

IRAN AND INDIA BETWEEN REGIONAL GOVERNANCE AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES

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Abstract

In a intimately interdependent global environment where one's prosperity depends on the contacts realised with others, isolating one government or community is not only improbable but dangerous because the respective government might go rogue and in peril to be colonised by the most radical elements of its own nation. Such might be the case of Iran if US and other important players toss away JPCOA. Instead of playing according to a zero sum antagonistic logic, Washington might find neighbors of Iran and employ them so as to forge a partnership with Tehran. As such, a friendly Islamic Republic could a solution to many of the problems in the Middle East.

Present study focuses hypothesis around a central questions: "Are two civilisational-states such as India and Iran able to start an alliance in order to fill the power void looming across their borders where an unstable Pakistan and a revanchist Afghanistan may very well fail after the pull out of the international peacekeeping force?" subsequently a second question comes to fore: "Why is there no Iranian-Indian alliance up until now?"

This article argues that India may play an appeasing role towards Tehran ambitions due to geographical proximity and civilisational needs. If they establish a common ground, both republics may work together towards shouldering regional evolution in the AfPak cauldron. Furthermore, the article aims to use Robert Keohane's regime theory applied to the area mentioned above.

Keywords: *Iran, India, Afganistan, Pakistan, instability, regional governance, cooperation.*

Introduction

Possessing vast natural riches, an expanding workforce along with a booming market one can bet on, India represents for Iran one of the most viable options in the South-East Asian wider area to initiate mutually beneficial partnerships, on medium and long term.

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Following the post 1990 events and bearing in mind that both states had a similar cultural and civilisational path, our study has the purpose to identify the strategic motivation behind the Indo-Iranian arrangements and take into consideration the constraints as well as the gap between them.

Additionally, despite many diplomatic attempts on different matters, mutual relationships have shown only ad-hoc goodwill; that is why we found it necessary to describe and explain foreign affairs goals of these two nations, in order to better understand the root causes against establishing a full strategic partnership.

Our research interprets the chosen case study in light of Robert Keohane's regime theory. We will examine each country regarding five dimensions, inspired (but not in exactly the same manner) by the Copenhagen School writings on security: politics, military, economy, social, and civilisational. Each dimension is presented in a different order for each of the two countries. We do not follow a rigid template but a natural unfolding of arguments.

The first part of the article is dedicated to theoretical issues. The second one, split in other two subchapters, reveals some mirror-images showing the interest of each side towards the other, while the third offers the conclusions along with the actual phase of bilateral development.

1.1. Globalisation as seen through regime theory

Nowadays, globalization is a proof of modernization and evolution all around the world. Namely that each state becomes closer towards all the others and they return the favor in kind. Which is false! Globalization may set the stage and embolden the actors to get acquainted but just like between individuals, does not say to you whom you should be friend with. When analysts quote Nye and Keohane's collocation <complex interdependence> they seem to

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forget the complex dimension¹. Those two classical authors position themselves against the statocentrism of neorealism and take into consideration both perspectives: interdependence may ease anarchy, fostering greater cooperation but at the same time, it might also encourage bad activities (banditry, human traffic, prostitution, proliferation of small arms or nuclear technology on the black market). All of the above mentioned compound the illegal side of connectivity²³.

Given these arguments, we believe that institutional liberalism possesses the most generous explanatory power. Even if other schools of thought may be more accurate in sectorial domains, liberalism's emphasis on mutual dependence remains today's best guidance in IR.

1.2. An economic-centered view about interdependence between states

Postwar American social sciences were heavily tributary to rational choice theory which postulated that individual actions are motivated by personal interest, always searching for the maximum gain with minimal costs. Their endless pursuit of personal welfare can be pinpointed on a map full of rewards and punishments.

International Relations theory didn't miss such trend. Both realists (who became neorealists) and liberals (having updated their earlier premises) derive from rational choice studies and games. While Kenneth Waltz's pioneering neorealism witnessed a world of egotistic states each fearful of the others, Robert Keohane foresaw a milder approach. Although agreeing to the Waltzian starting point about states wanting to survive above anything else, he considers that such survival is dependent on going beyond 'the jungle of suspicion' (in JFK's words)⁴ and learning how to cooperate. Therefore, political groups learn to forge path of dialogue which, in the end is assumed by international regimes, arrangements crafted to mitigate conflict, find common grounds and facilitate the accumulation of prosperity.

Regimes have been defined as : "a set of mutual expectations, rules and regulations, plans, organizational energies and financial commitments, which have been accepted by a group of states" by John

Gerard Ruggie, credited with having invented the formula, and as "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations" in Stephen Krasner's slightly more elaborate formula⁵.

Descending from general towards concrete:

"Principles are beliefs of fact, causation, and rectitude.

Norms are standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations.

Rules are specific prescriptions or proscriptions for action.

Decision-making procedures are prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice⁶."

However, in order to establish such regimes and afterwards to offer principles, rules and decisions, nation-states are poised to find common grounds in what Keohane calls issue-areas ("sets of issues that are in fact dealt with in common negotiations and by the same, or closely coordinated, bureaucracies, as opposed to issues that are dealt with separately and in uncoordinated fashion⁷")

Once established, international regimes may be regarded as institutions in their own right with the role to lower the transaction costs of negotiating shared interests. Here is starting point of Waltzian neorealism. Whereas the former finds cooperation pegged to the wishes of a hegemon, Keohanian institutionalism believes that collective arrangements are the ones which last the most.

