



Tehran NAM Summit and Future Arab Politics

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Introduction

The Islamic Republic of Iran claims that in many ways the 16th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit held at Tehran on August 30-31, 2012 has been a milestone event.¹ The participation of 120 countries, including the UN and 17 Observer States, at the Tehran Summit² despite the U.S.-Israeli pressure to boycott the venue,³ has indeed broken Tehran's three decade long international isolation. Iran got this rare and bigger opportunity⁴ to host such a large Summit and utilise it to explain its vital interests such as peaceful nuclear programme, *locus standi* of unilateral sanctions and the cascading effects of the policy of 'intimidation' and 'intervention' on the Iranian economy, society and polity. Besides, the three-year chairmanship of NAM has offered Tehran the much-needed strategic opportunity to improve its 'relations between the [NAM] member states', advance its case for a 'greater say in world affairs'⁵ and reduce its growing trust deficit in the Arab world.

Looking at the broader perspective, the present paper attempts to analyse, *inter alia*, five important issues that have hogged the limelight of Tehran Summit and their likely implications for the Arab world and beyond: (i) Iran's capitalisation of the NAM platform to project its vital interests; (ii) Egypt's geo-strategic and economic intents; (iii) Fate of the Assad regime and

future of Syria; (iv) India's own positioning at the Summit; and (v) NAM's new-found thrust in the 21st Century.

i. Iran's capitalisation of the NAM platform to project its vital interests

(a) Nuclear

The NAM Summit provided a rare opportunity to Iran to directly argue the 'baseless allegations'⁶ against its peaceful nuclear programme as well as to highlight the alleged complicity of Israel in the assassinations of its four nuclear scientists.⁷ Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told the NAM delegates that Iran's nuclear programme is peaceful and is meant only for making reactor fuel, medical isotopes and peaceful research.⁸ He considered the development of nuclear, chemical and similar weapons as 'un-Islamic', a 'great and unforgivable sin' and proposed the idea of "nuclear weapon free Middle East".⁹ However, he reiterated Tehran's "right to peaceful use of nuclear power and production of nuclear fuel".¹⁰ He added, 'I declare that the Islamic Republic of Iran has never been after nuclear weapons and it will never abandon its right for peaceful use of nuclear energy'.¹¹ Iran contends that the U.N. Security Council resolutions are invalid because Iran has signed the NPT, which entitles¹² Iran to enrich and reprocess spent fuels for peaceful purposes.¹³

Iran offers two main arguments for going nuclear; (i) energy; and, (ii) health. Iran's domestic energy consumption is growing at a faster rate, approximately 5-6 percent per annum, which consumes on an average 45 percent¹⁴ of the total oil it produces. Iran wants to diversify hydrocarbons by developing alternative sources such as solar, nuclear and spare oil and gas for export to finance its growing developmental activities. Second, Iran needs nuclear know-how to diagnose and treat its 8,50,000 cancer patients.¹⁵

(b) Implications of sanctions

The Islamic Republic also utilised the NAM platform to draw attention towards the crippling impact of the 'economic war'¹⁶ waged by the West by imposing the protracted series of 'unilateral' sanctions, including the infamous 'Iran Threat Reduction Act' (December 2011), targeting the Central Bank and oil industry.

Indeed, the protracted sanctions and embargoes have severely pared Iran's economic capacity. Iran lost 60 percent of its total oil export, down to 1.5 million barrels per day in April-May from 2.5 million at the end of 2011¹⁷; it lost approximately \$10 billion trade with UAE annually; the value of the Iranian rial is continuously tumbling— losing around 140 percent of its market value, from 11,000 rial a dollar to the current 24,000 between 2010 and September 2012; inflation has gone up to 30 percent; and annual revenue is projected to drop by more than 50 percent to \$50bn.¹⁸ The economic hardship faced by the country has been acknowledged by the top Iranian authorities, including the Supreme Leader and the President. In a statement Ahmadinejad said, 'the enemy is putting great pressure on the country and has fostered difficult conditions' and urged the government 'to save money to deal [with] the problem'.¹⁹

