

## Indo-Iranian Relations in the Post-Bipolar World and its Impact on Pakistan

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### **ABSTRACT**

*It is the most important current issue which has disturbed the cordial relations between the two historic and traditional friends, Pakistan and Iran, which ultimately made them strong rivals and competitors. The significance of the research paper stems from the rapidly growing relationship between India and Iran and its adverse effects on Pakistan.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The research paper seeks to highlight the underlying factors which compelled Iran to give up her friendship with Pakistan and to establish good relations with India (Pakistan's main adversary). An Attempt is made examine the key factors interactions between India and Iran, and to examine the key factors of interactions between India and Iran, and to explore the potential area which provided new avenues for improvement in their bilateral mutual relationship. The paper demonstrates the negative implications of this relationship on Pakistan.

The research paper analysis and examines the different issues and factors which created estrangement in Pak-Iran relations, and which ultimately made them strong adversaries. The Taliban factor figures above all, which proved to be the main cause of divergence in Pak-Iran relations. The research paper throws light on the ideological between Iran and Taliban in Afghanistan, and Pakistan as Taliban's close friend and strong supporter.

Moreover, the growing Pak-Iran tussle and competition in Central Asia, and especially Iranian reaction to the formation of Pak-Saudi axis for the isolation and economic encirclement of Iran have been highlighted and elaborated upon. The paper mainly focuses upon the considerable development in Indo-Iranian relations in the post by bipolar world. Different issues and factors i.e. there common concerns and identical interest on the various regional and the global issues have been examined which brought cordiality and harmony in their bilateral relationship.

In the changing geo-strategic environment which emerged since 9/11, had profound impact on the regional policies of these three countries. The new trend in the global and regional strategic dynamics necessitated Pak-Iran relations. The research paper examines and highlight those factors were responsible for the upward trend in Pak-Iran's relations. The change in the Iranian attitude towards Pakistan since 9/11, Iran's role as stabilizing and consolidating factors in Indo-Pak relations and above all, the

construction of Iran-Pak-India gas pipeline project also forms the integral part of the paper.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

A game theory has applied, which states that the inter-state relations are like a game in which the states behave like a players. Each state tries its best to baffle the opponent. As in the game of chess, the gain of one player is the loss of other. According to this theory, any gain on the party of Pakistan will be considered as a loss on the part of India and vice versa. By applying this theory, we conclude that any convergence in Pak-Iran relations would result in divergence in Indo-Iran relations and vice versa. The growing Indo- Iranian relations in the post bipolar world can be well analyzed under this theory which provides the best description of their mutual relationship in the changing world.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The relations between Persia and Indo-Pak Subcontinents existed prior to the beginning of Indo-Aryan civilization. With the passage of time, these relations became more strengthened and intensified which reached its zenith during the Mughal rule in India. The British used Iran as its own preserve and their policy on Iran was based on oil rather than on strategy. After the partition of Indo-Pak sub-continent, Iran became a decisive factor in Indo-Pak relations. Both the countries (India and Pakistan) made a ceaseless effect to cultivate relations with Iran. After independence, Pakistan pursued a policy of forging close links with the Muslims countries of Arab and the Middle East, in general. And Muslim neighboring countries, in particular, in order to strength its position visa-a-vis India which posed a great challenge to its security, sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. Her sole objective was to crush and weaken Pakistan politically, diplomatically and economically, in order to wipe her off from the map of the World. Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan were at the lowest ebb on issue of Pakhtoonistan. Moreover, she was feeling apprehensive

due to the growing Soviet Communist expansion, a danger to her security. Establishing close relations with Iran was the last ray of hope for Pakistan. It was in those tiring hours that friendship of Iran was the last ray of hope for Pakistan. It was in those tiring hours that the friendship of Iran proved a great source of consolation, strength, and satisfaction against her hostile neighbor, India. Iran was the first country which recognized Pakistan and supported Pakistan's entry into UNO. On her part, India tried best to get Iran on her side. She had two fold objectives to get the friendship and cooperation of Iran, Firstly, to isolate Pakistan in the region and, secondary, to get maximum benefits from Iranian oil which was an important factor underlying Indian diplomacy. But she did not succeed in her evil and ambitious design to create rivalry and rift between Pakistan and Iran and to win the friendship and support of Iran.

