

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

This PDF is auto-generated for reference only. As such, it may contain some conversion errors and/or missing information. For all formal use please refer to the official version on the website, as linked below.

## The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

<https://www.e-ir.info/2012/02/08/the-enigma-of-iranian-israeli-relations/>

URI MARANTZ, FEB 8 2012

### Chapter 1: Introductory Section

Iran and Israel have long been enigmatic players on the international stage, belonging to the Middle East but not quite identifying with the majority of its inhabitants. For the sole majority-ethnic Persian state in the Middle East and one of the few Shiite Muslim ones, friction and tension have been constant features of its relations with the predominantly Arab and Sunni Middle Eastern states. If Iran is somewhat of an outcast in the region, this is even more the case for Israel as the only ethnically and religiously Jewish state, not only in the region but in the world at large. Aside from Turkey, which is really the only other significant non-Arab state actor in the region, Iran and Israel represent deviations from the norm of mostly Sunni Muslim and ethnically Arab states in the Middle East. Still, what stands out as truly unique in the modern Middle East is the Iranian-Israeli connection, a facet of international politics unparalleled elsewhere in terms of Persian-Jewish contact and cooperation spanning thousands of years, overall international interdependence, and the abrupt switch from amity to enmity as of 1979.

While the international media has cast an ever-stronger spotlight on the Iranian-Israeli relationship in the past five or ten years, it has long deserved closer scrutiny. For two countries to be as intertwined at the political, military, economic and societal levels – like Iran and Israel from the 1950s through to the 1970s – and then to become and remain bitter and irreconcilable enemies – thanks to a radical Iranian regime change in 1979 – is virtually unheard of in the realm of international politics. This phenomenon begged further study, and was spurred along by the need for an impartial and inclusive analysis to mitigate the perpetual barrage of news headlines and journal articles prophesying the inevitable showdown between the two states (and invariably the United States and its fellow friends and enemies), resulting in a region-wide conflagration or global nuclear meltdown. While not claiming to be the epitome of objectivity, impartiality and neutrality on the subject, it is hoped this paper is a step in the right direction, a step towards a more rational and unbiased point of departure.

Where does the subject-matter of this paper fall within the field of Political Science? Beginning with broad strokes, it is clear from the outset that any comparison of Iranian-Israeli political relations falls somewhere between the subfields of International Relations and Comparative Politics. Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework used throughout the remainder of the paper and borrows heavily from the Realist and Constructivist brands of International Relations theories.[1] Chapter 3 lays out a broad literature review which draws sparsely from a wide range of theoretical and empirical sets of literature, including but not limited to: Foreign Policy Studies, Area Studies (Middle East Studies, particularly), Strategic/Security Studies, Political Psychology, and Comparative/Domestic Politics. The point is that no single branch or strand of Political Science monopolizes the content of this paper or dominates all others. While International Relations scholars and theories account for a significant portion of the sources used in this paper, many other writers, authors, journalists, and scholars contributing to a diverse set of literatures were consulted, referenced, incorporated, and integrated into the arguments of this paper.

What are the most important or most valuable resources for knowledge and information on the Iranian-Israeli relationship? Put another way, who are the major reporters or analysts of the conflict? Samuel Segev, Sohrab Sobhani, and Henry Paolucci have all written seminal accounts of the Iran-Israel connection in the late 1980s or early 1990s, a pivotal time in world affairs.[2] Not only was the Cold War coming to an end, but the almost decade-long Iran-Iraq War was winding down, and enough time had passed since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran to make

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

some informed evaluations of the change in Iranian-Israeli dynamics. More recently, more critical and analytical perspectives have been brought to bear on the international interactions of Iran and Israel. This was not doable when the bipolar balance of power known as the Cold War was disintegrating and would definitely not have even been possible today without the pioneering studies mentioned in the first footnote. Nevertheless, Trita Parsi and Haggai Ram manage to blend strategic, geopolitical and power-centric analyses with normative, discursive and ideational critiques in a powerful synthesis of Iranian-Israeli bilateral political relations.[3]

Any analysis of international politics needs to take into account some key factors: what game is being played, who are the main players, what are their resources and capabilities, which objectives or goals are being pursued, how exactly do they plan to achieve them, and who is the target audience of this analysis? It is hoped this paper has managed to answer these questions and sparked new ones in the minds of any interested and engaged readers. Finally, the Iranian-Israeli relationship is one which will continue to fascinate political scientists and scholars while simultaneously confounding and confusing them. With any luck, this paper will succeed in fostering fascination and curtailing confusion.

## Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Theory plays a central role in the analysis of any regional or international politics. For the purposes of this paper, two theoretical frameworks from the discipline of International Relations (IR) – Waltzian Structural Realism (WSR) and Wendtian Social Constructivism (WSC) – will be applied to the analysis of Iranian-Israeli relations from 1948 to the year 2010. The main reason for using both theories is their different ontological and epistemological starting points, facts that lead each to observe different ‘real worlds’ (or realities) and to evaluate some types of ‘knowledge’ (or evidence) as relevant to their conclusions and others as not. While WSR may explain *some* aspects of the Middle East’s international politics excellently, a substantial amount remains inexplicable or ignored. WSC fills in these analytical gaps and allows analysts to rethink WSR’s faulty causal relationships and poorly understood variables. Both theories occupy central places within the IR literature, and both have been successfully deployed in the analysis of case studies in the Middle East. Still, neither theory is entirely uniform or coherent; each represents broad schools of thought where multiple factions and perspectives vie for relevance and dominance within the particular discipline of IR and the general faculties of the social sciences.

Both theories (WSR and WSC) are single varieties among many, each with its own pluses and minuses. Realism exists in the Classical, Neo-Classical, Structural, Offensive and Defensive prototypes, while Constructivism is less easy to label since enormous differences exist within its own ranks at the meta-theoretical levels of ontology and epistemology.[4] In order to avoid becoming bogged down in the theoretical minutiae and multiple points of view available within both WSR and WSC – condensed and necessarily over-simplified versions of each theory – will be presented in this chapter, and then applied to the case studies of Iranian-Israeli relations in the following chapters. The narrow yet cogent theoretical frameworks used in this paper are Structural Realism, developed singlehandedly by Kenneth Waltz (WSR), and the brand of Social Constructivism advanced by Alexander Wendt (WSC). Although much of the richness and diversity of each theoretical tradition will be neglected by using only the work of these two theorists, it is the price that must be paid to create a standard model of each theory. That being said, the remainder of this chapter will outline their main assumptions and arguments and the relevance of these to the 62-year old Iranian-Israeli bilateral relationship.

### Waltzian Structural Realist (WSR) Theory

Realism as a general school of thought within IR traces its roots all the way back to Thucydides and his 2500-year old retelling of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta in Ancient Greece.[5] Since then, other scholars claimed by modern Realists as intellectual precursors to their own strands of thought include St. Augustine of Hippo (5<sup>th</sup> century CE), Niccolò Machiavelli (16<sup>th</sup> century), Thomas Hobbes (17<sup>th</sup> century), Carl von Clausewitz (19<sup>th</sup> century), and Hans Morgenthau (20<sup>th</sup> century).[6] Many others could be named, but these thinkers are the most famous and the most cited in terms of original political philosophy, and much Realist theory has been developed in the process of either agreeing or arguing with them. Recurring Realist concepts involve war, power, the balance of power, security, strategy, alliances, and arms races. This paper is only concerned with a single vein of Realist

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

thought – one of the most recent, in fact – as it was articulated by a single thinker. Neo-Realism (or Structural Realism, as it is also known) is laid out in the thought of Kenneth Waltz and is best expressed in his seminal work, *Theory of International Politics*.<sup>[7]</sup> It is this specific variant of Realism, Waltzian Structural Realism (WSR), which will be applied to Iranian-Israeli relations in the rest of this paper.

For the second-half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and well into the 21<sup>st</sup>, Waltz has been one of the leading figures in Realist thought. In an earlier publication entitled *Man, the State and War*, Waltz made a name for himself within IR by identifying the main causes of international war at three different levels, an idea which has caught on as the 'levels-of-analysis' problem.<sup>[8]</sup> Essentially, Waltz proposed that war was the result of processes or events taking place at one or more of the following three analytical levels: the individual (unit-level variable) or human nature, the state (intermediate-level variable) or national unit, and the interstate system (systemic-level variable) or international structure. What *Theory of International Politics* does is effectively cancel out the first two levels and allow the systemic or structural level to determine the frequency and probability of war between states. Hence, 'Structural' Realism refers to the structural/systemic-level of the interstate political system and discards the 'Classical' political philosophy of centuries past which tended to explain the occurrence and likelihood of war with descriptive unit-level variables, something Waltz would reject as 'reductionist' and 'unscientific' according to his particular formulation of systemic, social scientific theory.<sup>[9]</sup>

Before getting into the substance of Waltz's theory, it is important to acknowledge some issues of meta-theory. WSR is an ontologically 'rationalist' and epistemologically 'positivist' theory of politics. This is a fancy way of saying that the interstate system seen through Realist lenses consists of 'rational' state actors competing with each other in pursuit of self-interest (ontology) and that it is possible to build a theory out of these types of observations thanks to methods of rigorous and parsimonious theoretical falsification (epistemology). Waltz himself acknowledges that the intellectual inspiration behind his *Theory of International Politics* is derived from two principal sources: theories of philosophy of science and economics. Some of the philosophers of science most cited by Waltz are those interested in empirical and rigorous construction of theory, like Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, and especially Imre Lakatos, while theories of economics are derived from both the 'micro' and 'macro' ends of the spectrum – microeconomics for the rational calculations of individual unit actors and macroeconomics for the structural determinants acting on these same units – in this case, states versus systems.<sup>[10]</sup> This new and improved iteration of Realism, WSR, has reenergized and reinvented this particular theoretical tradition ever since the 1980s and continues to do so even today.

WSR can at its simplest be boiled down to three core assumptions about states and about the nature of the international system to which they belong and in which they interact. Firstly, the ordering principle of the international state system is anarchical rather than hierarchical, meaning not that chaos and disorder are to be expected but that there is no overriding authority able to supersede the legitimate claim to sovereignty of each state.<sup>[11]</sup> Simply put, each state has ultimate authority over its citizens, within its legal borders and over its entire territorial, maritime, and aerial jurisdiction. Because no state answers to a higher authority than itself and the international system is populated by similarly sovereign and independent entities, it is said that a condition of international anarchy therefore exists where the survival of each state unit is not guaranteed. In order to assure their survival, states are driven to accumulate power, which in turn provides security. Each state is a self-interested, rational actor seeking to maximize its own chances of survival and obsessed with acquiring power towards that end. Consistent with the international or systemic level of analysis, war then results from the absence of an authority structure analogous to the national level which would otherwise inhibit the use of force between states in international society, not because of human nature or domestic politics.

The second Waltzian assumption is the non-differentiation of function among units within the same system. In this case, the function of all states is the same: to protect its citizens and territory from abroad while providing for law, order and domestic stability at home.<sup>[12]</sup> Because each state performs the same functions (ensuring survival and providing security), this second proposition – differentiation of function – drops out of Waltz's theoretical equation.<sup>[13]</sup> This proposition, of course, is only negligible according to Waltz if all state functions are virtually identical from one state to the next. If the ostensibly secondary state functions of economic prosperity, environmental sustainability and foreign assistance differ across states, then the theoretical strength of this second Waltzian assumption is suddenly called into question.

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

The third and final assumption is that the distribution of capabilities among functionally alike states determines the balance of power between them. In other words, all states possess power resources (capabilities) which act as countervailing forces for the power resources of other states.[14] In turn, the *status quo* of the international system becomes a situation in which no single state can dominate all others, and relative rather than absolute gains become of paramount concern as each state attempts to 'one-up' the other.[15] Given the small number of states with both the capacity and the desire to dominate this type of system, international anarchy and great power conflict conform to the 'logic of small number systems.'[16] Basically, this final assumption posits that the balance of power only considers great powers seriously and relegates minor or middle powers to near-irrelevance.

These assumptions about the structure of the international state system and the nature of the states populating it lead to several hypotheses about state behaviour within that system. Perhaps the most important theoretical hypothesis – and conclusion – of WSR is that states are more likely to 'balance' against rising powers and growing threats than to 'bandwagon' with them.[17] This 'balance-of-power' theory of international politics grants states the autonomy to choose whether the most prudent balancing act is internal (allocating more national resources to military and economic security) or external (forming alignments and alliances with states possessing similar interests and, thus, similar enemies). WSR, along with virtually all Realist-inspired theories, is first and foremost concerned with stability over justice, power over morality, and continuity over change.[18]

Waltz also considers the issue of polarity (how many poles, or great powers, exist in one system) and concludes that bipolar systems are more stable than unipolar or multipolar ones. To see why this is so, it is useful to distinguish between 'internal' and 'external' forms of balancing. Internal balancing arises when one state uses its own resources and capabilities to counterbalance its enemies' resources and capabilities. External balancing refers to allying or aligning with similarly threatened states, rather than relying solely on one's own power, in order to balance against other states.[19] According to these classifications, then, unipolar systems involve only internal balancing by definition – if one powerful state dominates the interstate system, then no comparable powers amenable to external balancing exist.[20] Internal balancing also involves internalizing many of the costs of maintaining international peace and security, and so is inherently unstable.[21] Multipolar systems, however, are much less predictable and much more uncertain since both types of balancing occur, essentially adding more variables to a nominally parsimonious balance of power equation. Therefore, bipolar systems are the most predictably certain and stable systems since the external type of balancing is eliminated, leaving internal balancing as the only indicator of a system's evolutionary trajectory as a whole.[22]

At a time when many feared the possibility of unrestrained nuclear warfare between the two Cold War superpowers, Waltz predicted that the inability of either side to successfully overcome the other's nuclear deterrent through their own internal efforts made bipolarity that much stronger and more stable.[23] Precisely because of its theoretical parsimony and empirical rigour, WSR is a benchmark and a milestone for IR theory. This is true not only for Realist thought and its supporters but for its detractors as well, especially considering how much intellectual fodder it has provided over the years for many of WSR's critics.

## Wendtian Social Constructivist (WSC) Theory

As a school of thought, Constructivism owes an enormous intellectual debt to the fields of sociology and sociological institutionalism for its fluidity and versatility.[24] Epistemologically 'rationalist' and 'positivist' theories dominated the IR literature for much of the discipline's history and continue to retain impressive staying power in the face of post-positivist critiques. Constructivism, straddling the divide between positivist and post-positivist epistemologies, made its semi-official debut in IR theory in the 1980s as theoretical pluralism flourished and the Cold War's ideological straitjacket came undone.[25] It is difficult to say when, but Constructivist scholars began to make their mark sometime between IR's Third and Fourth 'Great Debates,' a time of intellectual creativity and theoretical diversity beginning sometime in the 1970s and continuing to the present day.[26] During this period of time, many parochial versions of Constructivism – Wendtian Social Constructivism (WSC) among them – have emerged as serious competitors among IR theories under the general banner of Constructivism.

Unlike Realism and thanks to the interdisciplinary nature of Constructivism's origins, it is no easy feat to track its

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

intellectual genealogy. Nevertheless, some of the most prominent scholars include Nicholas Onuf, Friedrich Kratochwil, Peter Katzenstein and Martha Finnemore, just to name a few.[27] These Constructivists examine materialist concepts like positivist-minded Realists but emphasize the social and non-material variables as well, variables like the constructed nature of all politics, national and cultural identities, values, norms, and beliefs, processes of learning and adaptation, and the underlying dynamics of change (and continuity) in the international system of states. Constructivist theory is also more engaged in understanding the 'constitutive' nature of international political issues, not so much in explaining them as in the case of Realism.[28] Still, one of the few and only attempts to evolve Constructivism beyond an ontological viewpoint or methodological tool within IR and construct a logically consistent and internally coherent theory was Alexander Wendt's pivotal study, sardonically titled *Social Theory of International Politics* in light of Waltz's 'asocial' theory.[29] This unique brand of Constructivist theory, from here on referred to as WSC, will be employed later on in the analysis of Iranian-Israeli bilateral relations.

As was done with Realism, it may help the meta-theoretically minded to briefly examine the ontological and epistemological bases of Constructivism. Robert O. Keohane's 1988 presidential address to the International Studies Association inaugurated the meta-theoretical division between 'rationalist' and 'reflectivist' theories, essentially parallel to the positivist/post-positivist divide.[30] In terms of meta-theory, rationalism (as in rational-choice theory) espouses a foundationalist ontology, positivist or empiricist epistemology, and quantitative methodology while reflectivism is ontologically anti-foundationalist, epistemologically post-positivist or interpretivist, and methodologically qualitative. Realism – whether Structural or any other kind – is a rationalist theory because it explicitly assumes that unit-level actors are rational, goal-oriented, and self-interested entities. WSC, as with many other theories employing post-positivist epistemologies, is a reflectivist theory, or at least it is according to Keohane's dichotomy. This simply highlights the fact that the nature of reality is not taken as objective, absolute or independent of perception but is instead seen as subjective, relative, and dependent upon the viewer's biases and (mis)perceptions. These distinctions between Realist and Constructivist theories at the level of meta-theory are incredibly significant within IR since they provide different philosophical models and starting points for theoretical investigation.

WSC shares some principles with WSR that other variants of each theoretical school of thought normally do not. First off, states remain the primary units of the international system and the most important actors on the international stage. This is not a starting assumption shared by other Constructivist scholars who emphasize the social construction of the nation-state just as much as any other aspect of the international system. Another key similarity between Waltz and Wendt is where they stand on the agent-structure debate, or the issue of free-will versus determinism. Both theorists are most comfortable with a top-down approach to international politics, purposely fashioning a more systemic, structural or deterministic theory as a result. The third and final parallel between Wendt's and Waltz's theories is the reality and unavoidability of anarchy, meaning that the only real difference between *Social Theory of International Politics* and *Theory of International Politics* is precisely what the titles imply: the 'social' aspect of politics at the international level. It is important to note, however, that Wendt does not see anarchy as leading inevitably and inexorably to conflict as does Waltz but claims instead that 'anarchy is what states make of it,' allowing agent-actors to prevail over structural-systemic anarchy and achieve cooperation.[31] Clearly, this means that anarchy – a very real construct – can lead either to conflict or cooperation, depending on how states acting and interacting under anarchical conditions choose to alter their behaviours and perceptions.

For all their similarities, WSC diverges from WSR in key ways, with three core ontological propositions about social life standing out more than others.[32] In general, Realists adhere to an asocial conception of interstate interaction where national interests are formed prior to socialization and states enter into social relationships only in order to achieve their interest-based goals. Constructivists argue that interests are not formed in this way, which leads to the first ontological difference between themselves and Realists. For Constructivists, interests need not be formed in isolation and pre-socialization by universally similar 'rational actors,' but they can be formed and transformed via social interaction and by differences in identities. Social identities at the domestic and international level are central pieces of information for post-positivists and political analysts exactly because "identities are the basis of interests." [33] To better understand national identity, social variables ignored by Realists like language, culture, ethnicity, religion, and gender need to be included in analysis.

# **The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations**

Written by Uri Marantz

The second difference of ontology between WSC and WSR involves one of their similarities: acceptance of the influence of social and political structures on the interests and actions of agents within that structure, or units within that system. 'Material' forces and structures are privileged by Realists above all else since they are the only relevant forces and structures acting upon the relevant actors. Constructivists recognize the importance of material concepts like arms, militaries, and balances of power, but they are also complemented by 'ideational' or 'normative' forces and structures like values, beliefs, cultures, and ideologies. The stress here is laid on shared ideas and understandings, all of which are socially constructed but which cannot be given meaning without a material basis. After all, "material resources only acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded." [34] Simply put, there is more to the world and its political happenings than purely material variables would suggest; the material and ideational are mutually constitutive and reinforcing. Socio-ideational factors are added to the material ones to facilitate understanding.