From Keohane moderately pessimistic of human affairs, we assert that interdependence is more intense than states or international regimes can contain. Even though governments choose mutual regimes and treaties in order to obtain common goods, their societies have a dynamic of their own and often goes beneath established norms, seldom generating common bads or externalities. Let's take for example weapons transfer. The majority of world states try to exert their needs for profit (if they are sellers) and security (if they are clients) through legal procedures, like UN Arms

¹ Waheeda Rana, Theory of Complex Interdependence: A Comparative Analysis of Realist and Neoliberal Thoughts, *International Journal of Business and Social Science* Vol. 6, No. 2; February 2015. Annett Bosz,

² For a discussion about trade and likelihood of warfare embedded in the literature review see: Derek Braddon, The Role of Economic Interdependence in the Origins and Resolution of Conflict, *Revue d'économie politique*, 122 2 (2012)

³ Especially in his later work, Robert Keohane, just as Joseph Nye Jr., grappled with what we call the <too much success syndrome>, namely that a much appreciated theory ends up distorted and set against its original message by overuse. To set the records straight and responds to those critiques who painted his liberalism as a naive overoptimistic Hegelian march towards peace, Keohane explained that: „My theory has nothing to do with the view that commerce leads necessarily to peace; that people are basically good; or that progress in human history is inevitable – all propositions sometimes associated with liberalism (..) My liberalism is more pessimistic about human nature and more cautious about causal connections running from economics to politics than some versions of classical liberalism; and I have never been a supporter of the "Washington Consensus" in its strong neo-liberal form." Robert O.Keohane, *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2003): 3 For an argument about how realists often misrepresented liberal thinking see Andrew Moravcsik: liberalism and International Relations Theory, Paper no.92-96, p.12, https://www.princeton.edu/~amoravcs/library/liberalism_working.pdf

⁴ Inaugural Address of President John F. Kennedy, Washington, D.C., January 20, 1961

⁵ Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony. Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 57

⁶ Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 57

⁷ Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 61

Trade Treaty (ATT) signed in 2014⁸; however, in spite of their presumed fair intentions, large quantities of arms and ammunition end up in the hands of guerilla or mafias. The explanations are either governments' inability to control the supply chain, either double-standards⁹.

2.1. The worldview of Iran

Being the end point of several factors (ideology, religion and spirituality, perception of warfare and threats, regime survival and the consolidation of its regional posture), Iran's national security strategy has come of age after walking a thorny path, from Homeyni's slogan "Nor East, nor West, only the Islamic Republic" up to the favorite saying of the incumbent Supreme Leader - "Show them death [namely the other nations] and they will settle with a fever!"

Shaped by the policies and actions exacted by other great powers, Iranian diplomacy unfolds on traditional parameters with clear penchant for soft power, employing cultural attitudes and values to achieve its essential goals.

At first sight, Iran seems to have channeled its energy towards Middle East where it finances and provides ideological assistance to all sorts of resistance movements within the Islamic world and also through intensifying efforts on behalf of the Shia minorities across the area; all set-up under the noble banner of protecting <the oppressed> against the <oppressors>.

On the other hand, besides the mentioned actions, the routine of Iranian diplomacy is geared up for defensive, so as to protect the regime against what is perceived to be American&allied endeavours to invade or impair the revolutionary regime, or other objectives related to the prestige of the former Persian Empire.

However, a more profound analysis must go beyond reductionism and take into account the porousness of frontiers, the increased conflicts in the neighbourhood, and last but not least the multiplication of political and socio-economical crises at the global level. With all of these in mind, Iran hopes it will return

to international diplomatic society, whereas the latest nuclear agreement might boost Tehran's regional perception.

When the Soviet Union fell apart, Iranian interests created the opportunity to highlight a regional framework based on diverse contacts with states from Caucasus, Central Asia, and South-East Asia, some of them sharing either common threats with Iran: terrorist and extremist Sunni groups; either linguistic, cultural and religious proclivities¹⁰. More so, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic describes in a crystal clear manner the foreign policy paths in regard to: the neighbors of Iran; those nations with a Muslim majority, as well as towards the third world¹¹.

At the same time, Iranian strategy towards its closest neighbours, Central Asia and India is nourished by several factors (economic, social, cultural and security), to the extent those just mentioned states are conceived as investment & consumers markets and, most of all, they can alleviate the ring of isolation Trump administration might superpose over Tehran movements.

According to the ancient Persian vision of geography, Iran remains embedded into the Middle East, Central Asia and Caspian area, that is why its foreign policy is always preoccupied to identify opportunities to be a part on the vast chessboard of a multipolar world.

As Iran is engaged in the transition from a rather rigid, fossil-fuel based economy towards a pro-market one, heavily linked to the global capital, Tehran needs to solve its nearby issues in order to further invite other actors.

Within this logic presented above, a state like Afghanistan poses significant problems to the extent it generates instability by being a traditional hub for drug traffic and a meeting point for jihadi fighters coming from everywhere.

From the standpoint of Iran, Afghanistan sends an open invitation to political expansion, given that the latter's official language emerges as a version of *tehrānī* dialect¹².

⁸ About the history of 2014 UN Arms Trade Treaty and its relationship with other norms on the same subject consult: Elli Kytömäki, The Arms Trade Treaty's Interaction with Other Related Agreements, Chatam House, Research Paper, February 2015

⁹ Recent theaters of conflict such as Ukraine and Siria-Iraq proved to be very lucrative. For an account about Balkan states selective arms transfers see: Lidia Kurasińska, "Balkan Countries Continue to Cash in on Arms Trade Despite Concerns of Diversion, Balkan Diskurs," July 17th, 2017. For a study about how EU got involved to assure that arms embargo against Zimbabwe was not breach, even European weapons produces see: Lukas Jeuck, Arms Transfers to Zimbabwe: Implications for an arms trade treaty, SIPRI Background Paper, 2011.

Burglary can also be an instrument to acquire small fire arms. Rachel Stohl, "The tangled Web of illicit Arms Trafficking," in Gayle Smith and Peter Ogden (eds), *Terror in the Shadows: Trafficking in Money, Weapons and People*, (Washington, 2004).

Other impediments against better policing arms transfer is due to francization of production. As arms producers build different parts in various countries, oversight of the supply chain becomes supplementary challenging. Denise Garcia, *Disarmament Diplomacy and Human Security: Regimes, Norms and Moral Progress in international relations*, (Routledge, 2011), Google books.

