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## Positive Peace in the Islamic Perspective of International Relations: The Case of Iran's Foreign Policy

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**Abstract.** The characteristics of the interpretation of the concepts of “positive” and “negative” peace within the framework of the Islamic paradigm of international relations, as well as the application of Islamic approaches to conflict settlement by the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) are analyzed. The relevance of the study is due to the need to rethink approaches to peacekeeping and move away from Western peace strategies and initiatives, since these approaches have demonstrated their inadequacy over the past 50 years. Based on the hermeneutic method of studying the Islamic sacred texts and comparative analysis, as well as the approach to “negative” and “positive” peace of the Norwegian sociologist J. Galtung, the authors justify the existence of two strategies for achieving peace, based on Islamic ideals — “resistance strategy” and “non-violence strategy,” using as an example of the first one the foreign policy activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran to resolve regional conflicts, taking Syria, the Palestinian problem and the Hormuz Peace Initiative as examples. The authors come to the conclusion that Islam considers only “positive peace” to be true peace, capable of ensuring security, a fair world order and universal equality. Iran, guided by the ideological attitudes generated by the Islamic Revolution of 1978—1979 (spirituality, the fight against corruption and economic injustice, the protection of the ‘oppressed’ and the fight against the ‘oppressors,’ the rejection of violence in social movements, the elimination of social discrimination, governance based on the people’s decision), seeks to introduce Islamic principles into its foreign policy practice, particularly in the Middle East. However, with a number of Arab countries in the region pursuing anti-Iranian policies, some of Tehran’s initiatives remained unrealized and did not gain support. Nevertheless, in the current context where the Western-centric world order is being revised, it is more relevant than ever to explore alternative approaches to conflict resolution and to identify their advantages and significance, based on practical examples that already exist.

**Key words:** Islam, positive peace, negative peace, peacekeeping, Iran, foreign policy, non-Western peacekeeping

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## «Позитивный мир» в исламском восприятии международных отношений: пример внешней политики Ирана

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**Аннотация.** Анализируются особенности трактовки понятий «позитивный» и «негативный» мир в рамках исламской парадигмы международных отношений, а также применение исламских подходов к урегулированию конфликтов Исламской Республикой Иран (ИРИ). Актуальность исследования обусловлена необходимостью пересмотра подходов к миротворчеству и отхода от западных стратегий разрешения конфликтов, поскольку данные подходы за прошедшие 50 лет уже продемонстрировали свою несостоятельность. Опираясь на герменевтический метод анализа священных текстов ислама и сравнительный анализ, а также подход к определению «негативного» и «позитивного» мира норвежского социолога Й. Галтунга, авторы обосновывают существование двух стратегий достижения мира, базирующихся на исламских принципах, — «стратегии сопротивления» и «стратегии ненасилия», рассматривая в качестве примера первой внешнеполитическую деятельность Исламской Республики Иран по урегулированию региональных конфликтов на примере Сирии, палестинской проблемы и Ормузской мирной инициативы. Установлено, что в исламе в качестве подлинного мира видится только «позитивный мир», способный обеспечить безопасность, справедливый миропорядок и всеобщее равенство. Иран, руководствуясь мировоззренческими установками, порожденными Исламской революцией 1978—1979 гг. (духовность, борьба с коррупцией и несправедливостью, защита «обездоленных» и борьба с «высокомерными», отрицание насилия в общественном движении, устранение социальной дискриминации, правительство, учитывающее мнение народа), стремится внедрять исламские принципы в свою внешнеполитическую практику, в частности на ближневосточном направлении. Однако в связи с тем, что ряд арабских стран региона проводят антииранскую политику, некоторые инициативы Тегерана остаются нереализованными, не получая поддержки. Тем не менее в современных условиях, когда происходит пересмотр западнцентричного мирового порядка, как никогда актуально изучать альтернативные подходы к урегулированию конфликтов, выявлять их преимущества и значение, опираясь на уже существующие практические примеры.

**Ключевые слова:** ислам, позитивный мир, негативный мир, миротворчество, Иран, внешняя политика, незападное миротворчество

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Indeed, We created humans in the best form  
*Qur'an*, 95: 4<sup>1</sup>

Amir al-Mu'minin: "Human life (is so precious that) it cannot be evaluated at any price"  
*Asrar al-Balagha*, p. 89<sup>2</sup>

### Introduction

The relevance of the research topic lies in the need to find new approaches to the

settlement of numerous conflicts, both civil and interstate. In this regard, religion, as an integral part of public and private life of most non-Western countries and based on such universal principles as humanism, justice and the primacy of human life, can serve as a basis for updating methods of peacekeeping and restoring trust between the conflicting parties.

Another motive for writing this article was a desire to contribute to the rehabilitation of the image of Islam as a peaceful religion, that seeks to promote the harmonious coexistence of various groups of society, as well as to overcome Islamophobia, a destructive phenomenon that divides and polarizes

<sup>1</sup> 95. At-Tin // *Qur'an*. English translation. URL: <https://quran.com/95> (accessed: 12.01.2023).

<sup>2</sup> 30 hadiths darbare Omar ba mazamin ziba az aeme athar [30 hadiths about Omar with beautiful themes from the Imams of Athar] // *Shia News*. (In Persian). URL: [shia-news.com/0010YP](http://shia-news.com/0010YP) (accessed: 12.01.2023).

communities at the national, regional and global levels and stigmatizes the followers of the Islamic faith. Contrary to the dominant discourse on the militancy of Islam, the authors emphasize the peace-loving aspects of Islamic teachings.

The novelty of the study lies firstly in the fact that the authors, relying on the hermeneutic method of studying the sacred texts of Islam, conceptualize the Islamic view of “positive peace” and peacekeeping and substantiate the existence of two strategies for achieving peace — the “resistance strategy,” which the Islamic Republic Iran follows in its foreign policy, and the “non-violence strategy,” adopted by a number of Arab countries in the Middle East, which agreed to sign a peace treaty with Israel in order to stabilize the regional situation.

Secondly, using the method of comparative analysis, the authors identify differences in the Western and Islamic approaches to ensuring peace and postulate the universal nature of the values promoted by the Islamic (in a broader sense, religious) concept of peacekeeping.

Finally, using Iran as an example, the authors demonstrate the advantages and limitations of implementing Islamic principles in foreign policy in the current world order, in which Western discourses still dominate. However, as we are currently experiencing a transformation of the Western-centric system of international relations, it is necessary to explore the possibilities of non-Western approaches to peacekeeping, which can become a solid basis for long-term and sustainable peace in the future.

