this connection, elements such as the size and advantageous geographical position of the country, its human and formidable natural resources together with its impressive military capacities were noted. Iran's soft power, which is primarily based on the sympathy accorded to the country by some fractions of Muslim and Arab populations (Sunni and Shi´a) due to the hard-line Iranian position vis-à-vis the USA was also noted. On the issue of sensitivities, Iran faces a number of serious challenges against their policy, reinforced by the economic sanctions decided by the UN Security Council as well as other restrictive measures taken by the USA, EU and others. These measures have seriously reduced Iran's international credibility and its scope of movement. Adding to this Iran's poor record on human rights and its support for extremist groups in the Middle East and elsewhere, we arrive at the conclusion that if Iran does not undertake a significant revision of its foreign policy, it risks severe trouble in the future. A revision in this domain cannot, however, take place without a revision of the ideological foundation of the Islamist regime. Until now, the Islamist ideology has served the interests of the Regime, or at least it has not put the survival of the regime in great danger. It therefore appears highly implausible that the Iranian regime will change its current behavior, unless it comes in such a situation that maintaining both *ideology* and *power* becomes unbearable.

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II

BIN LADEN'S FOREIGN POLICY
Paths of Amity and Enmity

BIN LADEN'S FOREIGN POLICY:
Paths of Amity and Enmity

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Foreign policy is normally recognized as the exclusive property of states. States are territorial actors; therefore, the notion of 'foreign' is constructed on the basis of territory and in relation with it. Viewed from this perspective, actors, institutions and activities existing beyond the frontiers of a state are 'foreign', except their embassies and other diplomatic offices which are in a sense an extension of the states' territoriality and as such benefit from the rule of 'extra-territoriality immunity'. Territoriality is also a constitutive pillar of a state's sovereignty the defense and protection of which are emphasized in almost all constitutions as essential duties of the government and the armed forces.

Parallel to the Westphalian and 'state-nation' schema, there are an important number of international actors who are not territorial, however pretty influential. This group of actors represents a vast spectrum of organizations, embracing both inter-governmental organizations like the UN, NATO, OECD and the OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference) and non-governmental organizations like Amnesty International, Greenpeace, IBM, Coca Cola, Google and so on. Instead of having a regular foreign policy, these kinds of actors are equipped with highly developed *public relations*.

In this puzzle, the Vatican and the European Union (EU) stand as particular cases. The Vatican is interesting since, on the one side, the Holy See has a territory (of only 0.439 km² of its own since the Lateran Treaty of 1929). On the other side, the Vatican's 'foreign' policy is not defined in relation with territory. The Papal authority is transnational and its fundamental political lines are expressed through the edicts and via the Vatican's world-wide networks and channels.

As regards the EU, according to the second and third pillars (common foreign and security policy and police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters), the EU is on the one side a predominantly inter-governmental actor while on the other side, and following the first pillar (European Community), the EU as European *Community* is supranational, meaning that "the member states have progressively pooled sovereignty and the role of the Commission, the European Parliament, and the European Court of Justice" (Aggestam 2008:361).

The same dichotomy is evident in the domain of EU foreign policy. On the one hand, the EU members have their individual, national foreign policy and, on the other hand, the "EU member states have committed themselves to speaking with 'one voice' on a range of foreign policy issues in international affairs" (ibid.). The EU 'common foreign policy' is conducted by a High Representative (currently Javier Solana) who is actively representing the EU on the international arena and, depending on the context, even plays a leading role in international negotiations.

In addition to this group of non-territorial actors, there is a group of non-state actors who are territorial or at least semi-territorial. Movements like the FLN in Algeria before independence, the ANC in South Africa before the end of apartheid and criminal-terrorist organizations of today like FARC in Colombia belong to this category. All these organizations or movements conduct a kind of foreign policy of their own. The FLN and the ANC were recognized by some countries which harboured their diplomatic delegates. In the case of FARC, some states (e.g. Venezuela and France) have negotiated with them in order to liberate hostages. What is common to all these three cases is firstly their territoriality and secondly attainability of their goals: Independence for Algeria, the end of apartheid in South Africa and liberation of FARC prisoners as well as finding some political accommodations in Colombia. The same rule is applicable to Islamist movements like Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon. They have a specific 'foreign policy' distinct from and even contradictory to the policy of their government ('Authority' in the case of Hamas). Here again in both cases, actors, whatever their goals could be, are directly connected to a specific territory. The goals of the FLN and the ANC were clear and, especially, they were realistic and attainable. While the goals of Hezbollah and Hamas are a mixture of attainable and less attainable ones. Annihilation of Israel and establishment of the (World) Caliphate (or Imamate for Hezbollah) are not considered so reasonably attainable.

