

Committee/Council: Security Council

Issue: The Question of Israeli-Iranian Relations

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Introduction

Since the establishment of the state of Israel, a state primarily inhabited by Jews, many Muslim-majority countries have been adversaries of Israel. Prior to the Islamic Revolution, Iran was one of the most prominent supporters of Israel in the world and the Middle East, however after Ayatollah Khomeini came to power, Israel became a huge target for Iran because it was not a Muslim state. Also, Israel had developed innovative technology and could be viewed as a frontrunner to be the most powerful state in the region, a position otherwise held by Iran. Relations were worsened as Iran started funding radical groups aimed at undermining the security of Israel with terrorist attacks. Bilateral dialogues were entirely cut off as radical president and hardline Islamist Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected to office as the president of Iran. Iran initiated nuclear research, claiming it's for energy purposes only, however the western world, allied with Israel, saw this as a front to develop nuclear weapons with the help of Russia. This sparked the fear of nuclear war between the two states. The close ties Israel has with the US also added to the already existing tension since the US is the largest enemy of Iran. So, it can be said that the religious and strategic split between Israel and Iran led to a strong rivalry that caused larger problems and a threat of war as Iran progressed with its nuclear program.

Definition of Key-Terms

Middle East

It is the region that is made up of largely Arab and/or Muslim states with the exception of Israel. This region can also be identified as Western Asia. Middle East was and still is a stage for many military conflicts since the 1990s as an aggressor and a defender in many of the religiously rooted issues.

Intifada

The acts of civil disobedience, violence and terrorism started in 1980s by Palestinian Arabs in Israel aimed at disrupting rule and supporting a free state of Palestine. Political and terrorist groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas further endorsed this;

which were later found out to be receiving immense funding from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Islamic Republic

The regime that was adopted in Iran after the 1979 revolution that, under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, led to the creation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this regime, the religious clergy rules and Sharia is the law.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

Weapons of Mass Destruction are any destructive device such as explosives, weapons designed or intended to cause death or serious injury through the release, dissemination, or impact of toxic or poisonous chemicals, or their precursors, any weapon involving a biological agent, toxin, or vector or any weapon that is designed to release radiation or radioactivity at a level dangerous to human life.

WMD can be chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive (CBRNE). These are weapons that have a relatively large-scale impact on people, property, and/or infrastructure.

The nuclear and radiological weapons are of particular interest for the Israel-Iran relations since Iran and Israel both threaten to use such weapons against each other.

Uranium Enrichment

This is the process of using an isotope of uranium in order to get cheap energy. Iran started this process in 2011 and claims that it is developing nuclear energy sources. Many countries have dubbed this as a project to develop nuclear weapons to “decimate the Zionist regime” as Iran’s supreme leader Ali Khamenei and late president Ahmadinejad both stated on multiple occasions.

Background Information

Historical Bilateral Relations

When Israel was proclaimed in 1948, Iran under the Shah was one of the first countries to recognize it since Iran was trying to modernize and Israel was a democratic country. Being the two modernized nations in the region, Iran and Israel countries had normal interactions.

Iranian Revolution

In 1979, due to heavy protests in the country, Iran experienced a revolution led by the Shia imam Khomeini who installed an Islamic rule. Socialists, republicans

and Islamists induced this revolution however the Islamist side came out on top under Khomeini's leadership. Under his, and his successor Khamenei's, rule the US and Israel are heavily antagonized. The US because it gave asylum to the exiled Shah and also represented and still represents capitalistic and anti-Islamist views and Israel firstly because it was the most economically and technologically developed nation in the region and secondly because it is a Jewish state as opposed to all the other nations in the Middle East which mostly encompass Muslim-majorities. Iranians were angered by the Shah's oppression and this sparked off the 1979 revolution. After the revolution, Iranians were so angered that the US granted asylum to the Shah that they took over the US Embassy in Tehran and accused everyone inside of espionage. After a hostage crisis that lasted the better part of a year, most people captured were tortured and executed. 6 people escaped and some were released however the US was definitely angered by this uncalled attack on its embassy and citizens that it became enemies with the Islamic Republic.