Paucity of financial resources has significantly affected Iran's government's capabilities to carry on economic and human resource development programmes. This has left the Islamic regime with little scope to carry out its developmental and diversification programmes pertaining to employment generation and control the rising unemployment rate, particularly among the youth, which forms around three-fourth²⁰ of the total 76 million population.²¹

Youth Unemployment Rates by Gender (ages 20-29)

Year	Men		Women	
	15-29	30-64	15-29	30-64
2007	20.9	3.5	36.1	4.4
2008	25.6	4.0	45.2	5.4

Source: Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, 2010.

To appease the hard-hit common Iranians, the government is forced to increase both minimum wages and the amount of cash subsidy to the targeted sections of the society. Revised minimum wage for this year is set to 3.9 million rials per month²² – an increase of 18 percent, while direct cash transfer to their bank accounts is reported to have increased from 4,55,000 rials to 7,30,000 rials for a family of four.²³ As a result, around 20 percent, i.e. equivalent to about \$70 billion, of the GDP is being spent on these sops by the government.²⁴

Table: Select Macro Indicators of the Iranian Economy

Indicators	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Population (million)	67.2	68.1	68.9	69.7	70.6	71.4	72.3

Per Capita Income (US\$)	1732.1	1989.5	2369.3	2753.6	3157.7	4004.4	4678.2
GDP Growth (%)	7.5	7.1	5.1	4.6	5.9	7.8	2.3
Inflation (%)	14.3	16.5	14.8	13.4	11.9	17.2	25.5
Unemployment (%)	12.8	--	10.3	12.1	--	10.6	10.5
Whole Sales Price Index	71.5	79.0	89.0	100.0	109.2	126.2	71.5

Data source: World Bank website.

Undoubtedly, the current state of Iranian society, economy and polity pose a grim situation. This might be causing concerns among the ruling clergy that the country may face another spate of wide scale demonstrations against the system. In the last Presidential election (2009), the Green Movement, although unsuccessful, was seen by many as a loosening grip of Ayatollahs' hold on society and polity. The controversial election results provoked the youth to demand an end to dictatorship and clerical control. Even once respectful subordinates, including reformist leaders like Mohammad Khatami, Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi, were also found openly defying Ayatollah Khomeini.²⁵ Perhaps, the protracted sanctions on Iran by the U.S. may also aim to discredit the ruling regime and mobilise people against the clergy.

ii. Analysing Egypt's economic and geo-strategic intents

Egyptian President Mohammad Morsi paid a visit to Tehran, apparently to hand over the baton of NAM to his successor Ahmadinejad, but his address from the NAM platform revealed the likely future domestic and foreign policy dynamics of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). It is interpreted that the NAM Summit at Tehran provided an 'historic' opportunity to both the countries, Egypt and Iran, to end their three decade old diplomatic logjams.²⁶ It seems that both the countries need each other to share and shape some of the emergent regional and domestic issues. Their alliance also seems to be forged on common imperatives such as drawing motivations from the same ideological visions, that Iran terms as 'Islamic Awakening' and their respective democratic support-base at home. Both the countries perhaps need to satisfy the aspirations of the people on the Arab street, amplify their support, even if symbolic, to the Palestinian cause as well as checkmate the strategic weight of Israel, besides solving the Syrian crisis and working on indigenising the regional security architecture. On the nuclear front, leaders of both, Iran and Egypt, found backing for the 'right of its peaceful uses by all the countries in the world'.²⁷

However, the political viewpoint, which President Morsi shared from the NAM platform, sitting beside his Iranian counterpart, represents an altogether different picture. After three decades, Iran recovered Egypt but as a 'half friend'. If Morsi sent a positive signal towards Iran by sharing the dais with Ahmadinejad and earlier letting Iranian naval ships pass through the Suez Canal for the first time since World War II, (which Israeli foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman, described as 'provocation')²⁸, he also signalled an altogether different political 'tone and tenor' of the future Egyptian foreign policy, including the MB's future strategic alignments. Morsi's stance on Syria appeared quite depressing and unexpected to the Islamic Republic.²⁹ He announced from the NAM platform that it was his 'moral' duty and 'political and strategic necessity' to support the Syrian people struggling for democracy and equality against a repressive regime which had lost its moral authority to remain in power.³⁰ Morsi equated the Assad regime with the Israeli occupation of Palestine by referring to "the struggle for freedom by the Palestinian and Syrian peoples".³¹