The third and final difference relates to the agent-structure debate. It has already been shown that pre-Waltzian 'Classical' Realists tend to privilege unit-level variables – whether individuals, elite groups, states, or otherwise – over systemic-level ones and that WSR places structural determinism ahead of agential free-will in the search for a superior theory. WSC, on the other hand, takes a different approach. As with most critical theorists, Constructivists are of the position that agents and structures are mutually constitutive; that is, they recreate and reconstitute one another in such a fashion that neither side of the debate is able to dominate or eliminate the other. This is somewhat like the way in which Neo-Classical Realism simultaneously examines agent- and structure-level variables, as opposed to the Classical Realist focus on agents/units and Structural Realism's preoccupation with structures/systems. [35] Therefore, agents and structures cannot be studied in isolation but must interact and be studied in tandem since "it is through reciprocal interaction that we create and instantiate the relatively enduring social structures in terms of which we define our identities and interests." [36] All three differences effectively introduce the 'social' into the study – and theory – of international politics.

## **Conclusion**

The interdisciplinary field of International Relations offers a wide range of theoretical positions and frameworks for explaining and understanding issues and events of international political importance. Of these varied and multifaceted theories, WSR and WSC are two of the most rigorous, concise, and inclusive. In the following two chapters, the conundrum of Iranian-Israeli relations over the past 60 years will be analyzed through the prism of these two theoretical frameworks. Together, Realist and Constructivist theory will collectively promote the explanation and understanding of material and non-material (social and ideational) aspects of the relationship, contributing to a fuller and more sophisticated theoretical examination of Iranian-Israeli relations between 1948 and 2010. These Realist and Constructivist concepts are in most instances applied to empirical cases implicitly since this chapter has already provided the necessary intellectual basis for the theory. Therefore, the tools of each theory are automatically applied to the relevant case studies unless otherwise stated.

## **Chapter 3: Literature Review**

Although the Iranian-Israeli rivalry has in recent years attracted more attention than ever before, it has not always resulted in well-informed or even well-intentioned analyses. To hone in on a more realistic image of the bilateral relationship between Iran and Israel, it is crucial to first examine the wide range of existing literature. In the course of compiling a literature review on any topic, it helps to keep some questions in mind. What is the purpose of this review? How wide-ranging is its breadth and depth? Who is the target audience and how are they affected? This review attempts to answer these questions and more as it provides a basic introduction to Iranian-Israeli relations in six sections: security and foreign policy; power, strategy, and geopolitics; triangular Iranian-American-Israeli relations; terrorism, proxies, and covert operations; nuclear technology, policy, and weaponry, and perceptions, psychologies, and identities. [37] Iranian-Israeli relations over the past 62 years – from 1948 to 2010 – are examined critically and analytically so as to connect previously disparate conceptual dots and lay the groundwork for a thoughtful and theoretical consideration of this conflict.

## **Security and Foreign Policy**

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

It should come as no surprise that in a region as potentially unstable and insecure as the Middle East, Iranian and Israeli security and foreign policy concerns are of prime importance. Both countries have experienced large-scale warfare in the past few decades with the perpetual threat of a renewal in hostilities emanating from former enemies (often neighbours) with legitimate or perceived grievances, intrusive and meddlesome foreign (super)powers, or the demands of the international community (IGOs like the United Nations and the European Union or NGOs like human rights and democracy regimes).[38] Therefore, achieving, maintaining, and increasing national security remains the dominant concern in virtually all Middle East states.[39] In other words, national security is the common theme for all national actors in the region.

Here a distinction needs to be made between national security and foreign policy. Although national security is often considered to be an indivisible part of a country's foreign policy, the two are logically distinct. National security refers in this context to national threats emanating both from within and from outside of that state's borders. Foreign policy, however, addresses only those threats to the state which originate from beyond national boundaries. Regardless, the two often overlap, and so conceptual distinctions between 'national security' and 'foreign policy' break down and become less rigid and well-defined as they merge and blend into one another.[40] In the literature, these broad categories represent useful theoretical constructs, but in a region as insecure, unpredictable, and conflict-ridden as the Middle East, national security and foreign policy might as well be studied together rather than separately.

Making the transition from national security to foreign policy is not difficult in the Middle East since a whole host of foreign, regional and international issues have immediate consequences at the domestic, national and sub-national levels. Consider the American-led 'War on Terror' in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, a doctrine which explicitly labelled some regimes as sponsors and supporters of terrorism and legitimized their invasion and regime change, something which then proceeded to take place in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003). In this particular case, a state's foreign policy orientation – in essence, pro- or anti-American – can have implications that resonate far beyond that state's national security boundaries and go on to affect regional and international security.[41] On the other hand, in the early 1990s the bipolar security environment that had characterized the Cold War for half a century disappeared. Gradually, foreign policy in the Middle East became less polarized between rival superpower blocs and regional powers began to assume greater autonomy and significance in their own affairs, giving minor powers and regional politics more autonomy than great-power international politics had previously allowed.[42] More than ever before, today it is difficult to determine where the dividing lines are between national, regional, and international levels of security, and what their relation is – or should be – to foreign policy. Meta-theoretical changes in the social sciences – post-positivist epistemologies, for instance – have spilled over into the fields of 'security studies' and 'foreign policy' within political science, and have resulted in more interdisciplinary, interdependent, and interrelated types of studies in both fields.

The field of security studies generally encompasses the national, regional and international levels of analysis altogether. While 'traditional' security studies are still largely synonymous with the military and geopolitical issues of the Cold War era, 'critical' security studies have arisen as a result of the societal, environmental, economic, and other types of security concerns that have eclipsed the so-called traditional ones.[43] Certain structural factors, like the region's democratic deficit, militarized and authoritarian states, inefficient and rentier economies, young and vulnerable populations, the unequal distribution of resources throughout the region, and massively underdeveloped civil societies reduce the immediate relevance of critical security studies in favour of traditional security issues.[44] Foreign policy studies have followed the same general trajectory as security studies – along with the political and social sciences, for the most part – in moving from a focus on the traditional to the critical, from ontologically rationalist, epistemologically positivist and methodologically quantitative theories to more reflectivist, interpretivist and qualitative understandings of theory. These latter theoretical variables all add to the number and types of variables relevant to foreign policy analysis.[45] As security studies and foreign policy analysis have become more conceptually complex and analytically dynamic fields of study, their growing abilities to shed new light on the nature of Iranian-Israeli relations have only become more evident.

## Power, Strategy, and Geopolitics

The concepts of power, strategy and geopolitics are closely linked to Realist thought in IR. Power politics and

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

balances of power, closely related concepts, are often used to justify or rationalize the onset of war in the Middle East. In a similar way, ever since the United States (US) ousted Saddam Hussein in Iraq and eliminated the strategic threat that he posed to regional stability and international security, the dominant Arab-Israeli conflict in the region has been superseded by the Iranian-Israeli one. Just as wars between Arabs and Israelis were (and continue to be) the result of the former conflict, wars between Iran and Israel could result from this newer conflict.[46] The concepts of war, conflict, power, and strategy remain pertinent themes in the Middle East.

The roots of this Iranian-Israeli discontent can be traced back to Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979, an event which replaced the autocratic rule of the Shah with that of an Islamic fundamentalist government. An interesting phenomenon is that most revolutionary governments – as idealistic and romantic as their revolutions may be – eventually succumb with time to the harsh realities of governing and tend to moderate their zeal and fervour accordingly. A stark exception to this rule in Iran's case is its raging anti-Zionism, an inexplicably vigorous policy since it targets a country with which Iran shares no historical grievances or territorial disputes.[47] A puzzling question emerges from this enigma: if no tangible reason exists for the origin, duration, intensity, or universality of hostilities between Iran and Israel, then what could lead to its resolution? Put differently, do any material incentives or non-material (ideational) policy shifts hold the proverbial keys to reconciling Iranian-Israeli differences?

The answers may lie in Iran's growing regional ties to the 'rejectionist front' of the Arab-Israeli peace process. Iran's creeping influence has been linked to Israel's 2006 war with Hezbollah in Lebanon, its 2008-09 war with Hamas in Gaza, and overall Syrian intransigence, startling developments that unite the hitherto disparate Arab-Israeli and Iranian-Israeli conflicts.[48] Whether the remaining 'moderate' and pro-US Arab states (Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, etc.) befriend Iran and isolate Israel or tacitly ally with Israel against Iran and its more 'radical' and anti-US Arab allies (Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas) will determine which way the regional balance of power tilts.[49] Regardless of what the future holds in store for the balance of power between Arabs, Iranians, and Israelis, loyalties and alliances in the Middle East are known to change suddenly and abruptly. This is a lesson which has been made painfully clear by Turkey's gradual eastward drift towards the Islamic World and away from the secular West.[50] Predicting these shifts remains central to a better theoretical understanding of the region.

Although some historical context may seem out of place in a literature review, it is important to introduce some key facts, dates, and trends at this point. Two other issues of geopolitical and strategic importance which should be mentioned are energy and Israeli legitimacy/recognition. Beginning with oil, it would seem that pipeline construction should follow the straightest and shortest path – from source to destination. Since the 1950s, however, oil pipelines have been built within instead of across national borders since security concerns have impeded the market's normal operating logic.[51] Pipelines are not the only method of transporting petroleum and natural gas but remain essential for the global supply and the international economy. Iran accounts for a large share of energy exports to industrialized countries and has not been afraid to use this fact to its advantage by periodically threatening to blockade the Persian Gulf – a vital energy corridor for overseas Middle East exports – and disrupt global energy flows to deter potential American or Israeli aggression.[52] Iran's bellicosity in this regard is a far cry from the days (1950s to 1970s) when it satisfied the majority of Israel's energy demands.[53]

In addition to the realm of bilateral energy cooperation, Iran was one of the earliest Muslim-majority countries to grant Israel a significant sign of diplomatic legitimacy – *de facto* recognition in 1950, second only to Turkey in 1949. At first this recognition signalled an increase in economic ties and technical assistance between Iran, Israel, and by extension the communities of the sub-Indian continent, but eventually evolved into a dynamic and strategic balance between fellow non-Arab states in an Arab-dominated region.[54] These are all powerfully, strategically, and geopolitically significant issues; nonetheless, they represent only some of the many proverbial pieces of the puzzle of Iranian-Israeli cooperation and conflict. Other variables need to be introduced into the theoretical equation if the ongoing patterns of amity and enmity between Iran and Israel are to be fully explained.

## Triangular Iranian-American-Israeli Relations

The unique, decades-long triangular relationship between Iran, Israel, and the United States has taken many forms over the years. Bilateral relations between the Americans and the Iranians had begun even before World War I, with



# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

Israel's bilateral relationships beginning shortly after its independence in 1948 and trilateral relations taking still longer to develop. Compared to other imperial powers of the time, like Britain, France, and Russia, American involvement in Iran and the Persian Gulf area is quite recent. The most audacious case of American (and British) intervention (and Israeli support) in Iranian affairs dates back to 1952-53 when popular revolts led by Mohammad Mossadegh – a highly charismatic and nationalistic leader aiming, along with other projects, to nationalize Iran's oil industry – deposed the Shah. Less than a year later he was ousted from power himself and replaced with the Shah after the US' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) backed an organized coup against him.[55] The ebb and flow of these tripartite relations for the most part followed the general pattern of Iranian-Israeli bilateral relations, so that during the Cold War years their collective anti-Soviet and anti-Arab political and security interests coincided. This remained true for some time following Iran's 1979 revolution simply because Iraq was an Arab state, a Soviet client, and a growing security liability for Iran, Israel, and the United States. In short, it was in the interests of all three states for Iran to counterbalance against a growing Iraqi threat.[56] Without the Iraqi threat, the US and Israel may perceive Iran to be the newest and most potent threat to their interests in the region.

The unstable and inherently ambiguous balance of power leads to interesting and contradictory regional configurations of friend and foe, ally and enemy. During the Cold War years, American, Iranian, and Israeli political and strategic interests lay in balancing against the ideological forces of pan-Arabism, Socialism and Communism. The most infamous case of American-Iranian-Israeli covert cooperation, the Iran-Contra Affair of the 1980s, reveals just how shallow rhetoric aimed at pleasing domestic constituents and achieving foreign policy goals can be. For Iran to resist Iraqi aggression – an aggression which the international community did little to curtail after having helped Saddam Hussein build one of the fiercest armies the Middle East had ever seen – it secretly acquired arms from the 'Big Satan' (the US) and smuggled them through the 'Little Satan' (Israel), an event indicative of the level to which these three countries had become strategically and geopolitically intertwined.[57] Trilateral relations since the 1979 Revolution remain complex.[58] It is clear that even the flamboyantly rhetorical and ideological nature of the revolutionary regime in Iran failed to rupture contacts and connections that took decades to develop between it and the West – at least not immediately.

This three-way relationship quickly collapsed shortly after 1979 and only remained suppressed because of common security interests throughout the remainder of the 1980s. Ever since both the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) and the Cold War came to an end, Iran and Israel have been locked in a hegemonic struggle for power and influence in the region.[59] One creative way to resolve this struggle for hegemony involves admitting Israel into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and working with Europe to contain Iran in an American-dominated Middle East, though Iranian and/or Israeli acceptance of this plan is highly dubious.[60] It is an inescapable reality that the US-Israeli special relationship is bolstered by similar values and convergent regional interests, whereas dissimilar values and divergent regional interests between Iran and the West translate to conflict and antipathy.[61] Interestingly, this three-way interaction has over the decades changed forms and followed the logic of various patterns at different times: from tacit alliance and extensive collaboration (1948-79) to covert cooperation (1979-88) and, finally, to overtly strategic and ideological conflict (1988-2010).

Regional analyses rather than narrowly national ones have also made the link between these three countries. The Arab-Israeli Levant and the Persian Gulf regions of the Middle East are traditionally thought of as independent regions, but systemic-level analysis points to a high level of interdependence and shared destiny between these two regions that would link Iran and Israel in ways that transcend traditional analyses.[62] In a way, this is exactly what Trita Parsi's *Treacherous Alliance* has done, quickly becoming one of the most probing, incisive and inclusive analyses of strategic and pragmatic relations between the US, Iran and Israel.[63] Critics have been quick to point out, however, that Parsi's work relies too much on interviews with questionable sources and personalities, in effect resembling a journalist's shocking and provocative prose rather than the detached and methodical approach of a political analyst or diplomatic historian.[64] Regardless, any attempt to make analytical sense of Iranian-Israeli bilateral relations must include the US and account for the trilateral dynamic between these three countries.

## Terrorism, Proxies, and Covert Operations

A proper analysis of Iranian-Israeli bilateral relations would not be complete without examining the effects of

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

terrorism, proxy agents and clandestine operations. There can be no question that the tragic events of September 11, 2001, altered the definitions of 'terrorism, terrorists and terror' for the public imagination, even for scholarly discourse.[65] In former US President George W. Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address, Iran was singled out along with Iraq and North Korea as part of the now-famous 'Axis of Evil' in an effort to collectively brand these countries as terrorist sponsors and rationalize their future regime change. However, the link made between Iran and terrorism precedes 9/11 by decades; fears of Iran's Shiite revolutionary fervour influencing the mostly Sunni Arab Middle East states and fomenting pockets of anti-Western, fundamentalist Islamic mini-states were clear from 1979 onwards.[66]

This eventuality soon came to pass in the guise of Hezbollah, a radical Shiite Lebanese movement initially formed in order to resist Israeli invasions into and occupation of Lebanon during the early 1980s. This group was supported ideologically, militarily, and financially by Iranian Revolutionary Guards since its inception in 1982, a situation which has changed very little today.[67] With Iranian backing, Hezbollah militants not only waged an 18-year long guerrilla war against Israel until the latter unilaterally pulled out in 2000, but Hezbollah-linked suicide bombers killed 241 US servicemen and 58 French paratroopers in 1983 in a series of coordinated suicide bombings on their military barracks in Beirut, Lebanon.[68] Iran's support for groups actively engaged in terrorism and classified as terrorist organizations – like Hezbollah and Hamas – only cements the conceptual linkage between Iran and terror in the West.

Hamas and Hezbollah have become increasingly important players in regional politics for many reasons, but none is arguably as central as Iranian support. Hezbollah's origins and ideologies differ in key respects from Hamas', which was founded in 1987 as a Sunni fundamentalist group and as a result of the First Palestinian Intifada.[69] Nevertheless, both possess anti-Western, anti-Zionist, anti-American and pro-Palestinian sentiments along with traditional Islamic values, making the revolutionary Iranian regime a natural ally in the struggle to annihilate Israel and liberate Palestine. This reality has led some analysts to proclaim the materialization of an 'Islamist Axis' opposed to secularism, modernity and the *status quo* in the Middle East.[70] Israel's wars with Hezbollah in Lebanon during the summer of 2006 and Hamas in Gaza during the winter of 2008-09, along with periodic increases in tensions with its northern neighbour Syria, only reinforce the image of an increasingly powerful Iran menacing Israel from afar via its regional proxies.

Aside from their very public provocations and recriminations, Iran and Israel are also locked into a not-so-public struggle of covert operations, political subterfuge, clandestine subversion and top-secret espionage. Not only did the Mossad – Israel's top spy agency – have a direct hand in the CIA-led ouster of Iran's populist President Mossadegh in 1953, but they also provided extensive military training and material support to the Shah's notorious secret services, SAVAK, from the 1950s to the 1970s.[71] It is indeed ironic that Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the elite military protectorate of the regime, received much of its expertise from Israel's support for its precursor under the Shah, SAVAK, and is now reusing those same skills against Israel by training and supplying its regional proxies: Hamas, Hezbollah, and to a lesser extent, Syria. Furthermore, a clandestine war of intelligence is currently underway between Iran and Israel as the Iranians step up their influence abroad by supporting these terrorist proxies and Israel jumps on the American bandwagon and continues the American-inaugurated 'War on Terror' in the wake of 9/11.[72] The polarizing narrative of 'who is a terrorist' and 'what is terror' becomes painfully evident here, as is the endless loop of political intrigue and covert operations undertaken by both states.

## Nuclear Technology, Policy, and Weaponry

Nuclear weapons and nuclear proliferation pose momentous problems for security and stability in the Middle East. More than anywhere else in the world, nuclear weapons would fundamentally alter the strategic balance of power in the region. Nuclear policy, weaponry and non-proliferation were not always points of contention between Iran and Israel, but they have become especially sensitive in the past decade. Both countries have long histories of nuclear program development and were greatly aided in this regard by the West as stalwart allies in the Cold War struggle against Communist influence. The West was never threatened by nuclear programs within Iran or Israel during the Cold War, but the regime change in Iran after 1979 clearly reversed the perceptions of Western countries and Israel to the potentially irrational and ideological nature of a nuclear Iran.[73] As a secular autocrat, the Shah of Iran was at

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

least predictable because the West had assumed that his actions were guided by a rational mind; the same could not be said about the fundamentalist clerics and ayatollahs who replaced him, however. Whenever nuclear power, policy, technology or weaponry is discussed or debated in the Middle East today, contention and provocation arise primarily as a result of Iranian-Israeli interactions.[74]

Iran's nuclear program dates back to the 1950s when the Western powers protected Iran as a bastion of secularism and modernity threatened by the Arab World's volatility and hostility and the expansionist tendencies of the Soviet Union.[75] Ever since the Islamic Revolution, many have questioned Iran's desire to resume its nuclear program for a number of reasons: many of the countries involved in Iran's nuclear program pre-1979 abruptly pulled out afterwards, freezing assets and leaving construction sites unfinished; much of the country's nuclear infrastructure was heavily damaged after an 8-year long war with Iraq; and an almost total American dominance of the region and the international system at the end of the Cold War.[76] Since 2006, four rounds of sanctions have been slapped on Iran through the United Nations in an effort to prevent the country from enriching uranium and producing fissile material that could be used in nuclear weapons on top of its failure to meet the transparency and openness demands of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).[77] Iran has been repeatedly censured by the international community in its quest to develop nuclear technology.