The homogeneity of views, common concerns and policies, and the convergence of interests on different regional and global issues made Pakistan and Iran close friends and allies. Their membership in CENTO (the US sponsored military alliance in the Middle East) further strengthened their bonds of friendship. Later on, friendship and alliance with USA further strengthened their securities vis-a-vis their adversaries. Iran not only established good relations with Pakistan but extended full support cooperation to the latter against India.

Throughout the active consideration of Kashmir's dispute Pakistan counted on Iranian support both inside and outside UNO, and above all, Iran's moral, material and diplomatic support to Pakistan in two Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971, further got the displeasure of India towards Iran. Moreover, the formation of RCD and a close interaction between Pakistan and Iranian leadership was not a pleasing development for India. From 1947-1979, all the efforts on the part of India to create a rift between Pakistan and Iran proved null and void, as Iran proved herself a trustworthily and time-tested friend of Pakistan.

The outbreak of Islamic Revolution in Iran brought a complete change in Iranian foreign policy, where Islam was

declared as a driving force to play an effective role in the Iranian foreign Policy. Suppression of secular and western principles and traditions became the cardinal principle of Iran's foreign policy after revolution. The change in Iranian foreign policy since Islamic Revolution had a profound affect on its relations with the countries of the world including Pakistan as a close neighbor. One of the guiding principles of the post revolutionary Iran's foreign policy was the identification of USA as the principal enemy of Islamic Revolution. Pakistan's close with USA, whose main objective was to sabotage the Islamic Revolution in Iran, led to negative implications for Pak-Iran relations. Due to developments in Afghanistan, Pakistan was assigned the role of 'policeman' which was earlier assigned to the Shah of Iran (Khomeini's arch enemy).As a result; Pakistan became the direct partner of USA to protect its vital interest in the region. The Iranian were generally convinced that USA via CIA is engaged in a covert operation designed to sabotage the Islamic Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

Khomeini's policy towards India was more severe and hostile than Pakistan. Their conflicting ideologies, Islam and secularism are the basis by which revolutionary Iran turned hostile towards India. In Khomeini's eyes Islam and secularism were two different schools of thought. Any reconciliation between the two conflicting ideologies was quite impossible.<sup>2</sup> He strongly condemned

India for the brutal killing of the, innocent, the deprived and freedom lovers. Moreover, his bitter attack on the Secular-Zionist connection made him (Khomeini) the enemy of India.<sup>3</sup> And above all, Indra Gandhi's visit to Isreal and her strong links with the Arab countries (the staunch rivals of Revolutionary Iran), created a feeling of apprehension and fear in the Iranian circle, that India was trying to encircle Iran by hostile powers to stoop the progress and development of Islamic revolution in Iran.<sup>4</sup>

Since Khomeini's death in 1989, a drastic change occurred in Iranian foreign policy where Islam was no more a driving factor in the foreign policy of Iran. Expansion of economic relation at the regional and global level become the cardinal principle of the

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cardinal principle of Iran's policy since Khomeini's era<sup>5</sup> The change in the Iranian foreign policy and its need to rebuild a war ravaged economy coincided with New Delhi's realization that it was now a time to improve relations with the strong power of the Persian Gulf, which gave both countries a sense of mutual help.<sup>6</sup>