Seemingly, through the NAM Summit Morsi tried to convey two major policy objectives of the parent MB:

First, by supporting the anti-Assad forces in Syria, he tried to win over the *Riyadh-Doha-Washington axis*. The main policy intent of the Egyptian President may be interpreted as 'to obtain economic favour from the cash-rich Gulf monarchies on one hand and signal a positive signal to the U.S on the other'. Morsi tried to project that under the Freedom and Justice Party 'Egypt means business'; Egypt needs active economic assistance from all around the world in general, including the U.S., besides welcoming the cash-rich Gulf sheikhs in particular. Indeed the FJP got an economically bankrupt, socially chaotic, religiously divided and politically moribund Egypt. The FJP won the presidential election by a thin majority of three percent against Ahmed Shafiq, erstwhile Prime Minister of the Mubarak regime. Consequently, the domestic circumstances may force President Morsi to balance the country's economic realism on one hand and the political ambitions of the parent MB on the other. Morsi utilised the NAM Summit to convey that Egypt is ready to align with both the traditional as well as new players without any political hangover. Morsi's projections are matched by his

recent political activities, including his foreign visits. He chose Saudi Arabia the first country to visit despite knowing the fact that King Abdullah not only opposed to the MB's struggle but also pressurised the U.S. to remain loyal to Mubarak.

Second, by announcing that ousting the minority Allawite regime in Syria from the power was an 'ethical duty...[and] a politico-strategic necessity', Morsi purportedly expressed the larger geo-strategic agenda of the FJP. Morsi's vocal support to the struggling opposition groups in Syria showcases two likely intensions: *first*, to support democratic development in the Arab world, including Syria and beyond; and *Second*, to carve out 'strategic depth' in Arab world and once again assume the role of *Umm al-Dunya* (Mother of the World). The MB is quite aware of the fact that its variants are the major political contestants in almost all the Arab countries that are passing through democratic upsurge. Looking at the future dynamics, Morsi has cast his die in Tehran and tried to woo today's 'struggling democratic forces as tomorrow's strategic partners' in the Arab world.

iii. Fate of the Assad regime and the future of Syria

(c) Fate of the Assad regime

On the Syrian front, the NAM Summit proved for both, Iran and the Assad regime, an unfortunate event. Although the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, tried to mobilise the NAM gathering, he could convince nor garner any sympathy for the beleaguered Assad regime. Instead, the Egyptian President roiled the Iranian occasion by evoking 'ethical' and 'political and strategic necessity' to support the rebels, forcing the Syrian envoy to walk out from the Summit.

In fact, the destiny of the minority Allawite regime in Syria had already been decided in the extraordinary OIC Summit that was held 15 days before the NAM Summit at Makkah on August 14-15, 2012. Indeed, the Makkah Summit was purposely convened by the *Riyadh-Doha axis* with Washington's blessings, to achieve twin objectives which apparently went in favour of the Saudi-led coalition. *First*, to tone down the Syrian issue to such an extent that it failed to get any serious attention at the NAM forum. They expelled Syria from the OIC. Although expulsion of any member country on such a flimsy ground is against the very charter of the OIC, no

country objected to the move except Iran and Algeria. That too went unheeded. This pre-emptive move at the OIC possibly made Syria a ‘non-starter’ at the NAM Summit. As a result, despite Ayatollah Khamenie’s vehement opposition to the foreign ‘intervention’ in Syria, nothing substantial could be achieved.