The concept of war and peace in Islam is studied in the works of such foreign authors as H. Hanafi (1987), M. Abu-Nimer (2003), A. Afsaruddin (2020) and H. Abadi (2022). As for studies in Russian, it is necessary to mention the works of G.M. Kerimov (1983), S.V. Reznik (2008), as well as an analysis of the evolution of the concept of jihad by K.A. Kadyrova (2014; 2015a; 2015b). It is also worth mentioning the Russian expert on Iranian studies, prof. V.I. Belov (Yurtaev), who brilliantly analyses

the “Islamic matrix” of Iranian foreign policy after the Islamic Revolution (Yurtaev, 2014; 2018). At the same time the problem of applying the Islamic concept of positive peace has not been considered by Russian scientists so far.

Noteworthy is the contribution of Iranian scholars, writing in both Farsi and English, to the development of the problems of the Islamic concept of peace and the application of Islamic principles by Iran in foreign policy activities. In this regard, the works of A. Yazdani (2020), M. Mohammadi (2008), M. Meghdar (2008) and A. Ashrafi (2020) should be mentioned. In addition, it is worth mentioning the analytical work of M. Khorramshahr (2011) on the impact of Islamic Revolution in Iran on the region and the international community.

The main reason why the authors choose Iran as a case study is linked to the change of values and foreign policy strategies of this country after the 1978—1979 Islamic Revolution. Iranians are intellectually influenced by many forces. First, their national identity; second, the Islamic element; third, the religion or school of Shi‘a, and fourth, the historical developments of the country, which have gradually been added to the historical memory of the people. It should be emphasized that the term “Islamic element” refers to the more generalized Islamic ideas and practices, such as the Five Pillars of Islam, the Qur’an, and the Hadith, which have influenced Iranian culture for more than a thousand years. On the other hand, the Shi‘a School refers to a particular interpretation of Islam that has been influential in Iran since the 16th century. This belief in the divine leadership of the Imams has played a crucial role in shaping Iranian identity, culture, and politics (e.g. *velayat-e faqih* concept).

The article hypothesizes that Islam and the Islamic Revolution’s values in Iran, due to their inherent characteristics, create conditions in the region and the world that, although they seem to be in the direction of disorder, will eventually lead to the spread of positive peace. For this purpose, in this article, the concept of peace and

positive peace will be examined, and further the concept of peace in Islam. Later, the main characteristics of the Islamic Revolution that were intended during the life of the Islamic Republic will be examined and it will be shown that all these characteristics are positive in the direction of expansion of peace.

### **The Positive and Negative Peace in International Relations**

The common nature of human beings, cultural diversity, the spirit of patience, attention to differences and multitudes, cooperation, acceptance of responsibility, and unity in the same diversity, the logic of the culture of dialogue, the spirit of creation as a new language, social justice and the solution of needs, united government, globalism and universalism (acceptable global responsibility), the new understanding of the current state of the world, and the necessity of interreligious dialogue are among the effective factors in actively looking at the category of positive peace (Simbar, 2016).

This section will discuss various meanings of peace with a focus on positive peace. It should be noted that this concern spread from the day after the First World War in the framework of Woodrow Wilson's approach to international relations. The most important concern of international relations is the provision of peace, and efforts should be made in this direction. Johan Galtung, the father of peace studies, often distinguishes between "negative peace" and "positive peace": "Negative peace talks about the absence of violence. When, for example, a truce is ratified, a negative peace will be created. It is negative because something undesirable has stopped happening (for example, violence has stopped or oppression has ended). Positive peace with positive content, such as restoring relationships or creating social systems, serves the entire population's needs, is constructive and resolves contradictions. Peace is not the complete absence of any conflict. It means non-violence

in all forms and manifesting involvement constructively" (Galtung, 1985).

Therefore, peace exists where people interact peacefully and manage their conflicts positively, respecting the legitimate needs and interests of all on important issues. Positive peace is the absence of structural violence, which means the need for defined positive social conditions such as social justice, equality, and human welfare. Positive peace requires the presence of social institutions for the fair distribution of resources and the peaceful resolution of disputes (Goudarzi & Kafash Neiri, 2018).

In a simple definition, according to international law studies, positive peace is respect for human rights, justice and the avoidance of violence in international relations, whether it is structural or direct violence. In addition to war and strife, it includes injustice, poverty, lack of development, environmental damage, lack of tolerance, etc. (Anderson, 2004). In this situation, positive peace will not be achieved without peace culture building, social education and strengthening of non-international norms.

On the other hand, the first and foremost goal of modern international relations is to maintain and establish peace. Nowadays, while there may not be war between countries, there may not be peace between them, which means that the meaning of peace in international relations has changed and evolved. From the point of view of international relations, the meaning of peace is to avoid disputes and violent action between states. In other words, peace is relative military stability and lack of discord and disorder in the international security system. International peace and security is a term widely used in the literature on international relations, implying peace and stability in the world system in such a way that none of the powers and political units should not step beyond their limits and not encroach on the territory of others, but respect it. All governments should try to maintain

international peace and security and not threaten it in any way (Mohammadi, 2008).

Given the prevailing conditions in international relations, two points about the concept of peace in international relations should be emphasized.

1. International peace and security in its true sense are not necessarily ensured by maintaining the status quo, because the laws and legal structures of the ruling system on international relations may have an oppressive and subservient nature. While peace is one of the concepts mixed with justice and equality, its stability is therefore impossible without justice.

2. In the past, peace, and security were concepts only used in the military and political fields. However, this concept is currently changing due to globalization and integration. Now, economic and cultural crises that require collective action by the international community can lead to peace and security (Meghdar, 2008).

The concept of peace and the spreading of positive peace have been associated by the emergence of new ideas and characteristics. Certainly, factors such as the introduction of positive and negative peace, the change in the motivations and goals of peace, and the evaluation in the peacekeeping process, have affected this change in the international concept. However, another level of understanding of peace can be discovered through the concept of peace provided by Islam and, additionally, the characteristics of the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

### **The Concept of Peace in Islam**

The concept of peace is central to Islam, since it was one of the reasons for sending down the Qur'anic revelation to the Arabs in the 7th century. There was an urgent need to overcome the state of permanent inter-tribal conflicts in the Arabian Peninsula, which had long impeded the unification of the Arab tribes and the development of statehood, despite the existence of all the prerequisites for it.