## **DEVELOPMENT IN INDO-IRANIAN RELATION RELATIONS IN THE POST WORLD**

Iran's growing relations with India in the Post-coldwar period were significant development which created doubts, suspicions and misunderstanding in Pak-Iran relations as the result of there perceived varying interests to Taliban's rule in Afghanistan, There growing competition in central Asia. . The U.S strategy of isolation and economic encirclement of Iran, and Pakistan as a close U.S friend and ally, created further estrangement in Pak-Iran relations. The convergence of Indo-Iranian views on Afghanistan led these two countries to a meaningful and constructive relationship. Both India and Iran were opposed to Taliban's rule in Afghanistan and were the stronger supporters of anti-Taliban Northern Alliance. Pakistan's whole hearted support and cooperation to Taliban made India and Iran as a natural ally and friends. In the worlds of Mehdi Masud, the strong Iranian reservations about Taliban were exploited by India as a means of Policy convergence of Afghanistan.<sup>7</sup> This view was supported by Indian Foreign Minister, Partab Mukerjee on the occasion of the visit of the Iranian counterpart, Ali Akbar Velayati, who said that there was nothing unusual in the similar stand of India and Iran on Afghanistan. Concern for the removal of the external interference and suppression of Taliban regime in Afghanistan become the basis of Indo-Iran realions.<sup>8</sup>

In the eyes of India, the Taliban's victory in Afghanistan would strengthen Pakistan, politically, strategically and economically, as contrary to the Indian objective in the region. In order to reduce Taliban's influence in Afghanistan and to bring to an end their regime, India started supporting Iran. The ultimate objective of India was to root out Taliban in Afghanistan once for

all, because they were friendly to Pakistan. Secondly, she was well-aware that the Taliban's victory in Afghanistan would strengthen Pakistan to enhance her dignity and international prestige and thirdly, the Taliban's influence in Afghanistan would be detrimental to Indian objective in Kashmir. The *Hindustan Times* carried an article the "Indo-Iran relations in the shadow of Taliban", in which the Indian writer remarked that "Taliban posed security problems for India in Kashmir- India saw a danger to its interest in Kashmir when a few of them went to Kashmir to fight by the side of militant"<sup>9</sup> As the mutual interests of both India and Iran were severely threatened by Taliban, therefore, India expressed her willingness to destabilize the anarchic situation created by the Taliban.

As opposed to the New World Uni-polar order, Tehran's ultimate desire was to form a strategic partnership with New Delhi as India was reluctant to become a part of the New World anti-US alliance. But above all, Iran needed to look for the economic partner beyond the Gulf. The identity of views and common interests on Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf brought India and Iran close to each other. India is a powerful country of Indian Ocean, and Iran is an important country of the Persian, gulf. In Indian mind, Pakistan was a great beneficiary of Iranian oil in past. India has two fold objectives to great the friendship and cooperation of Iran. Firstly, to get maximum benefits from the Iranians oil for the fulfillment of its industrial needs, and secondary, to make Pakistan completely isolated in region. While Iran sought Indian cooperation in the Indian Ocean. According to an Iranian writer, the most important state with which Iran will need to coordinate in Indian Ocean is India.<sup>10</sup> The similarity of views and convergence of interests in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf and their opposition to the presence of Super Power (USA) in the region were the key factors that brought the two countries close to each other. Moreover, the frequent exchange of visits of high leadership further consolidated their bilateral relations and mutual cooperation. During his visit to Iran in September-1993 P.V Narasimha Rao, the Indian Prime Minister, outlined the areas in

which the two countries could cooperate. This was the first visit of Iran. Describing India and Iran as the most important partners in the Indian Ocean he said, "India's role to be pivot of the dream of achieving cooperation is to realized."<sup>11</sup>

After the Gulf War of 1991 (Iraq-Kuwait War), USA came close to the Arab states. As Iran's relations with Arab were at the lowest ebb, the loose US-Arab relations were viewed by Iran and detrimental to her interest in the region. In order to deter such menace she needed a strong and organized naval force. For this purpose, she sought Indian naval support and cooperation which has been regarded as one of the sophisticated navy in the world. With this objective, the Iranian Naval Chief, Admiral Ali Shamkhani made an official visit to India in 1994.