The second objective of the Makkah Summit seems to discredit and expose the hollowness of Iran’s claims of leadership of the Muslim world. The silence of the OIC members against the unlawful expulsion of Syria also showcased the degree of Iran’s growing ‘trust deficit’ among the Muslim countries; hence, bringing the Islamic Republic’s leadership claims under question.

(d) Future of Syria

The prolonged battle between the democratic forces and the Assad regime has already signalled that power transition in Syria will neither be smooth nor quick. Nevertheless, two recent developments foretell that post-Assad Syria may really be not peaceful and stable; even there is no guarantee of its unity and integrity. *First*, the vocal support of Morsi to the democratic forces fighting against the Assad regime from the NAM platform and later in the UN General Assembly, shows that he does not want Egypt to remain either neutral or aloof from a future democratic Syria. To resolve the Syrian crisis that has already taken more than 27,000 lives,³² Morsi’s Islamic Quartet initiative – consisting of Middle East heavyweights Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt – could not yield the desired results at its first meeting at Cairo. The absence of Saudi Arabia from the meeting possibly indicates the differences in policy approaches among the Quartet over Syria. The *Riyadh-Doha axis* possibly does not want Syria to be shifted to the other side of the Red Sea; the *axis* might have different geo-strategic designs, which may not match Morsi’s proposal. This indicates that the future Syria is likely to remain the focal point of ‘politico-strategic’ contest among the Islamic Quartet itself.

Second, the prolonged Syrian crisis and the ensuing internecine conflicts among the different ethnic groups and sects might have generated serious mistrust and fear psychosis in the country. This may jeopardise the chances of a secular unified Syria. As a result, two possible scenarios may emerge: *one*, division of the country on ethnic and sectarian lines.³³ *Second*, ‘a Lebanon-type political arrangement’,³⁴ which is based on ‘the principles of separation, balance, and cooperation amongst the powers’.³⁵

iv. India's own positioning at the Summit

India was the only 'star performer'³⁶ at the Tehran summit. Although the Indian media reported that New Delhi was 'ambushed' at Tehran, referring to the unscheduled programme where Ahmadinejad shared the dais with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the NAM summit provided India an opportunity to cogently put forth its policy stand on several vexed issues, including Syria and Iran's controversial nuclear programme. India reiterated its policy stand on Syria of 'non-intervention' and 'internal solution' as the only viable, acceptable and long-lasting solution to the ongoing Syrian imbroglio.

On the Iranian nuclear issue, India clearly reinforced the relevance of the international bodies like the U.N. and the I.A.E.A. and suggested that Iran resolve its problems through these mechanisms. India categorically discarded the notion and the scope of imposing unilateral sanctions in a globalising interdependent world.

However, the NAM Summit also put India into a tough act of balancing its national interest, between the 'U.S. and Iran' on one hand and between 'Saudi Arabia and Iran' on the other. India's stakes in Iran and Saudi Arabia are well known. India needs the *Riyadh-Arab League axis* for energy, remittances, trade and 'strategic depth' purposes, while Tehran is needed for India's geo-strategic-transnational-corridor and energy purposes,³⁷ besides being partners locked-in a deep historical-cultural relationship since the time of valley civilisations.

Regarding Iran versus the U.S., indeed the NAM Summit put India into a tough position. India ignored the advice of the U.S. not to attend the Tehran Summit and by sharing the dais with Ahmadinejad it also gave the world a sense that 'Iran is not alone'. However, the results of these two acts are not known as no perceptible reaction from Washington has been received yet.

v. NAM's new-found thrust in the 21st Century

Although the positive side of the Tehran Summit offered Iran a direct platform to project its cause to the representatives of 55 percent of the world population³⁸, the grey side is quite dismissive of its achievements. It questions the very relevance of the NAM in the post-Cold War era itself.³⁹ The bonhomie at Tehran, they argue, will not deliver anything concrete except a 'feel

good factor’ to the Islamic Republic. NAM’s 600-page report would prove to be a paper tiger once the delegates disperse and the U.S.-West tighten their screw against Iran.