In Arabic, the word “peace” (“Salam”) has the same root as the word “Islam.” Also “al-Salam” is one of the 99 names of Allah

(Hanafi, 1987, p. 433), that is, sacred epithets characterizing the inherent qualities of God. In addition, from the same root (“sin”, “lam” and “mim”) come such words as “sallama” (2nd breed) — “make a concession,” “reconcile,” “agree with something,” “save from something”; “salama” (3rd breed) — “put up,” “live peacefully with each other” and the participle “salimun” — “safe,” “prosperous.” In the international arena, peace means more than the absence of war. As former United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon mentioned: “Peace means access to education, health and essential services.” Also, he remarks that peace should be earned via the dignity, rights and capacities of every man and woman.<sup>3</sup> However, if we study the Islamic doctrine, the concept of peace can be different.

According to Islamic doctrine, man is naturally inclined towards peace, and violence is generated by non-compliance with the divine will, mistakes in upbringing and lack of education (Yazdani, 2020, p. 153). In turn, war is the last means of conflict resolution, which can only be used after all peaceful means have been exhausted. The peace in the Qur'an is understood as a state that governs the lives of believers and defines their relationship with God as the Creator and his creatures. Achieving peace is the noblest and highest goal of human existence in this world, because peace, among other things, ensures the safety of human life.

Based on this, “peace” in Islam does not mean the absence of violence (“negative peace”), but rather the same “positive peace.” A. Afsaruddin notes that “It is rather a holistic concept that is based on two key factors: 1) the recognition of the equal dignity of every human being as God’s creation and 2) the guarantee of justice for all on earth. These two key factors

<sup>3</sup> Peace means dignity, well-being for all, not just absence of war — UN officials // UN News. September 9, 2014. URL: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2014/09/476992#:~:text=Audio%20Hub-,Peace%20means%20dignity%2C%20well%2Dbeing%20for%20all%2C%20not%20just,absence%20of%20war%20%E2%80%93%20UN%20officials> (accessed: 12.04.2023).

allow for peace to be conceptualized as resting on a fundamental restructuring of socio-economic relations and inter-personal relations that are conducive to establishing and nurturing a just and egalitarian society” (Afsaruddin, 2020, p. 132). She added that “The revealed laws of God, properly interpreted and implemented, will inevitably lead to the ultimate desideratum: a just and peaceful social order” (Afsaruddin, 2020, p. 99).

It should be emphasized that the concept of “justice” in Islam does not only mean “law,” but — more importantly — God’s justice, equality and righteous order as the basis for eliminating the unjust world order, usurper’s authorities and any form of social mistrust and inequality.

In the context of peacekeeping issues, it is necessary to separate the concepts of “al-salam” (peace), which is more consistent with “positive peace” and “al-sulh” (truce, also the same root “al-musalaha”, reconciliation, and “al-islah”, improvement, correction, (process of) reconciliation), which can be identified, on the one hand, with the “negative peace,” and, on the other hand, with the process of resolving differences between parties in order to stop or prevent further conflict and violent actions.

For all its peacefulness, Islam cannot be described as a pacifist religion. As A. Afsaruddin notes, “Thus pacifism, when defined as non-violence under all circumstances and the unconditional rejection of war, even in the face of violent aggression, would be regarded in specific situations as facilitating injustice and contributing to social instability — and, therefore, morally and ethically unacceptable” (Afsaruddin, 2020, p. 99). Since justice is also one of the basic principles of Islamic dogma, it should not conflict with peacefulness and allow infringement of the rights and dignity of the weak. Peacefulness should not lead to the acceptance of injustice and evil. At the same time, according to the Qur’an, any armed struggle must be exclusively defensive in nature. Justifications for an offensive war appeared much later and are

debatable, but the coverage of this discussion is beyond the scope of this study.

The concept of ensuring peace in Islam is based on the following principles.

1. Individual responsibility before God, oneself and society for living in peace and harmony with others. From this follows fidelity to the execution of contracts and the inadmissibility of breaking agreements. Moreover, for the sake of achieving peace, Islam even allows the conclusion of an agreement that at first glance infringes on the interests of Muslims, but in the long run serves them well (Alikhani, 2016, pp. 11—14). An example is the Hudaibiyya agreement (628), which the prophet Muhammad reached with the pagan Meccans in order to stop the bloodshed. The document contained demands that were unfavorable for Muslims (in particular, the possibility for all Arabian tribes to freely choose the side of Muhammad or the Meccans-Quraysh), but subsequently contributed to the reconciliation of Mecca with the supporters of Muhammad and the cessation of a long armed confrontation.

2. Reliance on the concepts of “sabr” (patience) and “musabara” (indulgence): patience and steadfastness in abstaining from the forbidden; condescension towards other people, as well as refraining from revenge on those who harmed you. This principle also guarantees the forgiveness of one’s enemy, which helps to restore trust between the conflicting parties and ensure a sustainable “positive peace”: “The reward of an evil deed is its equivalent. But whoever pardons and seeks reconciliation, and then their reward is with Allah. He certainly does not like the wrongdoers” (Qur’an, 42: 40).<sup>4</sup>

3. Justice is both a condition for achieving peace and a consequence of peace and social stability. Justice also makes it possible to ensure the equality of people, proclaimed in the Qur’an: “O humanity! Be mindful of your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and from it

<sup>4</sup> 42. Ash-Shuraa // Qur’an. English translation. URL: <https://quran.com/42> (accessed: 12.01.2023).

He created its mate, and through both He spread countless men and women” (Quran, 4: 1).<sup>5</sup>

4. Individual choice: peace cannot be imposed by anyone; the opposing sides must voluntarily recognize at least the partial correctness and legitimacy of the demands of their opponents make a decision to reconcile with the enemy and forgive their former opponents (Afsaruddin, 2020). The principle of individual choice makes such a Western approach to “peace enforcement” unacceptable from an Islamic perspective.

5. The value of human life is a key principle of every religion, including Islam. To save a life, it is permissible to eat forbidden (*haram*) foods. Considerations of the pricelessness of human life have long been a guiding principle for the Bedouin Arabs, who have established the principles of hospitality and treatment of a stranger, prescribing to accept in your tent any traveler who travels through the desert, for tomorrow he may be one of them. The guest must be fed and provided with accommodation for the night, and for three days the owner’s house will be a reliable refuge for this person. Based on this principle, Islam also calls for mercy, compassion and generosity towards the enemy in the course of conflict resolution.