A Naval Agreement was signed between two countries, by which India agreed to provide modern training to the Iranian naval officers and personnel in the hydrographic survey, meant to chart the safe by measuring and mapping the Ocean depth. In addition to this, India also provided warships and civilian ships to Iran, which included four Russian built Kilo-class submarines and five warships.<sup>12</sup>

The convergence of interest in interest in Central Asia was yet, another key factor that brought Iran and India close to each other. Iran's main objective was to reduce the growing US influence in the region which evident following the formation of Pak-US-Saudi axis, whose main objective was to suppress the Iranian interest in the Central Asia. Pak-Iran rivalry and competition in Central Asia was exploited by India as means of policy convergence and she came close to Iran. As India lacks direct access to the Central Asian states, so the cordial and close relations with Iran become the cardinal principle of Indian foreign policy in the post coldwar offered period. Iran has huge under utilized port faculties at Bander Abbas which offered India a direct access to Central Asia. A Bombay-Bander Abbas Sea-link to be connected to surface gird to Central Asian Republics provided India an easy access for her supplies and trade to Central Asia.<sup>13</sup> The economic and commercial cooperation between the two

countries become more strengthened and intensified following the visit of the Indian Prime Minister, P.V Narasimha Rao to Iran in September -1993. The Indo-Iranian economic cooperation in Central Asia was the priority issue discussed during the meeting.<sup>14</sup>

The Indo-Iranian coloration in Central Asia took a particulate shape when on April 20, 1995; India, Iran and Turkmenistan signed an agreement providing for route to Central Asia for Indian goods via Iran. The Central Asian countries are the main exporter of oil and natural gas. The three countries proposed a 'gas pipeline project' from Turkmenistan to India. The Iranian foreign Minister, Mr. Ali Akber Velayati shared this assessment in the public pronouncement. "Iran has committed to the strengthening and expanding Indo-Iran relations and also plays the role of catalytic factor supportive of the Indian effort at establishing close relations with Central Asian Republic."<sup>15</sup>

## **IMPACT ON PAKISTAN**

Pakistan's foreign policy makes were easily perturbed at the growing level of cooperation between Iran and India, as they viewed it in the context of India's endeavor to isolate and encircle Pakistan,, especially, the opening of Indian consulate in Bander Abbas. On other hand, the mutual exchange of visits and close interaction between the leaders of the two countries (Iran and India) was-of grave concern to Pakistan, coming as a great challenge to its geo-strategic and geo-economic interests in the region. Equally important, the convergence of Indo-Iranian interests and their common concerns in Afghanistan gave Pakistan a feeling of insecurity. It was really a great geo-political loss to Pakistan in the South Asian region. Pakistan's historic and time tested friend (Iran) which was a chief guarantor of Pakistan's security in the past, by providing her a strategic depth, was now engaged in a constructive and meaningful relation with India. Efforts on the part of India to prevent Pakistan from establishing any permanent base in Afghanistan was really a great set-back to Pakistan. Similarly, the Indo Iranian coordination in Indian Ocean

and Persian Gulf had negative bearings on Pakistan's commercial and strategic in the region. Moreover, the growing expansion of Indo-Iranian naval cooperation and, especially, the Indo-Iranian naval agreement of September-1996, become a matter of grave concern for Pakistan's foreign policy makers, and finally, the Indo-Iranian trade and commercial coordination adversely affected Pakistan's commercial interest in the region. Pak-Iran hostility and competition provided India with an opportunity to come closer to Iran, in order to fulfill her ambitious designs. The main objective of India was to sabotage ECO, the second largest economic bloc after EEC (European Economic Community) of which Iran and Pakistan were the founding members; as the economic prosperity and stability of Pakistan in ECO was never tolerated by India-Iran collaboration in Central Asia led to negative implications for the economic and commercial interests of Pakistan in ECO, the only economic platform between Pakistan, Iran and Central Asian States, which in turn, lost its credibility and effectiveness. As *Pakistan-Times* interpreted, "close Indo-Iranian ties as reflecting Indian success in countering the sprit of Iranian friendship with Pakistan and to reduce the influence of ECO"<sup>16</sup> This view was supported by Dr. Karl Fisher who commented that the growing indo-Iran commercial cooperation in Central Asia would have negative impact on Pakistan's trade and commercial relations with Iran in Central Asia."<sup>17</sup>