UN Arms Trade Treaty (2014) does not explicitly prohibit weapons transfers from state towards non-state actors, argues Tamara Enomoto, which could be listed as another example where the meeting point between national governments and international regimes may cause 'common bads'. Tamara Enomoto, Controlling Arms Transfers to Non-State Actors: From the Emergence of the Sovereign-State System to the Present, *History of Global Arms Transfer*, 3 (2017): 3-20, http://www.kisc.meiji.ac.jp/~transfer/paper/pdf/03/1_enomoto.pdf

¹⁰ Nikolay A. Kozhanov, "Understanding the revitalization of Russian-Iranian relations". *Carnegie Moscow Center*. (May 2015). http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_Kozhanov_web_Eng.pdf

¹¹ Abbas Maleki, "Iran and Central Asia" Central Asia Caucasus Institute. School for Advanced International Studies Johns Hopkins University. (05.04.2006) <https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/iranandcentralasia.pdf>

¹² In Western linguistic and political official documents, dari is held to be "Afghan Persian", a shade of the Persian language but spoken in Afghanistan.

One of the advantages Tehran brings to the fore is its absence from all sorts of alliances and other regional agreements, which provides the former with a certain detachment and neutrality when dealing with the nearby border conflicts.

By and large, the interest showed by the Islamic Republic towards India might be explained through the intention to get closer to governments that have a friendly relationship with the United States and Israel in order to assert its own cause or even determine Pakistan to change its approach towards Tehran.

2.1.1. Political dimension

According to Jalil Roshandel, Iran's rapprochement towards India started to increase since 1990s as a part of the 'Look East policy' promoted by Tehran, underpinned by a mutual desire to initiate a strong connection within the Central Asian and Caspian geographic complex. In order to achieve such a plan, Afghanistan had to be drawn in a 'tripartite strategic partnership' (2003) which would have allowed a transit corridor to Iranian and Indian goods towards Central Asian and Caucasian republics¹³. Furthermore, both Tehran and New Delhi would have a pretext to exert and increase pressure over Kabul and Islamabad.

By identifying three stages in the Indo-Iranian relationship, namely 1947¹⁴ - 1989¹⁵; 1990 - 2001¹⁶; 2001 - present day, C.Christine Fair asserts that their bilateralism remains complicated, each side being influenced by different links and entanglements with the wider international system.

Thus, if prior to 1971, when India has won the war with Pakistan, Iranian attitude towards India was rather prudent due to Tehran proclivity in regard to Karachi (Islamabad)¹⁷; after 1971 Iran changed the agenda and put India up on its list of priorities¹⁸.

The implosion of the Soviet Union has offered both Iran and India the opportunity to cooperate on common projects in Central Asia, as both of them were interested to curtail terrorist activities and organised crime in that geographic area¹⁹.

As such Iran has found in the South Asian nation a partner eager to cooperate and all of that in a testing time when Tehran had just finished a bloody war. The Islamic Republic had few supporters in its struggle to

Iraq, which left Iran poorer and more isolated in the end.

On one hand, the beginning of the war against terrorism in 2001 has allowed Iran as well as India to act in a much more organised framework against Sunni militants, creating a maneuver space in Afghanistan. On the other hand, including Iran into the 'Axis of Evil' proved a turning point for Iranian foreign policy, determining Tehran to start persuading different states in order to take it out of isolation, India being one of them²⁰.

Nevertheless, when it was found out that Iran was developing a secret nuclear program and Tehran started to make certain mistakes in its foreign policy, India - itself once a target of the international forum due to nuclear ambitions - has voted against Iran at the AIEA. New Delhi considered that another nuclear neighbour would not have been in its own interest. Moreover, the previous links between Iranian nuclear scientific community and AQ Khan, the father of Pakistani atomic arsenal, have been a strain to the progress of Indo-Iranian relations²¹.

Politically speaking, the visit of Iranian president to India (15 to 17 February 2018) has not produced any spectacular results, as India continues to be dependent on the larger strategy announced by Trump administration with regard to JPCOA. Thus, up to this point, any agreement perfect between the two Asian governments are insufficient to take the dialogue to the next level, whereas New Delhi pipes to Washington's tune²².

All in all, worth mentioning is the fact that after Rouhani's visit, Iran and India have identified several common goals, such as supporting the Palestinian cause. In this regard, Tehran greeted New Delhi's position at UN after United States has declared Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel²³.

2.1.2. Military dimension

The vision of a 'strategic partnership' between Iran and India has been improving since 2003 with the visit of Iranian president Moḥammad Ḥātāmī in India. The head of the Islamic Republic has been honored to attend India's Republic Day, event which was labeled to be one of *substance*, according to several pundits. By signing of the 'Delhi Declaration' and 'Roadmap for

¹³ Christine Fair, Jalil Roshandel, and Sunil Dasgupta, P.R. Kumaraswamy. "The Strategic Partnership Between India and Iran". *Asia Program Special Report*, No. 120 (April 2004): 1-3. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/asia_rpt_120rev_0.pdf

¹⁴ The year when India gain the Independence from the British Empire.

¹⁵ The closing of the Caold War.

¹⁶ When World Trade Center was Attacked.

¹⁷ Iran has been the first nation to have recognised Pakistan as an independent actor and established diplomatic relations with it. Later on, during the Indo-Pakistani warfare, Iran has encouraged Islamabad, most probably due to sharing common borders and their inner religious structure with a Muslim majority. (C. Christine Fair. "Indo-Iranian Relations: Prospects for Bilateral Cooperation Post-9-11". *Asia Program Special Report*. No. 120. (April 2004): 6-8. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/asia_rpt_120rev_0.pdf

¹⁸ Fair, "Indo-Iranian", 8-9

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 9-10

²⁰ *ibidem*, 11-12

²¹ Uma Purushothaman. "The Iran Opportunity for India". *E-International Relations*. 19.08.2015. <http://www.e-ir.info/2015/08/19/the-iran-opportunity-for-india/>

²² Sumitha Narayanan Kutty. "Rouhani's visit a reality check for Iran-India relations". *Al-Monitor*. 06.03.2018. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/03/iran-india-ties-rouhani-state-visit-chabahar-farzad-jcboa.html#ixzz5940rE93b>

²³ Fazzur Rahman Siddiqui. "India must not forget its historic support for Palestine". *The New Araby*. 15.01.2018. <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2018/1/15/india-must-not-forget-its-historic-support-for-palestine>

strategic cooperation', were created the premises for a future military synergy mutually and profoundly beneficial as India helped train Iranian navy personnel and afterward performed common exercises while Iranian technicians mended Soviet style military equipment operated by the Indian armed forces²⁴.