The emphasis on the principle of justice while maintaining or achieving peace justifies the “resistance strategy” that the Islamic Republic of Iran has adopted in its foreign policy. This strategy is based on Qur’anic verse (4: 95): “Those who stay at home — except those with valid excuses — are not equal to those who strive in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives. Allah has elevated in rank those who strive with their wealth and their lives above those who stay behind [with valid excuses]. Allah has promised each a fine reward, but those who strive will receive a far better reward than others.”<sup>6</sup> We can see the difference between the Islamic vision of justice

and peace and, e.g., the UN vision based on “equality” more than on “justice” and the freedom to have equal opportunities for education, healthcare, etc. Practical aspects of the implementation of the Islamic “resistance” strategy will be disclosed in the final section of the article.

The Qur’an, surah “Baqara” (2: 217) also says that “They ask you ‘O Prophet’ about fighting in the sacred months. Say, ‘Fighting during these months is a great sin.’ But hindering others from the Path of Allah, rejecting Him, and expelling the worshippers from the Sacred Mosque is a greater sin in the sight of Allah. For persecution is far worse than killing. And they will not stop fighting you until they turn you away from your faith — if they can. And whoever among you renounces their own faith and dies a disbeliever, their deeds will become void in this life and in the Hereafter. It is they who will be the residents of the Fire. They will be there forever.”<sup>7</sup> Public order, the security of society over the preservation of the life of the individual (collectivism of culture) “stresses the higher moral imperative of maintaining order and resisting wrong-doing” (Afsaruddin, 2020, p. 109).

It is noteworthy that most of the references to the question of the need for peace are related to the issue of relations between the Muslim Ummah and non-Muslims. The Qur’an obliges Muslims to end violence and seek peace with non-Muslims (Qur’an 9: 4, 9: 6—8).<sup>8</sup> In turn, the Qur’an logically affirms brotherhood among believing Muslims (Quran 49: 10).<sup>9</sup> This makes it possible to substantiate the need for both inter-religious and intra-Islamic dialogue, which are the basis for building harmonious and healthy social relations. In addition, the emphasis on the principle of patience and forbearance can be seen as the basis of the

<sup>5</sup> 4. An-Nisa // Qur’an. English translation. URL: <https://quran.com/4> (accessed: 12.01.2023).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> 2. Al-Baraqah // Qur’an. English translation. URL: <https://quran.com/2> (accessed: 12.01.2023).

<sup>8</sup> 9. At-Tawbah // Qur’an. English translation. URL: <https://quran.com/9> (accessed: 12.01.2023).

<sup>9</sup> 49. Al-Hujurat // Qur’an. English translation. URL: <https://quran.com/49> (accessed: 12.01.2023).

“non-violence strategy” adopted by the Arab states, which have chosen the path of reconciliation with the enemy (in relation to Israel) in order to achieve long-term peace and stop the bloodshed.

The specifics of the functioning of Arab-Muslim societies also offer tools for resolving conflicts, among which is their own model of mediation and arbitration, based on tradition and rooted in the institution of turning to a third party (an elder, tribal sheikh or *qadi* (judge), that is, a person who uses authority of all members of the community) to help resolve the dispute. As a rule, these mediators, guided by Islamic norms and values, encourage both parties to first resolve their differences on their own. The overall goal is to repair the damage done to interpersonal relationships and to restore trust between the parties. In addition, we should not forget that when resolving a dispute, the mediator should be guided by the principle of the common good (*al-maslaha*), i.e. the decision made should maximally satisfy the interests of both parties and also contribute to the well-being of the entire community.

### **Characteristics of the Islamic Revolution of Iran Aimed at Positive Peace**

In this section, after examining the concept of positive peace, we will study the characteristics of the Islamic Revolution, which are focused on positive peace. It is important to mention that the characteristics of Islamic Revolution in Iran stem from the concept of *velayat-e faqih*. This concept transfers all political and religious authority to the Shi'a clergy and makes all of the state's key decisions subject to approval by a supreme clerical leader that in this concept call *vali-e faqih* or the guardian Islamic jurist. This is the concept that separates Iran's policy from other Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia or Pakistan (Yurtaev, 2014; 2018; Kozhanov & Bogacheva, 2020). The purpose of this study is to show that the Islamic Revolution carries the characteristics that make this phenomenon lead to the spread of positive peace.

### **Rejection of Violence in the Social Movements**

When discussing the internal contradictions of the existing international order, R. Cox refers to social forces that can use these contradictions to advance challenges to this world order and to achieve a new, more just world order (Steans et al., 2013). According to Gills (2016), these anti-hegemonic forces challenge dominant political and institutional arrangements, forming “counter-hegemony” as a set of alternative values, concepts and considerations.

Counter-hegemonic forces have no specific nature and may or may not be progressive. The confrontation with hegemony requires the formation of a new historical alliance, which is not just a coalition of classes, but includes the political, economic and cultural dimensions of a specific social formation (Moshirzadeh, 2009). According to A. Gramsci, the issue of the cultural dimension is also found in the discussion of the changes in international relations. Gramsci (1992) sees a comprehensive transformation of social reality through the creation of “cultural hegemony” and “mutual culture” (Maziar, 1991).

A fundamental aspect of revolution, according to revolution theorists, is the idea of its spread. Despite the lack of a universal ideology, any revolution anywhere, at least based on the theory of diffusion, will affect its neighboring countries and cause revolutionary movements there. Thus, the same phenomenon of the Iranian Revolution caused unrest in Iraq, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia in the first days of the victory of the revolution (Ashrafi, 2020). The most recent example of such revolutions and their effects is the Arab Spring. This movement, according to experts still in process, not just put essential impacts on countries in the region of Middle East and North Africa, but also enlightened new values that could change the policy and perspective of the countries involved (Msellemu & Kessy, 2022).

A very important point, which is one of the essential features of the Iranian Revolution, is the rejection of violence in the social movement. It is impossible to ignore the



dimensions that are always present before and after movements against price increases or movements for social change, especially in the 20th century. Violence is one of these factors. The Iranian Revolution is an exception in this respect. Ruhollah Mousawi Khomeini, as the leader of the Iranian Revolution, did not allow the use of violent methods and armed conflict in order to overthrow the Shah's regime before the victory, and therefore the Iranian Revolution ended without using these methods. The peaceful way of social movement will cause the culture of avoiding violence to be institutionalized in society, and one of the basic foundations of positive peace will be provided. Perhaps this is why the military has not been able to become a standalone force in Iran's post-revolutionary politics.

