Israel and Iran: Allies and Adversaries

A study on Alliance Theory and Iran-Israel relations in the period 1948 – 2009

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Shall I join with other nations in alliance?
If allies are weak, am I not best alone?
If allies are strong with power to protect me,
Might they not protect me out of all I own?

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Introduction

The Research

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948 the relations between Israel and Iran have been complicated. At present there seems to be no relationship at all and both states react overtly hostile to each other. However, in the first three decades of Israel’s existence there was friendship and cooperation and the two states seemed to regard each other as natural allies as non-Arab states in an Arab region. Nevertheless, this period of collaboration receded into the background and the following decades of hostilities have made it appear as if both states have always been sworn enemies. Questions that arise are: why did Iran and Israel become allies in the first place? What characterised their relations? Why did the alliance break up? Could they be allies again? Which leads to more general questions: what are the motives for states to seek alliances? And is alliance behaviour predictable?

This thesis seeks answers to these questions. Hence, the aim of this study is twofold: first, to provide an analysis of Alliance Theory in International Relations (IR). Although alliances are a central element in the study of relations between states, there is no consensus on the origins of alliances. This has lead to numerous theories, all seeking to explain (part of) alliance formations from different perspectives on IR theory. In this thesis a short overview of the different approaches that fall within the scope of Alliance Theory will be provided. Subsequently the theories of Stephen M. Walt and Michael N. Barnett and Emanuel Alder on the origins of alliances will be further discussed. To focus the research and to be able to go in depth two theories have been chosen to be tested to the case of Iran-Israel relations. The reason these two theories are to be the subject of analysis is that they both represent a different perspective on IR theory. Where Walt represents the traditional realist strand of IR and regards alliances as strategic and interest-based alignments, Adler and Barnett represent the (post)modern constructivist view on IR and see alliances that develop into security communities based on shared identities and trust. Together these contrasting perspectives will form a complete picture of Alliance Theory. Moreover both theories seek to explain alliance formation in general, which makes them testable and less complicated to compare in the case of Israel and Iran.

A second purpose of this study is to gain insight in the relations between Israel and Iran, two key players in the Middle East. The Middle East is a region that receives a lot of media attention and that is subject of many security studies. Both states themselves are also in the centre of interest; Israel for its on-going conflict with Lebanon/Palestine and Iran for its
internal struggles and its policy on nuclear weapons. However, the bilateral relations between these two states are understudied. Nevertheless, it would be highly interesting for contemporary politics to understand the connection between Iran and Israel. Both strong hostile relations as well as a powerful alliance between the two states can have a marked effect on the region.

The research question that follows from these purposes is: to what extent can Alliance Theory offer an explanation for the difference in the relations between Iran and Israel in the periods 1948 - 1979 and 1979 - 2009? The two periods that will be compared roughly represent a period of friendliness and a period of hostility, with the Iranian revolution of 1979 as a turning point. The division between these two periods is useful to structure the research and enables a good comparison; though in reality it is not possible to draw such a sharp line. Some hostilities occurred before 1979 and not all relations ended immediately in this year. However, that does not alter the fact that the Iranian Revolution marks a major setback in Iran-Israel relations and therefore is a useful dividing line for this research.

By making a comparison between these two periods of alliance and hostility, the theories of Walt and Adler/Barnett can be tested in two different cases, though with the same states. Further, it can clarify how relations between Iran and Israel function, which can shed light on current and future relations. Through this design three contrasts structure this research: Iran versus Israel, 1948-1979 versus 1979-2009 and Walt versus Adler/Barnett.

To answer the research question in a constructive manner the study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter can be considered as the theoretical framework of this thesis and will provide an analysis of Alliance Theory and explore in depth the theories of Walt and Adler and Barnett.

In the second chapter the theory of Walt will be examined in the case of Iran-Israel relations before 1979. The leading question for this chapter is therefore: how can Walt’s balance of threat theory explain the relations between Iran and Israel in the period 1948 – 1979?

Chapters three to five will all follow a similar structure. In the third chapter the theory of Adler and Barnett on security communities will be analysed in the period before 1979. The corresponding question is: how can Adler and Barnett’s theory on security communities explain the relations between Iran and Israel in the period 1948 – 1979?