Interested in Indian know-how in military affairs, purchase of weapons and assuring bilateral experience exchange on intelligence, Iran has oriented its strategy in a way to institutionalise a strategic dialogue and create together with India a working group dedicated to combating terrorism and drug trafficking. Tehran has seen in New Delhi a potential provider of conventional military equipment, therefore a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) appeared in 2001 that offered the legal framework for Iran to buy military telecommunication gear, anti-tank rockets and spare parts. All in all, the military and intelligence coordination is constrained by the pressure from Washington and Tel Aviv, both of them insisting on New Delhi not to sell Tehran maritime hardware which might affect their regional security²⁵.

In summary, if Iran hopes to have a much closer relationship with India, the latter desires to keep the balance straight, so as not to break the ties either with the United States or Israel. The formality of their relations was revealed when several Israeli diplomats were victims of a terrorist attack in New Delhi (13.02.2012): shortly after Indian diplomacy did not wait too long and launched allegations with regard to a possible Iranian involvement whereas Iran refused to assist the police investigation in finding the perpetrators²⁶.

2.2.3. The economic dimension

The visit of the Indian prime-minister Narendra Modi (in 2016) in Tehran should be seen as a manner the international community is rediscovering Iran after the latter agreed to sign JPCOA. At first the event seemed, as usually, concerned on business issues. However the bilateral agreements signed showed a desire to deepen economic relations.

As a proof, Iranian media hailed the importance of India on the Asia subcontinent and praised it to be

the third economic power of the world in 2030. Some of the most important newspapers in Persian published headlines announcing that Iran and India "*intend to challenge China in Central and South Asia*" through the port Čābahār, set in the Iranian province Sīstān-o-Balūčīstān. Also, the two actors made the promise to boost the maritime commerce between Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Indian Ocean²⁷.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed between India, Iran and Afghanistan for the development of the mentioned Iranian port along with the operationalisation of a transport and commercial corridor through Afghanistan appear to ease the access of Iranian products to the Indian market. As a source of inspiration from what was once known as the 'Silk road,' all three states became aware that a corridor would allow the growth of economic potential and, last but not least, the improvement of political and security links between them.

According to the Iranian perspective, the development of Čābahār bears crucial importance also to India, given the fact that the port should become a direct rival for the Pakistani port of Gwadar, which has already been a beneficiary of Chinese investments. The matter did not escape public analysis, the Iranian news website *Entehāb.ir* was highlighting that India needs more than ever energy and connectivity projects with the Persian space, a terrestrial hub for many countries in Central Asia, Russia and Europa²⁸.

Another Iranian online platform, "Dīplumāsī-ye ĩrānī" advised India to reconsider the rhetorical tone towards Iran and its neighbors from Middle Eastern, given the former dependence towards fossil fuels and for the Iranian import market²⁹.

A third opinion, presented by the Iranian news agencies "Irna" and "Fars" have reported this high visit from the mutually beneficial perspective, perceiving India as the second most important client of Iran with regard to oil after China. In this respect, by signing the three party MoU, president Ḥasan Roūhānī considered it "*more than an economic document*" but a "*message for each of the three countries involved that they may dare to open new international routes*"³⁰.

²⁴ Fair, "Indo-Iranian", 12

²⁵ Monika Chansoria. "India-Iran Defence Cooperation". *Indian Defence Review*. 17.02.2012. <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/interviews/india-iran-defence-cooperation/>

²⁶ Tanvi Madan. "India's Relationship with Iran: It's Complicated". *Brookings Institution*. 28.02.2014. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2014/02/28/indias-relationship-with-iran-its-complicated/>

²⁷ Mohsen Ġalālīpūr. "Moṭallaṭī bā monāfa'-e moštarak/A trinagle based on common interests". *Īrān*. 03 ḥordād 1395/ 23.05.2016. <http://iran-newspaper.com/newspaper/page/6219/1/132778/0/>

²⁸ *** "Safar-e noḥost-e vazir-e Hend be ĩrān/Indian primeminister visits Iran". *Entekhab.ir*. 11-12 ordībehešt 1395/ 30.04 – 01.05.2016. <http://www.entekhab.ir/fa/news/266035/%D8%B3%D9%81%D8%B1-%D9%86%D8%AE%D8%B3%D8%AA-%D9%88%D8%B2%DB%8C%D8%B1-%D9%87%D9%86%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86>

²⁹ Kadira Pethiyagoda. "Naqšehā-ye montaḡe-yi dehlī. Mūdī Hend rā be Ḥāvar-e Mīāne nazdīk mīkonad?/ Rolul regional al Indiei. Mudi apropie India de Oriental Mijlociu?" *Dīplumāsī-ye ĩrānī*. 01 tīr 1394/ 22.06.2015 <http://www.irdiplomacy.ir/fa/page/1948780/%D9%85%D9%88%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%8C+%D9%87%D9%86%D8%AF+%D8%B1%D8%A7+%D8%A8%D9%87+%D8%AE%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%85%DB%8C%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%87+%D9%86%D8%B2%D8%AF%DB%8C%DA%A9+%D9%85%DB%8C%E2%80%8C%DA%A9%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%9F.html>

³⁰ *** "Dastāvardhā-ye safar-e noḥost-e vazir-e Hend be ĩrān/ Cadourile vizitei premierului Indiei în Iran". *Farda News*. 04 ḥordād 1395/ 24.05.2016. <https://www.fardanews.com/fa/news/525983/%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%87%D8%A7%D>

Taking into consideration not only financial reasons, but also geopolitics, by getting friendly with India, Iran has the chance to find new investors in infrastructure and outdistance itself from Chinese presence on the Iranian market. Although Tehran possesses unrefined oil, it still needs refineries as those already in function are either technologically outdated either abandoned. In this regard, Indian oil refining infrastructure adapted to a low sulfurous environment might prove attractive. Iran sees India as a partner when comes to exploring and development of oil and gas wells; now in China's upper hand³¹.

