

EDITORIAL NOTE

As the Winter-Spring 2008-09 issue of the Iranian Journal of International Affairs is released to print I welcome you to the latest edition of IJIA. So far and since fall 2007 when the current editorial board of IJIA assumed its duties, our procedure has been ever since to publish every issue of journal quarterly, in one edition, and regularly in time. However, for the first time some administrative and logistical problems-totally out of our control- caused this issue to appear as such (two issues of IJIA in one single collection as No.1-2).

Despite this shortcoming, in this issue we have managed as usual to bring you new and informative articles on Iranian foreign policy both in conceptual and practical spheres. Meanwhile we made efforts to diversify the scope of subjects on Iranian foreign relations with outside world and thinking around other regional and thematic issues of international relations.

Bearing this in mind, in the first article entitled: "**Sarkozy's European Policy and France's EU Presidency**", the author examines the France's term of EU presidency and investigates both the historical backgrounds and current trends of French policies with regard to the EU. Towards such an aim, France's role in shaping EU presidency since the end of World War II and its influence in establishing the European Community, and the gradual reduction of its role in post-cold war era are discussed. Coming to recent years, the article specifically explain France's term of EU presidency in mid 2008 that coincided with Nicolas Sarkozy's term as the French new-Gaullist president as he was making all in his efforts to reclaim France's regional and international status. In the same vein, Sarkozy's endeavor to end his country's EU policy stalemate under the strategy of "Return to Europe" is fully described.

The second article: "**The Future of the Caspian Sea after Tehran Summit**", discusses the important issue of new developments in the Caspian Sea region in post-cold war era. It tries to sum up the

accomplishments of Tehran Summit of 2007 which gathered all coastal heads of states. While reviewing the historical background and recent developments of the basin, the author examines the historical documents as they indicate of the Caspian Sea as an integral part of Iranian waters while the legal regime under the political circumstances prior to the World War I was modified according to the capitulatory conditions of Tsarist Russia toward Iran. This was the case until the treaties of 1921 and 1940 settled the bilateral affairs between Iran and the former Soviet Union in the Sea. However the Soviet disintegration and formation of new coastal states as well as new political, economic and security environment has required new configuration and new directions in terms of legal regime and other aspects of regional arrangement and cooperation among neighboring countries. Another issue that is properly discussed in the article is the role of Tehran Summit in October 16, 2007 and its declaration that converged diverse viewpoints and perception in terms of energy exploitation, navigation, shipping, and fishing in the Caspian Sea and proved to be a success for the Islamic Republic of Iran.

By surveying the role of Islamic revivalism in Iranian foreign policy and its regional and international ramifications, the third article entitled: "**Iran's preeminent Role and Facing Challenges**" delves into the socio-political, and the ideational as well as the religious dimensions of Islamic revolution. While examining the domestic and external roots of uneasy relations ever since between Iran and the West and the United States in particular, it also depicts characteristics of ideological aspirations and practical conduct of Iranian foreign policy. The impacts of Shiites' regaining their social and political rights in Iraq on Iran's regional preeminence and the new political and regional outlook after the US wars of Afghanistan and Iraq -as they brought an end to the Taliban rule and Saddam Baathist regime and provided Iran with new opportunities as a regional power - are the points also discussed by the author. The article concludes that in the new conditions Iran also faces new challenges which have to be managed carefully and responsibly.

In his informative piece under the title of: "**Theoretical and Practical Approach in Britain's Foreign Policy on Iran**", the author of fourth article pays a thorough attention and elaborates on theoretical and practical approach of British foreign policy toward Iran. In the same path, foreign policy decision making process in England and the functions of different institutions are studied too. What interestingly is clarified in the article is the way that several functionaries of British foreign policy decision-making –such as Foreign Office and National Intelligence Council- are being shortcut by Prime Minister. This has been specially the case during Blaire's tenure since 1997-2007 while he stood firm with George W. Bush of the United States in waging invasive wars of Afghanistan and Iraq. The article also categorizes different stages of Iran-Britain relations in which the fluctuations in British foreign policy approach towards Iran has caused turbulence in their bilateral relations.

The authors in the fifth article under the title of " **Iran's Foreign Policy in Post-Revolution Era: A Holistic Approach**", while reviewing the role of identity, culture and history in Iranian foreign policy, they explore different conceptual frameworks in which Iranian foreign policy has been explained. Therefore, they introduce "Realist-Idealism" as defining model and conceptual framework for approaching Iranian foreign policy. Within this approach, they conclude that their policy recommendations for dealing with ways of multilateralism could provide Iran with active participation in global management and international setting while opposing the dominating rule of great powers.

A quite recent book on Europe's energy security and its new foreign policy challenge is reviewed in '**Book Review**' section of the Journal. As the book relates the 'geopolitics' of oil to 'free market norms', it depicts that the European Union has recognized the importance of incorporating energy security more systematically into its foreign policy since a decade ago. As it is explained, the book

covers one of the basic and urgent but challenging matters in the relationship between the European Union and the oil and gas producer states.

The '**Special Report**' section of Journal follows up the fourth part of human rights violation in the UK. In this part, it focuses on "Islamophobia and Discrimination against British Muslims" in its different manifestation through which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (as it establishes that all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law) is breached by British government. In this part, different occasion, events and cases in which the breach of laws as: Verbal and physical attacks on Islam and Muslims in public places; Attacks on mosques and desecration of Muslim cemeteries; Anti-Hijab policy as the benign attempts to protect Muslim Women's rights; Widespread and routine negative stereotypes in the media, including the broadsheets, and so many other instances are explained.

In '**IPIS Events and Exchanges**' section, the IPIS annual activities in 2008 including international conferences, roundtable and interactions with counterparts around the world are brought up in details. The 'Speech' section of this issue covers the Iranian deputy foreign minister's presentation in the Inaugural Session of the Fourth International Congress on Asia, Istanbul, on May 27, 2009. The '**Chronology**' section of this issue as it covers the full six months of two seasons, also reviews hot topics on Iranian political and international life.

Happy reading,
Ahmad Sadeghi, Editor
Tehran, June, 2009