### ***Fight against Economic Injustice (Support for the Deprived)***

According to Ruhollah Khomeini, the economy in Islam is not an end but a means and a tool for the spiritual development of society. In addition, the explanation and implementation of Islamic principles in the economy is the responsibility of Islamic scholars, researchers and committed Muslim experts, who must, firstly, introduce the economic system of Islam in accordance with the needs and requirements of the time (theoretical aspect), and secondly, develop plans and programs for its implementation (practical aspect).

R.M. Khomeini considered the Islamic Revolution to be the revolution of the deprived and oppressed, who acted as the initiators of the revolution. In his opinion, the Islamic economy is neither capitalist nor communist, which means that neither of these two schools is legitimate from the Islamic point of view. Private property, which is the “bone of contention” between these two approaches, exists legally in Islam, limited only by the need to comply with the principles of “*halal*” (legal, permitted) and “*haram*” (illegal, prohibited).

Such views and ideas can be found in the speeches of R.M. Khomeini, who noted that “The question of property is in a sense both legal and conditional, but this does not mean that everyone can do anything and have any property. Legitimacy is based on Sharia norms, usury is prohibited, and people's property is not exploited without reason. Everything has a limit. Property, if it is legal, is respected no matter what regime is in power, and illegal property is not respected.”<sup>10</sup>

From Khomeini's point of view, Islam attaches great importance to spirituality and considers it legitimate to pay attention to material things to the extent that it does not hinder the growth and happiness of each individual, and this issue in itself will prevent someone from doing “*haram*.” If we consider Islam's emphasis on paying “*khums*,” “*zakat*,” and the implementation of other forms of charity prescribed by Islam, we will see that even legitimate wealth does not remain in the hands of true believers and is spent in the way of good.<sup>11</sup>

One of the serious concerns of the Islamic Revolution is the elimination of poverty among

<sup>10</sup> Khomeini R. (Imam Khomeini). Sokhanrani dar jame daneshjuyane esfahan (jelogiri az harg va marg) [Speech to the students of Isfahan (preventing chaos)]. Tuesday, 23 October 1979. Tehran: Institute for editing and publishing the works of Imam Khomeini. Vol. 10. P. 476—477. (In Persian). URL: [http://www.imam-khomeini.ir/fa/C207\\_42844/\\_%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%87\\_%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84\\_%D8%BA%DB%8C%D8%B1%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B9\\_%D9%88\\_%D8%AC%D9%84%D9%88%DA%AF%DB%8C%D8%B1%DB%8C\\_%D8%A7%D8%B2\\_%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B4\\_%D8%AF%D8%B4%D9%85%D9%86\\_%D8%AF%D8%B1\\_%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%AF\\_%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%AC\\_%D9%88\\_%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AC](http://www.imam-khomeini.ir/fa/C207_42844/_%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%87_%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84_%D8%BA%DB%8C%D8%B1%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B9_%D9%88_%D8%AC%D9%84%D9%88%DA%AF%DB%8C%D8%B1%DB%8C_%D8%A7%D8%B2_%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B4_%D8%AF%D8%B4%D9%85%D9%86_%D8%AF%D8%B1_%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%AF_%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%AC_%D9%88_%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AC) (accessed: 24.12.2022).

<sup>11</sup> Vojube hefze Nezame Eslami dar andishe siasi Emam Khomeini, nashriye majles va rahbord [Treasury of Knowledge: The need to preserve the Islamic system in the political thought of Imam Khomeini] // Hawzah.net. (In Persian). URL: <https://hawzah.net/fa/Article/View/99638/هـ-وجوب-حفظ-نظام-اسلامی-در-اندیشه-سیاسی-امام-خمینی> (accessed: 24.12.2022).

different classes of the Iranian nation, and for this reason various measures and programs have been implemented to reduce the social gap. Eliminating poverty is one of the foundations of positive peace because according to many international policy experts, economic needs are one of the main reasons for creating war among different nations.

### ***Elimination of Social Discrimination***

One of the characteristics of the Islamic Revolution was its emphasis on eliminating traditional discriminatory systems in Iranian society. The goal of the Islamic Revolution and those who tried to bring it to fruition was that everyone would achieve the standard of living that he deserves based on the efforts made. Ethnic, tribal and racial discrimination should not prevent the individual from reaching the desired position. In this regard, Ayatollah Khomeini emphasized social justice, defending the weak and confronting the “arrogant,” and considered this as one of the principles of the Islam, which, in turn plays a significant role in adjusting the wealth and the approximate equality of the society’s standard of living: “The prophets... have come to mobilize poor people to put looters in their place and fix social justice.”<sup>12</sup>

Khomeini’s constant emphasis on a modest life, including for officials, shows the importance of social justice for the Islamic economy. Social justice is one of the foundations of the existence of the Islamic Republic and means that discrimination based on tyranny must be eliminated. Islam supports the poor, the workers and the peasants (Dashiri, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> Khomeini R. *Sahifeh-ye Imam. An Anthology of Imam Khomeini’s Speeches, Messages, Interviews, Decrees, Religious Permissions, and Letters. Vol. 8.* Tehran : Institute for editing and publishing the works of Imam Khomeini), 1979. P. 292. URL: <http://staticsml.imam-khomeini.ir/en/File/NewsAttachment/2014/1702-Sahifeh-ye%20Imam-Vol%208%20.pdf> (accessed: 23.12.2022).

### ***Government Based on the People’s Decision***

The Islamic Revolution was able to explain the compatibility of Islam and democracy, to reveal the interaction between the two spheres — religion and politics, while answering two questions: Plato’s “Who should rule?” and Machiavelli’s “How should one rule?”. The answer is: it is necessary to establish a political system based on the spiritual and political characteristics, the link between the values of the state, the Islamic values and the democratic power structure (Khorramshahr, 2011). This state structure at the basis of the conformity of Islam with the requirements of the times, religious renewal and the revival of Islamic ideas about state administration emphasized the republican government method and the role of the people in state decision-making. The model of Islamization and sustainable Islamic values such as justice, God-centeredness and spirituality are considered as the basis of the political system.

The Islamic Republic was an expression of the connection between religion and politics and showed that it was possible to combine religiosity and modernization. At the same time, such a political system rejected inertia inherent in some supporters of the Islamic path of development, and sectarianism, as well as secularism and atheism. The Islamic Revolution proclaimed a system whose legitimacy is based on the sovereignty of God, the truth of religious values as well as the will of the people and the right to determine the destiny of the nation.