Relations Prior Nuclear Issues

From 1979 to 2011, the rivalry between Israel and Iran continued. During the intifada, since Iran was funding groups involved in this movement, relations were worsened and Iran and Israel became further alienated. In this period, Iran also decided not to recognize Israel as a state anymore, calling it after that "the Zionist state". In Iran's regime, the elected president of the country is mostly affective of external issues and president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad continued to antagonize Israel in his time in office from 2005 to 2013. He also showed strong support to Palestine in order to stir up more internal issues in Israel.

The Palestinian issues' affect on bilateral relations

The dispute between Israel and Palestine has changed many countries perception of Israel, including Iran. The disputed areas, mainly the West Bank and Gaza Strip regions, are populated by Muslims and are therefore of high importance to Iran since they share a religious background. The help to Hamas and Hezbollah also show the endorsement from Iran to a possible free state of Palestine.

Relations from 2011 to Present Day

In 2011, the Islamic Republic of Iran announced it would be proceeding with nuclear energy research and uranium enrichment, which is plentiful in the territory of the country. Even though Iran claimed this to be a project only to increase sustainable energy sources, the Western world and especially the US, one of Israel's closest allies, saw this as an attempt to create a nuclear arsenal for Iran to catalyze the destruction of Israel, which the leaders of Iran mention as one of their main objectives on several occasions. This discussion ignited a fear of nuclear war between Israel and Iran and a "World War III", since Iran and Israel are both highly

polarized. Due to all this, the Prime Minister of Israel; Benjamin Netanyahu, dubbed Bibi by international news outlets, called on the US president Barack Obama for preemptive strikes on Iranian nuclear research facilities. However President Obama and the US Congress were reluctant to show haste in such risky action. Since then, three Iranian nuclear researchers committed suicide; for which Iran accused Israel and its intelligence agency, Mossad- which doesn't have positive connotations,-of murdering these scientists to undermine uranium enrichment and nuclear development in Iran. This nuclear energy kerfuffle caused further enmity between Iran and Israel. Also, the fact that Russia was aiding and supporting nuclear research in Iran also created worries in the Western world even though Russia and Iran aren't know to be allies. However Russia could be pursuing alignment to get advantages on its long-time rivalry.

The Issue of the Iranian and Israeli Relations with the US

Since the establishment of the Islamic regime, Iran antagonized the US and claimed it to be its largest enemy. Israel is a close ally of the US and this added on the enmity between Israel and Iran. Iran called on Israel as the United States' ally that does their work in the Middle East.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Israel

As one side of this bilateral issue, Israel is one of two major parties involved. Israel has had conflicts with many Muslim countries in the region because of its religious majority and the Palestinian issue. However none lasted as long as the problems with Iran. Israel has had an aggressive approach to Iran. Only if Iran was to stop its nuclear research, this policy could change very quickly but other than that instance, Israel seems intent on giving no compromises what so ever. Also, Israel is equally aggressive towards Iran much so that Israel wishes to attack the nuclear facilities of Iran since the start of Iran's uranium enrichment. However the US, Israel's closest ally, stated repeatedly that Israel should not be the one to attack but defend itself if Iran chooses to strike.

Islamic Republic of Iran

Iran has developed an aggressive tone towards all Western and most non-Muslim countries, besides the ones that are beneficiary for the state, such as Russia. The most important thing about Iran is that it all comes down to supporting Islam, if its supporting Palestine or endorsing attacks on the US and Israel. Iran is very keen on continuing its nuclear program but never announced anything to suggest that it was developing WMD. In fact its rhetoric was to always say it was working towards getting cheaper and more sustainable energy. Iran's allies are short in number and

arguably aren't very powerful. **Venezuela, Syria, North Korea and Cuba** are the mainstream allies of Iran due to their shared enmity with the US. Russia and China can also sometimes be supportive of Iran when it is mutually beneficial, but they are against Iran more often than not. However surprising, other than Syria, no Muslim state is an ally of Iran. Their benefits are more aligned with those of the US and the EU.