Nevertheless, everything will not evaporate so fast or soon, as claimed by many analysts. NAM has not lost its relevance, particularly in the age of boundary-less ‘media warfare’, where world opinions for war are formulated and mobilised on doubtful pretexts in the ‘air’. NAM provides a global forum, the second largest after the U.N., to its member-countries to ‘directly’ communicate their side of arguments to the representatives of more than half of the globe’s population. The NAM forum is indeed, free, organic and still expanding, has all the potentials to emerge as a likely precursor of ‘global parliament’, with peace, negotiation and consensus rather than ‘intervention’ and ‘intimidation’ as a means to address and resolve the post-Cold War disorders. The Tehran Summit will not only set NAM’s future tone and tenor but also help it to counter the unjustified tools of ‘isolationism’ and ‘unilateralism’ imposed by select group of countries of the world.

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Notes

¹ How Tehran Shut Itself Down to Work Better, 31 August 2012, *Times Worlds*, <http://world.time.com/2012/08/31/how-tehran-shut-itself-down-to-work-better/#ixzz28JWR3CXX>, (accessed on 18 September 2012)

² However, only 29 heads of states attended the opening ceremony. Iran starts NAM summit under sharper UN nuclear scrutiny, 30 Aug 2012, *ahramonline*, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentPrint/2/0/51606/World/0/Iran-starts-NAM-summit-under-sharper-UN-nuclear-sc.aspx> (accessed on 12 September 2012)

³ Major argument the US-Israel offered to the nations, including India, to boycott Tehran Summit was to delegitimize the Islamic Republic of Iran in international arena. Both the countries even insisted the UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki Moon to avoid attending of the meeting. However, the UNSG attended and conveyed rather a tough message to Iran over human rights issues, nuclear imbroglio and its role in Syria.

⁴ On 09-11 December 1997, Iran hosted the 11th Summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation at Tehran. 55 members of the OIC attended the Summit. The Summit was addressed by the Rahbar Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

⁵ Colum Lynch, “Ahmadinejad tells U.N. ‘uncivilized Zionists’ are threat to Iran”; U.S. boycotts, 26 September 2012, *The Washington Post*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ahmadinejad-tells-un-uncivilized-zionists-are-threat->

to-iran-us-boycotts-address/2012/09/26/738d12a6-0800-11e2-a10c-fa5a255a9258_story.html (accessed on 28 September, 2012)

⁶ “Sanctions have not hindered Iran’s nuclear program: IAEA envoy”, *Tehran Times*, 2 September 2012, <http://www.tehrantimes.com/politics/101112-sanctions-have-not-hindered-irans-nuclear-program-iaea-envoy>, (accessed on 10 September 2012)

⁷ Israel is widely accused of preventing nuclear proliferation by killing the nuclear scientists and attacking and destroying the locations suspected for nuclear developments in the West Asian countries. In 1981, Israel bombed French-built Iraqi nuclear establishment at Osirak. In 2007, again Israel bombed the building in Syria suspected of developing nuclear devices. Similarly, Iran claims its four nuclear scientists have been killed by Israel; “Iran nuclear scientist killed by car bomb”, 12 January 2012, *Aljazeera and Agency*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/01/201211162848691713.html> (21 September 2012)

⁸ Nasser Krimi, “Iran’s Khamenei calls nuclear arms use a ‘big sin’” 30 August 2012, *Global Times*, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/irans-khamenei-calls-nuclear-arms-use-a-big-sin/> (accessed on 25 September 2012)

⁹ “The Islamic Republic of Iran considers the use of nuclear, chemical and similar weapons as a great and unforgivable sin [and]... proposed the idea of ‘nuclear weapon free Middle East’ to which Iran is committed”. Sayyid Khamenei's speech at NAM Summit, Official Website of republic of Nigeria, 24 September 2012, http://www.islamicmovement.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=439:sayyid-khameneis-speech-at-nam-Summit&catid=35:news-display (accessed on 26 September 2012)

