Analyse Iran’s behaviour since the Revolution in 1979. Is its behaviour rational or that of a rogue state?

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Abstract

Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the study and debate regarding Iranian foreign policy behaviour has emerged with regard to what is a controversial subject in the international politics literature. The main aim of this article is to analyse the behaviours of the Islamic Republic of Iran since the revolution. Although, Iran’s behaviour can be seen as indicative of its status as a rogue state within international society, this behaviour has fluctuated slightly during different periods. The explanation for this will address the question posed by this study.

Keywords: Iran, Iranian Foreign Behavior, International Community, Terrorism, Nuclear Programme, US Policy, Rogue state

Introduction

After the Revolution, the role of the state of Iran in world politics underwent a radical transformation, along with Iranian behaviour and its politics. In this context, it is noteworthy that the Iranian Revolution has been a major focus of scholarly attention. It seems that one of the most important events during the Cold War was the Iranian revolution. Over the past few years, the systems of government and foreign relations have changed to those of another era; as a result, the monarchy as a political system ended with the triumph of the Revolution (Mafinezam and Mehrabi 2008, p.36).

There is a significant amount of disagreement among scholars regarding explanations of the Islamic Republic’s foreign policies since the end of the Revolution with rationalist, realist, pragmatist, and idealist theories endeavouring to explain Iranian behaviour. As such, studies on Iranian policy are comprehensive (Ehteshami and Zweiri 2008). One explanation for Iranian behaviour is that the country has evolved into a rogue state, one that denies international law and covenants (Rotberg 2007, p.1). The main aim of this essay is to analyses the behaviours of the Islamic Republic of Iran since the revolution. Although, Iran’s behaviour can be seen as indicative of its status as a rogue state within international society, this behaviour has fluctuated slightly during different periods. The explanation for this will address the question posed by this study.

The first section of this essay will consider the nature and concept of the rogue state. The second section will analyse the nature of the Islamic Republic’s political system which is essential in order to understand Iranian behaviour. The third section will evaluate the ‘Teheran Hostage Crisis’ as a case study in the post-Revolution period, in particular the early years of the Islamic Revolution. Following this, the fourth section will present a discussion of the role of the Iranian state in supporting Islamic radical groups and terrorism throughout the world. Furthermore, it will consider how the Iranian state has used terrorism and supported insurgent groups since the beginning of the Islamic Republic, discussing the situation with regard to radical groups such as the Lebanese Hezbollah and Hamas. Finally, the last section
Iran will consider the impact of the Iranian nuclear programme in terms of aggressive behaviour and how this affects Iran’s foreign policy. In order to present a non-biased approach, counter-arguments about the Iranian nuclear programme will also be considered.

The image and concept of ‘rogue state’ and rational actor in international community

In order to gain a better understanding of Iranian actions, it is vital to analyse the concept of the rogue state. Historically speaking, the term ‘rogue state’ in international relations predates the twenty-first Century, having been applied to a wide variety of contexts including Bolshevism in Russia, Militarism in Asia, and Nazism in Germany (Henriksen 2001, p.352). During the Cold War period, the concept of the rogue state was used to describe certain nations, including Iran during the 1980s (Saunders 2006, p.26). Caprioli and Trumbore have argued that the term ‘rogue states’ is applicable when a ‘state establishes a history of international aggression or otherwise troublesome international behaviour’ (2003, p.378). Henriksen claims that the rogue state in the modern age can be identified as a state that disrespects global law by some actions that place it on the outside of international society (2001, p. 349).

In the aftermath of the Cold War era, the concept of the rogue state was used for the first time by the Clinton administration under the name ‘states of concern’ in terms of international relations (Rose 2000, p.1). More importantly, the term has clearly been linked to U.S. policy with regard to international politics (Hoyt 2000, p.298). According to U.S. policy-makers, with the beginning of the new world order, the main challenge and threat that faced U.S. foreign policy and interests have been rogue states (Caprioli and Trumbore 2005; Hoyt 2000, p.299; Rubin 1999, p.73). For example, Rotberg indicates that Anthony Lake, President Clinton’s former national security adviser, described rogue states as ‘on the wrong side of history’. This is because they do not recognise the fundamental values of the international community, which include ‘collective security, peaceful settlement of disputes, and democracy’ (2007, p.9).

