

ISRAELI FOREIGN POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA AND CAUCASUS
AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN (1991-2014)

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ABSTRACT: Israel as a political system faced with several countries that do not accept the legitimacy from the founding until now. This matter has been intensified by geopolitical situation of Israel and placed in a ring of Muslim neighborhoods that mostly do not recognize the existence and legitimacy of Israel as a country and a political system. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Israel obtained the chance to escape from this impasse of Muslim states and political isolation and economic blockade. The newly independent states of the former Soviet Union ties with the Israeli regime since its independence because of political, economic and strategic problems. On the other hand, Israel also used this opportunity and first facilitated its entry into Central Asia and the Caucasus by focusing on economic diplomacy and then have revealed its political and security objectives. This paper examines the foreign policy of Israel towards the countries of the region. The researchers evaluated and analyzed the goals and motivations of relations between Israel and the region and presented the Iranian national security considerations toward this issue.

KEYWORDS: foreign policy, Israel, Central Asia, the Caucasus, national security, Iran.

INTRODUCTION

Central Asia and the Caucasus are the regions that got growing place in regional and international relations since collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and now they considered as one of the most important sub-regional systems. The lack of influence its republics are leading to the involvement of regional and international powers in this strategic area. Accordingly, the emergence of newly independent states of Central Asia and the Caucasus began a new chapter in relations with neighbors and this area became competitive place for regional and trans-regional countries. In this circumstances, the Russian Federation as the heirs of the Soviet Union on the one hand and the West on the other hand tried to adopt a set of different ways to take advantage of this situation ([Anonymous, 2005](#); [Clive, 2001](#)). Establishment and strengthening of regional organizations were important approaches of the two sides for making consistency of the countries of Central Asia and Caucasus with its objectives, interests and policies. According to strengthen Israel's increasing engagement with Central Asia and the Caucasus region and its impact on national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran, this study examines the foreign policy dimensions of the various perspectives of Israel in Central Asia and the Caucasus and considerations of national security in Iran. To do this, the researches first

discussed theoretical background in the foreign policy of Israel and its presence in Central Asia and Caucasus and the importance of Eurasia in Israel's foreign policy and its foreign policy goals towards the Central Asia and Caucasus and then analyzed the factors affecting the formation of Israel in the region's foreign policy and finally, they investigated the foreign policy of Israel and national security considerations in Iran ([Akhavan Mofrad, 1999](#); [Haji-Yousefi, 2008](#)).

1.1. Theoretical principles in forming Israeli foreign policy in Central Asia and the Caucasus

The study of Israel's foreign policy is one of the most complex and difficult foreign policy. This is due to the different nature of Israeli foreign policy to other countries, and numerous variables in decision making and implementation of foreign policy of Israel. So, various forms of Israeli foreign policy analysis have been proposed by foreign policy analysts. However, there are special attentions on Israel's foreign policy relations with the countries of the world in many books and articles and provided a theoretical framework to understand the foreign policy of Israel. The focal point of these analysts was political structure of Israel or the interaction between it and great powers. There are also a huge amount of available resources to investigate on Arab-Israeli relations and there are less attention on evaluating how the

construction of Israeli foreign policy towards other countries. Moreover, most of researchers have focused on Israel's foreign policy as security policy ([Haji-Yousefi, 2001](#)). In the meantime, one of the most important writers who investigate the formation and implementation of Israel's foreign policy is Michael Brecher that by impacting "The Foreign Policy System of Israel" seeks to understand the foreign policy of Israel and Israel's decision-making processes ([Michael, 1972](#))

"Offensive realism" is based on a classical realist perspective. Intellectual basis of classical realism believes on "power" and "pessimistic" than the human nature. The power is most important factor in international politics and the government is attempting to maximize its power, and the desire for power related to human pleasures. Thus Offensive realism is based on:

Growing international conflict and aggression system within itself.

Security is rare product in the field of international competition. The attitude of "defensive realism" follows the logic of neo-realism. Neo-realist theorists don't accept the assumptions of classical realism that human nature is evil and power-oriented and instead they believe that international politics formed by urged governments to survive in the chaos of an international species. The existence of two types of offensive and defensive realism is not limited to theoretical propositions. In fact, scientists thought is the product of historical experiences and study the behavior of the practical arena of international politics actors. It should be noted that the foreign policy of a country is the result of interaction between the operating environment and the physical environment. Satisfactory societies usually conduct a passive foreign policy and so their manner in foreign policy is a response to the requirements of operational and physical environment. But offensive communities are generally combined with aggressive foreign policy that this is due to the aggressive attitude of their ideal operating environment and commitment of these countries to meet the intrinsic structures. Mental impressions of an idealistic practice can also be a small player that causes Israel to be adopted with a foreign policy. This matter is obvious in Israel's foreign policy towards Central Asia and the Caucasus as part of a new Middle East ([Taghvaei Asl, 2008](#)).

