UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

U.S. POLICIES TOWARD IRAN AND IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL SECURITY IN THE PERSIAN GULF FROM 1979 – 2008

SEYED MOHSEN MIRHOSSEINI

FEM 2012 22
U.S. POLICIES TOWARD IRAN AND IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL SECURITY IN THE PERSIAN GULF FROM 1979 – 2008

By

SEYED MOHSEN MIRHOSSEINI

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2012
DEDICATION

Dedicated to my father and mother for their continuous support, love and encouragement throughout my postgraduate study and to my beloved wife, Mahdieh and my loving son, Sina
Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

U.S. POLICIES TOWARD IRAN AND IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL SECURITY IN THE PERSIAN GULF FROM 1979 – 2008

By

SEYED MOHSEN MIRHOSSEINI

December 2012

Chairman: Sarvinder Kaur Sandhu, PhD

Faculty: Human Ecology

This research examined the US policies toward Iran and its implications on regional security in the Persian Gulf during the period from 1979 – 2008. In addition, the study also evaluated the U.S. policies toward Iran in relations to the Persian Gulf during the presidencies of Carter, Reagan, George HW Bush, Clinton, and George Bush during this period of time. The objectives of the research were achieved by seeking answers to the two research questions: 1) What were the evolutions of the U.S. regional security policies regarding Iran in the Persian Gulf from 1979 to 2008?; 2) What were the influences of the U.S. regional security policies on the regional peace and stability regarding Iran in the Persian Gulf?

Based on the research questions, the goals of this study were to examine and analyze the security policies of different US administrations from the time of the Islamic revolution in
1979 until the end of the George W. Bush presidency in 2008. In other words, the main focus of the study was to understand the security policies of the US administrations during the period from 1979 to 2008 toward Iran in the Persian Gulf region. Therefore, the study attempted to evaluate these security policies to identify and explain the factors of success or failure of these policies in the Persian Gulf region and to finally determine the security status of the Persian Gulf. As such, evaluating the thrust of various US policies toward Iran in the Persian Gulf region will show the success or failure of the US to create peace and security in the region.

For this purpose, the qualitative approach was selected and applied to the study and the data were collected from official websites available on the internet. Such data comprised the speeches of the Iranian and American administrations, official records and documents on security policies of the US toward Iran in the Persian Gulf region including the Arms Export Control Act, U.S. Congress negotiations, US Department of State annual reports, Country Reports on Terrorism, Peterson Institute Documents, and Middle East policy council documents. Thus, the goal of using the qualitative approach was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the security policies of the US toward Iran in the Persian Gulf region during the specified period. The analysis of the data revealed that the unilateral security policies of different US administrations toward Iran in the Persian Gulf did not succeed in establishing stability and peace for the region. Based on the conclusions of the research, the three main findings are outlined as follows:
Firstly, the findings of the current study about the U.S. policies toward Iran in relation to the Persian Gulf region since the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979 show that these policies were always confronted by challenges from local states such as Iran and Iraq and in some cases, a few regional conservative Arab states such as Saudi Arabia. This implies the failure of the unilateral U.S. security policies in the Persian Gulf region.

Secondly, the analysis of the “Regional Security Complex Theory” proves that according to the “Regional Security Complex Theory”, there were significant relationships between the rivalries of the regional states in the Persian Gulf and external interventions. The results revealed that local rivalries led to the interference by external powers in the region. In the case of Iran, the rivalries inside the Gulf Cooperation Council states and between them and Iran and Iraq led to U.S. intervention in the region. Moreover, the results obtained from application of the theory to the realities of the region revealed that the only reasonable solution for the security problems of the Persian Gulf region is a collective security forum that involves all the states of this important area including the GCC states, Iran and Iraq (6+2 arrangement).

Finally, the findings of this study have important implications for the promotion of peace and security in the Persian Gulf region. As the results showed, the various direct and indirect U.S policies toward Iran related to the Persian Gulf were unable to enhance American demands for a stable condition to maintain their interest in the region. Furthermore, the U.S. policies could not stop Iran’s ambitions to have a collective security policy that involved all the Persian Gulf states in a forum. So the findings of this study
suggest that to stabilize the region, there should be multilateral relations between Iran, Iraq, the GCC and U.S. that consider the concerns of all parties and the participation of all local states for peace and security to be achievable in the region.
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**DASAR AMERIKA SYARIKAT TERHADAP NEGARA IRAN DAN IMPLIKASI TERHADAP KESELAMATAN SERANTAU DI TELUK PARSI DARIPADA TAHUN 1979 - 2008**