The doctrine of “religious democracy,” which arose during the Islamic Revolution, contributed to the development of a culture of interaction between the state and society. Consideration by the government of the needs of the entire people and especially the majority of it — the Muslim community, should contribute to the creation of social harmony and the revival of the unity of the Iranian nation. This harmony in the relationship between the state and society is unattainable without the implementation of the principles of just Islamic

rule and Sharia (Barzegar, 2012). “Religious democracy” was also meant to challenge extreme nationalist ideologies, including pan-Arabism, regimes affiliated to the East (socialist bloc) and the West (capitalist bloc), and simultaneously fight imperialism and social imperialism.

The political system based on respect of a people’s will eliminates many causes of social unrest. Members of society can fulfill their legitimate political demands through participation in political competition and do not need to use violence to achieve their demands. Practicing non-violence within society can lead to the expansion of peace values outside society and in the international arena (Kuklinski, 2002).

### ***Fight against Corruption***

There are various definitions of corruption. In the broadest definition, corruption and the misuse of public facilities and resources are interpreted in accordance with self-interests. One of the important features of the Pahlavi regime was the systemic corruption of the state apparatus, which resulted in the highest level of corruption and fraud with financial resources, receiving and paying the largest bribes, and abuse of power.

Autocracy, monopoly of power and wealth in the Pahlavi family, the closed political system and lack of an independent press and parties, tyranny, tribalism and relationism, the weakness of legal institutions and disregard for the law marked the great corruption of the Pahlavi regime, which experienced a systemic crisis. A strong gap between the rich and the poor, the corruption of the ruling elite fueled discrimination and injustice in society. Thus, the class gap was considered one of the hallmarks of the Pahlavi regime and eventually led to anti-regime protests by the deprived masses of the Iranian people.

After the victory of the revolution and the proclamation of the Islamic Republic, one of the key measures of the new government was the fight against corruption. If corruption takes place in all dimensions and manifestations —

political, economic and cultural, the unity of society will be unattainable. In a society where people are not loyal to each other, and officials do not listen to their people, corruption will have fertile ground. As Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei noted in his sermons, “Our revolution was a mass popular movement against a government that by all accounts was bad. It was a corrupt, dependent and incompetent government.”<sup>13</sup>

In addition, one of the important reasons for violence in society is the existence of illegitimate ways of obtaining wealth and the feeling of despair in obtaining financial resources through legitimate means. When the economic system of society is continuously inefficient and lacks the necessary transparency, corruption is institutionalized and violence is legitimized in order to obtain wealth. The fight against corruption in theory and practice was one of the principles of the Islamic Revolution (Sarvi & Zarei, 2015).

### ***Spiritualism***

Spiritualism is a protest against the mainstream of the consumer society. Islam is a religion that respects both the material and spiritual needs of people, but material values must always be linked with spiritual ones. In the concept of the Islamic Revolution, Islam is perceived as the only way to save humanity from the burden of thousands of problems. To get out of the crisis, the Muslim people of Iran adopted the of Imam Khomeini’s theory of spirituality.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Bayanat dar khotbe haye namaze jome, paygahe etela resanie dafter hefz va nashre asare Hazrate Ayatollah Ozma Seyed Ali Khamenei [Office for Preservation and Publication of the Works of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Statements in Friday prayer sermons] // Khamenei.ir. 01.10.1999. (In Persian). URL: <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=2974> (accessed: 21.12.2022).

<sup>14</sup> Human nature and international relations from Imam Khomeini’s point of view // Imam Khomeini (PBUH) Editing and Publishing Institute, Aruj Publishing Institute, The Portal of Imam Khomeini. P. 128—140. URL: [http://www.imam-khomeini.ir/fa/c202\\_144890/%D8%AD%D8%B6%D9%88%D8%B1/%D8%AC\\_68/%D9%85%D](http://www.imam-khomeini.ir/fa/c202_144890/%D8%AD%D8%B6%D9%88%D8%B1/%D8%AC_68/%D9%85%D)

Islamic ideology and the presence of spirituality in politics have been proposed not only by the leaders of the Islamic Revolution or Iranian thinkers, but also by Western philosophers. M. Foucault (1988) calls the Iranian revolution “an empty-handed revolution.” Therefore, according to Foucault, the reason for the victory of the Iranian revolution is not the military equipment and the hard power that resulted from the unity of the revolutionaries, but rather the belief of the leader and the people of this revolution in the supremacy of soft power, which is summed up in Islam and Shi‘a teachings.

The modern period of human history was shaped with the emergence of two intellectual and political schools, liberalism and socialism. The first school, by giving priority to the fundamental rights and socio-political freedoms of individuals and groups, believed that the growth and expansion of these rights and freedoms was the desired perfection of man and could achieve the best material goals and realize the spiritual needs. In turn, the second school criticizing the unfortunate consequences of granting freedom, especially in the economic and political spheres, prioritized the value of equality over freedom and relied on the superior power of government.

The Islamic Revolution combined the values of both the French Revolution, which emphasized the first value, i.e. individual freedom, and the Russian Revolution, which sought to achieve the second value, i.e. the equality of the whole society. The Islamic Revolution under the leadership of Imam Khomeini combined both values, individual freedom and social equality, but interpreted them in its own way. But more importantly,

8%A7%D9%87%DB%8C%D8%AA\_%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86\_%D9%88\_%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B7\_%D8%A8%DB%8C%D9%86\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D9%84\_%D8%A7%D8%B2\_%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%AF%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87\_%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%85\_%D8%AE%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%86%DB%8C (accessed: 14.04.2023).

Khomeini also raised spirituality as the dominant principle over all other values. M. Foucault, a French thinker, explains the combination of politics and spirituality of the Iranian revolution in this way: “What has given strength to the Iranian movement is a dual feature: on the one hand, collective wills to change the governing body, and on the other hand, the will to change the roots of their lives” (Foucault, 1988).

The strength of this will is rooted in Shi‘a Islam, which allows active political struggle, mobilizes the masses and consolidates all the poor, disadvantaged and oppressed segments of the population. On this basis, the people of Iran sought to change their relationship with others, with religion, with God, and above all, with each other. It is at this point that Islam (and religion in general) plays the role of a promising and affirming means of changing the roots of people’s mentality. With its teachings and inner content, Shi‘ism distinguishes between purely external obedience and a deep spiritual life. People seek a change in their mentality through Islam because this approach already existed and was at the core of Iranian identity. There is a revolutionary force in Islam that goes beyond the mere obedience of believers. There was intention and will in the Islamic Revolution, a new beginning through the revival of spirituality and experience gained over centuries of Shi‘a Islam taking root in Iran (Foucault, 1988).

