

GEOPOLITICS OF THE PERSIAN GULF SECURITY: IRAN AND THE UNITED STATES

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Abstract

The geographical location of the Persian Gulf region is such that it has become the axis linking Europe, Africa, South Asia and South East Asia. More than 63 per cent of the reserves of crude oil and 40 per cent gas resources lie in the region. Today, strategic regions are categorized on the basis of their energy resources. Insecurity in the Persian Gulf or disruption in export of energy from this waterway even for a short period can threaten the industrial life of countries dependent upon oil and oil exporting countries of this region. Hence, security of the Persian Gulf has a special status in the foreign policies of the industrial and the oil exporting countries. The differences between the two powerful countries of the region and trans-region, that is Iran and America, are not over security but over how security should be ensured in the region.

Introduction

The Persian Gulf region links the three continents of Asia, Europe and Africa and as an arm of the Indian Ocean is considered part of a system linking the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. The advent of Islam took place in the Persian Gulf region and its culture has been founded on the principles of Islam. It has come to be known as the centre of the Muslim world. Owing to its strategic location, the Persian Gulf region has been the centre of attention for traders, businessmen and big powers for a long time. The commercial interests, through shipment of goods from the Persian Gulf to the outside world and vice versa have made this region so important for big powers that wars have been fought over its control. The Portuguese were the first western power to enter the Persian Gulf. It was the successful circumnavigation of the Cape of Good Hope

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by Vasco da Gama in 1498, which ushered in the era of European penetration of the East. From the sixteenth century onwards, the Persian Gulf became intractably linked with the commercial and political rivalries of the West maritime powers: first Portugal, then Holland and France, and finally Britain. To this was added the rivalry of the Ottoman Empire from early sixteenth century when Baghdad and Basra became a part of this Empire¹. Oil was found in the beginning of the twentieth century in the Persian Gulf region, and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was formed in 1908 to extract this oil. Oil was so important for Great Britain that Winston Churchill wanted Britain to own the oil company, or at least ensure its own requirements of its produce. Discovery of oil elsewhere too in the Persian Gulf made the region important not only to Great Britain but to all those who needed oil. Therefore the discovery of big fossil resources in the region and the increasing need of the world's industrial countries for the Persian Gulf oil altered the geopolitics of the region.² With the end of World War II began the cold war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the two great powers. The U.S. replaced Britain and emerged as the dominant power in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. Up to 1991, security and regional environment had largely been shaped by fears of intervention by either super power or the regional states' internecine conflicts (Iraq- Iran war or occupation of Kuwait by Iraq). Although with the fall of the Soviet Union the communist threat had faded, the fears of interstate conflicts remained. The spread of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction in the Persian Gulf and around it have added to the worries of the industrial countries including the U.S. which have become heavily dependent on the fossil energy of the region.

If the old geopolitical concepts considered this region as part of the Rimland, in the new geopolitical concepts, the Persian Gulf has become the heartland or the axis and the centre of centre.³ As the Persian Gulf is linked to the Indian Ocean only through the Strait of Hormuz, both the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf have acquired a special

¹ V. Mikhin, *Western Expansionism in the Persian Gulf* (New Delhi: Allied, 1988), 43.

² Duane Chapman and Neha Khanna, "The Persian Gulf, Global Oil Resources, and International Security," *Contemporary Economic Policy* 24, no. 4, (2006):507-519.

³ Asghar Jafari Valdani, *New Geopolitics of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf* (Tehran: The Institute for Political and International Studies, 2005), 6.

position in different geopolitical concepts. According to Nicholas J. Spykman, the Strait of Hormuz has led the countries needing this fossil material to perceive the Persian Gulf region geo-strategically significant.⁴ The movement of hundreds of tankers carrying oil from this region to the outside world and bringing commodities needed by more than 150 million people of the region shows the economic and financial significance of this waterway. The significance of economics and trade in the New World Order together with the spread of radical Islamic movements has turned the Persian Gulf into a region control over whose resources had assumed strategic importance from the geo-economic and geo-cultural aspects also. The significance of the Persian Gulf region in international equations is expressed in these words of Hanks and Cortell: “ It would not be an exaggeration to say that anyone who controls the waters of this region will have the ability to determine the fate of several countries, especially the powerful industrial countries of the world”⁵ Security has been the basic need of man and all world communities strive to strengthen it in order to live in peace and tranquility and enjoy better progress and happiness. Joseph Nye equates international security with oxygen and says its significance becomes clear only when it is not available⁶. In his article on peace, power and security, Barry Buzan has described security as liberation from every kind of danger and threat.⁷ According to him, on the international scene, security depends upon the potential of countries and communities for preserving their nature and independent performance as well as their territorial integrity.⁸