It should be emphasised that in the political science field, rogue states can be identified by describing a group of states which are associated with the irrationality and unreasonableness of their external action (Rose 2011). However, Rotberg has argued that the behaviours of rogue states includes both internal and external aggressive actions (2007, p.7). Additionally, a rogue state comprises three main components: behaviour, power, and capability. Thus, many scholars, when placing emphasis on this kind of state, confuse power and capability with behaviour (Rose 2011, p.5). However, some analysts have criticised the use of the rogue state appellation in international relations. For instance, Caprioli and Trumbore argue that the term ‘rogue state’ can be used to justify militarily aggressive behavior, such as the Bush administration’s invasion of Iraq (2005, p. 778). Furthermore, Rubin points out that rogue states have frequently been formed as the result of a revolution, when a new regime and ideology start to change a system (1999, p.2). Certainly, this explanation is applicable for some revolutionary countries such as Cuba, and Iran. It is therefore arguable that rogue states consist of a variety of types and explanations, while simultaneously being characterised by a violation of the standards associated with international norms, such as supporting terrorism and developing mass destruction capabilities within the global community (Henriksen 2001, p.349).

However, the rational actor model in the international arena can be defined as normal behaviour with respect to international rules within the international system. Rose for example, claims that the ‘the rationality paradigm explores the behavioural aspect of state interaction’ (2011, p.13) within the international system. Moreover, national interest is
The nature of the Islamic Republic political system

In order to understand Iranian behaviour after the Revolution, it is crucial to first identify and observe the political structure and the nature of the Iranian regime. One may assume that the external action of the state is often based on the interaction of different aspects, which can be divided into two main dimensions. The first one relates to the state’s position in terms of such aspects as its religious, historical, and geopolitical factors, while the second factor is related to the ability of the state to operate as part of the regional and global system (Hunter 1990, p.22). It is clear that foreign policies and behavior are based on domestic politics (Mansour 2008).

In terms of its political structure, the Iranian political system is unlike that of other countries because it includes different factions. For example, Takeyh (2007, p.32) claims that the Iranian political system consists of three intensive factions: conservatives, pragmatists, and reformers. In addition, each faction has different politicians and ideas, resulting in a struggle for influence and power within the institution of the Islamic Republic. Iranian political elites play a crucial role in terms of the nature of the political system (Jafarzadeh 2007; Ehteshami and Zweiri 2008), and the performance of diverse leaders is likely to change Iranian foreign policy. Furthermore, based on the Iranian constitution, the Supreme Leader has a great responsibility for the “general policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran” which includes both internal and external policies (Alexander and Hoenig 2008, p.13).

Thus, the highest religious and political authority in the Iranian political system is the Supreme Leader. There is no doubt that Iranian behaviour depends primarily on its constitution, which emphasises four essential principles: 1) to refuse all forms of “external domination”, 2) “preservation of Iran’s independence and territorial integrity”, 3) “defense of the rights of all Muslims without allying with hegemonic powers”, and 4) “the maintenance of peaceful relations with all non-belligerent states” (Ehteshami and Zweiri 2008, p. xiii). Moreover, Hunter (1990, p.3) points out that the Islamic constitution includes all the basic of Iranian domestic and foreign policies. It is clear that the Iranian constitution has determined the Iranian global enemies.

Thus, the political process in the Islamic Republic of Iran has a different construction from that of other countries, because it consists of different kinds of structure and institutions such as Parliamentary democracy, the President, and the religious leadership (Cook and Roshandel 2009). Since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the role of ideology with regard to Iran’s behaviour has certainly been of considerable significance in shaping the political system in the international order (Hunter 1990, p.6). The Iranian ideology largely depends on Ayatollah Khomeini’s understanding of Islam (Hunter 1990). The state of Iran depends mainly on the role of ideology for survival, and for intervention outside Iran.

Another significant point about the Iranian political system is the nature of its foreign policy. In the first decade of the Revolution, the foreign policy agenda of the Islamic Republic of Iran was established by Ayatollah Khomeini, who played a significant role in the foreign policy process. Tehran’s foreign policy depended on its ambitions and its observation of the threats against the survival of the regime (Milani 2009). Clearly, there is no doubt that domestic politics have a significant role to play in the shaping of the foreign policy of countries (Mansour 2008, p.957). Consequently, the state of Iran has created a strong link between internal issues and foreign behaviour in order to protect its system against external threats. Thus, Iran has employed different methods in dealing with its regional neighbours and with the western powers.
The Iranian “Hostage Crisis”

Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran’s behaviour and foreign policies have been more broadly affected than before. One of the most aggressive Iranian actions was the holding of fifty-two hostages for 444 days in Tehran in 1979. This was clearly; it was a serious event that had a negative impact on the diplomatic relations between the U.S and Iran (Wolf 2006, p.22). Furthermore, Sick (2003, p.85) points out that through this hostage the Iranian state supported terrorism, a claim also made by the United States and numerous other countries worldwide. It should be noted that the seizure of the American embassy was seen as evidence of Iranian attitudes, causing Iran to be perceived as an aggressive state by the international community. In terms of international law and diplomacy, the taking of diplomats as hostages is seen as an illegal action in terms of relationships between countries within the international system (Grzybowski 1981).

Despite this, however, it can obviously be argued that the Iran hostage crisis led to support for the Iranian Revolution and the ‘rallying cry’ of Iranian citizens. Consequently, this event created a strong feeling of anxiety and unhappiness against the west (Wolf 2006, p.27). From the Iranian perspective, the event served to unite Iranian citizens and was seen in terms of domestic politics as rational behaviour. In addition, this event was pronounced as the ‘Second Iranian Revolution’ by Khomeini. Therefore, some scholars have argued that the hostage crisis removed the Khomeini from domestic problems (Takeyh 2007, p.96). As a consequence, Khomeini tried to end American interference in Iranian domestic politics.

The taking of hostages, however, was rejected by the international society because it was defined as a violation of international law. Although perceived positively by Iranian and the Khomeini, the event was seen as a serious problem within the international arena (Takeyeh 2007, p.24). Furthermore, diplomatic immunity is the most important part of the relationship between members of the global community (Grzybowski 1981), which made the violation Ayatollah Khomeini all the more problematic. Therefore, Khomeini’s decision to reject the international community by ignoring ‘diplomatic immunity’ resulted in his global condemnation (Falk 1980). The main reasons behind Khomeini’s actions were fear that there would be a repeat of an event of 1953 in which the CIA sponsored a coup against Prime Minister of Iran Dr. Mosaddeq and restored the authority of the Shah (Jahanpour 1992, p.33).

The Iran hostage crisis clearly shows that international law was broken by the Iranian state. In this regard, Mostashari (2005, p.3) states that the first images of Iran as a rogue state in the international community appeared during the hostage crisis, which led to the cessation of diplomatic relations between the US and the Iranian regime. From the Iranian point of view, the hostage crisis sent a significant message to western countries that the Shah’s heritage and that of his allies were completely finished.

As a consequence, in the early years of the Islamic Revolution, Iran had a radical strategy and ideology for its relationship with international society. Iranian behaviour during the hostage crisis situation was identified as an aggressive policy on the part of the international community. It is important to note, however, that Iran’s foreign policy has changed slightly depending on different leaders and Presidents. For instance, since 1997 when Khatami became President, the foreign policies and behaviour of Iran shifted significantly in such a way as to improve relations with Western countries, and with the international community (Sick 2003, p.89).
Iran’s support for radical groups and terrorism

Following the triumph of the Iranian Revolution, Iran’s leadership over the Shiite Muslims was emphasised as a part of global activities (Byman 2008). A decade later, Iran started to mobilize the Shiite community of Lebanon and the Palestinians as an essential part of its strategy to achieve a balance of power (Rahigh-Aghsan and Jakobsen 2010, p.563). Therefore, ‘Shiism’ has played a significant role in the construction of Iranian foreign policy. In the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution, Iran has cooperated directly and indirectly with a number of radical groups and terrorist organizations outside of Iran, and is thus a long-time supporter of a number of terrorist groups and anti-Israeli organisations. This is because the Iranian system has viewed this support as an essential part of the Revolution’s responsibilities (Byman 2008, p.171).

In recent years, the Islamic Republic has been a major motivator for the growth of radical groups. On this point, Kahl and Waltz (2012) have argued that one major reason for such support has depended on Iran’s national interests and power. It should be mentioned that the extent of the norms of the Revolution is important for clerical leaders. For example, a short time after the Revolution Ayatollah Khomeini announced that Iranians ‘should try hard to export our Revolution to the world and we shall confront the world with our ideology’ (Byman 2008, p.3). Over the years, the Iranian Revolution became a significant factor in the spread of Jihadi groups (Takeyh 2007), and Iran has supported and sponsored a wide range of radical groups including Hamas, the Islamic Jihad in Palestine, and the Lebanese Hezbollah.