To conclude, Hasan Rūhānī's visit to India (February 2018) was described in beautiful words about 'historical ties' but without any major contracts signed. Energy was sidelined on the bilateral agenda given Washington's announcement about reinforcing once more sanctions against Tehran. However, a victory concerned the Cābahār with India signing contracts on 18 months³².

Considering the Peace pipeline Iran-Pakistan-India, Tehran has not abandoned the project which would bring not only financial gains, but also the reputation of having solved through diplomatic means the historical conflicts between the Southasian neighbours. At the time of writing this research, three impediments prevented us to complete the project: 1) the first concerns Tehran's claim to modify the price of oil each three years;³³ 2) American pressure and the perspective to reimpose sanctions; 3) Pakistan not being able to fulfill the agreement signed in 2009 and complete its sector of the pipeline. Thus India backed down and chose to negotiate energy contracts on bilateral basis with Tehran and Islamabad³⁴.

2.2.4. Social dimension

With regard to the social dimension of security, Iran has identified in India a great provider of pharmaceutical products, which tends to have an edge

in comparison to the Western ones³⁵. More so, due to geographical shorter distance, medicines can be delivered to Iranian pharmacies much faster³⁶.

2.2.5. Cultural dimension

Iranian official news agency, 'IRNA' noted that the interest of both states go far beyond political borders, and that Iran treats India as a great 'world civilisation' where the Persian language has been used as official idiom for around 700 years³⁷.

Sharing a common linguistic DNA, which derive from the Indo-Irani stock, Iran as well as India nurtured vast empires which shaped the culture of a modern nation nowadays.

Experts took notice of a Persian influence upon Indian subcontinent even before the advent of Islam, since the rule of Cyrus the Great. After the Arab conquest, many Zoroastrian worshipers³⁸ fled to Indian territories to escape the Muslim banishment of their cult³⁹.

Another cultural meeting point is the *parsi*⁴⁰ community in India. By no means large, it represents one of the most important communities there, especially because it succeeded in maintaining vivid contacts with the Zoroastrians⁴¹ in the Iranian cities of Kerman and Yazd. People with Persian origins, Parsis used an archaic language, the Avesta in their religious rituals and continue to cherish the preislamic glory of the Persian dynasties⁴².

At the same time, it is important to mention that in India lives a 14 million strong Shia community which can trace the beginning since the first century of the Sunni-Shia schism⁴³.

In contemporary India, the shia community speaks Urdu with Arabian-Persian alphabet. Its members value formal education and they are fully integrated into the Indian mainstream but at the same time they keep the juridical duodecimanical tradition

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³¹ Under the pretext of having the right to veto at the UN Security Council, China has negotiated few economic contracts with Iran in fairly advantageous terms, especially those dealing with energy issues.

³² Kutty, "Rouhani's visit"

³³ Abbas Maleki. "Iran-Pakistan-India Pipeline: Is it a Peace Pipeline?" *MIT Center for International Studies*. (September 2007): 2. <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/39802/Iran%20Pakistan%20India%20Pipeline.pdf>

³⁴ Damir Kaletovic. "Iran May Cancel \$7B Pipeline Project With Pakistan". *Oilprice. Com*. 27.01.2017. <https://oilprice.com/Latest-Energy-News/World-News/Iran-May-Cancel-7B-Pipeline-Project-With-Pakistan.html>

³⁵ Pharmaceutical products have been under anti-Iranian embargo sanctions, thus affecting the civil population in need.

³⁶ Purushothaman "The Iran"

³⁷ *** "Dastāvardhā-ye"

³⁸ Zoroastrianism has been the state religion of the Sassanid dynasty, the last one which ruled over the Persian Empire before the Arab conquest. - Cf. Jesse S Palsetia. *The Parsis of India. Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*. (Leiden. Boston. Koln BRILL, 2001): 2

³⁹ Palsetia, *The Parsis*, 2

⁴⁰ In India Zoroastrians are called <parsi>, while those from Iran are <irani>. Even the dictionary word 'parsi' has an Iranian origin meaning "persian." (Palsetia, *The Parsis*, 3)

⁴¹ Zoroastrian community in India is the most numerous in the world, followed by those from Iran, North American, Australia, and Afghanistan- Cf. "Top Countries of the World by Zoroastrian Population." *World Atlas*. 19.09.2017. <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/top-countries-of-the-world-by-zoroastrian-population.html/>

⁴² Palsetia, *The Parsis*, 5-35

⁴³ According to John Hollister, the presence of Shias on Indian subcontinent is due to Sunni persecution from the Umayyad and Abbasid periods. Most of them pertaining to Persian aristocracy/elite, Shias fled towards the protection lavishly given by the Indian rulers who have appreciated the refinement and education of the former. Bearing such cherished advantages, Persian language has come to be known as <the language of diplomacy and politeness>. For more information on the topic consult John Norman Hollister. *The Shi'a of India*. (London: Burlington Press, 1953): 101-102)

regarding the line of ʿAlī and preserve the right to use and update the sacred text of their cult⁴⁴.

Through clerics and seminaries organised in Qom and Mašhad, Tehran maintains a close relationship with Shia community in India. Such cultural practices keep alive the flame of Shiism and strengthens transnational networks so as to connect Shia believers across the map⁴⁵.

2.3. Indian worldview with regard to Iran

2.3.1. Cultural dimension

With a history of over a millennium, Indo-Iranian relations have drawn the geography of a common heritage, thus linking South Asia to the Pamir plateau and further on towards larger Eurasia. Their durability predates political relations between the two centers of civilization. Just like in the previous part, Indian interests towards their Iranian counterparts shall be treated on five dimensions: social, political, economic, military and environmental.

According to Jawaharlal Nehru, in his 'Discovery of India':

"Among many peoples and races who have come in contact with and influenced India's life and culture, the oldest and most persistent have been the Iranians. Certainly, the relationship precedes even the beginnings of Indo-Aryan civilization, taking their common roots, that the Indo-Aryans and the ancient Iranians split and took different ways⁴⁶."