The national security of a country can be affected by internal and external factors. The internal factors can be altered by making use of the internal potentials and capabilities and placed in the service of the country concerned. The external threats to the security of a country can be countered through the use of force, diplomacy, economic and

⁴ R D Dikshit, *Political Geography, The Spatiality of Politics* (New Delhi: McGraw-Hill Publication Company Limited, 2004), 196.

⁵ Mohammad Akbari, “Regional Security Arrangement in the Persian Gulf,” *Articles of National Seminar on the Role of Persian Gulf in the World Strategic Development*, *Semnon V I* (Summer, 2008): 37.

⁶ Joseph S. Nye Jr, “The Case for Deep Engagement,” *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 4 (July/August 1995): 90.

⁷ Barry Buzan, “Peace, Power, and Security: Contending Concepts in the Study of International Relations,” *Journal of Peace Research* 21, no. 2 (1998): 109-25.

⁸ “Middle East Security, Strategic Studies,” *Research Centre for Strategic Studies* (1992): 17.

commercial means and through the use of propaganda. Global security also helps ensure a country's security.⁹ Similarly, the economies of different countries are interlinked. This mutuality means the sides involved are vulnerable. The action of one can cause concern for the other resulting in some kind of reaction. For example, oil producing countries can affect the economies of oil importing countries by manipulating the quantity and price of their exports. The oil exporting countries depend on petro-Dollars for their development which means that when their oil revenues go down, their economic growth also slows down. This shows the degree of inter-dependence between the oil exporting and importing countries.

The concept of inter-dependence of states constitutes the main framework of contemporary international order. Seyom Brown and Robert O. Keohane believe that since countries are no longer self-sufficient, inter-dependence has increasingly tied them to each other as a result of which their security has also become interdependent. Today, issues such as nuclear weapons, poverty, environment, human rights, food and energy resources concern all world communities which must of necessity cooperate with each other. Oil is a clear example of inter-dependence and both exporters and importers depend on each other. It calls for cooperation by both sides especially in times of crisis.¹⁰ So, today the international system hinges on mutual cooperation. The governments, therefore, in the implementation of their economic policies are compelled to respond to the events taking place outside their borders. In other words, foreign policies of countries are tied to international economic issues which have a direct bearing on their security situation. It is believed that in the present world situation instead of rivalry and pursuit of military domination, countries had better realize security objectives through pursuing peaceful policies of cooperation.

Idealists after the First World War preached against war emphasizing cooperation among nations to prevent another major catastrophe. The effort gave birth to international institutions committed to strengthen peace by promoting international relations. The purpose

⁹ Houshang Ameri, *Theory of International Relations* (Tehran: Agah, 1972), 27.

¹⁰ Seyed Hossein Seifzadeh, *Different Concepts in International Relations* (Tehran: Nasher Sefid, 1992), 256-312.

was to ensure the national security of countries.¹¹ Post modernists today consider dialogue as most important and a major factor in determining a country's attitude to global security. The realists believe that conflict is part of human history. They believe that due to the special nature of man, the special nature of governments and the special nature of the international order, conventional wars take place and what provides security to nations is accumulation of military power. Morgenthau ties national interest to national power. The major powers try to increase their strength among other nations.¹² They also need domination over important international waterways and commercial links.¹³

U.S. Dependence on Oil and its Policy towards the Persian Gulf Security

Economic growth and social welfare of every country depends upon energy and, therefore, energy is one of the most important issues receiving the attention of world governments. Since the end of First World War, fossil energy has played an important role in the geopolitics of the world and would continue to play for several coming decades. With the emergence of new economic powers (China, India and South Korea) alongside the U.S., Europe and Japan, the demand for oil has increased sharply. The depletion of fossil energy reserves in the U.S. and certain other countries has made the major oil and gas producing regions crucially important for the world economy. The Persian Gulf region has come to enjoy special importance because with the increasing trend of energy consumption only a few countries would be able to continue their oil exports for the next two decades. Most of these countries are located in the Persian Gulf region. Therefore, the Persian Gulf region has great significance for industrial countries that stand in need of fossil energy.