### **IRAN AS STABILIZING FACTORS IN PAK-INDIA RELATIONS SINCE 9/11**

In the post 9/11 period, the U.S took a special interests in cultivating good relations with India. While many arguments can be given in order to explain the U.S tilt towards India including India's potential as a huge market for U.S business and its ability to serve as counterweight to the People's Republic of China in order to create semblance of balance in international Politics. Both of these approaches are viewed with a great concern in Pakistan and Iran due to India's animosity towards Pakistan and U.S' hostility towards Iran. Since 9/11, India's propaganda had been at

work as well to cast Pakistan in the category of terrorist states, to shatter its international image and prestige in order to damage its due place in the comity of nations. Pakistani analysts were of the view that Pakistan influence in Afghanistan was exaggerated by Indian propaganda, whose objective was to project Pakistan as fundamentalist state by linking it with Taliban.<sup>18</sup> In this way Pakistan joined the American led war against terrorism, and decided to abandon support and sided with Washington. As the result of this decision, the basic assumption of Pakistan-Afghan policy, the Taliban controlled Afghanistan was discarded. Pakistan's offer of unstinted support and cooperation to United States in its fight against terrorism was therefore, motivated by the immediate need to save Pakistan from being seen as an ally of Taliban as propagated negatively by India. As General Musharraf said, "this decision was taken to avoid immense by damage and loss that occur to Pakistan if it did not cooperate with USA. The Pakistani nation, on the whole, has demonstrated the level of maturity in understanding the implications arising out of this serious situation, and helped the government by accepting without any resistance, Policy option exercised by the government in the largest interest of the country."<sup>19</sup> In addition, the subsequent development in the indo-US relations had a negative bearings on Iran's' relations with India, as the growing Indo-US relations was seen by Iranian as detrimental to her interest in the South West Asian region. India has also 2-billion\$ military deal with Israel (Iran's' staunch enemy) which further created doubts and misunderstanding in the mind of Iranians. Therefore, Iran has to be more responsive to the deep-rooted designs of India in the Muslim World, given the current strategic alliance developed by India and Israel and augmented by U.S.

The decade since 9/11 saw considerable improvement in Pak-Iran relations , in the wake of the departure of Taliban from Afghanistan, President Musharraf's drastic action to crush the germs of sectarianism, and his reaction to the Bush doctrine by placing Iran as one of the countries in his 'axis of evil' paradigm. Moreover, the convergence of views on many regional and

international issues, and the frequent exchange of visits of the leaders and other high dignitaries greatly signified the old bonds of friendship between the two countries. As far as the relations of Iran with India in the post cold war are concerned, Iran has repeatedly denied that it is building up relations with India at the expense of Pakistan. In November-2001, the Secretary of the supreme Security Council of Iran, Dr Hasaan Rouhani, during his visit to Pakistan, reiterated his country's position and hoped that Iran's good relations with India would help to solve the Kashmir problem.<sup>20</sup> He said that "Islamic Republic of Iran has always kept these realities in mind, while maintaining relations with India it has been making effort to resolve differences between Pakistan and India."<sup>21</sup>

Since 9/11 Iran has dual Objective relations with India. Firstly, to whittle Israeli influence in India, particularly, the Indo-Israeli military deal of July-2002, that adversely affected both India and Pakistan. Secondly, Iran wanted to strengthen her economy which can only be achieved through Indian help and assistance, as she has a more advanced and sophisticated market economy. The construction of Iran-Pak-India (IPI) gas pipeline projects is a positive step in this direction which will be a milestone in the economic development of these three countries. Moreover, the pipeline project would greatly help to resolve the outstanding disputes between India and Pakistan. Regarding the importance of gas pipeline project from Iran via Pakistan as a landmark in the Indo-Pak relations, the Iranian President Khatami, on the occasion of his visit to Pakistan on October 22, 2002, said, "we consider the implementation of project of gas pipeline from Iran to India via Pakistan as an importance project at the national level and a sign of strategic link in the economic sphere of the two countries. The gas pipeline project can be viewed as the project of peace, friendship and cooperation in the region and its result and impact would be certainly beneficial to the three countries."<sup>22</sup> Under these circumstances, the Indo- Iranian cooperation should not be seen by Pakistan as 'collision' between the two countries (Pakistan and India) and directed against it.<sup>23</sup> Pakistan had already discussed the

granting of military base by Iran to India. In the eyes of the Iranian leadership, Iran serves as a stabilizing factor to the defuse tension between Pakistan and India. Regarding the Indo-Iranian defense pact, the remarks of General Musharraf is enough when he said that it would be unbelievable for the millions of Pakistanis to even imagine India attacking Pakistan from the Iranian soil.<sup>24</sup>