The long essay written in prison by India's first prime-minister does not consider Persian influence in South Asia only from ancient times, but acknowledges it to have been continuous and pervading all cultures:

"In India this Iranian influence was continuous, and during the Afghan and Moghul periods in India, the court language of the country was Persian. This lasted right up to the beginning of the British period. All the modern Indian languages are full of Persian words^{47,48}."

Further on, between VIIIth and Xth century AD Iranian migrants came to India where they became Parsees. With a number of more than 114.000 during the earlier stages of the XX century, nowadays they diminished.

XVIth century proved to be a period of Renaissance not only for Europe, but also a creative momentum due to the quasi-simultaneity of Safavid and Mughal Empires. As long as Shia doctrine was promoted in an aggressive manner, many nobles and intellectuals left the Shahs' rein and found refuge at the tolerant Mughal court where some of them gained high esteem⁴⁹. According to the historian of Middle Ages Irfan Iqbal: *"the sectarian divide could not prevent the intellectual interchange between the scholars of India and Persia; and for this the generally tolerant policy of the Mughal Empire deserves recognition⁵⁰."*

Architectural wonders such as Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri or Humayun's Tomb in New Delhi along with many other Persian modeled gardens are a testament of the successful synthesis between the two civilisations⁵¹.

Taking advantage of the Silk Road, many Indian merchants established themselves across Central Asia up to the Caspian Sea⁵². Even if today such communities are in a small number as compared to the past, their remnant have acquired an archeological importance, such is Ateshgah, the Fire Temple at the outskirts of Azerbaijan's capital, Baku.

2.3.2. Social dimension

However, from societal point of view, Iran is important to India for several reasons: a) India has the world's fifth Shia community, therefore any sign from Tehran has to be felt in South Asia; b) even Indian expats in Iran does not surpass 60 family or so (mostly Sikhs)⁵³, New Delhi has to take care of the widest diaspora on the globe, 15-16 million⁵⁴, with many working in the oil rich countries in the Gulf region and Libya. Therefore, instability in the Middle East would

⁴⁴ Jalal Jafarpour, Shahram Basity, Mohammad Reza Irvani. "A Study of Social and Cultural in the AsnaAshari Shias TwelverImami Shi'ism in India (Case Study Mysore City)". *Technical Journal of Engineering and Applied Sciences*, 4 (3, 2014): 156-164. <http://tjeas.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/156-164.pdf>

⁴⁵ *** "Home". *Study in Hawza*. Accessed February 02, 2018. <http://studyinhawza.in>

⁴⁶ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 146

⁴⁷ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery*, 147

⁴⁸ Linguists have studied the similarities between different branches of the Indo-European stream concluding that Avesta and ancient Sanskrit share common roots. In this regard see: Alexander Lubtosky, *The Indo-Iranian substratum*. Originally appeared in: *Early Contacts between Uralic and Indo-European: Linguistic and Archaeological Considerations*. Papers presented at an international symposium held at the Tvärminne Research Station of the University of Helsinki 8-10 January 1999

⁴⁹ One case is Mir Muhammad Sharif Amuli fell out of favor with the Safavid court therefore he fled to Akbar's in Mughal Empire. Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam: India, 1200-1800*, (London: Hurst & Company, 2004), 66-71 and *passim*

⁵⁰ For a quantitative account of Iranian nobles and their estates at the Mughal court, especially during Aurangzeb's time see: Muhammad Ziauddin, Ph.D, *Strength and Role of Persian Immigrants in the Politics and Administration of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir*, *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, Vol.XXIX, No.2, (2008): 138-152, esp. 140

⁵¹ Lesley A. DuTemple, *The Taj Mahal*, Lerns Publications Company, (Minnesota: Minneapolis, 2003), 27-30. Fatemeh Taghavi, *Artistic and Cultural exchange between India and Iran in 16th & 17th century*, 2nd International Conference on Social Science and Humanity, IPEDR, Singapore, vol.31(2012), pp.115-118. Mohammad Akvan, Mahmood Seyyed, *Architectural Interactions Between the Indian Subcontinent and Iran*, 12 May 2015, 16th International Academic Conference, Amsterdam, 12 May 2015, pp.37-48

⁵² During the 1660s, Jean Chardin, French traveler estimated Indian merchants living in Safavid Iran at 20.000, figure to be halved by the end of the century. Dr. Madhu Tyagi, *Theory of the Indian Diaspora: Dynamics of Global Migration*, (Horizons Books, 2017), 34

⁵³ Maya Mirchandani, *Iran's connection to India's Sikhs*, NDTV, August 29, 2012. Sridhar Kumaraswami, "Indian diaspora in Iran to meet PM during visit." *The Asian Age*. May 19, 2016

⁵⁴ Corinne Abrams, "This Map Shows Where India's Huge Diaspora Lives," *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan 19, 2016. Dr. Madhu Tyagi..., 14. Lubna Kably, "Desi diaspora largest in the world." *Times of India*, Dec 15, 2017

not be desirable for Rashina Hill. It is a well known fact that in 1990, with the outbreak of the first Gulf war against Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, Indian air force was sent to lift from the ground 100.000 Indian citizens employed in that area⁵⁵.

2.3.3. Economic dimension

Starting from the natural cultural influence between Persic Gulf and South Asia, Indo-Iranian economic interactions came as a plus to stylistic affinities. On the other hand, the intensity of trade and industrial contacts has been influenced by political *raison d'état*.

During the seventeenth century, India was Iran's main trading partner. According to a study, the value of their trade was the equivalent of 32 metric tonnes of silver. Safavid Iran was interested in four main products originated from Mughals: textiles, indigo, sugar, and spices. Many Gujarati merchants lived in Isfahan, as witnessed by different Western travelers like Jean Tavernier⁵⁶.

In modern times, after 1950, Indo-Iranian economic relationships focused on oil and technology. With Pahlavian Iran's great oil reserves, the Shah was aiming to modernize its society in a fast pace, and India was an opportunity with its technology and expertise. On the other hand, India's mammoth economy needed oil for it increasing domestic consumption⁵⁷. Bilateral investments between the two countries have a tradition of their own. In 1965, Chennai Petroleum Corporation limited was created between the government of India, and National Iranian Oil Company. In December 1966, Madras Fertilizers Ltd was another landmark in common enterprises. Ten years later one could witness the birth of The Irano-Hind Shipping Company, a joint venture with 51% Iranian capital and 49% Indian⁵⁸.

