

Three day International Seminar
On
India - Iran Relations in Contemporary Times
(1979-2009)
Centre for West Asian Studies
Jamia Millia Islamia (A Central University)
New Delhi
India
3-5 December 2009

Concept Note

India and Iran have been interacting since prehistoric times as neighbouring civilizations. With the advent of British supremacy on the Indian Subcontinent in the eighteenth century, Indo-Iranian interactions started to dwindle; they revived only after India's independence in 1947. Today both are considered as significant regional power and they are recognized as 'crucial factor' in fostering the peace, stability and development in the greater parts of West Asia, Central Asia and South Asia. Recent development in the context of 9/11 and the context of globalization has affected the relationship between two.

The 9/11 attacks on the United States, however, changed the context in which Indo-Iran ties had previously operated. South Asia was suddenly brought to the forefront of prominence within the broader context of the global war on terrorism, causing considerable concern in both India and Iran. India watched Washington resuscitate its relationship with Pakistan; while Iran witnessed the United States dramatically expand its military footprint in the region by invading Iraq and Afghanistan. At the same time, New Delhi and Tehran have sought to strengthen their bilateral relationship: in 2003, the two signed the "New Delhi Declaration," which set forth a vision of a bilateral "strategic partnership." Though two consecutive Indian votes against Iran in IAEA is widely seen among political-strategic community as illustration of India's abandonment of its close traditional ties with Iran in favour of more robust relationship with the United States and Israel, the subsequent developments belied such expectations.

Relations between India and Iran are far-reaching and multi-dimensional. The two states have recognized that they have a lot to offer one another and have acted to expand cooperation in a number of key areas. This ranges from their joint cooperation in the field of fighting terrorism in Afghanistan to working out of Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) Gas Pipeline and expanding defence ties between the two in addition to expanding cultural and trade relationship.

It is in the above background that a three day international seminar with the focus on political, economic, cultural, energy and security aspects of Indo-Iran relations, challenges and prospects of their bilateral cooperation in international politics, regional cooperation in West, South and Central Asia, Persian Gulf, SCO, NAM and Afghanistan has been conceived. In this context the seminar will also focus on how the role foreign powers including USA, UK, EU, Russia, China, Pakistan and some Arab countries has impacted the Indo-Iran relations. The seminar is organized by Centre for West Asian Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

The proposed seminar will have following sub themes: ----

(A) Political relations:

1. China as a factor in Indo-Iran Relations
2. Cooperation for adopting common strategies in international organization for achieving common goals
3. Cooperation in the area of international and regional peace, stability and countering terrorism
4. Impact of India's nuclear policy at IAEA on its relation with Iran
5. Impact of US sanctions on Iran -India relations
6. Indo-Iran Defense co-operation in combating terrorism
7. Indo-Iran strategic convergence in a new era
8. Iran – India bilateral relations: defense and security
9. Iran – India Working towards Asian Convergence in world order
10. Iran's response to Pak-sponsored terrorism in India, particularly Mumbai attack
11. Iran-India Working together towards strengthening NAM, UN and Security Council.
12. Iran-India, Russia and China and formation of a quadrilateral co-operation
13. New York 9/11 and its impact on Indo-Iran Relations
14. Pakistan and Afghanistan as regional factors in Indo-Iran relations
15. Role of European Union and its impact on Indo- Iran relations
16. Role of Islam as a political force in Indo-Iran Relations
17. Russia, Iran and India: Evolving a sustainable Relationship
18. The political economy of Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline
19. US as a factor in Iran-India relations

(B) Economy, Trade and Commerce:

20. Bilateral cooperation in areas of IT, infrastructure, industry and investment
21. Cooperation in the area of energy and energy security
22. Indo-Iran co-operation towards revival of Silk Route
23. Iran's Chabahar port connecting India to Afghanistan and CIS
24. Strategic Significance of IPI gas pipeline and its feasibility

(C) Cultural Diplomacy:

25. Cultural exchanges between India and Iran since 1979
26. Indo-Iran Cultural Relations
27. Indo-Iran Cultural Relations: A comparison of Pre & Post Islamic Revolution
28. Islam as a cultural factor in India-Iran Relations
29. Role of Persian literature in strengthening Indo-Iran Relations
30. Scientific and educational cooperation