Egypt

On the day of the declaration of Israel, Egypt was one of the countries that declared war on the newly found state. During the historical process, Egypt consistently attacked Israel as was required of it as a premier of the Arabs. However after continuous war, Anwar Sadat (President of Egypt) and Menachem Begin (Prime Minister of Israel) signed the Camp David Accords in 1978 and shared the Nobel Peace Prize. By doing so, Egypt became the first country to make peace and normalize relations with Israel. After the 2010 revolution of Egypt, many people feared the strengthening Islamists who take office would be against the previous treaty.

The state of Palestine

Iran and Palestine are close allies since they both are enemies of Israel. Iran funds political and militarist groups in Palestine and Palestine uses the funding and arms from Iran to harm Israel.

United States of America

The US is historically the enemy of Iran and ally of Israel. That is why the US is trying to defuse the tension by calling on Iran to end the nuclear research. To do this, the US and its allies have imposed sanctions on Iranian oil and have been conducting negotiations with Iran as P5+1 (Germany).

Russia and China

These two P5 nations are against Iran's extremist rhetoric in general; however Russia is cooperating with Iran on its nuclear program, as it is supportive of these specific Iranian policies. On the other hand neither of the nations have close relations with Israel however they are both important trading partners of Israel.

Hamas

A political party with a military wing, Hamas was found during the start of the intifada to create an independent, Islamic state of Palestine. Hamas supported

suicide bombings and attacks in Israel, in interest of the intifada. It is also the ruling government party in the Palestinian Territories. Hamas is recognized as a terrorist group by the EU, the US and most Western countries however Arab nations and Turkey see it as a legitimate political party.

Hezbollah

Hezbollah, meaning Party of Allah, is an Islamist military group and a Lebanese political party. Its Shia fundamentalism is close to the ideology of Iran, especially about their perception of Israel or the “Zionist entity” in their understanding. Therefore, Iran has been heavily funding Hezbollah and using that funding, it has been attacking Israel and sparking instability in the region.

IAEA

The International Atomic Energy Agency is a UN Organization that promotes safe use of nuclear energy and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Because of its purpose, it has tried to check on the Iranian nuclear facilities but was not granted admittance; this was one of the reasons why many countries thought of Iran’s program as a smokescreen for its weapon’s development. If IAEA investigators were allowed to inspect the facilities, the truth about Iran’s nuclear program would come out. That could either defuse tensions or cause a nuclear war in the Middle East.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
14 May 1948	The State of Israel was declared
17 September 1978	Camp David Accords signed
1 April 1979	The Islamic Republic of Iran was declared
2005	Anti-zionist Mahmoud Ahmadinejad takes office as President of Iran
2011	Iran advanced significantly in its nuclear program
2010-2012	Several Iranian nuclear scientists were killed or committed suicide

Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events

UNSC Resolutions 1696 and 1737

These resolutions, both passed in 2006, ask Iran to allow the IAEA to search its nuclear facilities and the latter also mentions some measures that will be taken if Iran does not comply with the wishes of the Security Council.

[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1696\(2006\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1696(2006))

[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1737\(2006\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1737(2006))

UNSC Resolution 1747

The resolution passed unanimously, calls on Iran to cooperate with the IAEA and end any activity related to nuclear weapon development.

[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1747\(2007\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1747(2007))

UNSC Resolution 1803 and 1835

These also call for the Iranian nuclear facilities to be inspected and Iran to stop all uranium enrichment efforts.

[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1803\(2008\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1803(2008))

[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1835\(2008\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1835(2008))

UNSC Resolution 1929

In this resolution, addressing all previous resolutions on Iran's nuclear program, the Security Council again calls for IAEA inspection and the end of uranium enrichment in Iran. If these requirements are not met, all member states will be imposing even heavier sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1929\(2010\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1929(2010))

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

There has been no direct attempt to defuse the tension between Iran and Israel since the two states never directly talk to one another. However the UN Security Council has passed multiple resolutions starting from 2006 on controlling and restricting the nuclear advancement of Iran.

Possible Solutions

The first possible action is to arrange a meeting, to be held directly between the two states but Iran will most likely heavily object to this suggestion. Another solution could be imposing harder and further sanctions on Iran however that has not yet been fruitful. The most lucrative solution would be for Iran to compromise its nuclear program and normalize relations with Israel by recognizing it as a state. The compromise from Israel could be to disarming warheads and decreasing WMD production to minimum.

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