In essence, ideology might be one of the most important motivators for supporting these groups. As noted earlier, Iran has a strong aspiration to spread the norms of the Revolution throughout the Muslim community. Furthermore, in terms of ideology, ‘Shiite Crescent’ and Shiite political forces in the Middle East gives a good opportunity to increase the role of Iran to dominate strategy, in particular, after the failure of Pan-Arab nationalism. Therefore, some Sunni regimes, such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Jordan are concerned about the rise of the role of Iran in this region (Ragigh-Aghsan and Jakobsen 2010, p.561). Despite this, Iran bases its policies regarding terrorism more on strategy than on ideology. Thus, the US has declared that Iran supports terrorism. For instance, after 9/11 George W. Bush described Iran as an ‘axis of evil’ and a dangerous regime (Sick 2003, p.90). Consequently, according to U.S. policies, Iran has become a ‘hostile regime’.

The Lebanese Hezbollah is a non-state military and radical group that has been supported by the Iranian regime in different ways, including organising, training, and providing funding (Takeyh 2007, p.205; Borghard and Rapp-Hooper 2013, p.86). Hezbollah began in 1982 as a reaction to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and its members include many radical Shiite Muslims (Alexander and Hoenig 2008, p.65). Moreover, in the years after the hostage crisis, Iran fully supported and aided Hezbollah during the Lebanese Civil War during the 1980s (Sick 2003, p.3). For instance, approximately $100 million dollars are provided annually by Iran to Hezbollah (Byman 2008, p.172).

Nonetheless, supporting of Hezbollah is not limited only to Lebanon, but has also spread to various countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain. According to Byman (2008), Hezbollah has been a significant actor in terms of implementing Iranian policies, and deterring Israel in the Middle East. It is clear that Iran is the main basis of support and provides all aspects for Hezbollah, and that there is a mutual relationship between them. Furthermore, Hezbollah as a social and political organisation has operated against Israel and the United States over the past twenty years.

In this regard, Byman (2003) points out that Hezbollah has been used by the Iranian regime as a crucial aspect of its foreign policy and to promote its external interests. The
Iranian political leadership believes that supporting terrorism and radical groups provides a good mechanism to enhance national interests and the spread of revolutionary values outside Iran. In its early days, Hezbollah carried out numerous attacks against the US and Israel in a variety of places. Consequently, as an aggressive regime in the Middle East, Iran contributed and played a significant role in these attacks (Byman 2008).

Milani (2009, p.56) claims that Iran has played a significant role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Therefore, Tehran has supported both Hamas and the Islamic Jihadi group. Iran and Hamas are allies, and have been involved in military cooperation (Frankel 2012). This case indicates that the Iranian support for the radical groups does not only depend on ideology, because Hamas is a branch of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood organisation (Alexander and Hoenig 2008, p. P86).

During the period of terrorism, Iranian foreign behaviour demonstrated that Iran has participated in a number of terrorist attacks outside of its borders, including the Argentina bombings of 1992 and 1994 (Sick 2003, p.3). In addition to the direct support for the militant organisations of the Iranian state, Iran is responsible for terrorist attacks and for killing opposition leaders such as Kurdish leader Abdol Rahman Qasemlu in Vienna in 1989, and also former Prime Minister Shapour Bakhtiari in 1991. These killings were carried out against those deemed to be ‘enemies of the Revolution’ (Sick 2003, p.3). Jafarzadeh (2007, p.62) for instance, demonstrated that the Minister of Intelligence and National Security had worked in terrorist operations in different countries throughout Europe and the Middle East, particularly during in the 1980s and 1990s. Consequently, many of those opposed to the Iranian regime were assassinated outside Iran.

It is also interesting to note that Iran provided support for terrorist groups in neighbouring countries. For example, terrorist organisations in Iraq after the Saddam era have had the patronage of the Iranian state (Caprioli and Trumbore 2007, p.61). According to US policy, the main aim of Iran in the support of radical groups in Iraq was to destabilize and encourage violence in that country (Cook and Roshandel 2009, p.106). For example, the Iranian Quds force has attacked the US and Iraqi armies (Cook and Roshandel 2009, p.106).