Oleh

**SEYED MOHSEN MIRHOSSEINI**

Disember 2012

Pengerusi: Sarvinder Kaur Sandhu, PhD

Fakulti: Ekologi Manusia


vii
Bagi tujuan kajian ini, kaedah analisis kualitatif telah digunakan dan data pengutipan data adalah dari laman web rasmi. Perolehan data adalah berdasarkan kepada ucapan-ucapan rasmi di negara Iran dan Amerika dan juga daripada rekod-rekod and dokumen-dokumen rasmi mengenai dasar keselamatan Amerika Syarikat terhadap Iran di rantau Teluk Parsi, diantaranya adalah rundingan Kawalan Eksport Senjata Akta Kongres Amerika Syarikat, Laporan Jabatan Tahunan Amerika Syarikat, Laporan Keganasan, Data Institut Peterson dan Data Dasar Timur Tengah. Analisis kualitatif adalah bertujuan untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang mendalam mengenai dasar keselamatan Amerika Syarikat terhadap negara Iran di Teluk Parsi. Secara am, analisis data menjelaskan dasar keselamatan adalah berbeza-beza dalam pentadbiran Amerika Syarikat terhadap Iran di Teluk Parsi dan gagal menyediakan kestabilan dan keamanan bagi rantau ini. Berdasarkan kesimpulan kajian, tiga penemuan utama digariskan seperti berikut:

Pertama, penemuan kajian berkaitan polisi Amerika Syarikat di Teluk Parsi yang berkaitan dengan rantau Teluk Parsi sejak Revolusi Islam Iran menunjukkan bahawa dasar Amerika Syarikat sentiasa berhadapan dengan cabaran dari negeri-negeri tempatan seperti Iran dan Iraq dan dalam beberapa kes termasuk juga serantau konservatif negara Arab seperti Arab Saudi. Ini bermakna, dasar keselamatan unilateral yang diguna pakai oleh Amerika Syarikat di rantau Teluk Parsi adalah tidak berjaya.

Kedua; analisis "Teori Keselamatan Serantau Kompleks" membuktikan bahawa mengikut "Teori Keselamatan Serantau Complex", terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara persaingan negeri serantau di rantau ini dan campur tangan pihak luar. Hasil kajian
menunjukkan bahawa persaingan tempatan membawa kepada gangguan kuasa luar di rantau ini dan dalam kes Iran, persaingan di dalam Majlis Kerjasama Teluk dan persengetaan antara Iran dan Iraq telah membawa kepada campur tangan tangan Amerika Syarikat di rantau ini. Selain itu, keputusan yang diperoleh daripada teori kepada realiti di rantau ini mendedahkan bahawa satu-satunya penyelesaian bagi masalah keselamatan rantau teluk Parsi adalah mengwujudkan satu forum keselamatan kolektif yang melibatkan semua negeri di kawasan ini termasuk negara-negara GCC, Iran dan Iraq (6+2 pengaturan).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with great pleasure that I express my appreciation to the various people who provided me with their full assistance and supports in completing this thesis. I would extend my deepest appreciation to all my supervisory committee members, Datin Dr. Sarvinder Kaur Sandhu, Prof. Dr. Jayum A. Jawan and Prof. Dr. Zaid B. Ahmad for their guidance and constructive criticisms. I would like to thank those who have enabled me to start and complete this study with their help, supports and personal encouragement:

- My wife Mahdieh and my boy Sina who have continuously encouraged and supported me in good times and in difficulties.
- My parents Seyed Ali and Sorayya and my brother Ehsan who always believed in me and encouraged me to continue pursuing knowledge to the highest possible level.
- A special thanks to Yazd University and its chancellor who prepared me the opportunity of studying PhD in Malaysia by supporting me financially during my study.

I would like to dedicate this research to all my family members, including my parents, brothers and wife. Their memories and presence have made my life more beautiful.
I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on December 13, 2012 to conduct the final examination of Seyed Mohsen Mirhosseini on his thesis entitled "U.S. Policies Toward Iran and Implications for Regional Security in the Persian Gulf from 1979-2008" in accordance with the Universities and University College Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U. (A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

Members of the Examination Committee were as follows:

**Nobaya binti Ahmad, PhD**
Associate Professor
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

**Ku Hasnita binti Ku Samsu, PhD**
Senior Lecture
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

**Kamaruzzaman bin Yusoff, PhD**
Associate Professor
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(External Examiner)

**Hussin bin Mutalib, PhD**
Professor
National University of Singapore
Singapore
(External Examiner)

---------------------------------------------

SEOW HENG FONG, PhD
Professor and Deputy Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 26 February 2013
This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

**Sarvinder Kaur Sandhu, PhD**  
Senior Lecture  
Faculty of Human Ecology  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairman)

**Jayum Anak Jawan, PhD**  
Professor  
Faculty of Human Ecology  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

**Zaid B. Ahmad, PhD**  
Associate professor  
Faculty of Human Ecology  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

**BUJANG BIN KIM HUAT, PhD**  
Professor and Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
Date:
DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

________________________
SEYED MOHSEN MIRHOSSEINI

Date: 13 December 2012
TABLE OF CONTENT

ABSTRACT iii
ABSTRAK vii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS x
APPROVAL xi
DECLARATION xiii
TABLE OF CONTENT xiv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS xxi