Israel, for its part, began research on nuclear technology shortly after its independence and received critical help from France and Great Britain, developing nuclear weapons capabilities by the early to mid-1960s.[78] Cooperation with outside powers and peripheral countries in the Middle East has been a cornerstone of Israeli foreign, defence and security policies since the days of Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, and this policy applied to Israel's development of nuclear technology and weaponry just as it did in many other respects.[79] Israel has never actually threatened to decimate any of its neighbours or enemies with a nuclear attack, but it has acted swiftly and decisively in order to thwart the nuclear ambitions of its neighbours. For example, the Israeli Air Force bombed Iraqi and Syrian construction sites in 1981 and 2007, respectively, to prevent the development of nuclear installations in these countries.[80] It goes without saying that Israel considers nuclear policy and potential proliferation in the region to be of the utmost importance.[81] A broader question remains: why do some countries deem it to be in their national interests to invest substantial resources in the development of nuclear technology and weaponry while others take a completely different path to achieve similar goals?

Standard nuclear deterrence theory would seem to suggest that nuclear weapons provide power, security, influence, respectability, status and prestige on the regional and international stages.[82] Many of these reasons may apply to Israel, though it has of course neither confirmed nor denied that it possesses nuclear weapons, an uneasy reality that no doubt fails to assuage the worries and fears of its Arab and non-Arab neighbours alike.[83] By the same logic, one state's (un)declared acquisition of nuclear weapons could be construed as a threat for others and spiral out of control in the form of a region-wide nuclear arms race.[84] In some ways, the United States has only exacerbated this problem by adopting a double standard in its approach to nuclear states, the most glaring contradiction being their divergent policies towards Iranian and Israeli nuclear programs.[85] Regardless, the point to be made clear here is that the issue of nuclear technology, weapons and proliferation is one that cannot be avoided in the Middle East or in the analysis of Iranian-Israeli relations.

## Perceptions, Psychologies, and Identities

This final section deals with the psychological or ideational aspect of Iranian-Israeli relations. Some variables in the relationship cannot be quantified or measured in a positivistic sense, like the 'self' and 'other' narratives, identities and perceptions.[86] Public perceptions and popular stereotypes exist within both the Iranian and Israeli populations, and once engrained are not easy to remove.[87] Ever since 1979, Iranians have been taught to picture Israel as an illegitimate entity left over from the colonial era that can only survive by manipulating the United States.[88] Israel, on the other hand, has considered Iran to be the primary existential threat to the Jewish State – more dangerous even than its Arab neighbours – ever since Ahmadinejad assumed the presidency in 2005 due to his anti-Semitic Holocaust denial, anti-Zionist inflammatory rhetoric and anti-Western nuclear defiance and support of terrorism.[89] Iran and Israel are thus locked into a self-perpetuating struggle over images, perceptions and conceptions.

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

On an individual level, psychological and psychoanalytical approaches can be used to resolve interpersonal conflicts; by analogy, these approaches can similarly be applied to international disputes. Israel's national pulse has been revealed most poignantly in the context of Palestinian-Israeli relations and the ongoing peace process, but what it reveals about the functioning of Israel's collective psyche is just as applicable to its relationship with Iran.[90] The connection between psychology and international relationships also has some bearing on issues of identity politics. Questions of identity politics in the Middle East have only been explored in the political sciences fairly recently, and have found firm footing in the subfields of political science known as foreign policy and international relations.[91] These are important developments since past attempts to predict and explain political behaviour in the Middle East have been less than successful.[92] Simply put, they have failed to factor in the psychological, ideational and identity-based variables.

Identity issues cannot be ignored when considering Iranian-Israeli domestic politics or bilateral and international relations. Both countries are dominated by a single ethno-cultural and quasi-religious 'in-group' that perceives itself to be surrounded by potentially hostile 'outsiders' and enemies. Whereas the Arab 'nation' is spread across many states in the Middle East, Iran and Israel are two states in which the two 'nations' of Persians and Jews are more-or-less confined within the borders of a single state.[93] As the largest Jewish Diaspora in the Middle East, the case of Persian Jews is truly unique and adds another variable to the equation of Iranian-Israeli relations.[94] Wherever they go, Diasporas and outside groups often encounter racism, discrimination and – in the Jewish case – anti-Semitism in their adopted lands.[95] Diasporas emerge precisely because social groups cling steadfastly to the cultures and identities they import from their home countries. The psychology behind the promotion of their identities in foreign lands and the perceptions they hold of themselves (and others) are integral tools not only for understanding Diasporas and their politics but also for Iranian-Israeli relations and their implications.

## Conclusion

It is clear that Iranian-Israeli relations span a wide range of thematic and practical topics. Historical context is needed for any substantive analysis in the social sciences, and decoding the puzzle of Iranian-Israeli relations is no exception. Considering how dense and murky the metaphorical waters of their bilateral relations are, this literature review has attempted to provide the most general but concise picture of contemporary relations between Iran and Israel. Furthermore, it has identified key aspects of the relationship which have been the traditional foci of attention among scholars and within the literature. Of the dozen-or-so books and scores of journal articles directly related to the enigma that is Iranian-Israeli relations, this paper adds a theoretical dimension to what has mainly been a descriptive enterprise. By filtering the existing literature through a theoretical lens, the remainder of this paper adds a sense of explanation and understanding to the Iranian-Israeli bilateral relationship.

## Chapter 4: WSR Explanation and WSC Understanding of Iranian-Israeli Relations, 1948 – 1979

The dominant ethnic groups in modern-day Iran and Israel – Persians and Jews, respectively – have engaged in meaningful relationships for millennia. Going back to the biblical days of the Jewish Diaspora and the redemption of the Jewish people in Persian lands at the hands of the Jewish Queen Esther and the Persian King Cyrus, Persians and Jews are fixtures of Middle Eastern history and culture.[96] Over a thousand years before Arabian warriors conquered large swathes of the Middle East and North Africa and assimilated the populations over which they ruled into the folds of Islam, Persians and Jews both practiced their own forms of monotheism: Zoroastrianism and Judaism. They remain two of the only ethnic groups that can trace their genealogical linkages back thousands of years through biblical passages, archaeological evidence, geographical contiguity, and cultural heritage.[97] The longstanding Persian-Jewish cultural relationship is a historical fact that has been overlooked and forgotten more recently due to short-term political considerations. In today's international system of states, the historical Persian and Jewish civilizations have become the Iranian and Israeli nation-states. The subject of this chapter is the more contemporary relationship between these two countries over the three-decade period from 1948 to 1979.

These dates should be significant to any seasoned observer of Middle Eastern political history. 1948 marks the year in which Israel declared independence from the British Mandate of Palestine and simultaneously initiated the first Arab-Israeli War of 1948-49. This event represented a tectonic shift in regional and global politics; Middle Eastern

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

issues, including inter-Arab and inter-Islamic relations, were irrevocably altered by this reality, as well as the accelerating bipolar superpower rivalry of the Cold War. 1979 is fundamental for several reasons: the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, for instance, but of the utmost significance for Iranian-Israeli relations was the Islamic Revolution in Tehran. Arguably as traumatic for the region as Israel's War of Independence, this religious revivalist regime change not only initiated a paradigm shift for theological Islamic thought, but it also transformed what the West considered to be a pillar of stability in a Western-dominated Middle East into a veritable source of unpredictability and volatility. In addition, these two events provide a clear window into a time when Iran and Israel enjoyed an open, amicable, and harmonious relationship – in stark contrast to the following thirty years of ever-growing enmity and hostility, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

As the title of this chapter suggests, the relationship between Iran and Israel from 1948 to 1979 will be subjected to analysis with both Waltzian Structural Realist (WSR) and Wendtian Social Constructivist (WSC) theoretical tools. With the goal of explanation in mind, the WSR analysis will focus on military and economic issues of 'high politics' which impinge directly on matters of national interests, survival, and security as well as foreign, defence, and decision-making policies. In the hopes of better understanding, the WSC analysis will dwell on the ideational and identity-related questions of ideological doctrines, religious belief-systems, national and cultural norms and values, and the processes through which all of these socially constructed ideas occur. By using the insights afforded by both theories and applying them to specific themes and events involving both countries, Iranian-Israeli relations can be effectively contextualized.

Of course, there are many ways in which to explain the Iranian-Israeli connection in theoretically Realist terms and to understand it in terms of Constructivist theory, like chronologically, thematically, textually, biographically, systemically, and so forth. No single perspective would do the complex and convoluted history between Iran and Israel full justice, so a broad combination of these methods is perhaps the most preferable, indeed the best method with which to proceed from this point onwards. A veritable *mélange* of methods and styles follows in the hopes that a genuine synthesis of all available alternatives will prove the most fruitful in illuminating the true nature of Iranian-Israeli relations.

## Waltzian Structural Realist (WSR) Explanation

Beginning with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the geostrategic landscape of the Middle East had changed forever. The map of the modern Middle East had largely been set by the onset of World War II. The Saudi King had already united the tribes of the Arabian Desert and captured the holy cities of Mecca and Medina with the help of zealous mercenaries known as the Ikhwan; The Turks were well on their way to establishing a Western-oriented, secular republic in the tradition of their nationalist patriarch Atatürk; the French had already partitioned Lebanon out of what was then Greater Syria and maintained a military presence to ensure the existence of puppet regimes and to ward off Nazi German encroachment; the British had already decided on the contours of today's Iraq and Transjordan, installing a monarch in each state from the family of Husayn as a reward for their role in the World War I Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire; and countries like historical Persia (modern Iran) and Egypt had been blessed with natural historical and cultural borders, yet British Mandatory Palestine remained in doubt since Arab Palestinians and Jewish Zionists both lay claim to this hotly contested strip of land.[98]

Unable to please or appease the Arabs or the Jews, the British eventually handed the case over to the newly established United Nations. For the Zionists, Palestine represented the only safe refuge for millions of Jews fleeing the horrors of the Holocaust in Europe. Anti-Jewish sentiment over the Palestine issue even spread to the Arab and Islamic Worlds, forcing North African, Middle Eastern, and Oriental Jews to flee their native homes and head for the modern state of Israel.[99] Arabs and Muslims, however, perceived the establishment of a Jewish state in their ancestral lands as unwarranted and unjust. Why should Muslim Arabs pay for the crimes of Christian Europeans? The international community's decision to partition the land between these two groups in November 1947 only incensed the Arabs further, as if their opposition went completely unheeded.[100] Hence, after months of mass rioting, popular outrage, and sporadic violence, the neighbouring Arab states declared war on the new state of Israel after it declared its independence in mid-1948. The tacit alliance that would gradually emerge in the next thirty years between Iran and Israel would not have been feasible without the unique blend of local geopolitical and international

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

diplomatic conditions that preceded this first Arab-Israeli war.

Speaking in terms of geopolitics, Israel became isolated in the region virtually overnight. Without the British presence in Palestine, the Jewish population in Israel had no friends or patrons sympathetic to its cause.[101] Few other countries have had to contend with similar geopolitical circumstances. The balance of power between Israel and its Arab neighbours was tenuous at best and only materialized thanks to lack of organization and motivation on the part of the Arabs, not by a comparable distribution of capabilities.[102] It is also true that the conflicting ambitions and mutual mistrust of some Arab leaders meant that annihilating Israel would further destabilize the region's already tenuous balance of power.[103] Therefore, it became apparent to Israeli leaders early on that a balance would not emerge from within the region; instead, it would be necessary to approach quasi-regional players outside of the Arab World with similar national and regional interests in order to increase their own power, and thus, security.

This 'outflank and outmanoeuvre' logic was central to Israeli foreign policy and acted as the cornerstone of the periphery doctrine – a shift in policy developed by David Ben-Gurion, one of Israel's earliest leaders and national figures. Essentially, it calls for cultivating closer relationships and developing similar interests with those pivotal countries on the periphery of the Arab World which, by virtue of their geopolitical position, may have grievances with their Arab neighbours that would make Israel a strategic ally.[104] Although populated by Muslims, Turkey was a logical partner since it was already affiliated with the West as a founding member of the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Ethiopia may have seemed like a strange choice but was favoured for three reasons: it contained the largest exilic Jewish population in Africa, it is strategically located in the Horn of Africa, and it has similar difficulties with Muslim minorities and Arab neighbours. Finally, Iran represented a unique opportunity that simply could not be overlooked. Similar to Turkey, it was a non-Arab Muslim country with Western-leaning tendencies, but unlike Turkey, there was a large, well-integrated and heavily influential Jewish Diaspora in Iran that could facilitate contact between the governments of the two countries. Iran was to be the central pillar of Ben-Gurion's periphery doctrine, providing Israel with a valuable ally and strategic depth in the Arab Middle East.

Diplomatic contacts were inaugurated between Iran and Israel shortly after Israeli independence and the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Iran became the second Muslim-majority country to *de facto* recognize Israel after Turkey in 1949, and in doing so walked a fine line between trying to court the West and trying to appeal to Arab and Muslim public opinion.[105] Israel clearly welcomed Iranian recognition since it gained international legitimacy from any contacts it made with Muslim states. Iran, however, astutely used Israel's diplomatic isolation in the Middle East to bolster its own influence in the region. By keeping a line of communication open with Israel, Iran could threaten the Arab states of the Middle East with improved ties and upgraded cooperation with Israel. At the same time, it managed to squeeze concessions out of these same Arab states – in regional and international forums – in exchange for not following through on implicit threats to undermine their anti-Israeli boycotts, sanctions and war efforts.

More than anything else, though, it was the technological and diplomatic collaboration that was crucial to the cultivation of closer Iranian-Israeli ties. Boiled down to its most basic elements, the trade-off was quite simple: in exchange for Israeli (and Western-sponsored) military equipment, Special Forces training and agricultural expertise, Iran remained a key pillar of stability within the American sphere of influence in the Middle East and a stalwart ally in the anti-Communist Cold War rivalry, received enough military aid to stifle domestic dissent and secure its territorial borders from Soviet, Arab, or separatist threats, and reinforced Israel's industrial capacities by providing it with inexpensive and reliable supplies of petroleum.[106] The full picture is inevitably more complicated than this, with variations in patterns of behaviour and trends over time, but the general convergence of national interests in this case is too coincidental to ignore. The reality is that Iran and Israel developed a mutually advantageous relationship which benefitted each country's national security and foreign policy needs.[107]

The economic and military aspects of Iranian-Israeli cooperation were particularly impressive. For instance, beginning in the late 1950s and continuing up until the regime change that supplanted the Pahlavi dynasty with the Islamic republic, Iran supplied Israel with virtually all of its energy needs in the form of petroleum imports channelled along the Eilat-Ashkelon pipeline.[108] Israel, for its part, developed highly advanced irrigation techniques that increased agricultural output and efficiency for vegetation growing in a variety of climactic conditions – from snow-capped mountains to inhospitably arid deserts – and exported this technology to Iran for its own domestic

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

consumption and export-oriented purposes.[109] Aside from these two highly specific examples, many others exist of Persian (Iranian) and Jewish (Israeli) entrepreneurial and business-related low-level contacts between these two countries.[110] Without a doubt, Iranian-Israeli relations were not limited to the realm of 'high politics' but consisted as well of interactions among private business owners and ethnic co-religionists on both sides.

In terms of military contacts, the Shah of Iran had been a client of Western weapons producers and developers for decades. Once Israel had proven its military prowess in several Arab-Israeli wars and innumerable border skirmishes, Iran became interested not only in Israeli-modified weapons systems and equipment, but also in Israeli military strategy and elite-level paramilitary and police-unit training.[111] Iran's SAVAK, the Shah's intelligence services and personal guard, were notorious for their ruthlessness and brutality in stifling domestic opposition; much of their arsenal and expertise were either given away or sold at reduced prices by Israeli military forces and the Mossad, Israel's secret services. Steadily growing throughout the 1950s and 1960s, by the mid-to-late 1970s Iran had become the largest non-European purchaser of American (and Western) weapons systems and military support.[112] It is one of those profound ironies of history, akin to the American involvement in the Afghan Taliban's anti-Soviet insurgency that later spawned Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda and the subsequent terrorist attacks on American soil, that Israel's well-intentioned contribution to Iranian military security would eventually be turned on Israel in the days following Iran's fortuitous Islamic Revolution.

## Wendtian Social Constructivist (WSC) Understanding

There is no doubt that the sudden entry of the state of Israel into the rapidly changing game of Middle Eastern politics was a proverbial game-changer for the region. Nonetheless, in order to fully understand why the emergence of a Jewish state in the Middle East was so shocking and perplexing for its Arab and Muslim inhabitants, it is important to possess a basic framework of understanding regarding Muslim theological doctrine. Within the Islamic worldview, the world is divided into two parts: *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb*, or one of Islam where peace reigns supreme and one of heresy where war is rampant.[113] The logic then follows that if Palestine is incorporated into the House of Islam, peace can be established in the region among Arab states.[114] Beliefs based in religious worldviews may seem exceedingly archaic or abstract to some (Western) observers, but they have very real and very powerful effects on the thought processes and behaviours of those who believe in them. Almost nowhere else is this truer or more applicable than in the Islamic World, a realm of civilization wherein religion is much more than a private affair yet is but a thread in the greater fabric of society, inextricably interwoven with politics, culture, and history.

Considering the anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist, and anti-Israeli attitudes that swept across North Africa and the Middle East on the eve of the Arab-Israeli War of 1948-49, the role played by Iran in facilitating the flight of Israel-bound Oriental Jews escaping persecution, discrimination, and violence in their native lands is remarkable. Interestingly, the Jewish culture was so intricately woven into the fabric of Persian-Iranian society that, although tens of thousands did emigrate for ideological or spiritual reasons, a large proportion of the Persian Jewish community remained in Iran; in fact, Iran today hosts the largest Jewish population in the Middle East outside of Israel.[115] Hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees fled Arab countries in which their safety and security were in jeopardy any way they could, sometimes freely with passage granted by the host state, and sometimes clandestinely for fear of inciting the outraged masses and inviting even more violence. Iraq was one of those countries from which Jews – some of whom had lived in Baghdad for nearly 2,500 years, ever since the Babylonian Exile which followed the destruction of the first Jewish Temple in Ancient Israel – could not easily escape. Iran facilitated the evacuation and escape to Israel of approximately 120,000 Iraqi Jews, making it one of the largest airlift and immigration operations of all time.[116] The Iranian government's decision to assist Middle Eastern Jewish refugees in making their way to Israel was one of the first and most meaningful Iranian-Israeli encounters.

The point regarding the incompatibility of an ethnically and religiously Jewish state existing in the midst of an Arab and Muslim interstate system ignores the obvious criticism that Iran is a state that is primarily populated by Muslim citizens who should logically reject Israel on the same grounds as their Arab coreligionists. In making this argument, however, a central component of both Iranian and Israeli identities as they have evolved since the late 1940s is overlooked. Simply put, Persians living in Iran and Jews living in Israel are *just not Arabs*. As obvious as this is, the very fact that Iranians and Israelis (not to mention the Turks) can relate to one another as ethnic outsiders in a

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

predominantly Arab neighbourhood imbues them with a shared sense of purpose, belonging, friendship, and psychological security.[117] This mutual understanding and similarity of positional roles in the Middle East may have also underscored the mentality that led to former Israeli Prime Minister Ben-Gurion's 'Periphery Doctrine.'

The Iranians and Israelis had much more in common than their non-Arab ethnic compositions. Even more than ethnicity, both the Pahlavi dynasty's adherents in Iran and the proponents of Zionism in Israel were educated abroad, believed in the European-inspired project of modernity, and transformed their native and traditional cultures by importing and adapting to these modern ideas from Europe.[118] In essence, the motivation behind modernization was to leave the traditions and orthodoxies of outdated and outmoded cultures behind in order to share in and contribute to the progress and innovation that the more advanced and sophisticated modern era represented. After all, it is no secret that the Shah of Iran was infatuated with the ethnographical notion that the Iranian nation's descent could be traced back several generations to nobler and lighter-skinned 'Aryan' roots.[119] This paralleled the mainstream Jewish society's privileging of Ashkenazi (German and Western European) Jewry over the darker-skinned and less 'civilized' Sephardi (Spanish and North African) and Mizrahi (Asian and Middle Eastern) Jews.[120] Still, the Iranian and Israeli drives for modernization went much further than socially constructed ideas about ethnic supremacy in a region awash in inter-Arab politics and pan-Arab ideologies.