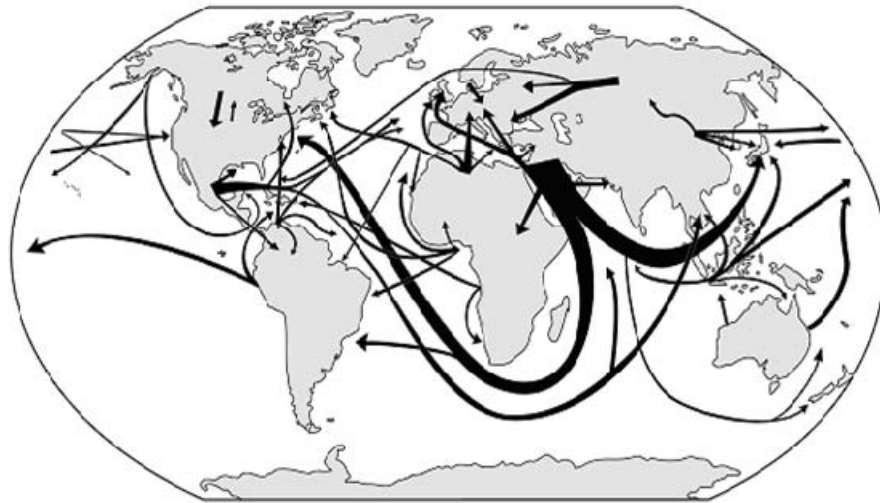
U.S. is the largest consumer of oil in the world and with the passage of time its domestic oil production would be further decreased. Presently, the U.S. is producing 8.5 million barrels of oil daily. This is when its daily consumption is nearly 19 million barrels. According to some estimates, by 2020 the consumption of oil in the United States will

¹¹ James E Dougherty, Robert L Pfaltzgraff and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff *Contending Theories of International Relations*, trans. Aliereza Taieb and Vahid Bozorgi, (Tehran: Qomes, 1993), 29-32

¹² Magsood Ranjbar, "Concepts of National Interest From Different Views," *Political and Economic Ettela'at*, no. 225-226 (2006): 172.

¹³ Mir Gasem Momeni, *Middle East* (Tehran: Abrar Moaser, 2005): 159.

reach nearly 25 million barrels per day. This is when by 2020 its domestic production would have decreased by 1.5 million barrels per day. According to predictions, in the first half of the present century, several oil producing regions in the world will witness reduction and even drying up of their oil reserves and only a few countries, which are located in the Persian Gulf region, would be able to export oil. The role of the Persian Gulf countries in exporting oil will increase day by day.¹⁴ Therefore, securing safe supply of oil and gas energy will be one of the major worries of the U.S. during the coming decades. Since more than 50 per cent of the world's proven oil reserves and 40 per cent of the world's gas reserves (Map 1) are in the Persian Gulf region, this region gets special significance in the U.S. foreign policy.¹⁵ Fossil energy in the Persian Gulf, therefore, has a direct link with the vital interests and hegemony of the United States.



1- Map of the movement of oil around the world.

Source: Geoffrey Kemp and Robert E. Harkavy (Translation by Seyed Mehdi Hosseini Matin), *Strategic geography and changing Middle East* (2003): 196.

Industrial countries like the U.S., Europe, Japan and China have made a lot of investment in the Persian Gulf region in order to be a part of these countries' economic development and thus be able to recover the

¹⁴ Ibid., 18.