¹⁰ Sayyid Khamenei's speech at NAM Summit, Official Website of republic of Nigeria, 24 September 2012, http://www.islamicmovement.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=439:sayyid-khameneis-speech-at-nam-Summit&catid=35:news-display (accessed on 30 September 2012)

¹¹ Nasser Krimi, “Iran’s Khamenei calls nuclear arms use a ‘big sin’” 30 August 2012, *Global Times*, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/irans-khamenei-calls-nuclear-arms-use-a-big-sin/> (accessed on 26 September 2012)

¹² Article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty entitles the signatory country to enrich and reprocess the spent fuel for peaceful uses. However, the controversy over Iranian nuclear programme is on its in-transparency and lack of confidence among the regional power of its misuse by the Islamic regime in Iran. It is true that if Iran succeeds in developing nuclear capability it will persuade other powers to develop their own capabilities. Hence it will seriously transform the dynamics of the region.

¹³ “Rick Gladstone Iranian Says Nuclear Talks Have Reached ‘Critical Point’” 29 June 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/30/world/middleeast/irans-un-envoy-denouncing-sanctions-says-nuclear-talks-are-at-critical-point.html> (accessed on 25 September 2012)

¹⁴ Annual Statistical Bulletin 2012, Organisation Petroleum Exporting Countries, (accessed on 24 September 2012)

¹⁵ “Nuclear standoff could hurt Iran's cancer patients” *The National*, 18 November 18, 2010, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/nuclear-standoff-could-hurt-irans-cancer-patients> (accessed on 22 September 2012)

¹⁶ Mohammad Ali Shabani, “Living under siege in Iran”, 11 July 2012, *Aljazeera and Agency*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/07/2012710132416172713.html> (accessed on 22 September 2012)

¹⁷ Dmitry Zhdannikov, “Iran's oil exports plummet as sanctions bite, agency says”, 13 June 2012, *Reuters*, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/13/us-iaea-idUSBRE85C0AK20120613> (accessed on 21 September 2012)

- ¹⁸ Roxane Farmanfarmaian “Iran's strategy under new sanctions” 10 August 2012, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/08/201288142724224103.html> (accessed on 22 September 2012)
- ¹⁹ “Iran's Khamenei: Reliance on Oil Sales a trap”, 30 July 2012, *The Reuters*, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/30/us-iran-oil-khamenei-idUSBRE86T06420120730> (accessed on 22 September 2012)
- ²⁰ Djavad Salehi-Isfahani “Iranian Youth in Times of Economic Crisis”, August 2010, Policy Brief, *Dubai Initiative, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School Harvard University*, <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/Salehi-Isfahani%20-%20DI%20Policy%20Brief%20-%20Iran%20Youth.PDF>, (accessed on 22 September, 2012).
- ²¹ Karim Sadjapour, *Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader*, Carnegie Endowment for Peace, Washington, 2009, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/sadjapour_iran_final2.pdf, (accessed on 13 September 2012)
- ²² “حدائق دسد تمزد 19 کارگ ران 983 هزار و 457 تومان تعیین شد”, *Paikar Iran*, (Iranian News paper), <http://www.peykeiran.com/Content.aspx?ID=45823>, (accessed on 3 October 2012)
- ²³ Mohammad Ali Shabani, “Living under siege in Iran”, 11 July 2012, Aljazeera and Agency, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/07/2012710132416172713.html> (accessed on 23 September 2012)
- ²⁴ Iran: Subsidy Reform amid Regional Turmoil, 3 March 2011, *Brookings*, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2011/03/03-iran-salehi-isfahani> (accessed on 23 September 2012)
- ²⁵ Karim Sadjapour, *Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader*, Carnegie Endowment for Peace, Washington, 2009, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/sadjapour_iran_final2.pdf, (accessed on 13 September 2012).
- ²⁶ The Islamic Republic severed its all diplomatic ties with Egypt “ever since the late Sadat offered the late Shah haven to pass his final days in peace”. Hamid Dabashi “Morsi in Tehran: Crossing the boundaries”, 5 September 2012, *Al Jazeera and Agencies*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/09/20129375930824837.html>, (accessed on 22 September 2012)
- ²⁷ “Morsi backs right to peaceful use of nuclear energy” 30 August 2012, *Press TV* <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/08/30/258961/morsi-backs-peaceful-nuclear-energy/> (22 September 2012)
- ²⁸ On 11 February 2012, the Egyptian authorities approved the passage of two Iranian supply ships, 15,00-tonnes *Alvand*, a patrol frigate, and 33,000-tonnes *Kharg*, a supply ship, to pass through the Suez Canal. Since the Islamic Revolution 1979, this was the first occasion of the Iranian ships to cross the canal. Israel has taken as a “grave view” and an act of ‘provocation’ from the Iranian side. Basically, the passage of the ships indicates more of improving relationship between Iran and Egypt than anything else significant. “Iranian navy ships exit Suez canal, *The Al Jazeera and Agency*, 22 February 2012. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/02/201122244215758692.html>, (accessed on 23 September 2012)
- ²⁹ “Morsi: Iran 'vital' to ending Syrian crisis”, 23 September 2012, *Aljazeera and Agency* <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/09/201292373523831134.html> (25 September 2012)
- ³⁰ ‘Our solidarity with the struggle of the Syrian people against an oppressive regime that has lost its legitimacy is an ethical duty as it is a political and strategic necessity’³⁰ and ‘I am here to announce our full and just support for a free, independent Syria that supports a transition into a democratic system and that respects the will of the Syrian