The modernization project involves much more than demonstrating ethnic purity or superiority; it calls extensively upon the concepts and narratives of post-colonial theories. Binary opposites adopted by post-colonial theories that reflect upon the modernization project include those of Western versus Oriental, secular versus religious, advanced versus traditional, and progressive versus retrogressive are apt metaphors for these post-colonial and modernizing mentalities.[121] In order to understand how the Iranian Shah and Israeli elites collectively considered themselves as islands of modernity and civilization struggling to survive in a sea of backward and barbaric peoples and societies, it is necessary to recognize the subconscious fears, desires, and motivations shared by both Iran and Israel. At the very heart of the modernization project, and perhaps its most symbolic aspect, is the fact that these two states identified themselves as outposts of continental Europe and non-contiguous extensions of Western civilization in the Arab and Islamic Middle East.[122] In this way, Iranian and Israeli societies propagated the belief that they represented Western culture and European peoples and that they were inherently incompatible with the Islamic civilization and Arab and Muslim peoples of the Middle East.

Having already explored the significance of Israel's War of Independence, Jewish refugees, identity politics, and the similarities in Iranian and Israeli Western self-images vis-à-vis the Oriental Middle East, it would be equally enlightening to examine the lasting impact of the 1967 Six-Day War.[123] During this war, Israel made extraordinary military, political, spiritual, and territorial gains after engaging Egypt, Jordan, and Syria in an inevitable war, but the real story lies in the psychological impact that this war had on its combatants. For Israel, the victory meant the expansion of its landmass by a multiple of four, the acquisition of strategic depth from neighbours which could in theory be traded for peace, the reassurance of national survival, and the Jewish state's repatriation of the holiest monument in Judaism, the Western Wall, in the newly reunified city of Jerusalem. For the Arabs (and Muslims), their defeat meant the loss of sovereign Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian land (in the form of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights, respectively), the inability of some regimes to fulfill – and also to survive – domestic demands for the eradication of Israel, the collective shame and dishonour that accompanies any country's undeniable defeat at the hands of their enemies, and the loss of sovereignty over Islam's third holiest site, the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque compound. Iranians openly mourned for their loss with fellow Muslims, but the Shah's regime quietly increased and strengthened bilateral ties with Israel in implicit recognition of its newfound geopolitical, strategic, and symbolic value as an ally. The Shah's overthrow in 1979 changed the nature of Iran and its relationship with Israel irrevocably.

## Conclusion

From Israel's national independence in 1948 to Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979, tacit alliance and mutual cooperation persisted between the two countries. The relationship was immediately strengthened in the late 1940s with Iranian help in the transport of Persian and Arab Jews seeking refuge from growing anti-Semitism to Israel proper, along with *de facto* recognition of Israel by Iran. Over time, the Persian Jewish community in Iran and



# **The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations**

Written by Uri Marantz

expatriate Iranian Jews in Israel facilitated the establishment and encouraged the growth of Iranian-Israeli ties at the military, business, political, industrial, cultural, technological, and agricultural levels. Through internal and international wars and through the strategic and ideological bonds that embodied the nascent alliance, Iran and Israel grew closer and more interdependent throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s – virtually until the tipping point of Iran's revolution. Israel would undergo its own material and ideational shifts, but the event which unequivocally changed their relationship would mark a fundamental shift in the regional balance of power and in the identities and interests of both actors. The following thirty years of Iranian-Israeli relations would be surprisingly different than the first thirty and would alter the region's history forever.

## **Chapter 5: WSR Explanation and WSC Understanding of Iranian-Israeli Relations, 1979 – 2010**

After thirty years of gradual and incremental improvements in Iranian-Israeli relations, the once amicable and cooperative relationship gave way practically overnight to a hostile and uncompromising one. The Iranians and Israelis had become strategic partners over the years, bound together within the Western sphere of influence in the Middle East, fighting the same anti-Communist, anti-Socialist, anti-Arabist, anti-fundamentalist, and anti-Orientalist struggle against virtually the same enemies. A large part of Iran's foreign, security, and defence policies relied to some degree on the expertise and willing assistance of Israel, and the same was true of Israel with regard to Iran. All of a sudden, after an event that few could have predicted, Iran's relationship with Israel began to gradually deteriorate from its peak in the mid-to-late 1970s. This game-changing event altered much more than the Iranian-Israeli relationship; it fundamentally redrew the geopolitical map of the modern Middle East. This event, of course, was none other than the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Without delving into too much detail concerning the nature of Iran's radical revolution and its legacy in the region and in the world at large, it is important to address the reasons for framing Iranian-Israeli relations chronologically the way this paper has done. It has already been stated that Iran and Israel became allies during their first three decades of relations, but eventually evolved into adversaries as they struggled with the implications of Iran's regime change in the next three decades. The momentous significance of the events of 1979 also provides a convenient measurement for the precise halfway point between the sum total of interstate Iranian-Israeli relations. The substantive and detrimental changes that took place regarding the relationship between Iran and Israel immediately after the onset of the revolution are clearly demarcated from earlier patterns of friendship, cooperation, and good will. As will be shown, the dividing line between 'generally good' and 'generally bad' relations is not so clear-cut. For instance, the 1980s saw great social upheaval, military confrontation, political disarray, and regime consolidation in Iran, meaning that some elements of previously open and cordial Iranian-Israeli relations were altered more quickly than either side may have desired or anticipated. Regardless, the use of the 1979 Revolution in Iran as a conceptual dividing line for the nature of Iranian-Israeli relations should be clear by now since it suits this purpose well.

Beginning this theoretical analysis in the year 1979 and ending it at the present time in the year 2010 is savvy for a few reasons. One reason for this decision has already been mentioned: the all-too-perfect delineation of 31 years of positive Iranian-Israeli relations versus 31 years of negative ones. A second rationale for choosing the present year is the simple need to stay current and up-to-date when considering rapidly shifting international political issues. This is true of nearly any field of study, though the benefit of hindsight cannot be overlooked either when historical details swept under the proverbial rug are uncovered and exposed to the light from time to time by diligent scholars. The news media has been dominated in recent years by the Iranian-Israeli conflict, sensationalistic storytelling that ignores the wider context and the historical precedent set by nearly thirty years of exactly the opposite type of relations. Predictions of an impending conflagration, nuclear arms races, and shortages of oil in the region have been foretold month after month, year after year, and without recourse to historically sensitive and theoretically sound analysis. This chapter, therefore, attempts to reverse that situation.

### **Waltzian Structural Realist (WSR) Explanation**

There can be no question that the Islamic Revolution inspired by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's radical sermons and facilitated by widespread social unrest and popular discontent with the policies of Mohammad Reza Shah of the Pahlavi dynasty reorganized geopolitical relations all over the Middle East. The Islamic Revolution inaugurated what

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

some hoped to be a theocratic democracy, a revision of Shiite Islamic political thought and a new age of Islamic republicanism.[124] Iran thereby underwent several transformations practically simultaneously: from one of the West's eager bastions of peace and stability in the region into one of its most raucous and ideologically bent detractors; from a vital American ally in the Cold War struggle against the Soviet Union and Communism into a regime that kidnapped dozens of American hostages on the eve of its revolution and literally demonized the United States; and from one of Israel's only friends in the Islamic Middle East to one of its most dangerous and unruly enemies.[125] While the Islamic Revolution heralded a decline in the Iranian-Israeli relationship, it was quickly overshadowed by another important event.

The Iran-Iraq War began in 1980 when Saddam Hussein's Iraq invaded Ayatollah Khomeini's yet-to-be consolidated Islamic Republic in Iran, and it ended in a stalemate in 1988 after an extremely bloody and costly confrontation. The lives lost on both sides of the Iranian-Iraqi border numbered in the hundreds of thousands, and the money spent on foreign-made arms and lost on potential oil and gas export revenue as a result of open warfare and partial blockage of the Persian Gulf numbered in the hundreds of billions of American dollars; out of 300,000 killed and 500,000 wounded Iranians, 25,000 were killed by illegal chemical weapons and 100,000 received treatment for it, along with an estimated \$790 billion USD loss to the Iranian economy alone.[126] Alongside Khomeini's Shiite and fundamentalist Iran, Hussein's secular Iraq was interestingly considered to be the more stable and reliable government, so nearly every country in the region – as well as many in the West – chose to openly support Iraq in its aggressive war against a revolutionary regime.[127] In terms of Iranian-Israeli relations, the circumstances surrounding the prosecution of the Iran-Iraq War revealed one of the most blatant contradictions of the Islamic Republic of Iran's history: the Iran-Contra Affair.

Boiled down to its basest parts, this infamous sequence of events involved the Americans using top-secret business and military contacts cultivated by the Israelis with Iranian elites to covertly supply the Iranian government with billions of dollars worth of armaments and defence systems.[128] Ordinarily, these types of weapons-transfer agreements – whether transparent or clandestine – are conducted regularly in dozens of conflict-prone parts of the world and garner no publicity or attention whatsoever. The reason that in this particular instance it was so controversial is because it appeared to directly contradict American and Israeli national interests. The United States had at the end of the day, along with many in the Western and Islamic Worlds, openly supported Iraq in opposing the existence and influence of an Islamic Republic in Iran. Israel, for its part, had yet to recover from the abrupt rupture of Iranian-Israeli relations and to adjust to the profoundly anti-Zionist and anti-Western polemics of the Ayatollahs in Tehran. Because American and Israeli national security and foreign policy interests clash with Iran's in the long-term, the behaviour of the Americans and Israelis can best be explained with the balance of power metaphor.

Usually applied to the machinations of great power politics, the theory of the balance of power can just as easily be applied to regional powers and their politics. In the Middle East, this theoretical concept has always encountered problems of definition, measurement, evolution, and agreement.[129] Still, Iraq was commonly considered to be the most powerful state in the Arab Middle East in the 1980s, and as such, it represented the principal threat to the region's fragile *status quo*. [130] Egypt, the only other major contender for regional dominance, had just signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. In addition, the Americans had managed to coax Egypt into the Western sphere of influence and added it to the growing list of moderate states already thought of as clients of the American patron in the global Cold War – states like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel. Therefore, as soon as Iran became a significant regional force, it was forced into confrontation with Iraq. As far as the old adage 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' goes, this reality translated into Western support for Iraq – if not directly, then at least tacitly. The metaphor of the balance of power, then, had a mitigating effect on regional domination.

Unbeknownst to the Americans or the Israelis at the time, the Iranians were beginning to grow in power and spreading their influence abroad by playing a supportive role in the birth and development of a Shiite militant group in Lebanon during its 15-year long civil war, from 1975 to 1990. Hezbollah was created in order to repel the Israeli invasion of 1982 and has since been accused by the United States and Israel of links to numerous criminal and terrorist-related acts. Along with the Palestinian militant movement Hamas, which was formed in the Occupied Territories (Gaza, West Bank and East Jerusalem) at the outset of the first Palestinian Intifada in 1987 to resist perceived Israeli injustices, Hezbollah has been known to coordinate its own tactics and strategies with Iran.[131]

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

Since their interests and objectives are similar, the fact that they collaborate on anti-Israeli and anti-Western projects is rather unsurprising; what is astonishing, however, is that Hamas and Hezbollah have been extremely successful in fulfilling their national and regional designs without the full capabilities of a legitimate state. As of Israel's unilateral withdrawals from Lebanon in 2000 and Gaza in 2005, added to the wars it has fought with these groups in 2006 and 2008-09, it seems to be the case that Hamas and Hezbollah have carved out mini-states for themselves in Lebanon and Gaza, respectively, making them more pernicious and formidable foes than previously acknowledged.

During the 1990s, Iranian-Israeli relations were somewhat subdued as liberal reformists took hold of the presidency in Iran and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict dominated the domestic political scene in Israel. The Palestinians and Israelis seemed to be on the verge of peaceful reconciliation in the early part of the decade. After the Oslo Accords of 1993, in which both sides agreed to mutual recognition and a framework for future peace was agreed upon, Iran began to play a primary role in the so-called rejectionist front of peace talks alongside the Syrian regime and its militant proxies, Lebanese Hezbollah and Palestinian Hamas.[132] Once Jordan had made peace with Israel in 1994, a year after the Palestinians did, Iran was even further ostracized and isolated from the region. Only in 2005, when the hardliner and neo-conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad assumed the presidency, did the Iranian-Israeli relationship begin to speedily worsen and reach the point of downright outrage and clear-cut hostility.

What accounts for this sudden and unanticipated confrontation between Iran and Israel? Once again, the balance of power metaphor is an apt one here. Ever since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the subsequent Gulf War in 1991, the 12-year long sanctions regime, the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the ongoing reconstruction efforts therein, there has been no self-evident or self-sustaining balance of power in the region. Israel's peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan and the seeds of peace sowed with the Palestinians have split the Middle East into pro-American Arab states (and non-state actors) with moderate foreign policies and anti-American ones with radical and destabilizing foreign policies.[133] With many of these 'moderate' Arab states becoming satisfied with the *status quo*, Iran has gained significant political clout on the 'Arab street' and among the more 'radical' and unsatisfied state and non-state actors by championing the always popular anti-Israeli rhetoric and policies. In this way, it is possible to see Iran and Israel as competitors for regional legitimacy, leadership and hegemony.[134] It is still too early to say whether Iran or Israel has managed to shift the balance of power decisively in one side's favour, though Iran seems to have courted more legitimacy and authority from the (Arab) masses in many regional countries, even within Israel itself.

Nuclear weapons change everything, including balances of power. This is why Israel has been so adamant that Iran should not achieve nuclear technological capabilities, even if the latter attests to their peaceful purpose and intent. Diplomatic isolation and rounds of international sanctions have not served to counter Iran's confrontational drive for nuclear technology or defuse its controversial calls for Israel's destruction and have only served to reinforce its image in the West as a troublemaker, terrorist sponsor, and pariah state.[135] Of course, there is a certain double standard at play when the West tacitly accepts Israel's development of nuclear technology and weaponry – even though it has failed to sign on to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, designed to prevent such occurrences, and of which Iran is a member-state signatory – while steadfastly refusing Iran the same prerogative.[136] Nevertheless, Israel maintains that it has never threatened to use its arsenal in an offensive manner nor has it ever heralded the annihilation of another member-state of the United Nations. Under constant threat of attack from hostile states like Syria and Iran and militant resistance groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, Israel furthermore fears the likelihood of Iranian nuclear weapons falling into the hands of less savoury entities and their possible deployment in acts of terror.[137] Iran may feel threatened in its own part of the world, with American and international forces occupying Iraq to its West, Afghanistan to its East, Central Asian military bases to the North, and Arab Gulf states to the South, but whether this reality actually requires a nuclear deterrent or the elimination of the state of Israel is another matter entirely.

## Wendtian Social Constructivist (WSC) Understanding

1979 was a year of rapid change and unforeseeable consequences in the Middle East. For Iran, the Islamic Revolution swept away a corrupt and autocratic leader whose tyrannical grip on power had alienated millions of Iranian citizens and replaced it with a revolutionary regime that would supposedly rebuild the Iranian nation along more populist lines and imbue it with righteous purpose and dignity. The possibility of breaking free from the bonds of authoritarian rule and international imperialism that had held Iran back from realizing its full potential was about to be

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

realized. In Israel, history was being made as the first peace treaty was being signed with an Arab state with which it had been at war for decades, which had refused it recognition, and which had plotted its destruction for years. Egypt was for many years the undeniable leader of the Arab World and by far the most formidable enemy that the Jewish state had to countenance on its frontiers. That being said, Israel was on the brink of rehabilitating a perpetually hostile relationship with its Arab and Muslim neighbours into a functional one. These paradigm-shifting events in Iran and Israel signalled the beginning of a new era not only in Iranian-Israeli relations, but in the inter-Arab, interstate, and international interactions of the Middle East as well.

As was mentioned in the last chapter, Israel perceived a kindred spirit in the Shah's Iran. As fellow non-Arab, industrializing, secularizing, and Westernizing countries, Iran and Israel increasingly developed key strategic, economic, and ideological linkages and became invaluable allies. When this narrative was shattered and the image of the relationship reversed, Israel saw in the Ayatollah's Iran the spectre of Islamic extremism, fundamentalism, terrorism, and even a reflection of its own insecurities on the domestic front. Added to these potential fears, Israel had already begun to fear Iran's very real anti-Western, anti-Zionist, anti-Israeli, and anti-Semitic ideological and foreign policy orientations.[138] On the other hand, Iran felt that it had been dominated by great power politics and exploited by the West for too long, with Israel playing a central role in both Iran's domination and exploitation. The revolutionary nature of the regime made it incumbent upon the government to seek retribution for the travesties and injustices thrust upon Iran in the past, and its religiously fundamentalist worldview brought the issue of Palestinian Muslims subjugated by an Israeli occupation to the forefront of its foreign policy priorities.[139] After the Islamic Revolution, the oppositional forces between Iran and Israel were simply too great to allow for the continuation, restoration, or amelioration of Iranian-Israeli relations.

Of course, the ideological straitjacket that Iran crafted for itself in the wake of the revolution, and which Israel attempted to unravel, contained its own internal contradictions and inconsistencies. For all its fiery bluster and histrionic demonization of the West in general and Israel in particular, Iran still had no choice but to accept the military and economic assistance of the United States and Israel – or in Iran's terms, 'Big Satan' and Little Satan' – in repelling the Iraqi invasion of 1980 and fighting its 8-year long war with Iraq. The imperatives of national survival limited Iran's viable options, forcing it to take decisions and adopt policies that directly contravened the ideological bases of the Islamic Revolution. An overly righteous and rigidly zealous regime would have risked national suicide rather than dance with the proverbial American and Israeli devils, as it were; therefore, it is clear that Iran must have sacrificed the privileges of dogmatism in order to cope with the necessities of the real world.[140] Essentially, Iran's impermeable, ideological 'iron curtain' gave way to a pragmatic, rational actor behind the facade.

In order to understand more fully the shifting patterns of post-revolutionary Iranian-Israeli relations, it is useful to consider the changing national identities and worldviews of both countries. This mental exercise requires some empathy, magnified from the level of the individual psyche and elevated to the level of the national consciousness. Take Iran's foreign and international relations, for example, which were altered dramatically after the upheavals of 1979.[141] Before 1979, Iran had legitimate cause to be wary and distrustful of the outside world, but after this national metamorphosis, the reasons only grew. After being fought over like a prize to be won and conquered by great powers for centuries, Iran had finally managed to exert some level of national self-determination through the sheer force and novelty of its revolution. At the same time, however, the Sunni Arab states of the Middle East abhorred the prospect of an emboldened Iran fomenting dissent by exporting its Shiite Persian revolutionary brand to disaffected Shiite and minority communities. Still, the most significant contributing factor to Iran's reluctance to trust in or cooperate with the international community lies in the behaviour of most of the Arab and Western Worlds during its long war with Iraq in the 1980s.[142] From Iran's point of view, Israel is complicit in these crimes, and Iran therefore perceives Israel to be an enemy, a fact which is clearly detrimental to their relationship.

Israel's changing perceptions of itself and of others are comparable to Iran's but nevertheless operate within different conceptual parameters. Identity is contingent upon history, and many seminal events in Israeli history have significantly altered the course of that country's national identity.[143] Even domestic political changes can lead to alterations in a state's identity, like in the Israeli elections of 1977; Prime Minister Menachem Begin's Likud Party managed to overturn thirty years of Labour Party rule by courting the votes of Israel's ethnic Sephardim (North African Jews) and Mizrahim (Oriental Jews) and religious minorities (Ultra-Orthodox and Haredi Jews), shocking the

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

ethnic Ashkenazim (European Jews) and the secular majority of the population into the realization that Israel was far from a homogeneous nation-state in the Western European sense of the term.[144] Both foreign and domestic factors influence national identity, and for Israel this is precisely the case with the Palestinians, a nation without a state living both inside and outside of Israel's borders. The Palestinian-Israeli conundrum, a part of the larger Arab-Israeli conflict, is intricately tied up in the Iranian-Israeli relationship. Insecurities within Iran and Israel further damage an already toxic relationship, with Iran delegitimizing Israel and strengthening its pro-Palestinian proxies while Israel opposes Iran's regional ambitions and clamours for regime change.