¹⁵ Amir Asadian, *U.S. Security Policy in the Persian Gulf* (Tehran: Pegohesh kadeh Rahbordi, 2001), 33.

money they have paid to buy oil. The consumption of Persian Gulf oil in these countries is nearly 67.5 per cent. It is 25, 25, 7.6, 6.8 and 1.3 per cent in the U.S., Europe, China, Japan and India respectively.¹⁶ These figures show that the Persian Gulf region is of strategic significance for these consumer countries. These countries' dependence on oil would make them subservient to the country that could control the oil lines going out of the Persian Gulf. The region, because of its geographical perspective and its large oil deposits, assumes a special status in the national security strategy of the United States. Therefore, the U.S. after the Second World War has tried to seek domination over the Persian Gulf zone to control its security directly or indirectly through different doctrines and actions. Some of these doctrines and actions are mentioned below:

On 12 March 1947, President Harry S. Truman of the U.S. in the face of the Russian threat towards some of the Middle East countries declared that:

“It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. We must assist free people to work out their destinies in their own way. Our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes”.¹⁷

In Iran, the pressure of the nationalist forces on the Shah mounted till he had to flee the country in August 1953. At the same time, the activities of the Tudeh (communist) Party also increased. The Shah's departure made the USA act at once. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) joined hands with some of the opponents of Musaddiq (Iranian

¹⁶ Christof Rühl, “BP Statistical Review of World Energy, An Update: The Long Term and the Short Term, 2007,” June 2008, http://www.eugbc.net/files/13_47_749294_BPStatisticalReviewofWorldEnergy-Brussels,September2008.pdf

¹⁷ Ralph N Magnus, ed. Documents on The Middle East- United States Interests in the Middles East(Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1969); Details of the Truman Doctrine are to be found in, Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origin of the Cold War in Near East:: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 434-39.

Prime Minister) to overthrow his government on 19 August 1953 and bring back the Shah into power on 22 August 1953.¹⁸

The Eisenhower Doctrine showed further U.S. interest in the Middle East. It was declared on 5 January 1957, that it aimed:

“To cooperate with and assist any nation or groups of nations in the Middle East in the development of economic strength dedicated to the maintenance of national independence. To undertake in the same region programs of military assistance and cooperation with any nation or groups of nations which desires such aid. To include the employment of armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations, requesting such aid, against over armed aggression from any nation controlled by international communism.”¹⁹

The British announcement of withdrawing from the Persian Gulf by 1971 was of great concern to the U.S. as it was important to fill that vacuum for the security of the region. The prevention of communist penetration in the Persian Gulf was the prime concern of the U.S. The small Sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Ras-al-Khaimah, Umm-ul-Quiwain, Dubai and Fujairah were in vulnerable position and open to outside and regional powers' interference in the Persian Gulf. The West, especially the U.S., was worried what would happen after the British withdrew. Due to its engagement in Vietnam, the U.S. did not want to take over the security of the Persian Gulf all by itself. At the same time this situation was a turning point in Iran's history to play an important role in marshalling security in the Persian Gulf. The American administration clearly stated that it preferred that responsibility should remain with the pro-Western regional governments in the Persian Gulf. In fact “the Americans believed that a colonial presence in the region would encourage anti-western sentiments and contribute to the overthrow of the conservative pro-western regimes. In addition, this step was consistent with the policy of disengagement which America had followed since the early 1960s. The

¹⁸ Fakhredin Azimi, *Iran: The Crises of Democracy* (London, I.B. Tauris, 1989), 331-33; Kermit Roosevelt, *Counter Coup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979).

¹⁹ Alexander Deconde, *A History of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 755-57.

United States was convinced that western interest in the Persian Gulf stability could be safeguarded by friendly local governments, led by Iran and Saudi Arabia, and believed that these local “great powers” (Iran the most populous country and Saudi Arabia the richest oil state) were better able to keep the Soviet Union out in the Persian Gulf.²⁰ So the Nixon Doctrine on 18 February 1970 clearly stated:

“The United States will participate in the defence and development of allies and friends, but America cannot and will not-conceive all the plans, design all the programs, execute all the decisions and undertake all the defence of the free nations of the world. We will help where it makes a real difference and is considered in our interest”.²¹

To achieve this aim, expansion of Iran's military might was considered necessary. Iran's military might was reinforced by building a number of military bases in the region and outside the Persian Gulf (like Chah Bahar, the largest naval base in the Indian Ocean). In addition, the U.S. provided Iran with several kinds of advanced weapons. So the Shah was able to assure peace and security in the Persian Gulf till his fall.

The fall of the Shah of Iran on 11 February 1979 and the Soviet military entry in Afghanistan on 25 December compelled the U.S. to redefine its role in the Persian Gulf. The U.S. president, Jimmy Carter, without any delay had to adopt a different policy. The new policy came in the form of the Carter Doctrine. On 23 January 1980 the doctrine held:

“Let our position be absolutely clear: an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force”.²²

²⁰ Pirouz Mojtahed-Zadeh, *Political Geography of the Strait of Hourmuz: The Evolution of Iran's Role, 1970s and 1980s* (London: University of London, 1990), 5.