people for freedom and equality at the same time, preventing Syria from going into civil war or going into sectarian divisions”, Geneive Abdo “Iran Spins Morsi Visit”, 31 August 2012, *Middle East Institute*, Washington, <http://www.mei.edu/content/iran-spins-Morsi-visit>, (accessed on 23 September 2012)

³¹“Morsi sparks controversy with anti-Assad comments in Tehran”, *ahramonline*, 30 August 2012 <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentPrint/1/0/51612/Egypt/0/Morsi-sparks-controversy-with-antiAssad-comments-i.aspx>, (accessed on 25 September 2012)

³² Allison Jackson, “Syria crisis: Middle East Heavyweights hold Cairo meeting”, 17 September 2012, *Globalpost* <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/middle-east/egypt/120917/syria-crisis-middle-east-cairo-meeting>, (22 September 2012)

³³ Zakir Hussain, “Post-Assad Geostrategic Possibilities, *Issue Brief, Indian Council of World Affairs*, 6 August 2012, <http://www.icwa.in/pdfs/IBpostassad.pdf>, (23 September 2012)

³⁴ For detailed discussion see David W. Lesch, (2006)*The Now Lion of Damascus: Basher Al Assad and Modern Syria*, Yale University Press, 2005.

³⁵“Overview of the Lebanese system” <http://www.presidency.gov.lb/English/LebaneseSystem/Pages/OverviewOfTheLebaneseSystem.aspx>, (accessed on 27 September 2012)

³⁶ Indrani Bagchi, “PM Manmohan Singh took NAM centre stage”, 2 September 2012, *The Times of India*,http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-09-02/india/33547918_1_Morsi-nam-Summit-mahmoud-ahmedinejad, (accessed on 18 September 2012)

³⁷ Zakir Hussain, “Iran Crisis and India’s Policy Predicaments”, Viewpoint, 17 February 2012, *Indian Council of World Affairs*, <http://www.icwa.in/pdfs/VBIndiaIran.pdf>, (accessed on 23 September 2012)

³⁸ Iran NAM summit sends message of peace, 25 August 2012, *Global Times*, <http://www.tehrantimes.com/component/content/article/84-perspectives/100837-iran-nam-summit-sends-message-of-peace>

³⁹ Responding to the query of the significance of NAM Summit going on in Tehran, C. Raja Mohan during his first Sapru House lecture on *India and the Great Powers: Managing Strategic Triangles*, at Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, on 31 August 2012, argued that NAM has no relevance in the post-cold war era- “Who remembers what happened in the last NAM Summit held at Sharmal al-Sheikh, Egypt”.