As the situation currently stands, Iran and Israel have defined their respective national identities in stark contrast to one another. In other words, each country is by definition the other's own worst enemy. Even a cursory examination of how each country addresses the other on their foreign ministry websites should clarify this point; Iran provides anti-Israeli propaganda in the form of 'neutral' news stories under a link entitled 'crime against humanity' that is largely targeted at showcasing the plight of the Palestinians or vilifying and demonizing Israel, and Israel offers information on the 'Iranian threat' ranging from nuclear weapons and terrorist support to Holocaust denial and human rights violations, a notable fact since no other country is given a similar link. As Iranian-Israeli interactions became more negative following the Islamic Revolution of 1979, their mutual identities and interests have been correspondingly transformed from friendly and cooperative into hostile and confrontational ones. Only by understanding how the ideational aspects of the relationship have changed over time does it become clear why Iran blames the 'Zionist entity' for many of its internal and external problems, for example, or why Israel perceives the pernicious influence of Iran in every anti-Israeli terrorist attack.

## Conclusion

Iranian-Israeli relations for the past three decades, from 1979 to the present day (2010), have thus far assumed a very different trajectory than the initial three decades of the relationship. Iran's Islamic Revolution signalled a paradigm shift in the way each country acted towards and perceived the motivations and intentions of the other. While Iran and Israel maintained some sort of clandestine diplomatic, military, and economic connections during the early 1980s as a result of Iran's conflict with a mutual enemy of both countries, Iraq, the relationship quickly soured in the mid-to-late 1980s once the war had ended. The relationship then took on a decidedly hostile tone from the early 1990s onwards as Palestinian-Israeli peace talks began in earnest. It has become such a dysfunctional relationship that Iran openly calls for the destruction of a fellow member of the United Nations and perceives Zionist conspiracies in all domestic unrest and foreign antagonism while Israel blasts the theocratic regime in Iran as an irrational and irresponsible government aiming to acquire nuclear weapons for suicidal and messianic purposes. In short, Iranian-Israeli relations have reached an all-time low, and a region-wide war breaking out is very much within the realm of possibility.

## Chapter 6: Concluding Section

The relationship between Iran and Israel is unique in terms of its sudden and dramatic change in orientation. For thirty years these two countries shared a strong and strategic geopolitical friendship, and in only a matter of days in 1979, their relationship for the next thirty years began to shift towards bitter and ideological hostility. From Israel's inception in 1948 to Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979, these two countries each found niche roles for the other to play in its national security and foreign policy needs. From similarities in ethnic identity as non-Arab outsiders living within an Arab-dominated Middle East to tacit diplomatic support, collaboration spanned the expansive range of military, political, economic, industrial, agricultural, and cultural aspects of interaction. In 1979 the Shah's unceremonious removal from power ended this meticulously cultivated relationship and led abruptly into a new era of enmity, hostility, demonization, vilification, recrimination, and confrontation. The current state of affairs in Iranian-Israeli relations is a result of the crystallization of three decades of these increasingly adversarial and antagonistic trends.

With every paper's completion comes one deceptively simple question whose answer is a generally good indicator of that paper's substantive quality. Why is this paper worth the read? In other words, what has this paper added to the relevant literature in terms of novelty or insight? It is true that no primary research has been undertaken, no original hypotheses have been tested, and no new (or old) theories have been constructed (or disproved) in the preceding

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

pages. Nevertheless, this major research paper has taken an immensely complex topic with multifaceted dimensions and broken it down into more easily understandable bits and pieces. In addition, the application of International Relations theories to the empirical case study of the Iranian-Israeli relationship enables the reader of any level of familiarity and proficiency with the subject-matter to paint a more realistic and more generalizable picture of the region, the origins of the conflict, and the personalities of its main protagonists. The use of theory also helps to tell the story of Iranian-Israeli bilateral relations more fully and completely.

In essence, this is why two theories are used instead of just one: so that the actions, reactions and interactions of these two states in the international arena can be better explained and understood. Waltzian Structural Realism (WSR) is useful because it is a meta-theoretically positivist theory which aims to combine deductive theorizing with empirical phenomena to infer causal relationships about international affairs. On the other hand, the more interpretivist theoretical framework known as Wendtian Social Constructivism (WSC) introduces new approaches to old questions as it reverses the normal flow of causality and incorporates more abstract variables into the analysis of world politics. Whereas WSR typically quantifies the relationships between multiple variables in order to *explain* their dynamics and mechanics, WSC seeks to qualify these explanations with deeper and more holistic *understanding*. Neither theory addresses all theoretical variables or empirical phenomena on its own, but each complements and supplements the other in mutually beneficial ways that provide more insight into the inner workings of the world of international relations.

As for the future of the relationship between Iran and Israel, it seems that there are three likely scenarios. The first and most likely option is the one in which these two countries remain locked in a bitter struggle for regional supremacy, constantly vying for power, security, and influence in the region. War is inevitable according to this version of future events, although there is something to be said about the ironical stability of long-standing, irresolvable conflicts like those on the Korean peninsula (North and South Korea), the East China Sea (China and Taiwan), the Indian Subcontinent (India and Pakistan), the Caucasus Mountains (Armenia and Azerbaijan), the East Mediterranean (Turkish and Greek Cyprus), and the like. In essence, even if war does break out between Iran and Israel – as it has in some of these analogous situations – these two conflicting countries are likely to remain the dominant players in the region for some time to come. The fallout of a potential nuclear conflagration, however, cannot be ignored, which is what makes this conflict more serious and, at the same time, more sensational than most. Suffice it to say that this state of affairs envisages a future in which Iran and Israel are destined to remain enemies for the foreseeable future.

A second and more radical hypothesis for the course of Iranian-Israeli relations down the road is their regression to open, amicable, and cooperative behaviours as allies, friends, or just tacit partners in some mutually beneficial relationship. Pundits and sceptics would seriously question the probability of this future scenario; however, the evidence supporting such an eventuality is sprinkled throughout the paper and implied in its argumentation. Why were Iran and Israel drawn together in the first place? Simply put, the congruence of national interests, the parallels in national identities, the realities of common enemies (and allies), and the advantages of regional stability (and security). If the same conditions were to hold in the future, it is conceivable that Iran and Israel could revert once again to allies instead of enemies. Without regime change in Iran (or Israel), resolution of the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli (and interwoven Arab-Israeli) conflict, moderation (or inflammation) of both Iranian and Israeli foreign, security, and defence policy establishments, or a change in Arab attitudes toward either (or both) states, the chances of this prospect coming to fruition remain negligible at best.

The third and final possibility for the future of Iranian-Israeli relations is something completely different from either the first or the second scenario. It is not a continuation in hostilities nor is it an unexpected end to caustic relations and an initiation of friendlier and more inviting ones. What if Iran and Israel were relatively uninvolved in one another's affairs and became more-or-less neutral in the other's respective neighbourhoods in the Middle East? In this projection of the future, Iran and Israel would relate to one another in novel ways and unlike anything observed or experienced in the past. This is perhaps the most difficult type of relationship to envision of all three. It appears as if too many variables are at play in both Iranian and Israeli foreign relations and domestic politics for these two regional heavyweights not to cross paths: American domination and hegemony in the Middle East, Palestinian self-determination and national independence, Zionism and Jewish Diaspora politics, energy security and the geopolitics

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

of natural resources, nuclear weapons and non-proliferation concerns, and terrorism at the local, national, and global levels, for instance. Even as a thought experiment, the idea of Iran and Israel refusing to meddle in one another's internal matters is untenable.

Therefore, the realistic set of alternatives for future Iranian-Israeli relations is limited to either continued conflict or renewed cooperation. Practically all of the trends already examined in this paper point to enmity rather than amity becoming the normal state of relations between the two. Israel is clearly the military hegemon in the region, but as long as it remains in a technical state of war with dozens of neighbouring states and peace with the Palestinians is elusive, Iran is poised to challenge the current regional order as an up and coming regional power. Unfortunately, no matter how rigorous, parsimonious, methodical, or contextual one's analysis may be, there is simply no way to foretell the future in the realm of international politics. To paraphrase Niels Bohr, the famous physicist, 'Prediction is difficult – especially about the future.' One thing is for sure, though; the relationship between Iran and Israel is a consequential one – not only for the region but for the world as a whole. The future of Iranian-Israeli relations is bound to be an interesting one, and as such, definitely merits further study.

## Works Cited

Acharya, Amitav. "The Emerging Regional Architecture of World Politics." *World Politics* 59, no. 2 (January 2007): 629 – 652.

Adamson, Fiona B., and Madeleine Demetriou. "Remapping the Boundaries of 'State' and 'National Identity': Incorporating Diasporas into IR Theorizing." *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 4 (December 2007): 489 – 526.

Adib-Moghaddam, Arshin. *Iran in World Politics: The Question of the Islamic Republic*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

Aharoni, Ada. *The Second Exodus: A Historical Novel*. Bryn Mawr, PA: Dorrance, 1983.

Askari, Hossein, Amin Mohseni, and Shahrzad Daneshvar. *The Militarization of the Persian Gulf: An Economic Analysis*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2009.

Bahgat, Gawdat. *American Oil Diplomacy in the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2003.

———. "Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East: Iran and Israel." *Contemporary Security Policy* 26, no. 1 (April 2005): 25 – 43.

———. "Iran, Israel, and the United States." *Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 3 – 21.

———. *Israel and the Persian Gulf: Retrospect and Prospect*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006.

———. "The Islamic Republic and the Jewish State." *Israel Affairs* 11, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 517 – 534.

Bar, Shmuel. "Between Stagnation and Chaos: Iran and the Middle East." *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 3, no. 3 (2009): 23 – 29.

Bar-Joseph, Uri, ed. *Israel's National Security Towards the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. London: Frank Cass, 2001.

Bar-Tal, Daniel. "Why Does Fear Override Hope in Societies Engulfed by Intractable Conflict, as It Does in the Israeli Society?" *Political Psychology* 22, no. 3 (2001): 601 – 627.

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

- Beblawi, Hazem, and Giacomo Luciani, eds. *The Rentier State: Nation, State, and Integration in the Arab World, Vol. 2*. London: Croom Helm, 1987.
- Beker, Yonatan. "Nuclear Proliferation and Iran: Thoughts About the Bomb." *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 2, no. 3 (2008): 29 – 40.
- Beres, Louis Rene, and Ze'ev Maoz. "Correspondence: Israel and the Bomb." *International Security* 29, no. 1 (August 2004): 175 – 180.
- Bergman, Ronen. *The Secret War with Iran: The 30-Year Struggle Against the World's Most Dangerous Terrorist Power*. Translated by Ronnie Hope. New York: Free Press, 2008.
- Berquist, Jon L. *Judaism in Persia's Shadow: A Social and Historical Approach*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Bialer, Uri. "Fuel Bridge across the Middle East – Israel, Iran, and the Eilat-Ashkelon Oil Pipeline." *Israel Studies* 12, no. 3 (October 2007): 29 – 67.
- Bilgin, Pinar. *Regional Security in the Middle East: A Critical Perspective*. New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005.
- Blechman, Barry M., and Douglas M. Hart. "The Political Utility of Nuclear Weapons: The 1973 Middle East Crisis." *International Security* 7, no. 1 (Summer 1982): 132 – 156.
- Booth, Ken, ed. *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 2005.
- Brackman, Roman. *Israel at High Noon: From Stalin's Failed Satellite to the Challenge of Iran*. New York: Enigma Books, 2006.
- Brown, Peter Robert Lamont. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Faber and Faber, 2000.
- Brumberg, Daniel. *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- Buzan, Barry, and Ole Waever, eds. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Buzan, Barry, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 1998.
- Byman, Daniel, Shahram Chubin, Anoushiravan Ehteshami, and Jerrold Green. *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001.
- Carr, E. H. *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919 – 1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*. London: Macmillan, 1939.
- Chetrit, Sami Shalom. *The Mizrahi Struggle in Israel: Between Oppression and Liberation, Identification and Alternative, 1948 – 2003*. In Hebrew. Tel Aviv, Israel: Am Oved, 2004.
- Chubin, Shahram. *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2006.
- Chubin, Shahram, and Robert S. Litwak. "Debating Iran's Nuclear Aspirations." *Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (Autumn 2003): 99 – 114.



# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

- Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Translated by Col. J. J. Graham. Edited by Jan Willem Honig. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2004.
- Clawson, Patrick. "The Paradox of Anti-Americanism in Iran." *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 8, no. 1 (March 2004): 16 – 24.
- Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004.
- Cohen, Marsha. "Lions and Roses: An Interpretive History of Israeli-Iranian Relations." PhD Diss., Florida International University, 2007.
- Cordesman, Anthony H. *The Military Balance in the Middle East*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004.
- Cordesman, Anthony H., and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan. *Iran's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Real and Potential Threat*. Washington, DC: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2006.
- Cox, Robert W. "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory." *Millennium* 10, no.2 (June 1981): 126 – 155.
- Crawley, Richard. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004.
- Dabashi, Hamid. *Post-Orientalism: Knowledge and Power in Time of Terror*. London: Transaction, 2008.
- Dannreuther, Roland. *International Security: The Contemporary Agenda*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007.
- Davidi, Avi. "The Post-Revolutionary Iranian Triangle: The United States-Israel-Iran Tripartite Relations." PhD Diss., University of Southern California, 2002.
- Dweikat, Qasem M. Shehadeh. "The Geostrategy of Oil Pipeline Construction and Operation in the Middle East." PhD Diss., Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, 1990.
- Ehteshami, Anoushiravan, and Emma C. Murphy. "The Non-Arab Middle East States and the Caucasian/Central Asian Republics: Iran and Israel." *International Relations* 12, no. 1 (April 1994): 81 – 107.
- Ehteshami, Anoushiravan, and Mahjoob Zweiri. *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives: The Politics of Tehran's Silent Revolution*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2007.
- Eilam, Ehud. "A New Take on the Iranian-Israeli Conflict." *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 2, no. 2 (2008): 11 – 21.
- Erllich, Reese. *The Iran Agenda: The Real Story of U.S. Policy and the Middle East Crisis*. Sausalito, CA: PoliPointPress, 2007.
- Evans, Michael D., and Jerome R. Corsi. *Showdown with Nuclear Iran: Radical Islam's Messianic Missions to Destroy Israel and Cripple the United States*. Nashville, TN: Nelson Current, 2006.
- Evron, Yair. *Israel's Nuclear Dilemma*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Fawcett, Louise, ed. *International Relations of the Middle East*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Fierke, K. M. *Critical Approaches to International Security*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007.
- Finnemore, Martha. *National Interests in International Society*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996.

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

- . “Norms, Culture, and World Politics: Insights from Sociology’s Institutionalism.” *International Organization* 50, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 325 – 347.
- Freedman, Robert O, ed. *Contemporary Israel: Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Security Challenges* . Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009.
- Gat, Moshe. *The Jewish Exodus from Iraq, 1948 – 1951*. New York: Frank Cass, 1997.
- Gause III, F. Gregory. “Systemic Approaches to Middle East International Relations.” *International Studies Review* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 11 – 31.
- Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1983.
- Gerges, Fawaz A. “The Study of Middle East International Relations: A Critique.” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 18, no. 2 (1991): 208 – 220.
- Giddens, Anthony. *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* . London: Macmillan, 1979.
- . *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1984.
- Gilboa, Eytan, and Efraim Inbar. *US-Israeli Relations in a New Era: Issues and Challenges After 9/11* . New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Goodarzi, Jubin M. *Syria and Iran: Diplomatic Alliance and Power Politics in the Middle East* . London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006.
- Griffiths, Martin. *Fifty Key Thinkers in International Relations*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Grosbard, Ofer. *Israel on the Couch: The Psychology of the Peace Process* . Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003.
- Hadar, Leon T. “Review of Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Iran, Israel and the United States.” *Middle East Policy* 14, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 143 – 173.
- . “The Collapse of Israel’s Periphery Doctrine.” *Foreign Policy*, June 26, 2010, [http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/06/26/the\\_collapse\\_of\\_israel\\_s\\_periphery\\_doctrine](http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/06/26/the_collapse_of_israel_s_periphery_doctrine) (accessed June 27, 2010).
- Halliday, Fred. *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology* . Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Hamman, Jeffrey A. “The Beirut Memorial Online: They Came in Peace – History.” <http://www.beirut-memorial.org/history/index.html> (accessed June 19, 2010).
- Hammel, Eric. *Six Days in June: How Israel Won the 1967 Arab-Israeli War* . Pacifica, CA: Pacifica Military History, 2001.
- Hayes, Jarrod. “Identity and Securitization in the Democratic Peace: The United States and the Divergence of Response to India and Iran’s Nuclear Programs.” *International Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (December 2009): 977 – 999.
- Hersh, Seymour M. *The Samson Option: Israel’s Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy* . New York: Random

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

House, 1991.

Hinnebusch, Raymond, and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, eds. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Edited by Richard Tuck. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1651].

Hollis, Martin, and Steve Smith. *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Hotchkiss, Theodore Clark. "The Proliferation of Surface-to-Surface Missiles and Weapons of Mass Destruction and the Emerging Role of Tactical Missile Defenses in Israel, Syria and Iran." PhD Diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, 1993.

Inbar, Efraim. *Israel's National Security: Issues and Challenges Since the Yom Kippur War*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Iran. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.ir/cms/cms/Tehran/en/index.html> (accessed June 10, 2010).

Iran Chamber Society. "History of Iran: Iran-Iraq War 1980-1988." [http://www.iranchamber.com/history/iran\\_iraq\\_war/iran\\_iraq\\_war1.php](http://www.iranchamber.com/history/iran_iraq_war/iran_iraq_war1.php) (accessed July 15, 2010).

Israel. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/SiteMap.htm> (accessed June 10, 2010).

Jafarzadeh, Alireza. *The Iran Threat: President Ahmadinejad and the Coming Nuclear Crisis*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Jervis, Robert. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976.

Kalmin, Richard Lee. *Jewish Babylonia between Persia and Roman Palestine*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006

Kam, Ephraim, ed. *Israel and a Nuclear Iran: Implications for Arms Control, Deterrence, and Defence*. Tel Aviv, Israel: Institute for National Security Studies, 2007.

Kamrava, Mehran. *Iran's Intellectual Revolution*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Kaplan, Morton A. "The New Great Debate: Traditionalism vs. Science in International Relations." *World Politics* 19, no. 1 (October 1966): 1 – 20.

Karpin, Michael. *The Bomb in the Basement: How Israel Went Nuclear and What That Means for the World*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007.

Kashani-Sabet, Firoozeh. "Cultures of Iranian-ness: The Evolving Polemic of Iranian Nationalism." In *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics*, edited by Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee, 162 – 181. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002.

Katouzian, Homa, and Hossein Shahidi, eds. *Iran in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Politics, Economics and Conflict*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Katzenstein, Peter, ed. *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

Kedourie, Elie. *Nationalism*. Oxford, UK: Hutchinson, 1960.

Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. New York: Random House, 1987.

Keohane, Robert O. "International Institutions: Two Approaches." *International Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (December 1988): 379 – 396.

Keohane, Robert O., ed. *Neorealism and its Critics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Kerr, Malcolm H. *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958 – 1970*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Khaldun, Ibn. *The Muqadimah: An Introduction to History*. Edited by N. J. Dawood. Translated by Franz Rosenthal. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Khan, M. A. Muqtedar. *Jihad for Jerusalem: Identity and Strategy in International Relations*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004.

Kinzer, Stephen. *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008.

Klein, Adam. "Characterizing 'the Enemy': Zionism and Islamism in the Iranian and Israeli Press." *Communication, Culture and Critique* 2, no. 3 (September 2009): 387 – 406.