²¹ Robert H. Ferrell, *American Diplomacy* (New Delhi: University Book Stall, 1975), 812-13.

²² The State of the Union Address by President of U.S. Jimmy Carter to the Congress on 23 January 1980, cited in *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (28 January 1980): 197

By examining these doctrines and actions one may conclude that the Persian Gulf region given its special geopolitics both from the geographical point of view and its large oil deposits has assumed a special status in the national security strategy of the United States. Because of the U.S.' superior position in the Persian Gulf region, the countries needing oil from the Persian Gulf respect the U.S. and have submitted to its hegemony. In this way, the U.S. supremacy and hegemony has been established and prevails over countries that need the fossil energy from the Persian Gulf. This hegemony which is not possible without having domination over the important geo-economic region of the Persian Gulf has compelled the American leaders to pay a high price for controlling the region. The U.S. war against Iraq, also known as the oil war, can be cited in this connection.

The American leaders believe that the 9/11 incident has exposed the U.S. vulnerability and that terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism and the governments supporting them can threaten the U.S. security. Today, terrorism is seen as a threat to the international system. Terrorism can destabilize several countries in the Persian Gulf region which in turn can destabilize the region itself. Radical Islam which has led to the spread of violence in the world can create crises in the important and strategic region of the Persian Gulf as a result of which interests of countries including the U.S. can be seriously harmed. The spread of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons in the Persian Gulf region poses a threat to the U.S. forces in the area. During the Iran- Iraq war chemical weapons were used by Iraq against Iran as a strategic deterrent against Iranian forces that were used to compensate for the weakness of Iraq's military forces. The U.S. war of 2003 against Iraq was justified as an effort to prevent Iraq from further developing the alleged WMDs. The strong opposition of the U.S. to Iran's nuclear activities also has to be seen in this context. In addition, the United States has developed close relations with the conservative Arab states of the Persian Gulf region. It concluded several agreements with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates after the 1991 Persian Gulf War. According to these agreements the United States has to defend these Arab states against all hostile acts. Therefore one should not be surprised the United States, which claims worldwide interest in democracy and human rights, supports these undemocratic states of the region.²³

²³ Richard W. Murphy and F. Gregory Gause, "Democracy and U.S. Policy in the Middle East," *Middle East Policy* 5, no. 1 (1997): 59.

Neo Conservative Perspective

After the cold war, especially in the wake of 9/11, the United States, led by the neo-conservatives, was inspired by the 18th century realist philosopher Thomas Hobbes for gaining greater power in the globalised world. This approach results in constant war.²⁴ Accordingly it was assumed to be the responsibility of the big powers to play the role of international police and set up order and ensure security. In order to assume this responsibility, this international police must ensure that other countries do not assume more power and to do so it was necessary to control them. Oil and controlling the oil lines were the objectives to bring other players under the U.S. leadership. U.S. opposition to Iran's nuclear programme and its campaign to prevent Iran from gaining strength is the basic element of U.S. foreign and national security policies. Failure to reach an understanding on these issues with Iran in this sensitive and strategic region has led to the expansion of U.S. relations with regional Arab countries while at the same time it tries to restrict and isolate Iran within the Persian Gulf region. However, with the change in the U.S. leadership and the exit of neo-conservatives from the White House, it can be expected that new conditions will emerge to bring about a shift in the policies of U.S. and Iran in the Persian Gulf region.

Security in Iran's Foreign Policy

Iran wants spread of the Iranian revolution beyond its borders, especially by promoting relations with other Islamic countries and popular movements that are working for the global Ummah. This objective of the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy must be defined in line with Article 154 of the Iranian constitution.²⁵ According to the President of Iran, the domination-seeking countries want to destroy justice and international security.²⁶ On the contrary, the Islamic system is based on equality and Islamic justice should prevail so that international security could be established. Iranian officials perceive that the U.S. policies have

²⁴ Mohammad Ali Kadivar, "Liberalism and Conservatism in Thomas Hobbes' Thoughts" *Political & Economic Ettela'at*, no. 5-6 (2005): 88-89.