Iran’s perspective, however, is completely different from U.S. and Western views about Iranian activities in the support of foreign groups since the Revolution. However, it may seem that Tehran has continued to support radical groups against the interests of western countries in order to survive without respect to international rules. As Jafarzadeh (2007, p.64) claims, the main motivation for international radical Islamic groups is Iran in terms of the ideological, funding, and political resources. In fact, these actions throughout the international community can be designated as aggressive behaviour. Therefore, the Iranian regime’s support of terrorism offers considerable support for the description of Iranian behaviour as that of a rogue state.

Iran’s nuclear weapons program

Another reason for describing and characterising Iran as a rogue state in the global community is related to its development of weapons of mass destruction. Iran’s nuclear ambition has become increasingly complicated in recent years, and is a highly controversial subject in the international arena. Although Iran’s nuclear capability goes back to the system of monarchy, it was initially instigated through cooperation with the United States as a peace programme. In addition, before the start of this programme Iran signed a non-proliferation agreement (Smedts 2012, p.2). Iran’s possession of nuclear weapons is identified globally as a major security issue, and has become a source of tension between Iran and the international community due to a is lack of trust. Waltz (2012), for instance, argues that the Iranian purpose with regard to getting nuclear weapons is unclear in terms of its aggressive acts or its
security. Therefore, it is impossible to be certain of Iran’s aim. Many scholars and policymakers have argued that Iran’s behavior with regard to obtaining a nuclear weapon is aggressive behaviour.

Iran’s nuclear strategy is a concern for Western countries and particularly for the United States. As Mostashari (2005, p.1) states, the US has concerns about Iranian nuclear programme for two reasons. First, Iran may use its weapons against Israel and US troops in the Middle East. Second, the US is also worried about these weapons being obtained by terrorists. Therefore, many analysts have argued that the main fear with regard to Iranian nuclear weapons is that it is likely that they will be made available to terrorist groups (Byman 2008).

In contrast with western perspectives about Iranian nuclear weapons, the Iranian state has a different explanation. For example, Iran’s attempt to develop nuclear weapons is perceived internally as a rational choice against external threats (Takeyh 2007, p.140). This is because Iran lost its alliance with the United States after the revolution, whereas before it had received US military assistance. Although the Iranian regime has announced that its nuclear programme is not for military activities, no convincing evidence exists to confirm this claim (Smedts 2012, p.12).

However, Iran’s support of radical groups in the Middle East has caused the country’s possession of nuclear weapons to be of great concern to the global community. Iran borders unstable states, including Pakistan and Afghanistan posing a potential risk to regional security. It can be argued that the Iranian nuclear programme also poses a major threat to some Sunni countries or allies of the United States, such as Turkey and Pakistan (Bahgat 2006, p. 202).

Other arguments emphasize that Iranian nuclear weapons may perhaps lead to mutual deterrence, therefore being useful for ensuring the balance of power in the region. For instance, Kenneth Waltz, the famous scholar of neo-realism, argues that nuclear proliferation could be helpful to maintain stability in the anarchic system, while this view is also based on the ‘self-help system’ when it comes to avoiding nuclear attacks (Dannruther 2007, p.190). In the light of this logic, an Iranian nuclear state may be helpful in terms of the balance of power and deterrence with regard to Middle Eastern states because in this region, only Israel possesses nuclear weapons. During the Cold War, for example, nuclear deterrence played a crucial role in preventing nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union (Dannruther 2007, p.190). Nevertheless, there are no guarantees between two nuclear powers, and therefore, it does not seem a rational choice model.

However, some analysts have argued that another reason for preventing Iran from getting nuclear weapons is to create a zone free of nuclear weapons and to encourage nuclear non-proliferation in the Middle East. In this regard, Henry Kissinger has argued that ‘‘Iran getting a nuclear weapon would move the world beyond the point where non-proliferation can be a meaningful policy’’ (Cook and Roshandel 2009, p.73). This is mainly, because several states have ambitions to obtain a nuclear capability, but the United States plays a part in preventing such ambitions by providing military assistance for its allies in the Middle East such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia (Rahigh-Aghsan and Jakobsen 2010, p.572).