In the fourth chapter the theory of Walt will be tested in the period after 1979. The leading question of this chapter is: how can Walt’s balance of threat theory explain the relations between Iran and Israel in the period 1979 – 2009?
And the fifth chapter will return to the theory of Adler and Barnett, now tested in the period after 1979. The corresponding question for this chapter is therefore: *how can Adler and Barnett’s theory on security communities explain the relations between Iran and Israel in the period 1979-2009?*

The sixth and final chapter will provide for a conclusion to the research question and a short summary of the research. However, before the outset of the first chapter, first a short historical background of Iran-Israel relations will be provided.

**Historical Background**

Prior to Israel’s independence, Iranian policy towards a Jewish state was detrimental. When the UN Special Committee on Palestine in 1947 proposed the partition plan, a plan to split the British Mandate of Palestine into two states, Iran voted against it. Also, when the UN General Assembly later that year endorsed the plan, Iran voted against it. And then, after Israel became an independent state in 1948, Iran voted against its admission to the United Nations. During the 1948 War Iran sided with the Arab states, although it did not get involved in military activities.

In the first two years of Israel’s existence, Iran did not recognise it de facto or de jure. The Cold War had just begun and the United States (US) and the Soviet Union (SU) were trying to extend their spheres of influence throughout the world. Iran, at that time ruled by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, sided with the US. Iran and Russia had experienced centuries of rivalry and war, therefore the choice for the US by the Shah was obvious. For Israel, under the leadership of David Ben-Gurion, the choice was less clear, although ultimately it also distanced itself from the SU and consolidated with the US. This made Iran less suspicious of Israel’s intentions and in 1951 the Iranian government decided to recognise Israel as a fact in the region, although it still refused de jure recognition. In practise this meant that there were no official relations between the two states, nevertheless Iran also would not strive for or support a nullification of the state of Israel.\(^2\)

Besides the superpower struggle, other political realities made that Iran and Israel had to have a measure of contact. An example of this are the Iranian refugees, who lived in Palestine during the 1948 War. After they fled the country, their properties were put under government custody. Subsequently the Iranian government, at the request of the refugees, sent an unofficial convoy to Israel, to settle the claims and redeem the properties. Also the

persecution of Iraqi Jews in Iraq added to the importance of evolving relations, as Iran had become the transit point for the Iraqi Jews who fled from Iraq to Israel.3

Gradually cooperation, which existed mainly of economic and political cooperation, between the two states grew. Iran offered Israel agriculture products in exchange for industrial goods, medical equipment and technical assistance. In 1953 the Israeli and Iranian National Banks opened a line of credit and an Iranian-Israeli trading company IRIS was founded to encourage business ties. After the Suez Crisis in 1956, the Israeli port of Eilat and the Tiran Straits became an important transit of importing oil to Israel and Europe. Israel started to buy Iranian oil and El-Al Airline opened a direct line to Teheran.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s this economic cooperation was step by step extended to security cooperation. In 1960 the Shah repeated in public Iran’s recognition of Israel and in 1961 Ben-Gurion was the first Israeli prime minister to visit Teheran, starting a sequence of visits of prominent officials on both sides. When the Shah started administrating the SAVAK (Sazeman-i Ettelaat va Amniyat-i Keshvar), the national security and intelligence service, he obtained the support of the Israeli Mossad and Israel started to train Iranian officers. In this period Iran also became an important export market for Israeli arms.4

In the period 1958-1967, while Israel helped develop Iran’s armed forces, Iran increased its export of crude oil to Israel. During the Six-Day War of 1967 Iran stayed out of the war, though Iranian generals sent warm congratulations notes to Israeli officials after the overwhelming victory of the Israeli forces. The 1967 War once again proved the strategic weakness of the Suez Canal, which again was blocked to Israeli shipping by Egypt. After this closure Iran and Israel decided to embark on a joint venture to construct the Eilat-Ashkelon Pipeline. Initially this pipeline transferred annually more than ten million tons of oil, which was more than Israel’s annual consumption. Israeli imports from Iran grew from 1.3 million dollars in 1967 to 2.7 million dollars in 1969 and 5.8 million dollars in 1977. Israeli exports to Iran grew from 22.3 million dollars in 1970 to 103.2 million dollars in 1977.5

In the early 1970s, despite the growing trade, the flourishing relations between the two states started to cool down. In 1973 Israel fought the fourth war since its origin. This war was part of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which constantly led to battles and disputes in the region between Israel and a coalition of Arab states. During this war Iran officially maintained a