Today, bilateral relations still evolve around energy matters. In the fiscal year 2016-2017, trade was estimated around \$12.89 billion, with India importing \$10.5 billion worth goods, mostly crude oil⁵⁹.

At the moment of our writing, three core issues were essential for the agenda of Indo-Iranian economic ties, and all of them refer to geopolitics: a) the access to Farzad-B oil fields; b) the completion of Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline; c) the development of Chabahar port.

In 2008, a consortium of Indian companies headed by ONGC Videsh Ltd discovered a vast reservoir of natural gas in the Persian Gulf that was

called the Farzad-B gas field. After the UN embargo against Iran due to its nuclear program, Indian companies took a step back. Since 2016, when the sanctions were lifted, the same consortium wanted a comeback, but they cannot settle an offer satisfactory to National Iranian Oil Company. Moreover, recent developments didn't help negotiations as Tehran signed an agreement with Russian company, Gazprom in May 2017. At the beginning of 2018, both nations indulge in a blame game and take retaliatory measures against each other: whereas India cut the import of gas by a third to 415,400 barrels per day (bpd), Iran has cut by one-third the time it gave to Indian refiners to pay for oil they buy from it⁶⁰.

The port Chabahar is Iran's only oceanic port with a coastline to the Gulf of Oman. If developed to its full potential, the port allows India to avoid Pakistan and better connect to Central Asia. In May 2016, India and Iran signed an agreement on this matter followed by president's Rouhani inauguration of the first phase in November 2017 surrounded by the officials of 17 countries. New Delhi strategists hope that Chabahar should prove a serious competitor for the Pakistani port Gwadar. '*Reducing the Pakistani blockage regarding India-Afghan connectivity is central*' to the enterprise, considers Indian analyst Harsh Pant. According to Afghan Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, '*Afghanistan used to rely only on one transit road, which was through Karachi. That is not the case anymore. [Now] it's [also] through Chabahar*⁶¹.' India endeavors to help Afghanistan's reconstruction by limiting Afghan dependence to Pakistani goods. As a matter of fact, New Delhi sent 15.000 tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan in October 2017 through Chabahar, and from there the transport went to Zaranj, an outpost city at the Irano-Afghan border. The maritime pivot has to be linked to Zaranj-Delaram highway in Afghanistan, completed by India in order to attract Kabul in its area of influence⁶².

The geopolitics of pipelines has, instead, an opposite stake: to link India and Pakistan in a wider corridor of energy which could fade their growing economies desire for supplementary energy. IPI (Iran-Pakistan-India) and TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) are two major avenues pursued by India's Look West grand strategy. IPI was blueprinted in 1989 by Iranian and Indian diplomats didn't have an impressive evolution, especially after 2009 when

⁵⁵ Constantino Xavier, *India's Expatriate Evacuation Operations. Bringind Diaspora Home*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2016

⁵⁶ Sushil Chaudhury, *Trade, Politics and Society: The Indian Milieu in the Early Modern Era*, (Routledge, 2017), without page number (accessed from Google Books)

⁵⁷ In October 1974, the Shah visited India, event significant on the economic side for the conclusion of an agreement to supply nearly 75% of Indian oil import of 120 million barrels. A few months later Tehran also agreed to postpone an Indian debt worth of \$750 million. In return the later would be granted by Tehran \$ 300 million to develop the iron ore mines in Kudremukh, state of Karnataka to an output of 7.5 million tonnes a year. Sujata Ashwarya, *India-Iran Relations: Progress, Problems and Prospect*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 52

⁵⁸ Mohammed Khalid, "Indo-Iran Relations: Strands of Cooperation and Potential for Conflicts in the 21 Century," 63-72 in R. Sidda Goud, Manisha Mookherjee (ed), *India and Iran in Contemporary Relations*, (Hyderabad: Allied Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2014), esp.67

⁵⁹ "Chabahar, Farzad-B gas field, security on Indo-Iran talks agenda," *The Times of India*, Feb 15, 2018

⁶⁰ "Iran-India Farzad-B Talks Deadlocked Over Gas Price," *Financial Tribune*, November 01, 2017

⁶¹ Harsh V. Pant, "The Challenging Geopolitics of the Port at Chabahar," *The Diplomat*, December 12, 2017

⁶² Sudha Ramachandran, *Iran's Chabahar Port Empowers India-Afghanistan Trade at Pakistan's Expense*, The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, January 10, 2018

Indian pulled back from the project due to US pressure to stop Iranian nuclear program. Instead, Washington proposed Manmohan Singh an alternative with TAPI. However, after Iran signed the agreement with P+5, India could follow both infrastructural projects⁶³.

2.3.4. Military dimension

Taking into consideration our arguments with regard to Irano-Indian military conundrum, their links in this matter are rather shy, oriented only on political and economical matters.

In 1983 both states have established a Working Group for defence matters to further the personal contacts between their militaries. New Delhi Declaration (2003) seemed to have unveiled a period of strong cooperation mainly in defence logistics (India would have refitted Iranian Soviet style T-72 tanks and MIG-21 jets). In March the same year Indian and Iranian navies conducted their first joint naval exercise in the Arabian Sea⁶⁴.

In the aftermath of Rouhani visit to India (February 2018) the common Declaration stressed out the threat of terrorism and the subsequent need to cooperate in this matter, especially on the Afghan front⁶⁵.

It is fair to think that in the near future, intelligence jointness seems more realistic than the military one; given that fact that Indian defence industry is still obstructed by bureaucracy and the national armed forces still rely on imports, and that a reenactment of international sanctions against Tehran might prove prohibitive to any further arms transfers.

2.4. Political dimension

It remains to the political level to synthesize the historical relations between two venerable civilisations and walk those steps necessary to implement the economic imperatives. Whereas during the sanctions era, India had to bend to structural pressure and bandwagon along the American side, now, with the warming up, New Delhi and Tehran can make the most of it and establish a functional and durable interdependence.

Past experience is not absent and may serve as a guide to further action⁶⁶.