Compared to all other non-state actors, the case of al-Qaida is quite different. Deprived of a determined territory, this 'organization' is active at the global level as a distinct, influential actor. Does al-Qaida have a 'foreign policy'? Is the foreign policy of a non-territorial, non-governmental and transnational religiously based actor substantially different from territorial actors? This study aims to answer these questions. It is obvious that al-Qaida is neither a genuine organization nor an institution. It is an umbrella or a pillar (Qaida) of a virtual global gathering whose strong ideological creed ties together its various components. The question is who formulates al-Qaida's ideology? According to Thomas Hegghammer, there are five principal categories of actors that shape contemporary global jihadist ideology: 1) The "old al-Qaida", i.e. Bin Laden and Zawahiri who have a mythical status in Islamist circles and exert tremendous ideological influence, 2) some [Sunni] religious leaders whose fatwas and books are published and distributed on the Internet, 3) the strategic thinkers in their twenties or thirties who are members of militant groups, 4) the active militant organizations such as "al-Qaida on the Arabian Peninsula" and "al-Qaida in the Land of the Two Rivers", and finally, 5) the "grassroot radicals" such as *al-Ansar and al-Islah* (Thomas Hegghammer 2006: 15-17). It is also assumed that ideology in general and a strongly religiously rooted ideology like al-Qaida's in particular have a direct impact on the formulation of foreign policy. In this concise study, I refer predominantly to the first of al-Qaida's ideological sources.

Al-Qaida and Foreign Policy

The first question is what is 'foreign' to a non-territorial actor like al-Qaida? First, unlike territorial states who define 'foreign' in terms of territory and nationality, to al-Qaida, everybody (physical and moral body, every institution, organization and authority) who is not with al-Qaida is a 'foreigner', irrespective of religion, nationality, race and so on. Second, al-Qaida as a non-territorial entity could theoretically be present on each and every territory. These two distinctive elements make al-Qaida into a very singular entity, indeed.

This singularity is found not only in comparison to the Westphalian territorial construction, but it also, and especially, represents a rupture from the Islamic classical theory. According to this theory, the world is divided into 2+1 categories, consisting of *Dâr al-Islam* (the World of Islam), *Dâr al-Harb* (the World of War) and something in between, *Dâr al-'Aqd* (the World of Contract/Armistice). However, al-Qaida's 'revisionist' approach must be credited for being in compliance with the original Islamic model (*Umma*) designed by the Prophet Muhammad. In fact, the real architect of this original approach is not al-Qaida, but Sayyid Qutb (1906-66) who invented the ingenious theory of *Jâhiliyya* (State of Ignorance). *Jâhilliyya* is grosso modo a state equivalent to what the 'Middle Ages' represent in western mentality as the epoch of darkness and backwardness.

He defines the *jâhili* society as any other society but the Muslim society. *Jâhili* societies may be anti-religious or religious in diverse ways, but the only thing that really matters is what they have in common – that they are *jâhili*. Likewise ethically, there are no agrarian ethics and no industrial ethics; there are no capitalist ethics or socialist ethics. There are only Islamic ethics and *jâhili* ethics (Shepard 2003: 525).

Jâhiliyya in its extension embraces not only the non-Muslim societies, but also the Muslim societies. Qutb declares that

we classify them among jâhili societies not because they believe in other deities besides God or because they worship anyone other than God, but because their way of life is not based on submission to God alone. Although they believe in the Unity of God, still they have relegated the legislative attribute of God to others and submit to this authority, and from this authority they derive their systems, their traditions and customs, their laws, their values and standards, and almost every practice of life (ch. 5).

What is particularly important in this context is that, by including the existing Muslim societies among the *jâhili* societies, Qutb broke down the classic Islamic categorization 2+1 mentioned above. It means that in the present situation of Muslims in the world, there is no such entity as a 'Muslim' or an 'Islamic' world. The true 'Islamic world' must be rebuilt on the basis of its authentic design which was thought and realised by the first Muslims.

It is in such a chaotic approach that al-Qaida defines its policy towards 'foreigners' which embraces Muslims as well as non-Muslims indiscriminately.