Kolodziej, Edward A. *Security and International Relations*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Korany, Bahgat, and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, eds. *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984.

Kostrzewa-Zorbas, Grzegorz. "American Responses to the Proliferation of Actual, Virtual, and Potential Nuclear Weapons: France, Israel, Japan, and Related Cases, 1939 – 1997. Lessons for the Multipolar Future." PhD Diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1998.

Kramer, Martin. "Israel vs. the New Islamist Axis." *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 11, no. 1 (March 2007): 13 – 16.

Kratochwil, Friedrich. *Rules, Norms and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Küntzel, Matthias. "Iranian Anti-Semitism: Stepchild of German National Socialism." *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 4, no. 1 (2010): 43 – 51.

Landau, Emily B., and Ephraim Asculai. "The Fourth Round of Sanctions on Iran." *Right Side News: The Right News for Americans*, June 13, 2010, <http://www.rightsidenews.com/2010061310571/global-terrorism/the-fourth-round-of-sanctions-on-iran-i.html> (accessed June 23, 2010).

Lapid, Yosef. "The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era." *International Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (September 1989): 235 – 254.

Leshem, Elazar, and Judith T. Shuval, eds. *Immigration to Israel: Sociological Perspectives*. Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998.

Litvak, Meir. "The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Holocaust: Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism." *Journal of Israeli*

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

*History* 25, no. 1 (March 2006): 267 – 284.

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*. Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1998 [1515].

Maghen, Ze'ev. "From Omnipotence to Impotence: A Shift in the Iranian Portrayal of the 'Zionist Regime.'" Ramat Gan, Israel: Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, 2008.

Mahdavy, Hossein. "The Pattern and Problems of Economic Development in Rentier States: The Case of Iran." In *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East: From the Rise of Islam to the Present Day*, edited by M. A. Cook, 428 – 467. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Marashi, Ibrahim al-, and Sammy Salama. *Iraq's Armed Forces: An Analytical History*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Maoz, Ze'ev. *Regional Security in the Middle East: Past, Present and Future*. Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997.

———. "The Mixed Blessing of Israel's Nuclear Policy." *International Security* 28, no. 2 (January 2003): 44 – 77.

Mearsheimer, John J. "Structural Realism." In *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., edited by Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, 77 – 94.

———. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2001.

Menashri, David. "Iran, Israel and the Middle East Conflict." *Israel Affairs* 12, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 107 – 122.

———. *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World*. Boulder, CT: Westview Press, 1991.

Mirsepasi, Ali. *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948.

———. *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1946.

O'Neil, William D., and Caitlin Talmadge. "Correspondence: Costs and Difficulties of Blocking the Strait of Hormuz." *International Security* 33, no. 3 (Winter 2008/09): 190 – 198.

Onuf, Nicholas. *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989.

Oren, Michael B. *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East*. New York: Random House, 2003.

Owen, Roger. *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Pant, Harsh. "Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia and Middle East: The Centrality of Enduring Rivalries." PhD Diss., University of Notre Dame, 2007.

Paolucci, Henry. *Iran, Israel, and the United States*. New York: Griffin House Publications, 1991.

Pardo, Eldad. "Israel as an Example in the Eyes of the Iranian Left in the 1960s." In Hebrew. *Iyunim Bitkumat Yisrael* 14 (2004).

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

- Parsa, Misagh. *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, the State University, 1989.
- Parsi, Trita. "Iran and Israel: The Avoidable War." *Middle East Policy* 14, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 79 – 85.
- . "Israel and the Origins of Iran's Arab Option: Dissection of a Strategy Misunderstood." *Middle East Journal* 60, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 493 – 512.
- . "Israeli-Iranian Relations 1970-2001: Ideological Calculus or Strategic Rivalry?" PhD Diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2006.
- . *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.
- Pedahzur, Ami. *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle Against Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- Polakow-Suransky, Sasha. *The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship with Apartheid South Africa*. New York: Pantheon, 2010.
- Raas, Whitney, and Austin Long. "Osirak Redux? Assessing Israeli Capabilities to Destroy Iranian Nuclear Facilities." *International Security* 31, no. 4 (April 2007): 7 – 33.
- Ram, Haggai. "Between Homeland and Exile: Iranian Jewry in Zionist/Israeli Political Thought." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 35 (April 2008): 1 – 20.
- . "Caught Between Orientalism and Aryanism, Exile and Homeland: The Jews of Iran in Zionist/Israeli Imagination." *Hagar* 8 (2008): 105 – 128.
- . *Iranophobia: The Logic of an Israeli Obsession*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Reich, Bernard. *The United States and Israel: The Nature of a Special Relationship*. Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2003.
- Reppa, Robert Bruce. *Israel and Iran: Bilateral Relationships and Effect on the Indian Ocean Basin*. New York: Praeger, 1974.
- Reus-Smit, Christian. "Constructivism." In *Theories of International Relations*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Scott Burchill et al., 212 – 236. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Richter, Elihu D., and Alex Barnea. "Tehran's Genocidal Incitement Against Israel." *Middle East Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 45 – 51.
- Rubin, Barry. "Iran: The Rise of a Regional Power." *Middle East Review of Affairs* 10, no. 3 (September 2006), <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2006/issue3/jv10no3a10.html> (accessed June 13, 2010).
- Rubin, Michael. "Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Iran, Israel and the United States – Review." *Middle East Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (Spring 2008), <http://www.meforum.org/1914/treacherous-alliance> (accessed June 15, 2010).
- Sanders, Ralph. "Israel and the Realities of Mutual Deterrence." *Israel Affairs* 15, no. 1 (January 2009): 81 – 97.
- Sariolghalam, Mahmood. "Understanding Iran: Getting Past Stereotypes and Mythology." *Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (September 2003): 69 – 82.

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

Schiff, Ze'ev. "Israel's War with Iran." *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 6 (November/December 2006): 23 – 31.

Schulz, Ann Tibbitts. *Buying Security: Iran Under the Monarchy*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989.

Segev, Samuel. *The Iranian Triangle: The Untold Story of Israel's Role in the Iran-Contra Affair*. Translated by Haim Watzman. New York: Free Press, 1988.

Segev, Tom. *1967: Israel, the War, and the Year That Transformed the Middle East*. Translated by Jessica Cohen. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007.

Selzer, Michael. *The Aryanization of the Jewish State*. New York: Black Star Publishing, 1967.

Shaoul, Eshagh Emran. "Cultural Values and Foreign Policy Decision-Making in Iran: The Case of Iran's Recognition of Israel." PhD Diss., George Washington University, 1971.

Shavit, Yaacov. *The New Hebrew Nation: A Study in Israeli Heresy and Fantasy*. London: Frank Cass, 1987.

Shemesh, Moshe. *Arab Politics, Palestinian Nationalism and the Six-Day War: The Crystallization of Arab Strategy and Nasir's Descent to War, 1957 – 1967*. Eastbourne, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2008.

Shenhav, Yehouda. *The Arab Jews: Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion, and Ethnicity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006.

Shlaim, Avi. *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

———. *The Politics of Partition: King Abdullah, the Zionists, and Palestine 1921 – 1951*. Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Shotan, Gil. "Is Israel the Source of All Evil?" *The Stanford Review, Opinion* 42, no. 6 (May 1, 2009), <http://stanfordreview.org/article/israel-source-all-evil> (accessed June 30, 2010).

Smith, Anthony D. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1986.

Smith, Steve. "The Self-Images of a Discipline: A Genealogy of International Relations Theory." In *International Relations Theory Today*, edited by Ken Booth and Steve Smith, 1 – 37. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.

Sobhani, Sohrab. *The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations, 1948 – 1988*. New York: Praeger, 1989.

Solingen, Etel. "The Domestic Sources of Regional Regimes: The Evolution of Nuclear Ambiguity in the Middle East." *International Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June 1994): 305 – 337.

———. "The Genesis, Design and Effects of Regional Institutions: Lessons from East Asia and the Middle East." *International Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (June 2008): 261 – 294.

Spyer, Jonathan. "Israel in the Middle East: Threats and Countermeasures." *International Relations* 22, no. 3 (September 2008): 349 – 352.

Sternhell, Ze'ev. *The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism, and the Making of the Jewish State*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Stillman, Norman A. *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book*. New York: Jewish Publication Society of

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

America, 1979.

Sucharov, Mira M. *The International Self: Psychoanalysis and the Search for Israeli-Palestinian Peace*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005.

Talmadge, Caitlin. "Closing Time: Assessing the Iranian Threat to the Strait of Hormuz." *International Security* 33, no. 1 (Summer 2008): 82 – 117.

Tamimi, Azzam. *Hamas: A History from Within*. Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2007.

Telhami, Shibley, and Michael Barnett, eds. *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002.

Tilly, Charles. "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists." *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 1 (March 2004): 5 – 13.

Todd, Paul, and Jonathan Bloch. *Global Intelligence: The World's Secret Services Today*. London: Zed Books, 2003.

UN News Service. "Citing Iran's Failure to Clarify Nuclear Ambitions, UN Imposes Additional Sanctions." *UN News Centre*, June 9, 2010, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34970&Cr=iran&Cr1> (accessed June 23, 2010).

Vaziri, Haleh. "The Islamic Republic and Its Neighbors: Ideology and the National Interest in Iran's Foreign Policy During the Khomeini Decade." PhD Diss., Georgetown University, 1995.

Vaziri, Mostafa. *Iran as Imagined Nation: The Construction of National Identity*. New York: Paragon House, 1993.

Waever, Ole. "Still a Discipline After All These Debates?" In *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., edited by Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith, 297 – 316. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

———. "The Rise and Fall of the Inter-Paradigm Debate." In *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, edited by Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski, 149 – 185. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Waltz, Kenneth N. *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001 [1959].

———. *Theory of International Politics*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979.

Weinbaum, M. G. "Iran and Israel: The Discreet Entente." *Orbis* 18, no. 4 (Winter 1975): 1070 – 1087.

Wendt, Alexander. "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 391 – 425.

———. "Constructing International Politics." *International Security* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1995): 71 – 81.

———. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press: 1999.

Wilson, Peter. "The Myth of the 'First Great Debate.'" In *The Eighty Years' Crisis: International Relations 1919 – 1999*, edited by Tim Dunne, Michael Cox, and Ken Booth, 1 – 16. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.



# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

Wistrich, Robert, and David Ohana, eds. *The Shaping of Israeli Identity: Myth, Memory and Trauma*. London: Frank Cass, 1995.

Yaphe, Judith S., and Charles D. Lutes. *Reassessing the Implications of a Nuclear-Armed Iran*. McNair Paper 69. Washington, DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 2005.

Yiftachel, Oren. *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.

———. "Ethnocracy and its Discontents: Minorities, Protests, and the Israeli Polity." *Critical Inquiry* 26 (Summer 2000): 725 – 756.

Zakaria, Fareed. *The Post-American World*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2008.

Zerubavel, Yael. *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

[1][1] The archetypical Realist and Constructivist examples adopted in this paper are Kenneth Waltz's Structural Realism and Alexander Wendt's Social Constructivism. For their original scholarly works from which much of this paper's analytical focus is derived, see Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), and Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press: 1999).

[2] For good examples of accounts of the Iranian-Israeli connection circa 1990 and the Cold War's end, see Samuel Segev, *The Iranian Triangle: The Untold Story of Israel's Role in the Iran-Contra Affair*, trans. Haim Watzman (New York: Free Press, 1988), Sohrab Sobhani, *The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations, 1948 – 1988* (New York: Praeger, 1989), and Henry Paolucci, *Iran, Israel, and the United States* (New York: Griffin House Publications, 1991).

[3] Trita Parsi is well known for the former – strategic, geopolitical and power-centric – type of analysis while Haggai Ram is better known for the latter – normative, discursive and ideational – type of critique. By blending these ontological, epistemological and methodological approaches, deep and far-reaching analytical and critical insights can be obtained. See Haggai Ram, *Iranophobia: The Logic of an Israeli Obsession* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), and Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

[4] One scholarly example of each variety of Realism is enough to make this point. Classical Realism – Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), Neo-Classical Realism – Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008), Structural Realism – Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), Offensive Realism – John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), and Defensive Realism – Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987). Constructivism is more difficult to categorize for soon-to-be explained reasons.

[5] Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War is often used as the penultimate example of the 'timeless principles' and 'cyclical nature of history' that Realists claims to represent. For an English translation, see Richard Crawley, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004).

[6] To demonstrate how valuable the contributions of these early writers are to Realist scholars of IR, it is sufficient to mention their most important writings – or in the case of St. Augustine, to briefly consider a biography which outlines some of his most prominent works. See Peter Robert Lamont Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

(London: Faber and Faber, 2000), Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1998 [1515]), Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1651]), Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Col. J. J. Graham, ed. Jan Willem Honig (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2004), and Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 1948).

[7] See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1979.

[8] See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001 [1959]).

[9] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1979: 65 – 74.

[10] Many Structural Realists will acknowledge similar intellectual and conceptual debts, and all will undoubtedly use Waltz as the primordial example for their own variants of Structural Realism. See John J. Mearsheimer, “Structural Realism,” in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., eds. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 77 – 94.

[11] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1979: 61.

[12] *Ibid.*, 93.

[13] *Ibid.*, 95.

[14] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1979: 97 – 99.

[15] *Ibid.*, 105 – 106.

[16] *Ibid.*, 131.

[17] *Ibid.*, 116 – 128.

[18] These central Realist tenets are not disputed by IR thinkers and can be found in any introductory text.

[19] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1979: 116 – 128.

[20] While external balancing is conceptually inconsistent with unipolar systems, other types of non-state or sub-national resistance movements spontaneously emerge which can undercut or counteract an imperial or neo-colonial power’s domination and exploitation of an internationally constructed order. For details on imperial decline and spontaneous regeneration, see Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqadimmah: An Introduction to History*, ed. N. J. Dawood, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton and Oxford, Bollingen Series: Princeton UP, 2005), and Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987).

[21] This debilitating consequence of internal balancing is related to great power hegemonic decline, an idea popularized by Paul Kennedy in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 1987.

[22] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1979: 168.

[23] For a brief but enlightening biography of Kenneth N. Waltz, a general summary of his scholarly works, and his contributions to IR theory, see Martin Griffiths, *Fifty Key Thinkers in International Relations* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 46 – 50.

[24] For more on Constructivism’s sociological origins, see Martha Finnemore, “Norms, Culture, and World Politics: Insights from Sociology’s Institutionalism,” in *International Organization* 50, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 325 – 347.

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

[25] Post-positivist critiques took issue with the limited starting assumptions and stringent methodological requirements of WSR, perhaps most famously in Robert O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). Constructivists began to reconcile the radically opposing views of the (positivistic) Realists and their (post-positivistic) critics with the works of Friedrich Kratochwil, Nicholas Onuf, Christian Reus-Smit, John Gerard Ruggie, and Alexander Wendt.

[26] The use of these historical 'Great Debates' within IR as a useful pedagogical tool is itself a question very much up for debate. For background and critique of the First Great Debate, see E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919 – 1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1939), and Peter Wilson, "The Myth of the 'First Great Debate,'" in *The Eighty Years' Crisis: International Relations 1919 – 1999*, eds. Tim Dunne, Michael Cox, Ken Booth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1 – 16. For the Second Great Debate, see Morton A. Kaplan, "The New Great Debate: Traditionalism vs. Science in International Relations," *World Politics* 19, no. 1 (October 1966), 1 – 20, and for a rendition of the 'traditional' – as opposed to 'behaviouralist' – methodology of IR, see Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1946) or Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948). For the Third Great Debate, see Yosef Lapid, "The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era," *International Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (September 1989), 235 – 254, and Ole Wæver, "The Rise and Fall of the Inter-Paradigm Debate," in *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, eds. Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 149 – 185. For the Fourth Great Debate, see Ole Wæver, "Still a Discipline After All These Debates?" in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, eds. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 297 – 316, Steve Smith, "The Self-Images of a Discipline: A Genealogy of International Relations Theory," in *International Relations Theory Today*, eds. Ken Booth and Steve Smith (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 1 – 37.

[27] As with Realists in the previous section, this list is in no way meant to be exhaustive. For examples of how each scholar's distinct works reflect their individual contributions to Constructivist IR theory, see Nicholas Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), Friedrich Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Peter Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), and Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

[28] For this critical distinction between the different purposes and objectives behind many IR theories, see Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[29] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press: 1999).

[30] This rationalist-reflectivist distinction is mirrored in a famous Robert W. Cox article written several years earlier in which these two theoretical approaches are dubbed 'problem-solving' and 'critical' theories, respectively. See Robert W. Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," *Millennium* 10, no. 2 (June 1981), 126 – 155. For Keohane's rationalist-reflectivist dualism, see Robert O. Keohane, "International Institutions: Two Approaches," in *International Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (December 1988): 379 – 396.

[31] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," in *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 391 – 425.

[32] There are, of course, innumerable ways to compare and contrast Constructivist and Realist IR theory. Still, for the general framework used in this paper, see Christian Reus-Smit, "Constructivism," in *Theories of International Relations*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., eds. Scott Burchill et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 212-236.

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

[33] Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It," 1992: 398.

[34] Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," in *International Security* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1995): 73.

[35] Importantly, Neo-Classical Realists still fail to give agents and structures mutually constitutive properties, choosing to examine them as independent and not interdependent variables. Critical theorists, Constructivists included, are indebted to Anthony Giddens' theory of 'structuration' for this agent-structure interrelation. For two of Giddens' seminal works on structuration theory, see Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (London: Macmillan, 1979), and Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1984).

[36] Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It," 1992: 406.

[37] The elementary introduction to Iranian-Israeli relations that follows in the form of a literature review is in no way meant to exhaust the sum total of meaningful interactions between these two countries. It is instead meant to familiarize the reader with the substance of the arguments presented in this paper.

[38] IGOs refer to inter-governmental organizations and NGOs refer to non-governmental organizations. As non-state actors incapable of competing directly with states for power and influence, both types of internationally oriented organizations have portrayed themselves as members of the 'international community' to compensate.

[39] Levels of security other than the national, such as human, societal, economic, or environmental, become more immediate concerns in more stable and secure regions like Europe and North America. The Middle East, however, remains preoccupied with national security concerns and for obvious reasons. For Iranian national security, see Ann Tibbitts Schulz, *Buying Security: Iran Under the Monarchy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), and Daniel Byman, Shahram Chubin, Anoushiravan Ehteshami, and Jerrold Green, *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001). For Israeli national security, see Uri Bar-Joseph, ed., *Israel's National Security Towards the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), and Efraim Inbar, *Israel's National Security: Issues and Challenges Since the Yom Kippur War* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[40] Many scholars have begun to combine national security and foreign policy studies together in an effort to attain greater theoretical sophistication. To see an Iranian example: Homa Katouzian and Hossein Shahidi, eds., *Iran in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Politics, Economics and Conflict* (New York: Routledge, 2008), and to see an Israeli example: Robert O. Freedman, ed., *Contemporary Israel: Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Security Challenges* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009).

[41] For the variable of 'foreign policy orientation' and its theoretical derivation, see Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, eds., *The Foreign Policies of Arab States* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984).

[42] For scholarly work on the autonomy and importance of regions in Middle Eastern politics, see Ze'ev Maoz, *Regional Security in the Middle East: Past, Present and Future* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997), and Pinar Bilgin, *Regional Security in the Middle East: A Critical Perspective* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005). For the autonomy of regions in international politics, see Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, eds., *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), and Amitav Acharya, "The Emerging Regional Architecture of World Politics," *World Politics* 59, no. 2 (January 2007): 629 – 652.