1.2. History of Israel's presence in the Central Eurasian region

In Soviet era, Soviet Central Asia as part of the Soviet Union has no direct relationship with the

international system. So, the history of Israel's relations with Central Asia and the Caucasus is considered in three distinct historical periods:

First period based on the interactions between Israel and the Soviet Union. Second period under Gorbachev's policy reform that continues from the arrival of Gorbachev to the Soviet collapse. The third period is after the independence of the republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus and Israeli influence in the region.

1.3. The importance of the Central Eurasian region in Israel's foreign and security policy

Central Asia and Caucasus are very important for Israel as a trans-regional actors in the international arena. But to address the importance of this region in Israeli foreign policy and security first should be evaluate the importance of Central Asia and the Caucasus internationally in the field of payment.

1.3.1. The importance of Central Asia in Israeli foreign policy and security

1.3.1.1. The geopolitical and geostrategic position in Central Asia

1.3.1.2. The importance of geographical position has a set of values and opportunities

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and created a power vacuum in Central Asia and lack of experience in governance and statecraft, it would be a competition between regional and trans-regional powers in order to obtain the values and opportunities ([Marlène, 2012](#)).

1.3.1.3. The importance of energy resources in Central Asia

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are countries that don't have enough oil and gas resources and they provide their needs from the three Central Asian countries. According to statistics in 2008, Uzbekistan has been 0.594 billion barrels oil reserves. This country has 51 rank in terms of oil production and 70 in oil exports. It also has 65 billion cubic feet of proven gas reserves and its rank in gas production is 11 and has 16 ranks in gas exports ([James, 1971](#))

1.3.1.4. Strengthen Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia

Islam is the religion of the majority of the people of Central Asia. Most of Shi'ite Muslims also has a presence in Central Asia in Tajikistan. In terms of religion, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Pakistan have relationship with the Sunni Muslims and Iran has relation with Tajik Shi'ite Muslims. Islamic resurgence in Central Asia became more prominent particularly in Tajikistan with the rise of Gorbachev in 1985. But Islamic extremism is imported from other countries and major actors

in this field are Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

1.4. The importance of Caucasus in Israeli foreign policy

Israel's long-term strategy in the geographical region of Eurasia and economic and social region in the Middle East has led to become an important area for Israel.

This area due to the strategic environment is more important to Israel's border. In fact, according to the security policy and military objectives and strategic focus that are always important for Israeli authorities in their external relations with other states and this matter have been exacerbated the Israeli security crisis in the Middle East.

Economic capacities of Israel in the Caucasus are as follows:

- A) agricultural mechanization
- B) Technology and Production
- C) Mineral Resources and Energy

In general it can be stated that Israel in order to expand its influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus has utilized all of its resources. Israel is trying to channel economic and trade relations and enhances its diplomatic and political ties and gradually increases strategic in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Generally, with regard to the set of circumstances that has given special importance to Central Eurasia, this area that was less important in the period of the Soviet Union in Israel's foreign policy positions become very importance in the post-Soviet foreign policy of Israel. In fact, this matter affected by the attitude surrounding the doctrine of the unity of Israel and the New Middle East by Perez in 1993 ([Akhavan Mofrad, 2008](#); [Hashemi, 2008](#)).

1.5. Israel's foreign policy goals and motivations towards Central Asia and the Caucasus

Israel used three main aims of economic, political and security agenda in the countries of region:

1.5.1. Economic objectives

Expanding economic relations with regional countries, particularly in agriculture, irrigation management, water and cotton are on top of Israel's actions in the region. Israel is trying to channel economic and trade relations, have developed political and diplomatic relations and gradually increase its strategic depth in the region.

1.5.2. Political objectives

The most important aim of Israel in the region are the withdrawal of strategic isolation in the

Middle East, avoid joining the grouping of Muslim countries against Israel in international and regional areas and increasing the legitimacy of global and regional political relations with Muslim countries.

1.5.3. Security objectives

The important Security objectives in Israel are strategic alliances around new, access to the larger living space acquisition, development and transmission ring strategic threat to the security concerns beyond the borders of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Iran and facing with the threat Of Iran ([Maleki, 2001](#)).

1.6. Evaluating the factors affecting the formation of Israel's foreign policy in the region

The regional and international variables that influence the behavior of Israeli foreign policy in recent decades are included the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Persian Gulf War, the hegemony of America, the rise of Islamic movements, Intifada, 11 September and Arabic revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa,. However, it should not be ignored the nature of Israel's political system. These factors has led Israel's strategic environment in the last decade become near to a new coalition, thickening of the concept of military security, economic strategy and threats from distant countries (especially Iran).