The signing of U.S-India civilian nuclear deal of March-2006 after the goodwill visit of President Bush to India was not a pleasant development for both the countries (Pakistan and Iran). For Pakistan, this development was more server and alarming as it affected the strategic balance of power between India and Pakistan in the favor of former, as Pakistan's main threat perception comes from its eastern neighbor, India. The deal also led the displeasure of Iran towards India. While many arguments can be given in order to explain U.S. tilt towards India, including India's potential as a huge market U.S. businessmen and its ability to serve as a counterweight to People's Republic of China.

"As a close friend of Pakistan and India, USA has discouraged both India and Pakistan from entering into any deal with Iran including the gas pipeline project because of the concern that Tehran intends to develop nuclear weapons. There is also U.S law that forbids any major investments in Iranian oil and gas sectors and requires mandatory sanctions against those violating the ban."<sup>25</sup> Both India and Pakistan have their independent and perceived national interests to be friendly and cooperative with USA and Iran respectively. As it is said, that a close Pak-U.S relations is not at the cost of Pak-Iran relations, just as close Indo-Iranian relation is not at the expense of Pak-Iran relation.

As far as U.S –Iran nuclear crisis is concerned; both India and Pakistan have their own policies regarding the crisis. In spite of her best relations with Iran, India on her part would not like to see a nuclear armed Iran as this would bring a multiple nuclear weapons and given an impetus to nuclear proliferation in the region. While Pakistan's standpoint on the Iran-U.S nuclear row is that it should be settled within the framework of IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) and that Iran has a legal

right to the nuclear enrichment for peaceful purpose under the provisions of NPT (Non-proliferation Treaty). While Pakistan desires the non-use of physical force in the settlement of this dispute and hopes that Iran as the member of international community, should resolve the dispute peacefully according to UN Resolution. Because of its traditional link with USA and non-Nato ally, Pakistan while maintaining friendly ties with USA, it would not allow its facilities to be used against any of its friendly neighbors Pakistan diplomacy will be aimed defusing the crisis early and peacefully. As Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Kusuri said, "Pakistan is against the use of force ..... diplomacy must be given a chance. He further asserted that Pakistan had already paid a heavy price due to U.S led war in the neighboring Afghanistan and did not want the similar instability on its border with Iran."<sup>26</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The relations between Iran and Indo-Pak subcontinent existed prior to the beginning of Indo-Aryan civilization. With the passage of time these relations become more strengthened and intensified, which reached its climax during the Mughal rule in India. The British rule in India brought the geo-political importance of Iran in the defense of India.

Since their independence, both India and Pakistan made ceaseless efforts to get the friendship and cooperation of Iran. Economically, Iran is the third largest oil producing country of the world. India has dual objectives for cultivating good relations with Iran. Firstly, to crush Pakistan geo-politically, geo-strategically and economically in order to make it completely isolated in the region. Secondly, she wanted to take maximum benefits from Iranian oil which was an important factor underlying Indian democracy for a Pakistan, relationship with Iran was more important that could help strengthen her security vis-avis India. Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan were at lowest ebb on the issues of Paktoonistan. Moreover, she felt apprehension with the growing danger of soviet Communist expansion, More significantly India's relations with