Meanwhile, in terms of the nuclear programme, according to UN sanctions, Iran is not a rogue state to the extent of North Korea. North Korea is more developed than Iran in terms of nuclear testing (Chubin and Litwak 2004, p.249), and the latter has still not built nuclear weapons. It is significant to note, however, that the consensus against nuclear weapons has considerably increased, both externally and inside Iran. On the other hand, former Iranian President Ahmadinejad said that ‘‘the Iranian people demand their right to a nuclear program’’ (Jafarzadeh 2007, p. 202).
Despite all this, it is important to mention that realism theory has played a significant role in explaining Iranian behaviour and its relations with other countries following the Revolution. According to this approach, “the most basic motive driving state is survival” and “universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states” (Donnelly 2000, p.7). Hence, according to this theory, identifying the problems of rogue states is unsuitable (Saunders 2006, p.30). Iranian behaviour in the case of the nuclear programme is likely to be affected by a realism perspective in the global system which is described as an anarchic system. Following the success of the Iranian Revolution, Tehran could mostly depend on a realism approach when it came to achieving its interests.

As a consequence, it is clear that there are different explanations regarding the Iranian nuclear programme. For example, Jafarzadeh (2007, p.x) emphasises that there are no ethical standards in an Iran based on of Islamic rule. Hence, an armed Iran can be described as a rogue nuclear state. As has been demonstrated, the behaviour of a nuclear Iran is far from certain in the Middle East, and the nation can therefore be seen as a real threat to security in the international community. Indeed, a nuclear Teheran as a central issue might be a challenge for security if chemical and biological weapons were to be transferred to terrorist groups. Thus, providing nuclear weapons for terrorist groups is deemed unacceptable by the United States and for other global powers (Byman 2008, p.179). For example, the Obama administration claims that the main threat to US security is nuclear terrorism (Schneider 2013, p.308).

Moreover, it is also important to mention that Iran’s support of non-state proxy groups has become a significant fear in the international community (Borghard and Rapp-Hooper 2013, p.100). For example, Iran has supplied military material to Hamas, and Hezbollah; therefore, many analysts argue that the Iranian support for proxy groups is clearly dangerous to stability in the Middle East (Borghard and Rapp-Hooper 2013, p.100). This might be used against Iran’s enemies such as Israel, which former Iranian President Ahmadinejad called to be for “wiped off the map” (Takeyh 2007, p.196). It should therefore be argued that the possession of nuclear weapons by states that support terrorism is highly dangerous, posing a significant threat to international stability and security.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Iranian Revolution was a turning point during the Cold War, playing a significant role in the new face of Iranian foreign policy. Since the Islamic Revolution, it is clear that the foreign policy of Iran has been increasingly based on radical revolutionary principles rather than international norms. This study has demonstrated that the Iranian system has been seen as a hostile regime by the international community.

Thus, there are many reasons for describing Iranian foreign behaviour as being aggressive and for the perception of Iran as a rogue state by the global community, particularly the Iran Hostage Crisis, the country’s support of terrorism, and its development of weapons of mass destruction. However, although Iranian diplomacy in the case of the Hostage Crisis was irrational and unacceptable by international legal standards, it played a significant role in the integration of Iranian foreign policy. Moreover, Iranian radical behaviour can therefore be seen in its support of terrorism and radical groups beyond the Iranian border. Iran has actively sponsored several radical groups including Hezbollah, Hamas, and some radical organisations in Iraq.

The Iranian nuclear programme has become a controversial matter in international security politics, resulting in international nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. In support of this argument, it is important to observe that the spread of nuclear weapons poses a major threat to international security. One crucial point of the Iranian aggressive behaviour is
related to obtaining weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, many analysts have argued that if Iran obtains nuclear weapons, there would be instability in the world and in particular, in the Middle East. Overall, Iranian foreign behaviour is irresponsible in the framework of the international system.

Simultaneously, however, Iran can be considered to be a pragmatic state, working in its own national interests within the international system, in that it has played a realistic game. Following the success of the Iranian Revolution, the rhetoric from Iran regarding nuclear weapons can be seen as a pragmatic approach to protect its national interests and security. The main characteristic of pragmatic foreign behaviours appears to be one of applying different ways with regard to foreign policy according to its benefits at different times.

Ultimately, Iranian behaviour has mostly been perceived as a hostile regime within the international system since the Revolution, according to some of the reasons discussed above. From this discussion, it can be concluded that Iran poses a threat to international peace and security, especially in light of Caprioli and Trumbore claim that “rogue states are real threats to international security” (2007, p.61). Therefore, it seems highly likely that the Iranian regime could be described as an irrational and rogue state in the international system. Nevertheless, many analysts claim that Iran should change its foreign policies and relations, becoming in the process a responsible member of the international community.
Iran

Bibliography