²⁵ Manouchehr Mohammadi, *Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Principles and Problems* (Tehran: Nashr-e-Dadgostar, 1997), 33-35.

²⁶ Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Speech at United Nations General Assembly Conference, 62nd session of the UN General Assembly New York, (Sept 26, 2007).

obstructed the realisation of collective security by regional countries.²⁷ For a long time, the presence of alien forces in the Persian Gulf has been considered as a threatening element against Iran. Regarding the security of the region, Iranian government believes that the security of the region should be maintained by the Persian Gulf states and not by foreign powers. The change in the policies of the U.S. and Iran can decrease the tension and distrust between the two countries thereby bringing about stronger security in the Persian Gulf.

Iran's Position in Persian Gulf

Iran's coast is 1259 kilometers long in the Gulf and has a large number of islands which can facilitate the protection of the Strait²⁸ Iran also has an edge over other countries in the waterway from the naval and technological point of view. Iran's selection as a policeman of the region during 1970 by the U.S. confirms Iran's potential for security in the Persian Gulf.²⁹ In addition, owing to the recommendations in the Kyoto Agreement to use clean energy, it is expected that during the coming years natural gas would assume an important status as a clean fuel among other fossil energies and its consumption would greatly increase. As has been mentioned earlier, the Persian Gulf region contains 40 per cent of the world's gas reserves with Iran having 15.5 per cent share in these reserves. But progress on the Peace Pipeline between Iran-Pakistan-India has been negligible so far.³⁰ Iran's gas to Europe will decrease Europe's dependence on Russia and will promote the common interests of Iran and Europe.

²⁷ Amir Sajedi, "Nuclear Iran and Regional Security: An Iranian Perspective," *IPRI Journal* VIII, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 33-44.

²⁸ Amir Sajedi, "The effect of the Abue Mousa, Greater and Lesser Tunbs on Iran's Relations with UAE," (Paper presented at The International Conference on the Persian Gulf in the Scope of History, University of Isfahan, Tehran, Iran, 2005).

²⁹ Amir Sajedi, "Iran's Role in the security of the Persian Gulf," *Nedai Daneshgab*, no. 20 (2004): 122.

³⁰ Hadi Veicy, "Geopolitics of The Persian Gulf in The World Economy, Iran's Gas export," (Paper presented in the National Seminar On The Role of Persian Gulf In The World Strategic Development, 2008).

Concluding Reflections

Mutual understanding of each others' peculiar problems is necessary to avoid conflict. The inter-dependence of countries has increasingly linked their economies and security to each other. The economic crisis which we are witnessing today in the United States has shown its impact on all world countries. In other words, problems in one part of the world cannot remain confined and can have harmful effects beyond the source of the trouble. The dependence of U.S. and other industrial countries on the fossil energy of the Persian Gulf region demands that this region be kept free of crisis. Iran, which due to historical, geographical, economic and strategic reasons is considered to be the key to regional stability and security has never wanted instability and insecurity in the region. What jeopardises stability of the region are the different perceptions that Iran and U.S. have regarding the Persian Gulf security. The Islamic Republic of Iran wants the region to be free of trans-regional powers and it claims that regional security should be established by regional countries. The Arab countries in the Persian Gulf region do not have a common understanding of the Persian Gulf security and they lack the trust that collective security in the region needs. Therefore, it seems improbable that they would be able to participate in collective security arrangements in the short term to establish stability and security in the region. Apart from oil, the U.S. has many vital concerns in the Persian Gulf region like countering terrorism, eliminating the threat of weapons of mass destruction, ensuring the stability of friendly states, and so on. The U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf region for these reasons will continue and Iran will continue to strive for bringing about a change in this respect.

Like any other region, the Persian Gulf region also needs security which should be achieved through cooperation by all regional countries and those countries that are dependent on oil. Security and stability of the Persian Gulf region can be achieved in the real sense when countries needing the fossil energy and the countries around the waterway are able to have deep understanding of inter-dependence and feel the need for ensuring security in the Persian Gulf region. In view of globalization and geopolitical complexity, Persian Gulf countries interested in having direct talks with Iran should do so without any preconditions in order to resolve different issues. Similarly, a shift in the policies of the U.S. and Iran can resolve mutual differences and restore relations. ■