Bin Laden and Carl Schmitt: Meaning of Politic

To al-Qaida, the outside world, or what in the literature of foreign policy is generally called the 'Environment', is based on a *Jâhili* order which is both ignorant and repressive. Therefore, the task for true Muslims is the same as was the mission of the first Muslims and it consists in a drastic change of the whole system, beginning by tearing down the pillars of *Jâhiliyya*. In its world view, al-Qaida represents an incarnation of Carl Schmitt's theory of *enmity* (Schmitt 1996). It is doubtful whether Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri are familiar with the work of Carl Schmitt, but the study of al-Qaida's multiple declarations and actions demonstrates a clear similarity between Schmitt's fundamental thesis on the concept of the political with al-Qaida's world view. To Schmitt, the specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between *friend* and *enemy* (Schmitt,

1996:26). Viewed from this angle, the political *grouping* is the pillar and objective of enmity and friendship, not individuals. Precisely, al-Qaida is acting on behalf of an imaginary community which does not exist as a 'community' in the real world, but is living in the imagination of many Muslims as 'real' or at least attainable.

Friends

Bin Laden is not particularly explicit in his concept of friends. Obviously, his own entourage and the al-Qaida network are those closest to him. But he does not expend much energy on distinguishing between Muslims. Consequently, all Muslims are potential allies. His understanding of friends should also be seen in the light of his call for armed struggle and so Bin Laden is willing to accept Muslims with another understanding and interpretation of the Koran as friends in a given situation (cf. also his pragmatic approach to the implementation of the shari'a).

"If it is not possible to push back the enemy except by the collective movement of the Muslim people, then there is a duty on the Muslims to ignore the minor differences among themselves; the ill effect of ignoring these differences, at a given period of time, is much less than the ill effect of the occupation of the Muslims' land by the main Kufr [i.e. USA]" (Declaration of War, 9).

The quotation shows again that Bin Laden is willing to enter into a compromise with his ideology to attain the final goal.

The fact that his concept of enemies is as explicit as shown below and that Bin Laden feels threatened by the USA and Israel is logically followed by an undefined concept of friends. This again is in keeping with Bin Laden's priorities concerning allies. Thus, Bin Laden should be seen as a strategic commander who wants as many allies as possible to fight his primary enemy. It is also from this perspective you can look at the speech from November 1, 2004 in which he addresses the American people. This may be regarded as an attempt to fight the offensive of the American state against the Muslim world from within. At the same time, it is important to note that there has been a development from the early speeches to this most recent speech. Previously, you could be left with the impression that he also wanted to fight American civilians. To what extent this development is self-contradictory is hard to tell since Bin Laden, in *Declaration of War*, declares that the enemy must be fought in many ways, *"… the ultimate aim of pleasing Allah,…is to fight the enemy, in every aspect and a complete manner"* (Declaration of War, 9-10). In this way, Bin Laden's speech to the American people may be regarded as a tactical move in the struggle against the external enemy. To sum up, Bin Laden's concept of friends may be seen as a result of temporary strategic considerations. So, to Bin Laden, friends and alliances become a means to fight the primary enemy.

Enemies

Overall, the point of departure for Bin Laden's concept of enemies is those who offer resistance to or oppose Muslims in general and everywhere.

Bin Laden is very explicit in his concept of enemies. Thus, the USA is the primary enemy:

"If there are more than one duty to be carried out, then the most important one should receive priority. Clearly after Belief (Imân) there is no more important duty than pushing the American enemy out of the holy land." (Declaration of War, 9).

Apart from the USA being the primary enemy, Bin Laden constantly links the USA and Israel together as being part of the same hostile conspiracy. *"...and leaving the main enemy in the area – the American Zionist alliance – enjoy peace and security?!"* (Declaration of War, 8). This quotation also refers to the tolerance shown by the Saudi family vis-à-vis Israel and the USA. Thus, enmity towards others is derived from the influence the USA has upon other states and groups. The acceptance of American influence is consequently the root of degeneration of Muslim societies. Where the USA and Israel are the primary enemy, the allies of this alliance become the secondary enemy who should also be fought. As examples of secondary enemies or collaborators, Bin Laden mentions Great Britain, Russia and the West in general, in addition to the Saudi regime in Saudi Arabia.