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Background of the Study 2

1.2.1 The Importance of the Persian Gulf Geopolitics 3

1.2.2 U.S. attempts to build a security system for the Persian Gulf 8

1.2.3 Feature of the region after U.S. attack of Iraq 10

1.3 Problem statement 12

1.4 Research aims and Objectives 13

1.5 Research questions 14

1.6 Significance of the study 14

1.7 Scope and limitation of the study 18

1.8 Theoretical Framework 19

1.9 Definition of Terms 24

1.9.1 Regional security 24

1.9.2 Regional Security Complex (RSC) 25

1.9.3 Balance of Power 26

1.9.4 Persian Gulf 27

1.9.5 Arab Gulf 27

1.9.6 Unofficial policy 28

1.9.7 Regime 29
1.10 Methodology  
1.10.1 Research data collection methods  
1.10.2 Research Designs and Methods  
1.10.3 Sources of available Data  
1.10.4 Techniques for collecting and analyzing data  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Introduction</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Regional security</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Evolving of the Persian Gulf Security Regimes</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Alternative Security Frameworks for the Persian Gulf</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Iran’s Persian Gulf policy</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Conclusion</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 THE EVOLUTION OF THE U.S. POLICIES TOWARDS IRAN</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Introduction</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Background</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 The Geography and Geopolitics of the Persian Gulf</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 The Persian Gulf Geographic Confines</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 Geopolitics of the Persian Gulf</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 Local Geography</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.4 Classification of the Persian Gulf states</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Great Britain’s presence in the Persian Gulf</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 British withdrawal from Persian Gulf</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1 The American reactions to British withdrawal</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2 Regional states reactions regarding British withdrawal</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 American arrival in the Persian Gulf</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.1 American policy objectives in Iran</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2 The U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3 Reasons of American indirect presence after Britain withdrawal</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 The policy of Twin pillar by Nixon administration</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.7.1 Areas of cooperation between Iran and US 99
3.7.2 US military assistance to Iran 101
3.8 Carter Doctrine 104
   3.8.1 USCENTCOM in the Persian Gulf region 109
3.9 The policy of Dual containment (the policy of Clinton’s administration - Clinton’s Doctrine) 111
   3.9.1 Basic codes of the dual containment policy 114
   3.9.2 Factors of supporting Dual Containment Policy 115
   3.9.3 Implementation of the Dual containment policy toward Iran 117
   3.9.4 Implementation of the Dual containment policy toward Iraq 119
3.10 Establishment of the [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) 121
   3.10.1 Introduction 121
   3.10.2 Previous Efforts for cooperation and alliance 121
   3.10.3 Declared and undeclared objectives of the GCC 123
   3.10.4 The main concerns of GCC states regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran 125
   3.10.5 Interaction between the GCC states and the U.S. 127
   3.10.7 Military abilities of the GCC state 130
   3.10.8 A turning point at Doha summit 133
3.11 Conclusion 135

4 EVALUATION OF THE U.S. POLICIES IN PERSIAN GULF 136
4.1 Introduction 136
4.2 Evaluation of the “Twin Pillars Policy” 137
4.3 Evaluation of the “Carter Doctrine” 139
4.4 Evaluation of the Regan Doctrine 143
4.5 Evaluation of the “George Herbert Walker Bush” Policy 146
4.6 Evaluation of the “Dual Containment Policy” 149
   4.6.1 Evaluating the methods of containment 158
4.7 Evaluation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) policy 159
4.8 Evaluation of George W. Bush Policy 165
4.9 Islamic Republic of Iran’s Policies towards the United States 174
4.9.1 The Khatami phenomenon and Iran’s foreign policy 177
4.10 Conclusion 180

5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS 182
5.1 Introduction 182
5.2 Securing the Persian Gulf as a neo-conservative thought 183
5.3 Schools of Thought about Iran 184
5.4 The Persian Gulf Remains as the World's Energy Supply 185
5.5 Dilemmas in U.S. Persian Gulf Policies 187
5.6 Regional Security Structures as Possible Options 192
5.6.1 Potential Models (samples) for the Persian Gulf 195
5.6.2 Parameters of Formulating a New Security Structure for the Region 197
5.6.3 Essential pre-structure for Security building in the Persian Gulf region 198
5.7 Interaction of the GCC Regarding Iran 199
5.7.1 GCC and the Iran-Iraq War 203
5.7.2 The difficulties facing GCC states 204
5.7.3 The American Congress and weapons sales to the GCC 205
5.8 Sources of Conflict in the Persian Gulf Region: Penetration and Resistance 207
5.9 Oil is the main interest but not the unique interest 208
5.10 Major Problem Regarding the U.S. in the Persian Gulf 209
5.11 Conclusion 214

6 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS 215
6.1 Introduction 215
6.2 Summary 215
6.3 Conclusion 219
6.3.1 GCC needs a new security arrangement 220
6.3.2 Mutual understanding of the U.S. and Iran 223
6.3.3 Disengaging from the region 225
6.3.4 The New Regional Security Arrangement 227

xvii
6.4 Implications (theory and practice) 232
6.5 Recommendation for future research 234

REFERENCES 236
BIODATA OF STUDENT 254
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS 255