[43] For 'traditional' security studies, see Edward A. Kolodziej, *Security and International Relations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), and Roland Dannreuther, *International Security: The Contemporary Agenda* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007). For 'critical' security studies, see Ken Booth, ed., *Critical Security Studies and World Politics* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005), and K. M. Fierke, *Critical Approaches to International Security* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007). For a potential synthesis between the two approaches, see Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

[44] The concept of rentier states comes from the work of Hossein Mahdavy and originally refers to the economic situation of pre-revolutionary Iran. It was later applied to the political economy of Arab states and popularized by Giacomo Luciani. See Hossein Mahdavy, "The Pattern and Problems of Economic Development in Rentier States: The Case of Iran," in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East: From the Rise of Islam to the Present Day*, ed. M. A. Cook (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1970), 428 – 467, and Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani, eds., *The Rentier State: Nation, State, and Integration in the Arab World, Vol. 2* (London: Croom Helm, 1987).

[45] For an early positivist account of Arab foreign policy in the Middle East, see Korany and Dessouki, eds., *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, 1984. For interpretivist foreign policy studies of the Middle East (including non-Arabs Iran and Israel), see Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, eds., *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002), and Shibley Telhami and Michael Barnett, eds., *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

[46] For the potential fall-out of all-out, large-scale warfare between Iran and Israel, see Trita Parsi, "Iran and Israel: The Avoidable War," in *Middle East Policy* 14, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 79 – 85, and Jonathan Spyer, "Israel in the Middle East: Threats and Countermeasures," in *International Relations* 22, no. 3 (September 2008): 349 – 352.

[47] According to this logic (and Haleh Vaziri's), Iranian foreign policy is best understood as 'strategic pragmatism' clothed superficially in 'revolutionary idealism'. For this exception to the rule of Iranian foreign policy moderation, see Haleh Vaziri, "The Islamic Republic and Its Neighbors: Ideology and the National Interest in Iran's Foreign Policy During the Khomeini Decade," (PhD Diss., Georgetown University, 1995), and David Menashri, "Iran, Israel and the Middle East Conflict," in *Israel Affairs* 12, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 107 – 122.

[48] For Iran's increasing support for and influence over its anti-Israeli proxies, Hamas and Hezbollah, see Ze'ev Schiff, "Israel's War with Iran," in *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 6 (November/December 2006): 23 – 31. For Iran's growing ties and clout with Syria, see Jubin M. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran: Diplomatic Alliance and Power Politics in the Middle East* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006).

[49] For the first scenario, see Ehud Eilam, "A New Take on the Iranian-Israeli Conflict," in *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 2, no. 2 (2008): 11 – 21. For the second scenario, see Trita Parsi, "Israel and the Origins of Iran's Arab Option: Dissection of a Strategy Misunderstood," in *Middle East Journal* 60, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 493 – 512.

[50] For recent news articles demonstrating Turkey's shift away from the secular West and towards the Arab/Islamic Worlds, see Rick Francona, "Turkey Has Proposed Turkey-Iran-Syria Alliance," *Basil and Spice*, June 5, 2010, <http://www.basilandspice.com/journal/62010-turkey-has-proposed-turkey-iran-syria-alliance.html> (accessed June 17, 2010), and Ayse Karabat, "Turkey's Foreign Policy: Moving Away from the West?" *Qantara.de: Dialogue with the Islamic World*, June 17, 2010, [http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show\\_article.php/\\_c-476/\\_nr-1344/i.html](http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-476/_nr-1344/i.html) (accessed June 17, 2010).

[51] For an analysis of this security rather than market-oriented logic underlying oil pipeline construction in the Middle East throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, see Qasem M. Shehadeh Dweikat, "The Geostrategy of Oil Pipeline Construction and Operation in the Middle East," (PhD Diss., Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, 1990).

[52] For the economic consequences of a potential Iranian blockade of the Persian Gulf, see Caitlin Talmadge, "Closing Time: Assessing the Iranian Threat to the Strait of Hormuz," in *International Security* 33, no. 1 (Summer 2008): 82 – 117, and William D. O'Neil and Caitlin Talmadge, "Correspondence: Costs and Difficulties of Blocking the Strait of Hormuz," in *International Security* 33, no. 3 (Winter 2008/09): 190 – 198.

[53] For Iranian-Israeli petroleum, natural gas, and energy cooperation, see Uri Bialer, "Fuel Bridge across the Middle East – Israel, Iran, and the Eilat-Ashkelon Oil Pipeline," in *Israel Studies* 12, no. 3 (October 2007): 29 – 67.

[54] For Iran's recognition of Israel, see Eshagh Emran Shaoul, "Cultural Values and Foreign Policy Decision-Making

## The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

in Iran: The Case of Iran's Recognition of Israel," (PhD Diss., George Washington University, 1971). For Iranian-Israeli cooperation in and development of South Asia, see Robert Bruce Reppa, *Israel and Iran: Bilateral Relationships and Effect on the Indian Ocean Basin* (New York: Praeger, 1974). For generally close ties between Iran and Israel, see M. G. Weinbaum, "Iran and Israel: The Discreet Entente," *Orbis* 18, no. 4 (Winter 1975): 1070 – 1087, and Gawdat Bahgat, "The Islamic Republic and the Jewish State," in *Israel Affairs* 11, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 517 – 534.

[55] For historical contextualization of this major event, see Reese Erlich, *The Iran Agenda: The Real Story of U.S. Policy and the Middle East Crisis* (Sausalito, CA: PoliPointPress, 2007), and Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008).

[56] For a fascinating look at Iranian-Israeli (and American) collaboration and collusion during the years of the Cold War, see Sohrab Sobhani, *The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations, 1948 – 1988* (New York: Praeger, 1989), and Henry Paolucci, *Iran, Israel, and the United States* (New York: Griffin House Publications, 1991).

[57] Though it would seem like the United States and Israel would be repelled by Iran's 1979 Revolution, geopolitical realities on the ground – the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and Iraq's pan-Arab charge against Iran in 1980 – pushed the national interests of all three states in the same direction. No case proves this point better than the Iran-Contra Affair. For an insider's view of these happenings, see Samuel Segev, *The Iranian Triangle: The Untold Story of Israel's Role in the Iran-Contra Affair*, trans. Haim Watzman (New York: Free Press, 1988).

[58] For insight into this three-way relationship post-1979, see Avi Davidi, "The Post-Revolutionary Iranian Triangle: The United States-Israel-Iran Tripartite Relations, 1979-2001," (PhD Diss., University of Southern California, 2002).

[59] For work that deals with themes of power and hegemony in the Middle East, see Trita Parsi, "Israeli-Iranian Relations 1970-2001: Ideological Calculus or Strategic Rivalry?" (PhD Diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2006), and Trita Parsi, "Israeli-Iranian Relations Assessed: Strategic Competition from the Power Cycle Perspective," in Katouzian and Shahidi, eds., *Iran in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 136 – 157.

[60] For an editorial advocating the Israel-NATO option, see Ronald D. Asmus, "Contain Iran: Admit Israel to NATO," *Washington Post*, February 21, 2006, <http://gees.org/documentos/Documen-749.pdf> (accessed June 13, 2010).

[61] For the American-Israeli special relationship, see Bernard Reich, *The United States and Israel: The Nature of a Special Relationship* (Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2003), and Eytan Gilboa and Efraim Inbar, *US-Israeli Relations in a New Era: Issues and Challenges After 9/11* (New York: Routledge, 2009). For the dissimilarity in values and interests between Iran and the West, best demonstrated by its anti-Americanism and anti-Zionism, see Patrick Clawson, "The Paradox of Anti-Americanism in Iran," in *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 8, no. 1 (March 2004): 16 – 24, and Meir Litvak, "The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Holocaust: Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism," in *Journal of Israeli History* 25, no. 1 (March 2006): 267 – 284.

[62] For systemic-level interdependencies between US, Iranian and Israeli interests in the Middle East, see Gawdat Bahgat, *American Oil Diplomacy in the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2003), and Gawdat Bahgat, *Israel and the Persian Gulf: Retrospect and Prospect* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006).

[63] See Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

[64] For critical reviews of Parsi's *Treacherous Alliance*, see Leon Hadar, "Review of *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Iran, Israel and the United States*," in *Middle East Policy* 14, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 143 – 173, and Michael Rubin, "Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Iran, Israel and the United States – Review," in *Middle East Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (Spring 2008), <http://www.meforum.org/1914/treacherous-alliance> (accessed June 15, 2010).

## The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

[65] For an in-depth sociological description and explanation of the political and normative misuses of loaded terms like these, see Charles Tilly, "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists," *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 1 (March 2004): 5 – 13.

[66] This argument can be found interspersed within the writings of various academic sources. For a short summary of why Iran posed such a threat to the Arabs post-1979, see Ali Younes, "Why Arabs Fear Iran," *Al Arabiya News Channel*, February 16, 2009, <http://www.alarabiya.net/views/2009/02/16/66562.html> (accessed June 29, 2010).

[67] For more information on Lebanese resistance group Hezbollah's internal formation and dynamic functioning, see Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[68] For historical context, personal records and memorial services dedicated to the US soldiers who lost their lives in Lebanon, see Jeffrey A. Hamman, "The Beirut Memorial Online: They Came in Peace – History," <http://www.beirut-memorial.org/history/index.html> (accessed June 19, 2010).

[69] For the historical origins and Islamist-oriented ideologies of Palestinian resistance group Hamas, see Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: A History from Within* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2007).

[70] This idea of an 'Islamist Axis' is only the latest in a long line of catchy, anti-Iranian monikers. See Martin Kramer, "Israel vs. the New Islamist Axis," in *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 11, no. 1 (March 2007): 13 – 16.

[71] For documentary evidence of Israeli involvement in the Iranian secret services under the Shah, see Paul Todd and Jonathan Bloch, *Global Intelligence: The World's Secret Services Today* (London: Zed Books, 2003).

[72] Iranian state-sponsored terrorism and Israeli counter-terrorism efforts cannot be examined in isolation from the historical and clandestine cooperation of both countries' secret services and spy agencies until the 1980s. For the complexly symbiotic relationship between Iranian and Israeli secret services and the backlash Israel is currently experiencing because of it, see Ronen Bergman, *The Secret War with Iran: The 30-Year Struggle Against the World's Most Dangerous Terrorist Power*, trans. Ronnie Hope (New York: Free Press, 2008), and Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle Against Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

[73] Motivations and intentions, though not empirical or falsifiable, nevertheless play a large part in the 'rational' calculations and justifications of doctrines and decisions, especially in the West. For more on the perceived Iranian threat, see Michael D. Evans and Jerome R. Corsi, *Showdown with Nuclear Iran: Radical Islam's Messianic Missions to Destroy Israel and Cripple the United States* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Current, 2006), and Alireza Jafarzadeh, *The Iran Threat: President Ahmadinejad and the Coming Nuclear Crisis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[74] Israel claims that Iran's development of nuclear technology and potential proliferation pose existential threats to itself in light of its call for Israel's destruction, revolutionary rhetoric and overall support for terrorism, thereby jeopardizing the safety and stability of the region, the world, and its energy supplies. On the other hand, Iran charges that a belligerent and nuclear Israel which has shown disproportionate use of force against its Palestinian inhabitants and Arab neighbours is the real threat to peace and security in the Middle East. For more on this controversy, see Yonatan Beker, "Nuclear Proliferation and Iran: Thoughts About the Bomb," in *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 2, no. 3 (2008): 29 – 40, Ephraim Kam, ed., *Israel and a Nuclear Iran: Implications for Arms Control, Deterrence, and Defence* (Tel Aviv, Israel: Institute for National Security Studies, 2007), and Gawdat Bahgat, "Iran, Israel, and the United States," in *Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 3 – 21.

[75] Iran's early nuclear program and cooperation with the West under the Shah is well documented. For examples, see Shahram Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2006), and Anthony H. Cordesman and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan, *Iran's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Real and Potential Threat* (Washington, DC: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2006).

[76] For debates surrounding the intentions behind Iran's nuclear program after the 1979 Revolution, see Shahram

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

Chubin and Robert S. Litwak, "Debating Iran's Nuclear Aspirations," in *Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (Autumn 2003): 99 – 114, and Judith S. Yaphe and Charles D. Lutes, *Reassessing the Implications of a Nuclear-Armed Iran*, McNair Paper 69 (Washington, DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 2005).

[77] The fourth and latest round of United Nations sanctions created more controversy than any previous round because of strong opposition from temporary Security Council members Turkey and Brazil. For background and context, see UN News Service, "Citing Iran's Failure to Clarify Nuclear Ambitions, UN Imposes Additional Sanctions," *UN News Centre*, June 9, 2010, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34970&Cr=iran&Cr1> (accessed June 23, 2010), and Emily B. Landau and Ephraim Asculai, "The Fourth Round of Sanctions on Iran," *Right Side News: The Right News for Americans*, June 13, 2010, <http://www.rightsidenews.com/2010061310571/global-terrorism/the-fourth-round-of-sanctions-on-iran-i.html> (accessed June 23, 2010).

[78] For historical contextualization of Israel's early development of nuclear power and weaponry, see Louis Rene Beres and Ze'ev Maoz, "Correspondence: Israel and the Bomb," in *International Security* 29, no. 1 (August 2004): 175 – 180, and Michael Karpin, *The Bomb in the Basement: How Israel Went Nuclear and What That Means for the World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007).

[79] The 'periphery doctrine' emphasized the importance of allying with non-Arab and semi-regional powers like Turkey, Iran and Ethiopia. See Sobhani, *The Pragmatic Entente*, 1988: 33 – 64, Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 2007: 127 – 135, and Leon T. Hadar, "The Collapse of Israel's Periphery Doctrine," *Foreign Policy*, June 26, 2010, [http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/06/26/the\\_collapse\\_of\\_israel\\_s\\_periphery\\_doctrine](http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/06/26/the_collapse_of_israel_s_periphery_doctrine) (accessed June 27, 2010). An extreme example of this periphery doctrine would involve Apartheid-era South African-Israeli military, security and defence cooperation in the 1970s and is documented in Sasha Polakow-Suransky, *The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship with Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Pantheon, 2010).

[80] For a comparison of Iran's present drive for nuclear technology to Iraqi and Syrian nuclear aspirations of the past along with potential Israeli countermeasures, see Whitney Raas and Austin Long, "Osirak Redux? Assessing Israeli Capabilities to Destroy Iranian Nuclear Facilities," in *International Security* 31, no. 4 (April 2007): 7 – 33.

[81] Much has been written on the phenomenon of nuclear proliferation, but Israel's decades-long campaign to prevent its neighbours from achieving this capability has not garnered as much attention. For Israel's worst-case, doomsday scenario, see Seymour M. Hersh, *The Samson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Random House, 1991). For the nature of bipolar nuclear rivalries – like the Indo-Pakistani one – with special emphasis on Iran and Israel, see Gawdat Bahgat, "Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East: Iran and Israel," in *Contemporary Security Policy* 26, no. 1 (April 2005): 25 – 43, and Harsh Pant, "Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia and Middle East: The Centrality of Enduring Rivalries," (PhD Diss., University of Notre Dame, 2007).

[82] It is questionable how far this argument should be taken since it is now known that Israel possessed nuclear weapons during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. Even though the superpowers of the day – the United States and the Soviet Union – came almost as close to using nuclear weapons against each other as they did during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, perhaps Israel lacked the qualities of deterrence that accompany nuclear capabilities because of its deliberate policy of nuclear ambiguity. For more on this line of reasoning, see Barry M. Blechman and Douglas M. Hart, "The Political Utility of Nuclear Weapons: The 1973 Middle East Crisis," in *International Security* 7, no. 1 (Summer 1982): 132 – 156. For a more modern version of this same argumentation, see Ralph Sanders, "Israel and the Realities of Mutual Deterrence," in *Israel Affairs* 15, no. 1 (January 2009): 81 – 97.

[83] Israel's Ambassador to the United States has famously stated that 'Israel will not be the first [country] to introduce nuclear weapons to the Middle East' – though this equally ambiguous statement, which itself hinges on one's interpretation of the term 'introduce,' does not clear up the issue. For more on Israel's nuclear opacity and ambiguity, see Etel Solingen, "The Domestic Source of Regional Regimes: The Evolution of Nuclear Ambiguity in the Middle East," in *International Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June 1994): 305 – 337, Yair Evron, *Israel's Nuclear Dilemma* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), and Ze'ev Maoz, "The Mixed Blessing of Israel's Nuclear



# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

Policy,” in *International Security* 28, no. 2 (January 2003): 44 – 77.

[84] In response to the hypothetical scenario of a nuclear Iran, Shmuel Bar claims that “Iran will probably take advantage of this period of Arab strategic inferiority in order to cement its hegemony in the region... In the long run, therefore, it is reasonable to assume that along with a first response of appeasement of Iran, the Arab countries will attempt to acquire nuclear weapons of their own” (p. 26). For more, see Shmuel Bar, “Between Stagnation and Chaos: Iran and the Middle East,” in *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 3, no. 3 (2009): 23 – 29.

[85] Interestingly enough, the United States’ reactions towards the nuclear programs of many countries have seldom been the same. For case studies examining American policies towards Iran and Israel in comparison with its policies towards other similar countries, see Grzegorz Kostrzewa-Zorbas, “American Responses to the Proliferation of Actual, Virtual, and Potential Nuclear Weapons: France, Israel, Japan, and Related Cases, 1939 – 1997. Lessons for the Multipolar Future,” (PhD Diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1998), and Jarrod Hayes, “Identity and Securitization in the Democratic Peace: The United States and the Divergence of Response to India and Iran’s Nuclear Programs,” in *International Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (December 2009): 977 – 999.

[86] For one of the earliest works to recognize this fact and explore international politics from this perspective, see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976). For work that applies this ideational conceptual framework to Iranian-Israeli relations, see Marsha Cohen, “Lions and Roses: An Interpretive History of Israeli-Iranian Relations,” (PhD Diss., Florida International University, 2007).

[87] One study examines the media depictions of Iran and Israel in one another’s media outlets, with Iran’s *Islamic Republic News Agency* framing Israel as a ‘savage regime,’ ‘Zionist oppressors’ and ‘general enemies of Islam,’ while Israel’s *Yediot Aharonot* demonized Iran’s President and cast him as the ‘chief supporter of Islamic terror’ and an ‘immediate threat to the Jewish State.’ See Adam Klein, “Characterizing ‘the Enemy’: Zionism and Islamism in the Iranian and Israeli Press,” in *Communication, Culture and Critique* 2, no. 3 (September 2009): 387 – 406.

[88] Recent research points to Iranians capitalizing on the power of negative perceptions by portraying Israel as a weak, illegitimate and ineffective social group and nation-state rather than previously advertised as strong, clever and diabolically manipulative. For this paradigm shift, see Ze’ev Maghen, “From Omnipotence to Impotence: A Shift in the Iranian Portrayal of the ‘Zionist Regime’” (Ramat Gan, Israel: Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, 2008). For Iran’s steady stream of anti-Zionist slogans and propaganda, see Elihu D. Richter and Alex Barnea, “Tehran’s Genocidal Incitement Against Israel,” in *Middle East Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 45 – 51.

[89] Negative Israeli perceptions of Iran are facilitated and conditioned by a long history of conflict and mistrust with its Arab neighbours. For a sociological critique of Israel’s domestic ethnic insecurities projected outwards onto the Islamic Republic of Iran, see Haggai Ram, *Iranophobia: The Logic of an Israeli Obsession* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009). For a deconstruction of anti-Iranian Israeli propaganda, see Mahmood Sariolghalam, “Understanding Iran: Getting Past Stereotypes and Mythology,” in *Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (September 2003): 69 – 82.

[90] For a cross-sectional analysis of national psychological issues underlying the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, see Ofer Grosbard, *Israel on the Couch: The Psychology of the Peace Process* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003); for its international self-image as a victimized state, see Mira M. Sucharov, *The International Self: Psychoanalysis and the Search for Israeli-Palestinian Peace* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005); and for its societal self-esteem, see Daniel Bar-Tal, “Why Does Fear Override Hope in Societies Engulfed by Intractable Conflict, as It Does in the Israeli Society?” in *Political Psychology* 22, no. 3 (2001): 601 – 627.