Neither Friends nor Enemies

Besides 'enemies' and 'friends', there are some states or a group of states that al-Qaida considers equivalent to the Islamic classic, the World of Contract (Dâr al-'Aqd). The best example of this category is the Islamic Republic of Iran. It should be noted that from the creation of al-Qaida in 1998 until today , there have been systematic clashes – some of them very violent, indeed – between al-Qaida and a number of Muslim countries, in particular the Arab governments. Several bombings and other terrorist actions in Egypt, in Jordan, in some North African countries, in Saudi Arabia, in Indonesia and so on. But, not a single action of this kind against Iran, neither within Iranian territories nor against Iranian interests abroad. And this, despite the fact that Iran is a Shi'a country, governed by the Shi'a clergy while Bin Laden is a Wahhabi. And according to the Wahhabi creed, the Shi'a represent a heretic sect that must be combated. The only few altercations on the Shi'a issue between al-Qaida and Iran happened sporadically; one between Zarqawi, al-Qaida's commander in Iraq (killed in 2006), who criticized the Shi'a in Iraq very vigorously. And vehement attacks on the part of al-Zawahiri against the Iranian government on 8 September 2008 (Reuters) in which he accused Iran of collaborating with the USA against Muslims. An accusation that is a manifestation of Zawahiri's frustration rather than a serious statement rooted in facts. The Iranian government had neither initiated any attack nor regular criticism against al-Qaida. It is even alleged that in the aftermath of the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Iran had hosted Bin Laden's family (among them, his oldest son) and al-Qaida's combatants. The fact is that al-Qaida and the Iranian Islamist government are tied to each other in a cooperation-conflict relation. They are each other's allies against the West while at the same time, they are competing for the leadership of the Islamic world. This picture corresponds somehow to the relations between the USSR and China under Mao; both countries were socialist and anti-Western, though at the same time, each other's rivals.

From the same perspective, organizations like Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon which are Iranian satellites and protégés, belong, of course, to the same category as Iran herself. It is a fact that Hamas which is Sunni and a branch of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, as well as Hezbollah which was initially created by revolutionary Iran in 1984 as a Shi'a jihadist organisation, are both cultivating ambivalent relations with al-Qaida. No

direct relations between them, sporadic support from al-Qaida to the Palestinian cause and to the 'people' of Lebanon only in words. It is also a fact that due to the massive presence of Hamas and Jihad al-Islami in Palestine, al-Qaida has until now had no real opportunity to organize actions in Palestine. On the other hand, when opportunity arises, al-Qaida tries to provoke trouble and actions which are not necessarily compatible with the pro-Iranian organisations. The best example of this kind of attitude is perhaps the rebellion of the Fath al-Islam (a Sunni jihadist movement) in north Lebanon which was clearly an al-Qaida showdown after the reinforcement of Hezbollah's position due to the Israeli war on Hezbollah in the summer 2007.

Iran and its allies are not the only example in this category. Bin Laden has offered Europe to become a 'neutral zone' in al-Qaida's struggle against the USA. In his declaration of 2007, he explicitly proposed to the European countries to dissociate themselves from the US yoke in exchange for a guarantee of not being al-Qaida's target anymore.

Conclusion

This study shows that, in our globalised and 'googlised' contemporary world, states are no longer maintaining the monopoly on foreign policy. The last three decades have witnessed the emergence of an increasing number of non-territorial actors who are also conducting foreign policy, albeit without the traditional protocol and formalities. In this context, al-Qaida represents a prototype of new international and even global actors who consider themselves not only a substitute of the 'State', but also act as delegates of or successors to a titanic 'Empire'; although it is, in the case of al-Qaida, the Islamic empire. On the question that 'politics' in general and 'international politics' in particular are in reality a matter of friends and enemies, it is curious that this idea emanated from a pro-Nazi jurist (Carl Schmitt) and that it is prominent in the mode of thinking and acting of Islamists. Perhaps the obsession with the concept of 'enemy' in a normal situation (without war or great crisis) is generally more visible with totalitarian regimes than with non-totalitarian ones. One reason may lie in the self-reflection of totalitarian regimes which by nature are convinced of being besieged by enemies both internally and externally. To them, everything outside of the *totality* that they can control is a potential enemy.

Bin Laden has a geographical point of departure which originates in his rupture with Saudi Arabia. The main enemy is the USA-Israel alliance, alternatively those in support of this alliance. The concept of enemies and the rhetoric are very direct and explicit. However, the concept of friends is not a static concept as it may be adapted according to a given situation. Thus, the general view is that Bin Laden is strategic in relation to his mission and chooses his friends and allies on the principle whether they will be able to help him with his primary mission. So, the primary goal is to fight the main enemy and subsequently to introduce the world Islamic order.

This study reveals the existence of a relation between the nature of the goal and claims put forward by the non-state actors and the plausibility of compromise as well as the degree of attainability of the goals. When the claim is territorial (autonomy, independence) and when the goal is political *rearrangement* at national level, compromise would be very hard, however not impossible. When, on the contrary, the claim is not territorial and the goal is

beyond the reach of attainability, eg. restoration of a new Caliphate, compromise becomes almost impossible. The non-state actor who persists in pursuing these claims and goals has only little chance of satisfying the claims and attaining the goals. This is the case of al-Qaida.

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