The two pillar of Indo-Iranian most recent rapprochement are Modi's visit in Iran in 2016 followed by Rouhani coming to South Asia late February 2018. Synthetising both Joint Communiqués we find that both parties acknowledged the New Delhi Declaration from 2003 as the founding document of their collaboration, enumerated a wide range of items of mutual interest and expressed: "*their determination to build a strong, contemporary and cooperative relationship that draws upon the strength of the historical and civilisational ties between the two countries, leverages their geographical proximity, and responds to the needs of an increasingly interdependent world. They were also of the view that their governments must enable and encourage utilisation of the emerging opportunities to the maximum possible extent in all areas of bilateral economic and commercial cooperation, in particular connectivity and infrastructure, energy, and trade & investment.*" (2016)⁶⁷ and acted towards "*Wide-ranging and constructive discussions on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues were held in a cordial atmosphere.*" (2018)⁶⁸

Repeated promises about Afghanistan ("*Both sides stressed that the interests of peace and stability in the region are best served by a strong, united, prosperous, pluralistic, democratic and independent Afghanistan while supporting the National Unity Government in the country. They stressed out the significance of strengthening India-Iran-Afghanistan trilateral consultations and coordination, including by suitably supplementing their cooperation on Chabahar.*") spell the mutual desire to shoulder regional governance.

To return to theory, Indian elites try to craft their entanglement with Tehran in the language of interdependence and define a regime based on < mutual expectations, rules and regulations, plans, organizational energies and financial commitments >.

However, one must not think that it is all about pragmatism. Even though India's diplomatic behaviour did not pinpointed the promotion of democracy like US

⁶³ Stephen Blank, "Will China Join the Iran-Pakistan-India Pipeline?" Jamestown Foundation, *China Brief Volume: 10 Issue: 5*, March 5, 2010. Richard Rousseau, "Pipeline Politics in Central Asia. With several pipeline projects under way, Central Asia is readying itself for a new 'Great Game.'" *Foreign Policy in Focus*, June 24, 2011. Bhat Mukhtar Ahmad, *America and Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) Gas Pipeline*, *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, Vol. 8(8), (November 2014): 260-265, DOI: 10.5897/AJPSIR2014.0696

⁶⁴ Monika Chansoria, "India-Iran Defence Cooperation".

⁶⁵ Ashok Sharma, Associated Press, "India, Iran to step up cooperation on Afghanistan," *The Associated Press*, 17 February 2018

⁶⁶ Postwar Indo-Iranian diplomatic ties begun in 1950 and passed through several phases. From a strictly structural/ neorealist perspective, both countries were part of different alliances with rather antagonist needs. While Nehruvian India styled itself as champion of non-aligned world, Iranian proclivities looked for the friendship of the United States and enlisted itself into CENTO, also known as the Baghdad Pact (1955-1979; a NATO inspired arrangement made up of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and the United Kingdom with the purpose of checking the expansion of the Soviet Union). Sujata Ashwarya, op.cit., pp.8 and 17. For more references about CENTO consult: Michael A Palmer, *Guardians of the Gulf: A History of America's Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992*, (New York: The Free Press, 1999). Unal Gundogan, *Islamist Iran and Turkey, 1979-1989: State Pragmatism and Ideological Influences*, *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (March, 2003). Umut Uzer, Ayşe Uzer, *Diverging Perceptions of the Cold War: Baghdad Pact as a source of Conflict Between Turkey and the Nationalist Arab Countries*, *The Turkish Yearbook*, Vol. XXXVI, pp.101-118. Apart from that, Indo-Iranian relationship was somehow strained by the particular moves within the Greater Middle East. Whereas the Shah maintained a close dialogue with Pakistan, Nehru's close friendship with Nasser, an enemy of Muslim dynasties, could not further the rapprochement between Tehran and New Delhi. Dr. Sattyanarayan Pattanayak, *Iran's Relation With Pakistan: A Strategic Analysis*, (New Delhi: Vij Books Ltd, 2011): 22-23.

⁶⁷ India - Iran Joint Statement- " Civilisational Connect, Contemporary Context" during the visit of Prime Minister to Iran, May 23, 2016

⁶⁸ Ministry of External Affairs, India-Iran Joint Statement during Visit of the President of Iran to India (February 17, 2018)

did, still, Indian public opinion, pundits and decisionmakers shy away from the theocratic leanings of the Islamic Republic in the words of analyst Subhash Agrawal: “If we could find a substitute for energy, we would walk away from them. India doesn’t want to be with Iran, but who is there to give us oil? We would never choose to have a relationship with this type of unstable and reactionary regime⁶⁹.”

Probably it would be unreasonable to conclude that these are the impressions of all important actors on the Indian stage, but we wonder how will India’s external behaviour evolve when Hindutva nationalists will express an intolerant opinion towards Muslims both at home and abroad!

Conclusions

Iran’s geographical position as a bridge between Central Asia, Middle East, and the Persian Gulf allows it to bet on regionalism in order to detect those strategic opportunities concerning the state with which Tehran has maintained historical, linguistic, and cultural connections.

Assuming the regional power status, Iran cannot even conceive being discarded out of the big players

table; therefore, following this logic India can be counted as an emergent global power which Iran is eager to become friend with. Oriented on becoming a part of different regional cooperation formulas, Iran has identified India as the partner of choice based on three levels: politically, New Delhi might soften its sour relationship with the United States; economically it is able to receive Iranian fossil fuels; militarily- offering assistance and provide conventional equipment, and last but not least, cultural, given the previous linguistic, historical and civilisational affinities. Also, in spite of Iranian efforts to strengthen its friendship with India, New Delhi takes a prudent line, dictated by the dual rhetoric coming from Washington and Tel Aviv.

To return to the theoretical part and to Robert Keohane’s theory of regimes, we may say that Tehran and New Delhi are on the verge of establishing an international regime pending the pressure of the global hegemon- the US and its allies. Up to this moment, principles and norms offer hope in this direction; what is lacking is substantial decision-making which would help the alliance between those great nations to use their shared civilisational roots in order to create an oasis of civility upon the Afpak conundrum.

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