[91] This sudden interest in ‘identity politics’ is part of a broader post-positivist turn in the social sciences that began in the past few decades and has only accelerated since. For post-positivist studies of Iranian and Israeli foreign policies, see Shibley Telhami and Michael Barnett, eds., *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), and Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, eds., *The Foreign Policies*

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

of *Middle East States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002). For a post-positivist analysis of Iranian and Israeli international relations, see M. A. Muqtedar Khan, *Jihad for Jerusalem: Identity and Strategy in International Relations* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology*

(Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), and Louise Fawcett, ed., *International Relations of the Middle East*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[92] Explanation and prediction are the goals of much political analysis. For the theoretical and practical obstacles that prevent their attainment, see Fawaz A. Gerges, "The Study of Middle East International Relations: A Critique," in *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 18, no. 2 (1991): 208 – 220, and F. Gregory Gause III, "Systemic Approaches to Middle East International Relations," in *International Studies Review* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 11 – 31.

[93] Within Iran a Persian mentality dominates the mainstream culture as in no other state, just like Israel is the only country in the world that Jews can call a 'national homeland.' For more on the Persian-Iranian nation-state, see Mostafa Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation: The Construction of National Identity* (New York: Paragon House, 1993), Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, "Cultures of Iranianness: The Evolving Polemic of Iranian Nationalism," in *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics*, eds., Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002), 162 – 181, and Farideh Farhi, "Crafting a National Identity Amidst Contentious Politics in Contemporary Iran," in Katouzian and Shahidi, eds., *Iran in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 13 – 27. For more on Jewish Israel's national characteristics, see Yaacov Shavit, *The New Hebrew Nation: A Study in Israeli Heresy and Fantasy* (London: Frank Cass, 1987), Robert Wistrich and David Ohana, eds., *The Shaping of Israeli Identity: Myth, Memory and Trauma* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), and Ze'ev Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism, and the Making of the Jewish State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

[94] As Diasporas grow around the world, Diaspora politics receives proportionally more attention in political science. For its incorporation into IR, see Fiona B. Adamson and Madeleine Demetriou, "Remapping the Boundaries of 'State' and 'National Identity': Incorporating Diasporas into IR Theorizing," in *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 4 (December 2007): 489 – 526. For the case of Persian Jews living in Iran (in exile from Israel), see Jon L. Berquist, *Judaism in Persia's Shadow: A Social and Historical Approach* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), and for Jewish Persians living in Israel (in exile from Iran), see Judith L. Goldstein, "Iranian Ethnicity in Israel: The Performance of Identity," in Elazar Leshem and Judith T. Shuval, eds., *Immigration to Israel: Sociological Perspectives* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998).

[95] From anti-Semitism of the European and Christian-inspired variety to the Middle Eastern and Islamic-rooted brand, Jews have been persecuted practically everywhere they have been minorities. For the unique blend of Persian-Iranian hatred towards Jews, see Roman Brackman, *Israel at High Noon: From Stalin's Failed Satellite to the Challenge of Iran* (New York: Enigma Books, 2006), and Matthias Küntzel, "Iranian Anti-Semitism: Stepchild of German National Socialism," in *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 4, no. 1 (2010): 43 – 51.

[96] For the uniquely interwoven and interdependent nature of Persian and Jewish historical civilizations, see Richard Lee Kalmin, *Jewish Babylonia between Persia and Roman Palestine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[97] The exact meaning and significance of ethnicity and national heritage, along with the linkage between them, is a hotly contested theoretical concept. For seminal works, see Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (Oxford, UK: Hutchinson, 1960), Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1983), and Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1986).

[98] For historical accounts detailing the breakup of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of the Middle East as it is known today, see William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), 149 – 170, and Roger Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 5 – 22.

## The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

[99] The number of Jewish refugees fleeing from Arab countries as a result of the first Arab-Israeli War in 1948-49 is estimated to be about 600,000 to 800,000, nearly the same as the number of Palestinian refugees. See Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book* (New York: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), and Ada Aharoni, *The Second Exodus: A Historical Novel* (Bryn Mawr, PA: Dorrance, 1983).

[100] The nearly diametrically opposed narratives espoused by Arabs and Jews about the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine in 1947 are no doubt obstacles to an unbiased and unfiltered perspective on the issue, but provide valuable insights into the underlying motivations and intentions of all actors involved. For more information on the 1947 Partition Plan and the collective Arab response, see Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 2004: 239 – 272, and Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 2004: 73 – 80.

[101] Ever since the British had promised Zionist leaders a national homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine, the only hope for its realization was British manpower, firepower, and willpower. After an abrupt and poorly planned strategy to pull its resources out of Palestine and allow the United Nations to arbitrate the Palestinian dispute between the Arabs and Jews (and the plan's subsequent Arab rejection), the Jewish population was on its own.

[102] Malcolm Kerr popularized the thesis that Arab states in the Middle East vied for power and influence among each other as much as with Israel or with outside powers. See Malcolm H. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958 – 1970*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

[103] Indeed, some Arab states gained more by exploiting the conflict with Israel for their own gains than they could have without it; it is suggested that Jordan's first king, for example, actively colluded with the Jewish government in Palestine in order to capture the West Bank. For this thesis, see Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), and Avi Shlaim, *The Politics of Partition: King Abdullah, the Zionists, and Palestine 1921 – 1951* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[104] The periphery doctrine acted as a strategic blueprint for Israeli foreign and security policies for decades. See Sohrab Sobhani, *The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations, 1948 – 1988* (New York: Praeger, 1989): 33 – 64, Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007): 127 – 135, and Leon T. Hadar, "The Collapse of Israel's Periphery Doctrine," *Foreign Policy*, June 26, 2010, [http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/06/26/the\\_collapse\\_of\\_israel\\_s\\_periphery\\_doctrine](http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/06/26/the_collapse_of_israel_s_periphery_doctrine) (accessed June 27, 2010).

[105] Iran extended *de facto* recognition to Israel because it was simply not as engaged as the Arabs in the Palestinian issue. For more in-depth analyses of the recognition issue, see Eshagh Emran Shaoul, "Cultural Values and Foreign Policy Decision-Making in Iran: The Case of Iran's Recognition of Israel," (PhD Diss., George Washington University, 1971), Sobhani, *The Pragmatic Entente*, 1988: 1 – 16, and Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 2007: 29 – 38.

[106] This broad generalization of the mutually beneficial tradeoffs taking place between Iran and Israel is not meant to be exact or precise, nor is it meant to suggest a ratio of or causal relationships between variables. It is instead meant as a general summary of Iranian-Israeli relations during the period of time under study: 1948 to 1979.

[107] The best source for this claim remains Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

[108] Iranian oil was crucial to Israeli energy security. See Uri Bialer, "Fuel Bridge across the Middle East – Israel, Iran, and the Eilat-Ashkelon Oil Pipeline," in *Israel Studies* 12, no. 3 (October 2007): 29 – 67.

[109] Israeli agricultural expertise to Iran spread in time to the rest of the West Asian region. See Robert Bruce Reppa, *Israel and Iran: Bilateral Relationships and Effect on the Indian Ocean Basin* (New York: Praeger, 1974),

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

and Ann Tibbitts Schulz, *Buying Security: Iran Under the Monarchy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 117 – 129.

[110] Familial and cultural contacts between Iranians and Israelis facilitated business and financial ties. Iranian-Israeli trade in the final years before the Islamic Revolution, for fiscal year 1978-79, is estimated at \$250 million (USD). See Amnon Netzer, “The Jews of Iran, Israel and the Islamic Republic of Iran” (in Hebrew), *Gesher* 100 (1980): 51.

[111] Israel's training and supplying of Iranian SAVAK special security forces (with American consent) is well known in the intelligence community. See Sobhani, *The Pragmatic Entente*, 1988: 121 – 123.

[112] The Iranian war machine had swollen to a significant size by the mid-1970s as a result of Western assistance. By 1976, for example, Iran had procured a standing army of 300,000 soldiers, 2,900 armoured tanks, 13 naval ships, 317 combat aircraft, and spent upwards of \$11 billion (USD) in that year alone on military spending. See Schulz, *Buying Security*, 1989: 24, 48.

[113] There is no basis for this belief in the Quran, the Hadith, or even any Muslim holy texts. The distinction between *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb* stems instead from the thoughts of prominent thousand-year old Sunni Muslim jurists, like Abu Hanifa and Ibn Taymiyyah.

[114] An op-ed parodying this very fallacy demonstrates this point better than even examples of the sources actually espousing this point of view. See Gil Shotan, “Is Israel the Source of All Evil?” *The Stanford Review, Opinion* 42, no. 6 (May 1, 2009), <http://stanfordreview.org/article/israel-source-all-evil> (accessed June 30, 2010).

[115] Many of Iran's Jews chose to stay in Iran after Israel's foundation, and some even stayed after the Islamic Revolution. See Haggai Ram, “Between Homeland and Exile: Iranian Jewry in Zionist/Israeli Political Thought,” in *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 35 (April 2008): 1 – 20, and Haggai Ram, “Caught Between Orientalism and Aryanism, Exile and Homeland: The Jews of Iran in Zionist/Israeli Imagination,” in *Hagar* 8 (2008): 105 – 128.

[116] The Iranian government's role in ferrying Persian and Iraqi Jews to Israel provided a huge boost for Iranian-Israeli relations. See Moshe Gat, *The Jewish Exodus from Iraq, 1948 – 1951* (New York: Frank Cass, 1997).

[117] This is generally referred to as in-group versus out-group bias or in-group favouritism but is a relatively simple psychological phenomenon to understand. Whether the motivating ideology behind the collective identification of the group is nationalism, ethnocentrism, fundamentalism, etc., the (sub)conscious effect is very much the same.

[118] The drive for modernization was a critical determinant in the compatibility of Iranian and Israeli identities and objectives in terms of national security and foreign policy. For Iranian encounters with modernization, see Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). For an Israeli take on modernity and modernization, see Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[119] Both Shahs of the Pahlavi monarchy were enamoured with the Aryan and Indo-European ancestry that Iranians and Europeans supposedly shared in common. See Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, *Iran in World Politics: The Question of the Islamic Republic* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 31 – 82.

[120] Israel's mainstream Ashkenazi Jews have traditionally identified more closely with their ‘Aryan’ European roots and culture rather than with those of its Sephardi and Mizrahi ‘Oriental’ minorities living in the Middle East. See Michael Selzer, *The Aryanization of the Jewish State* (New York: Black Star Publishing, 1967), Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), and Sami Shalom Chetrit, *The Mizrahi Struggle in Israel: Between Oppression and Liberation, Identification and Alternative, 1948 – 2003* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv, Israel: Am Oved, 2004).

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

[121] Post-colonial theories have grown in popularity and utility with the parallel rise in the social sciences of more post-positivist epistemologies and anti-foundationalist ontologies. See, for instance, Yehouda Shenhav, *The Arab Jews: Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion, and Ethnicity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), and Hamid Dabashi, *Post-Orientalism: Knowledge and Power in Time of Terror* (London: Transaction, 2008).

[122] Many Iranians during the Shah's reign saw Israel as an important political model to emulate and entertained romantic notions of Israel as a bridge to the West. See Eldad Pardo, "Israel as an Example in the Eyes of the Iranian Left in the 1960s" (in Hebrew), *Iyunim Bitkumat Yisrael* 14 (2004): 2, and Ram, *Iranophobia*, 2009: 50 – 72.

[123] The Arab-Israeli War of 1967, also known as the Six-Day War and the June War, is one of the most mythologized events in recent Middle Eastern history and at the time wielded enormous significance for the future diplomatic, political, military, and cultural relations of Arabs and Israelis. For an account sympathetic to the Arabs, see Moshe Shemesh, *Arab Politics, Palestinian Nationalism and the Six-Day War: The Crystallization of Arab Strategy and Nasir's Descent to War, 1957 – 1967* (Eastbourne, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2008), and for one sympathetic to the Israelis, see Eric Hammel, *Six Days in June: How Israel Won the 1967 Arab-Israeli War* (Pacifica, CA: Pacifica Military History, 2001). For more general accounts of the war, see Michael B. Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Random House, 2003), and Tom Segev, *1967: Israel, the War, and the Year That Transformed the Middle East*, trans. Jessica Cohen (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007).

[124] Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's influence on Persian culture and Shiite theology – an ideology, Khomeinism – is a specific brand of Shiite Islamic political thought that has infused Iran with a unique worldview among nations and states. The legacy of the revolution and Khomeini's role in it has become contested in recent years. See Daniel Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[125] Iran's Islamic Revolution brought about many external changes in the region, but the simultaneous internal changes are often overlooked in the process of analyzing its foreign dimensions. For a tripartite distinction between the conservative-religious, reformist-religious, and secular-modernist discourses taking place in Iran, see Mehran Kamrava, *Iran's Intellectual Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[126] For statistics on dead and wounded Iranians in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War, see Iran Chamber Society, "History of Iran: Iran-Iraq War 1980-1988," [http://www.iranchamber.com/history/iran\\_iraq\\_war/iran\\_iraq\\_war1.php](http://www.iranchamber.com/history/iran_iraq_war/iran_iraq_war1.php) (accessed July 15, 2010). For the numbers of deaths and injuries caused by chemical weapons, see Anthony H. Cordesman and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan, *Iran's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Real and Potential Threat* (Washington, DC: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2006), 27. For Iran's estimated economic loss during the war, see Hossein Askari, Amin Mohseni, and Shahrzad Daneshvar, *The Militarization of the Persian Gulf: An Economic Analysis* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2009), 118.

[127] The Arab World, inhabited mostly by Sunni Muslims and governed mostly by secular regimes, feared the Islamic Revolution in Iran for three reasons: the Persian-Arab ethnic divide, the Shiite-Sunni confessional divide, and the goal of Islamizing secular governments by exporting the revolution. Some supported Iran for their own reasons and paid the price of regional diplomatic isolation, like Syria because of its own inter-Baath Party rivalry with Iraq.

[128] For an in-depth breakdown of Israel's role in the Iran-Contra Affair, see Samuel Segev, *The Iranian Triangle: The Untold Story of Israel's Role in the Iran-Contra Affair*, trans. Haim Watzman (New York: Free Press, 1988).

[129] For instance, what defines a greater, regional, or lesser power in the Middle East region – who is and who is not eligible for candidacy? How is power to be measured – diplomatically, militarily, economically, culturally, or all of the above? When does this balance of power evolve or change forms – national independence, shifts in alliances, regional wars, domestic revolutions, or some combination of all of these examples? Or is it just impossible to tell?

[130] Saddam Hussein had assembled an army of at least 190,000 soldiers, 2,200 armoured tanks, and 450 combat aircraft by the end of a massive military build-up during the 1970s. For more military statistics, see Anthony H.

# The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

Cordesman, *The Military Balance in the Middle East* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 284 – 310, and Ibrahim al-Marashi and Sammy Salama, *Iraq's Armed Forces: An Analytical History* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 105 – 128.

[131] Hamas and Hezbollah often work with Iran to achieve strategic, military, and political goals. See Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle Against Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 70, 86, 141 – 145.

[132] Iran's role as a leading rejectionist state opposed to the regional *status quo*, American hegemony, Palestinian-Israeli peace talks, and so on, has long been a staple of its foreign policy but has shown signs of moderation and even alteration ever since the Iran-Iraq War ended. See Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri, *Iran and the Rise of its Neoconservatives: The Politics of Tehran's Silent Revolution* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 97 – 148.

[133] In this formulation, the moderates are clearly Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Palestinian Authority, while the radicals consist of Iran, Syria, Lebanese Hezbollah, and Palestinian Hamas. Countries like Lebanon and Iraq are more-or-less uninvolved in the sense that any relevant foreign policy initiatives are weak, impaired or non-existent.

[134] For a view of Iranian-Israeli relations as timeless Middle Eastern power struggles, see Trita Parsi, "Israeli-Iranian Relations Assessed: Strategic Competition from the Power Cycle Perspective," in Homa Katouzian and Hossein Shahidi, eds, *Iran in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Politics, Economics and Conflict* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 136 – 157.

[135] Iran has a history of concealment, deception, and obfuscation with regards to its nuclear policy, a cause for concern among regional Arab states vying for power and influence, an Israel that is routinely the target of anti-Zionist vitriol and delegitimizing rhetoric, and the Western-based security order presently in place in the Middle East. See Michael D. Evans and Jerome R. Corsi, *Showdown with Nuclear Iran: Radical Islam's Messianic Missions to Destroy Israel and Cripple the United States* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Current, 2006), and Alireza Jafarzadeh, *The Iran Threat: President Ahmadinejad and the Coming Nuclear Crisis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[136] This double standard wherein Israel receives a *carte blanche* vis-à-vis its nuclear program from the West yet Iran is scrutinized relentlessly and bombarded with international sanctions has been noted, and in some cases sensationalized, in many journalistic circles. See James Zogby, "Double Standards Won't Lead to a Nuclear-Free World," *Middle East Online*, April 12, 2010, <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/opinion/?id=38373> (accessed July 23, 2010), Associated Press, "Iran: Sanctions Reflect Double Standard," *The Jerusalem Post*, June 18, 2010, <http://www.jpost.com/IranianThreat/News/Article.aspx?id=178852> (accessed July 23, 2010), and Senussi Bsaikri, "Western Double Standards: Israel vs. Iran," *MEMO, Middle East Monitor: Creating New Perspectives*, November 10, 2009, <http://www.middleeastmonitor.org.uk/reports/66-senussi-bsaikri/230-western-double-standards-israel-vs-iran> (accessed July 23, 2010).

[137] The West and Israel both fear a nuclear Iran, but a nuclear Iran providing its proxies with nuclear armaments is more than a nightmarish scenario for both. See Yair Evron, *Israel's Nuclear Dilemma* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), Ronen Bergman, *The Secret War with Iran: The 30-Year Struggle Against the World's Most Dangerous Terrorist Power*, trans. Ronnie Hope (New York: Free Press, 2008), and Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle Against Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

[138] More than the external military threat, the secular and Ashkenazi mainstream in Israel feared the ethnic and religious resurgence in Israel following the Likud Party upset of the well established Labour Party in the national elections of 1977. Oren Yiftachel, "Ethnocracy and its Discontents: Minorities, Protests, and the Israeli Polity," *Critical Inquiry* 26 (Summer 2000): 725 – 756, Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), and Ram, *Iranophobia*, 2009: 50 – 72.

[139] The revolutionary regime in Iran differentiated itself both from its past under the Shah and its neighbours in the Arab Middle East by adopting more romantic and idealistic policies inspired by revolutionary rhetoric and ideology. See Misagh Parsa, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, the State University,

## The Enigma of Iranian-Israeli Relations

Written by Uri Marantz

1989), and David Menashri, *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World* (Boulder, CT: Westview Press, 1991).

[140] More recent studies have also pointed to the fact that Iranian foreign policy and decision-making processes can be construed as those of a prudent, rational, and pragmatic state actor which increasingly uses ideology as a mask for *realpolitik*. See Daniel Byman, Shahrām Chubin, Anoushiravan Ehteshami, and Jerrold Green, *Iran's Security Policy in the Post-Revolutionary Era* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 100.

[141] Iranian national identity under the Shah included Western, secular, modern, and monarchical symbols and meanings, but was transformed after the revolutionary changes inaugurated by Ayatollah Khomeini and assumed more distinctively and contrastingly Oriental, Islamic, fundamentalist, and republican traits and characteristics.

[142] Not only did many of these states refuse to lend a helping hand to Iran or remain neutral and uninvolved in the war, but many of them publicly sided with Iraq, a country which had unabashedly initiated a war of aggression against Iran in direct violation of the United Nations Charter and international law!

[143] Two examples already mentioned include the 1967 Six-Day War, which infused the Israeli national psyche with a sense of arrogant confidence bordering on hubris, and the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, which introduced the possibility of peaceful coexistence between the Arab states and Israel to the national discourse.

[144] Whether ethnic, religious, or any other variety, domestic considerations often impact a state's foreign relations. In the case of Iran and Israel, see Ram, *Iranophobia*, 2009: 23 – 49, and Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*: 68 – 78.

—

*Written by: Uri Marantz*

*Written at: University of Windsor*

*Written for: Dr. Tom Najem and Dr. E. D. Briggs*

*Date written: April 2011*