1.7. Geopolitical Dilemma, security and legitimacy crisis in Israel's Foreign Policy

One of the most important factors in the tendency of Israel to expand its relations with Central Asia and the Caucasus is bound geopolitical and security crisis of legitimacy in the foreign policy of Israel. It is influenced by geographical factors and circumstances surrounding Israel since its formation to now. In fact, on the one hand due to the lack of acceptance of Israel as a political system with its neighboring countries and consequently the security of permanent crisis those Israeli officials interpreted "It described heaven among the hell Arabs".

1.8. New peripheral Union: balancing strategic threat to the surrounding environment

Israel for going out of the geopolitical dilemma, security and legitimacy crises security policy and military objectives and strategic always has been focused on the foreign relations with other states. This is a consequence of the re-emergence of the doctrine of Ben Gurion (Union of the) in order to siege the enemy while Israel's security crisis has been exacerbated and is also of great importance in the Eurasian region.

1.8.1. The impact of demographic facts and environment circumstances on security- political strategies in Israel

One of the most important Israeli policies in the region is attracting and facilitating Jewish immigration to Israel in the Occupied Palestinian. Although there was this process since the establishment of Israel in Israeli politician's brains, it has pursued in recent years seriously. On the other hand, the Jews uses their lobby to expand its influence in the region in Israel by improving political situation in the region.

According to the created challenges especially in terms of cultural, linguistic and economic incomes between immigrants and mainstream over the past two decades concern has been revealed in higher levels of political risk in recent years.

Table 1: The number of Jews in Central Asia and the Caucasus

The share of the population	The Jewish population	country
0.196%	13.859.800	world
75.4%	6.135.300	Israel
0.133%	190.000	Russia
0.095%	8.88	Azerbaijan
0.064%	2.99	Georgia
0.019%	3.200	Kazakhstan
0.013%	4.00	Uzbekistan

1.8.2. Economic, technological and political requirement in region

Entering countries to coalition and regional and international alliances in the international system were the factors that influenced Israeli policy towards the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus as emerging countries in international relations.

1.8.3. Israeli political integration within the region

Generally, the political factors affecting the Israeli presence in the region has been the supervisor of the civil status of the republics and the crisis in the process of nation - government building that causes despite gaining political independence don't have the government affirmative model and thus they would like to replicate the business model of the Zionist regime. On the other hand, secularism attractions resulted in spread of Israel presence in the region.

1.8.4. The position of Israel's soft power in foreign policy in Central Asia and the Caucasus

One of the aspects of Israeli foreign policy in Eurasia returns to focusing on the question of the place of Judaism in Israel's soft power in

Central Asia and the Caucasus. This matter has ideological and religion nature of on the one hand and on the other hand, this cultural influence applied in the political, security and economic objectives for Israel in the region. In fact Israel are looking to expand the dimension of its soft power through the support of various foundations and institutions in the region. In addition, Israel is also trying to establish cultural hegemony in the region by seeking to undermine the Islamic ideology as a major challenge to its identity ([Koolae, 2004](#))

1.8.5. The impact of September 11 on Israel's strategy towards Central Asia and Caucasus

September 11th has a huge impact on the international system and the security of the region . Israel had closed a position to do its plan before this accident had and was incapable against the Palestinians and its policies in the region but September 11 created an opportunity for Israel to take advantage from this event and change the conditions towards its favor. In the meantime, Israel was able to achieve the following objectives through its foreign policy toward Central Asia and the Caucasus region:

-Israel came to the borders of Iran by excusing fight to terrorism

-Israel stressed that there would be fight against Islamic fundamentalism anywhere and also most of the Muslim newly independent republics in Caucasus and Central Asia countries could influence to them.

-The major aim of Israel's fight against terrorism was combating to both Syria and Iran.

-Israel could legitimize its existence in the region by cooperating with the countries among region countries

-Israel could start the cooperation in all areas with Central Asia and the Caucasus since its entry into the regional economic.

-Israel faced with restriction before this incident in achieving its goals in Central Asia and the Caucasus and had a cautious and conservative in its politics and after that it came to the international arena clearly.

CONCLUSION

Although Arabic revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa Middle East were formed under the influence of domestic policy issues, however, due to significant changes in the created structure of the political system, it is one of the most important Israel's foreign policy in recent years. This revolutionary is worsening security situation in Israel due to the changing balance of power in the region which has already had the benefit of Israel. In fact, until the revolutions of Arabic Israel could have good relationship with

many Arabic countries and it was reassuring to Israel that if the countries Peace with the regime of the Drnyaynd of the war was not going well, but the revolutionary Islamists to power and undermining America's influence and authority. Active region reflects negatively on Israel's Security. Israel has presence in the Caucasus and has intensified its influence in the political, economic, security and cultural region in the past two decades that has significant impact on the foreign policy of threats and opportunities in this area. This matter has great importance particularly with the tensions between Iran and Israel in light of the new design in Middle East, Israel and the United States.

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