Thus, the spirituality of the Islamic Revolution was deeply derived from the pure teachings of Shi‘a Islam, which had deep roots in Iranian culture. Therefore, this revolution was seen a reaction to the intellectual and practical deviations of the modern era and envisioned the reconstruction of a new Islamic civilization based on the three principles: freedom, justice, and spirituality.<sup>15</sup> Moreover,

<sup>15</sup> Khomeini R. *Sahifeh-ye Imam. An Anthology of Imam Khomeini’s Speeches, Messages, Interviews, Decrees, Religious Permissions, and Letters. Vol. 4.* Tehran : Institute for editing and publishing the works of

the advantage of the prominent goals of this revolution over other political schools was a new approach to life based on the values of Shi'a Islam, which, unlike socialism and liberalism, combined materialism and spirituality. It is spirituality that restrains the individual and society from using violence. It seems that the best way to control violence is to use spiritual tools, which are widely used in all situations and can be considered one of the best factors to achieve positive peace.

### Positive Peace in Iran's Foreign Policy

The diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has followed two political and legal procedures to ensure positive peace. In the first decade, the IRI carried out efforts to support the Islamic world and establish peace in the geographical region of the "Islamic Ummah," and also to confront the powers that sought to disturb peace and security in the Islamic world. Iran's efforts to reduce tensions in crises in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kashmir and Nagorno-Karabakh serve as good examples for Iran's peacekeeping policy in the region. Moreover, Iran's continued emphasis on respecting internationally recognized borders, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states is within the framework of Iran's overall policy of maintaining and enhancing stability, security and economic development in the Middle East (Nowrozi & Mosfa, 2012).

Twenty years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, and especially after Iran assumed the chairmanship of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC, now the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation), reconciliation between the countries of the Islamic world and Islamist groups within these countries has accelerated. Achieving peace in Tajikistan, Iraq and Afghanistan, Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabakh and Kashmir was part of

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Imam Khomeini), 1979. P. 104. URL: [http://staticsml.imam-khomeini.ir/en/File/NewsAttachment/2014/1698-Sahifeh-ye%20Imam-Vol%204\(1\).pdf](http://staticsml.imam-khomeini.ir/en/File/NewsAttachment/2014/1698-Sahifeh-ye%20Imam-Vol%204(1).pdf) (accessed: 22.12.2022).

Iran's activities during this period. Iran has also proposed a number of peace initiatives on conflicts outside the Islamic world that can be innovative in their own right.<sup>16</sup>

Iran's pacifist approach has been recognized by the international community and has led to Iran mediating a number of issues in trans-regional issues. Currently, Iran can be considered as one of the main peacekeepers in the Syrian crisis. In cooperation with Russia and Turkey, Iran has become a major participant in the peace talks in the so-called Astana format and is one of the main pillars of this format (Belhadj Klaz & Mariani, 2022, p. 23). The US and conservative countries in the Middle East region tried to realize their offensive goals in this country by removing Iran from the Syrian arena, which led to the failure of several rounds of talks on Syria. However, Iran's role in the Astana process has added legitimacy to this negotiating format. It should be mentioned that with the peace process in Syria, Iran is not only spreading its positive peace ideology, but also implementing a successful peacekeeping mechanism without Western interference in the region.

Among the successful peace processes in the region, there have been some failed attempts. In October 2019, Iran proposed the Hormuz Peace Initiative to spread positive peace in the Persian Gulf region.<sup>17</sup> This plan is based on the cooperation of the Gulf coastal countries to end the presence of foreign forces in this important and strategic water area. The initiative aims to achieve peace and stability in the Persian Gulf and economic progress and

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<sup>16</sup> Kharazi S. K. Siasate khareji ma: Majmue sokhanrani haye Seyed Kamal Kharazi vazie omur khareje [Our Foreign Policy : The collection of speeches of Seyyed Kamal Kharazi, Minister of Foreign Affairs]. Vol. 1. Tehran : Political and International Studies Office, 2006. (In Persian).

<sup>17</sup> Grajewski N. Iran's Hormuz Peace Endeavor and the future of Persian Gulf security // European Leadership Network. July 7, 2020. URL: <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/irans-hormuz-peace-endeavor-and-the-future-of-persian-gulf-security/> (accessed: 24.12.2022).

prosperity for the countries of the region. However, the ties of the West to the Gulf region and the presence of US military bases have limited the effectiveness of the Hormuz Peace Initiative. Moreover, the dependence of many countries in the region on the West contradicts the values of an independent world and Iran's foreign policy ideology.

As already mentioned, the change of values in Iran's foreign policy began with the Islamic Revolution and Khomeini's resistance doctrine (Goudarzi, Jawan & Ahmad, 2009). Imam Khomeini's teaching on resistance was based on such important components as a correct understanding of regional conditions, refraining from any superficiality and false ideas about the Islamic religion, turning Islam into a real ideology of struggle, activating the global capabilities of the Islamic Ummah, a correct assessment of future events, avoiding political quietism and abandoning the defeatist mentality. Certainly, values such as dignity, independence and freedom are rooted in the same strategy. Iran's adherence to the "resistance strategy" can be seen in the issue of Iran's peaceful nuclear programme. Based on the ideology and logic of faith in global peace, Iran has banned and stopped the production and use of weapons of mass destruction in accordance with Sharia law and guided by the order of the Supreme Leader. However, the West seeks to accuse Iran of hindering the global movement towards peace. As a result, Iran is facing sanctions and international pressure. However, Iran believes that peace can be achieved by using a "resistance strategy" and not succumbing to pressure.

Today, the outcomes of resistance doctrine are most evident in the Middle East region. As part of this doctrine, the IRI has created an axis of resistance in the region and encouraged the Palestinians to try to achieve peace without surrendering to Israel's pressure. Islam, and Iran following it, values human life and follows the Qur'an's universalist worldview. These values are opposite to Western individualist worldview, where countries' priorities are

national interests, not human life. Therefore, the Palestinian position is supported by the Islamic world.

