

## Indo- Iran relations (evolving ties from 1990-2005)

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### Abstract

India and Iran -the great civilisations of the world had close historical and cultural ties. With the changing trends in the international politics which somehow leads towards the change in national interest had sometimes effected the relations between the two countries. However both New Delhi and Tehran are striving to maintain good and friendly relation among them to achieve their interests of national importance.

### Introduction

The two great Asian states, India and Iran shared close relations that can be traced back to 2000BC. After independence India wanted to maintain cordial relationship with Iran and signed a friendship Treaty with Iran according to which peace and friendship should be strengthened and mutual differences should be resolved by diplomacy, arbitration etc among the both countries. But the Friendship soon grew complicated because of many reasons, one for example Iran's support to Pakistan as both have joined Baghdad Pact etc. Many efforts were put forward to improve the relations, however it was only after the cold war and in early 1990s when prime minister of India P.V Narshimha Rao visited Iran and strengthened the bilateral relations.

### Objective of study

- 1 To study the political and economic prospective of indo-Iran relations
- 2 To analysis the issues of convergent and divergent of indo-Iran relations

### Methodology

For the purpose of the study, both published and unpublished secondary data has been utilized. The data of indo-Iran relations were also analyzed. The data is collected from various journals Asian survey, journal of Middle East review of international affairs and Asia programme special report Etc

### Discussion

The end of cold war marked an important shift in India's politics both at the domestic and international levels. India's engagement with the Arab states in the middle east have gained momentum in the last few years, giving special attention to build its relationship with these Arab states particularly with Iran because of quest for its national interests. Various factors have compelled India towards Iran which includes presence of large number of Muslim community, energy requirement of India etc. The end of cold war in 1990s had given India a chance and traceableness to carry out its foreign policy in the region.

Relations between India and Iran have been depending with respect to most issues, especially security, energy and other forms of commercial cooperation, infrastructure development in Iran, military and intelligence ties. These development ties have widely supported by the people across the both borders. After the cold war both the countries wanted to enlarge area of relationship and to friendly contacts with each other. However sometimes shadow of clouds cover the indo Iranian relations. Despite the fact, both Countries have tried to evolve and maintain a good relationship and as such various developments had taken place in this regard.

### Political relations

From the very inception of free India, it had tried its best to maintain friendly, favourable and well-disposed relations with Iran .On March 15,1950, both countries have formulized treaty of friendship which lays emphasis on solving the dispute through negotiations, arbitrations etc and to promote peace and friendship between the two countries. After the set back to this treaty for many years because of many reasons like Kashmir issue and Iran's support to Pakistan etc ,the two sided relations strengthened again. A major breakthrough in this direction was Prime Minister P.V Narshihma Rao's visit to Iran in 1993.He was the first prime minister of India to visit the Iran after the Islamic revolution of1979.Prime minister Rao's visit was followed by Iranian president Rafsanjani in 1995.During this bilateral visit, mutual economic interest in key technological sector was stressed .Later on it was realised by both countries to cooperate on strategic issues including defence cooperation when prime minister Vajpayee visited Tehran in 2001 and signed the Tehran Declaration with his counterpart Mohmad Khatmi.consequently, new Delhi Declaration was signed between India and Iran when Khatmi visited India as a chief guest to India's republic day celebrates in 2003` the new Delhi declaration includes areas 7 oil and gas

issues the commitment to expand non hydro carbon bilateral trade and other and other forms of economic cooperation etc

The changed environment after the 9\11 has also opened up the opportunities for both India, Iran and Afghanistan is new more open and both states are considerably more free to uses whatever at their disposal, the possibility of Afghanistan c

Eventually being stabilized has opened up new commercial and developmental possibilities that compel both India and Iran to work together.

### **Commercial and Economic relations**

There is great potential for cooperation between India and Iran in the energy sector , since the early 1990 's space energy security u has become one of the main priorities of India's foreign policy. India and Iran are tide up with economic relations vary deeply. Both the countries show a great deal of interest in advancing the trade and energy ties. As reflected in the 2001 Tehran Declaration and the 2003 New Delhi declaration, India and Iran want to move ahead on commercial and energy issues'.