Afghanistan and Soviet union were at cordial note. It was in those trying hours that the friendship of Iran with Pakistan become a great source of consolation, and satisfaction which gave Pakistan strength and capacity to safeguard its position vis-à-vis her overambitious eastern enemy and worse adversary, India, moreover, the identical viewpoints and common consensus on most of the regional and international issues, and there close memberships in CENTO and RCD further strengthened and intensified their bilateral mutual relationship. Iran's whole hearted support and cooperation to Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir, and in two Indo-Pak wars in 1965, 1971 was the eloquent example of its love, devotion and dedication. As a result, all the evil and our ambitious designs on the part of India to crush Pakistan dashed to the ground. The out break of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 has profound impact on the foreign policy of Iran, which affected her relations with most countries of the world, including Pakistan, as a close neighbor. One of the guiding principles of post Revolutionary Iran's foreign policy was the identifications of USA as the principal enemy of Islamic Revolution, and Pakistan's close relations with USA created doubts, jealousy and misunderstanding between the two countries (Pakistan and Iran). In addition, Khomeini's policy towards India was more sever and harsh. The conflicting ideologies, Islam and Secularism were the basis by which Revolutionary Iran turned hostile towards India, keeping in view, the fact that Islam was the driving force in the foreign policy of Iran since revolution. Moreover, Khomeini's bitter attack on- Zionist-Secular connection made him the enemy of India.

The decade since war period saw deterioration in Pak-Iran relations. Their conflicting views on Afghanistan following the emergence of Taliban and their strong tussle and competition in Central Asia made Pakistan and Iran virtual rivals and strong competitors. Equally important, the formation of Pak-US-Saudi axis for the isolation and the economic encirclement of Iran, added fuel to fire to already confused and disturbed Pak-Iran relation. The Pak-Iran rivalry and hostility provided India with an

opportunity to come close to Iran. It is generally observed, that any divergence in Pak-Iran relations would result in convergence in Indo-Iran relations and vice versa.

More significantly, the change in the Iranian foreign policy since Khomeini's death and its need to rebuild a war ravaged economy coincided with the New Delhi's realization that, it was now a time to improve relations with strong power of the Persian Gulf, Iran, which gave both countries a sense of mutual need. Similarly, the convergence of interests in Afghanistan and Central Asia greatly helped the bringing of these two counties close to each other. And above all, the frequent exchange of visits and close interaction between the high leadership and other dignitaries further intensified and strengthened their bilateral mutual cooperation in the post bipolar world, and above all, their opposition to the New Uni-polar System further accelerated their mutual cooperation.

The growing Indo-Iranian relations in the post-bipolar-world had an adverse affect on Pakistan's geo political and geo-strategic interests in the South-West Asia region. Moreover, indo-Iranian coordination and cooperation in Afghanistan, Central Asia, region ocean, and Persian Gulf contributed negatively to Pak-Iran relations. Pakistan lost friendship of its traditional and time-tested friend, Iran, who was the chief guarantor of its security in past, engaged meaningful and constructive relations with India (Pakistan's worse adversary).

However, the cordiality in the Indao-Isreali relations following the signing of indo-Israeli military deal of September - 2002, and the development in the Indo-U.S relations after the conclusion of Indo-U.S civilian nuclear deal had negative and dire consequences for both Pakistan and Iran. As both USA and Israel are the staunch enemy of Iran, which in turn made Iran to change its attitude towards Pakistan. In the post 9/11 period good relations with India and Pakistan became the cherished principle of Iranian foreign policy, in order to whittle and reduce the U.S and Israeli influence in India, Iran's repeatedly denied that it was building relations with India at the cost of Pakistan, removed

misunderstanding, doubts, and suspicions in Pak- Iran relations. In other words, Iran served as a stabilizing factor the Indo-Pak relation which was discussed by President Khatami on the occasion of his visit to Pakistan in October-2002. The construction of Iran-Pak-India gas pipeline is the clear example which would not only solve the basic differences in Indo-Pak relations but also enhance the era of economic prosperity and reconstruction in the region.

As far as the nuclear stand-off between Iran and US is concerned, both India and Pakistan as friend of USA (India concluded civilian nuclear deal with US and Pakistan as non-Nato ally) were under a tremendous pressure of by USA from entering into any deal with Iran including gas pipeline, because of the concern that Iran intends to develop nuclear bomb. We have to watch and wait.

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