However, some Western and Israeli experts believe that Iran and other Islamic countries have diverged because of the "normalization" process and agreements between Israel and Arab countries (Berger, 2017). Based on this, we can conclude that the Iranian government adheres to its own ideas about the world and regional events, and the values of Iran are at odds with the values of most Arab countries. The Iranian government believes that the normalization of relations with Israel is tantamount to betrayal, and the Arab countries should not go astray. However, in this case a closer look reveals that Iran and the Arab countries share the same Islamic concept of achieving peace, but use different strategies. As already mentioned, Iran follows the "resistance strategy," which is also mentioned in Islam, to achieve peace. In turn, the Arab world, frustrated with this strategy, has decided to use other available Islamic guidelines and the "non-violence strategy," according to which, to establish lasting peace, it is sometimes necessary to deal with the aggressor, even if it is not correspond to the values of Islam. By this point, it becomes clear that paths to peace may be different in Islamic concepts, but the values never change (Table).

The ways to achieve positive peace may differ from country to country in foreign policy, and therefore Iran's policy may be perceived by other countries as a kind of challenge for promotion of positive peace in other regions. For China, for example, its secular foreign policy has shaped positive peace on the principles of mutual understanding, cooperation and peaceful development. Its foreign policy aims to build a harmonious world based on win-win cooperation and mutual benefit. In addition, China is moving towards positive peace through projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which has the same goal as its foreign policy.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence Stand Stronger // China's Embassy in the Islamic Republic of

**Differences between Western and Islamic Conflict Resolution Frameworks**

Topic	Western perspective	Islamic perspective
View of conflict	Generally negative phenomenon Conflict must be fully resolved for peace to be achieved	Nuanced perspective Views conflict as natural and potentially positive Recognizes also the negative dimensions of conflict
Role of the mediator	Committed to upholding the Western principles of: a) confidentiality; b) impartiality; c) neutrality	A trusted advisor Advisor capable of exerting influence through: a) deep-rooted social networks; b) political power; c) religious virtue; d) previous mediation experience
Role of religion	Secular frameworks that often frame religion only in terms of “religious conflict”	Religion can be a useful tool for addressing not only religious conflict, but conflict in general
Scope of involvement	Individualism in conflict resolution and peacebuilding/ negotiations	Emphasis on the whole community ( <i>Ummah</i> )

Source: (Abadi, 2022, p. 5).

A review of Indonesia’s foreign policy shows that the country also stands for positive peace based on principles such as dialogue, cooperation and mutual respect. One of the main features of Indonesian policy is “moderate” Sunni Islam. This feature of the foreign policy reflects the domestic values and beliefs in Indonesian society. Islamic norms have constructed a moderate Islam, which this country uses in its foreign policy (Anwar, 2010).

Iran. June 29, 2014. URL: [http://ir.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/dtxw/201407/t20140702\\_1894012.htm#:~:text=The%20Five%20Principles%20of%20Peaceful%20Co%2DExistence%20are%3A%20mutual%20respect,mutual%20benefit%2C%20and%20peaceful%20coexistence](http://ir.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/dtxw/201407/t20140702_1894012.htm#:~:text=The%20Five%20Principles%20of%20Peaceful%20Co%2DExistence%20are%3A%20mutual%20respect,mutual%20benefit%2C%20and%20peaceful%20coexistence) (accessed: 18.04.2023).

Another example of combining Islamic principles and the nation-state is Malaysia’s Islam Hadhari, which represents “a progressive, democratic and tolerant approach to Islam” (Ali, 2016, p. 207). Islam Hadhari, promoted by Malaysian Prime Minister A.A. Badawi in 2004—2009, aimed to build the image of Islam as a “religion of peace,” to assert “non-confrontation with Western, non-Muslim countries” and seek cooperation with the international community on “economic development,” and advocated “scientific progress and global security” (Ali, 2016, p. 207).

By comparing Iranian, Chinese, Malaysian and Indonesian foreign policies in the regard of promotion of positive peace, we can understand that intersection of these policies can cause additional challenges and stop promoting peace in different regions. As already mentioned, the foreign policy characteristics of the Islamic Republic of Iran are based on universal Islamic principles and norms, which may provide the country with an opportunity to change methods or diplomacy towards promoting positive peace, but not values. This be challenging for the Chinese (secular) approach because of the possible shift in tactics and the existence of values and norms close to Islamic ones. At first glance, however, the Iranian approach is close to Indonesian policy. However, since Iran’s foreign policy follows the values of the Islamic Revolution and Shi’a Islam, the approaches of Indonesia or Malaysia, which are guided by moderate Sunni Islam, may diverge from the Iranian vision of a positive peace. All these countries have their own specific characteristics in foreign policy, which allows them to promote positive peace in their own way in different regions.

**Conclusion**

As the international system enters a new world order based on multipolarity, the need for sustainable peace is increasing. However, achieving peace at all costs cannot ensure global stability. Following Western-dominated values, the international community repeatedly uses

“negative peace” to achieve short-term stability. It is therefore necessary to explore the possibilities of non-Western approaches to peacekeeping, such as “positive peace,” which can provide a solid basis for a long-term and sustainable peace in the future. To move from negative to positive peace, the global system needs to shift from Western individualism to a universal worldview, which a religion such as Islam could effectively provide. Universal principles will ensure long-term and lasting peace, as they contribute to the elimination of the root causes of conflicts, including inequality and injustice, and will achieve what Western peacekeeping principles and tools have failed to achieve for several decades.

Islam emphasizes that the main priority and cause of peace should be human life, and to achieve this goal religion can be used to resolve all kinds of conflicts. However, the ideology provided by Western states is oriented towards their own national interests. The West and the non-West use different peacekeeping principles and tools to achieve peace. The West has not revised its approaches to peacekeeping for a long time, although they have already demonstrated their inefficiency in achieving a positive peace. Although Islam is flexible,

pluralistic and can provide separate different strategies for achieving peace in different regions of the world. In the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Islamic world followed for a long time the “resistance strategy,” but recently some Arab countries have opted for a “non-violence strategy,” with both approaches aimed at achieving long-term positive peace.

Like all Muslim countries, Iran follows the same values and implements Islamic approach in its foreign policy. One of the main values of Iranian diplomacy is spreading positive peace to achieve global sustainable peace. To that end, Iran invested in its foreign policy such characteristics as rejection of violence in social movements, justice, fighting corruption, elimination of social discrimination, government based on the people’s decision and spirituality. Contrary to widespread perception, Iran follows the same Islamic values as Arab countries, although due to complex relations with the West and international sanctions pressure, Iran uses a resistance doctrine. With this approach, Iran can not only spread positive peace via the universal worldview of Islam, but is also expecting the new world order to facilitate the implementation of non-Western approaches to peacekeeping.

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