India's energy security has been primary out lined by the issues'; like energy demand due to economic growth, energy deficiency in India and the implication of its energy paths on the environment. India – Iran energy and commercial relations' has generally been dominated by oil and gas. Iran is the world's third largest oil and second gas reserve country respectively, wants to place it in to the new markets and India wants to have access to these resources. It's a main stimulus for India and Iran to come closer

Although will have to import much of its natural gas either via pipe line or liquefied natural gas. It has been building LNG facilities both on the west coast and in the south of the country much decisions had taken place whether to obtained natural gas from Iran via much disputed Pakistan and the project gets much opposition from united states. On the other hand, Iran lacks capability to materialize LNG and to construct LNG terminal with the help of India would go against the Iran –Libya sanction [ALSA]

In the light of extant energy ties with Iran, India is too cautious about the construction of the Iranians chahbahar port which provides India a land access to Afghanistan and centre Asia it located at the coast of south sistan and Baluchistan province. India and Iran have been making progress in their commitment build a north-south corridor with the participation of Russia. India and Iran in September 2000 signed an agreement called the inter- governmental agreement on international north-south transport corridor which permits facile transit of goods from India parts to Iran's parts at Bander Abbas. Apart from the major highway to link chahbar and the Kandahar- harete highway, two rail projects' also planned, the first project run by India plans to link chahbar by rail to the mineral rich area of Hajigak. The second project run by Iranians will produce a fright line from heret to Iranians north eastern city of mashad.

### **Defence and Military Relations**

Both India and Iran hoped for enhanced cooperation in military and defence sphere. On the military side, India and Iran agreed to explore opportunities for joint training and exchange of visits, while declaring that defence cooperation is not aimed against any third country. Several analysts believe that India can offer medium technology weapons, train Iran's armed forces supply spare parts to Iran etc.

India and Iran after farming an Indo-Iranian Joint commission in 1983, both states have established relatively low level defence and military relations. It was however only after the Delhi declaration that both countries have jointly mired their Navies in the Arabian Sea in March 2003. The bilateral agreement of 2003 where it was decided to explore opportunities for cooperation in defence and agreed areas, including training of exchange of visits. Although in 1996, India has an expertise in using and maintaining Russian-built military equipment and is helping Iran to develop submarine batteries more suitable for warm gulf water.

Apart from military ties, India has developed intelligence outposts in Iran, Including the Indian consulate in Zahedan and Bandar Abbas which will permit India to monitor ship moments in Persia gulf. In any further conflict with Pakistan, this will provide India quite significant power projection advantages. Iran is essential to India's security strategy. India has consciously made an effort to drive out Pakistan centrism from its foreign policy decisions and enlarge as an important power beyond the parameters of South Asia.

### **Afghanistan and the Quest for Cooperation**

Afghanistan and the political stability in the Afghanistan are equally important to both the countries. Both India and Iran have cooperated to secure their interests in Afghanistan and stabilization and economic development of Afghanistan which equally sharing common concerns about Pakistani influence in the country. Both India and Iran are feared of Sunni Islamic Extremism lead by Taliban while in the former the Taliban

carried out terrorist activities in Kashmir and New Delhi and in the later they treat Taliban as a threat to Iran's Shia Sect.

The relationship between New Delhi and Tehran has grown smoothly in the spare of commerce and trade, energy, defence and regional development. Over the years, albeit a few irritants hampering a steep growth in the current geopolitical scenario, the situation in Afghanistan is one of the major focal point in their bilateral relations- India and Iran both supported Afghanistan's minority dominated "Northern Alliance" against the Taliban in the Afghanistan and the coming of Hamid Karzai, both countries provided economic aid to this US backed government in Afghanistan. India agreed to expand the port of Chabahar and lay railway tract that would connect Chabahar to the Afghan city of Zarang on the Iran-Afghan border while Iran is assisting economic aid to build roads and other constructions in Afghanistan.

**Nuclear Programme of Iran and the India's response**

In the past, India has publicly supported Iran's right to peaceful nuclear technology, evident from the fact when in 1991, India has cooperated with Iran a civil nuclear programme according to which India will sell Iran a 10 megawatt research reactor and a 220mega watt nuclear power reactor. However a lot of pressure from the United States, the deal could not proceed. India was keen to support Iran on nuclear issue, when in 2004 India's national security advisor J.N.Dixit and Khatmi held discussion over the issue. India assured Iran that New Delhi would always support Tehran's peaceful use of nuclear technology.

However there was a setback to the Indo-Iranian relations when India voted with the United States in the IAEA for the implementation of the Non-proliferation safeguards agreement in Iran in September 2005 strengthened relations with the US at the cost of friendship with Iran and preferred Iran without nuclear weapons.

Some analysts believe that India did not want to see a nuclear Iran that is why voting at the IAEA meeting of Board of the Governors, Russia and China abstained while India chooses to vote along with US and the west.

## Conclusion

India and Iran are two great historical civilisations having been constant between the cultures of these two countries. Both New Delhi and Tehran have initiated joint efforts to strength bilateral relations; both countries expanded their relationship to cover wide-ranging political, economic and security aspects. Both sides are making efforts to expand trade by including other commodities. India and Iran have cooperated and contributed a lot to build the Afghanistan again. Sometimes there are ups and downs in their bilateral relations because of political differences between the two like nuclear issue of Iran etc.

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