5 Menashri and Parsi, Israel i, Relations with Iran.
position of neutrality and it offered support to both the Israelis and the Arabs. It provided Egypt with crude oil, Saudi Arabia with Iranian pilots and airplanes, but it also refused to join the Arab oil embargo against Israel and continued to supply Israel with oil.\(^6\)

In 1975 the collaboration between Iran and Israel on the Kurdish issue in Iraq came to an end. In the early 1960s both states had started a joint operation to support the Kurdish rebellions in Iraq, which opposed their common enemy, the Ba'ath government in Iraq. However, in 1975 Iran decided to sign the Algiers Agreement with Iraq’s de facto leader Saddam Hussein. The most important part of this agreement was that Iraq promised to end its interference with and support to the Kurds in Iraq; herewith the Iran-Iraq conflict also was officially over. The Shah did not inform Israel of this decision.\(^7\)

In 1977 the leader of the right-wing Likud Party, Menachem Begin, became prime minister of Israel. This ended the three decades of political dominance of the Labour Party in Israel. In 1978 in Iran major demonstrations against the Shah started to occur. This marked the beginning of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, under leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. Under pressure of the opposition the Shah decided to leave Iran in January 1979. Two weeks later Khomeini, who lived in exile for fifteen years, returned. The monarchy fell and Khomeini established the Islamic Republic of Iran. Less than three weeks later the Khomeini government severed all relations with Israel.

Symbolic for the new Iran-Israel relations was that only six days after Khomeini’s return the compound of the Israeli mission to Iran was handed over to the Palestinians and the street on which it was located was renamed Palestine Street. Khomeini developed a strong anti-Israel rhetoric, plausibly to strengthen ties with the Arab states. However, despite strong words, Iran avoided a direct confrontation with Israel.\(^8\)

In 1980 the relations between Iran and Israel took an interesting turn when Iraq invaded Iran, the start of the Iran-Iraq war, which would last to 1988. During this war Israel secretly supported Iran. In the period 1980-1983 Iran purchased over 500 million dollars worth of arms from Israel, most of it was paid for through deliverance of Iranian oil to Israel. However, when confronted in public, both states firmly denied any form of cooperation.\(^9\)

After the war Khomeini preferred relations with Israel that have been referred to as “a cold peace”. In which he rhetorically opposed Israel without translating this into an operational policy. However, this ‘peace’ only lasted till 1991, when two important events

\(^7\) Parsi, Israel and the Origins of Iran’s Arab Option, 505.
\(^8\) Menashri and Parsi, Israel i, Relations with Iran.
\(^9\) Parsi, Treacherous Alliance, 107.
completely changed the geo-strategic map of the Middle East.\textsuperscript{10} In this year the SU collapsed, which put an end to the Cold War. Also the Iraqi army was entirely defeated in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Iran and Israel emerged as the two most powerful states of the region and relations between them widened.\textsuperscript{11}

In 1994 Israel believed Iran started military anti-Israel acts with the bombing of the Israeli embassy and a Jewish community centre in Argentina, although no evidence has yet been presented that could tie Iran to these acts. Israel adopted a very aggressive attitude towards Iran, depicting Iran’s Islamic fundamentalism as Israel’s worst enemy.\textsuperscript{12}

In 2006 a war broke out between Israel and Hezbollah, a Lebanese guerrilla and political group supported by Iran. The war started after Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers and killed another three. Israel regarded this as an act of war, not only by Hezbollah, but also by Iran. Within hours, Israel launched a massive attack against Hezbollah in Lebanon, also with the idea to weaken Iran’s influence at the Israeli border.\textsuperscript{13} The conflict killed at least 1500 people and only ended when the UN brokered a ceasefire.

At this moment relations between the two states are hostile and although it never came to a direct military confrontation several analyses prove that this might be only a matter of time. This could lead to a major regional conflict with extensive consequences, also viewed in the light of a possible nuclear war.\textsuperscript{14} The former is a current issue, because American and European officials believe Iran is planning to build nuclear weapons, although Iran claims its nuclear activity is solely aimed at generating electricity. Israel, which is widely believed to already be in possession of multiple nuclear weapons, has declared that it would regard an Iranian weapon as an existential threat and has threatened to attack Iran’s main nuclear complex.\textsuperscript{15}

In conclusion, the relations between Iran and Israel over the years were changeable: from trading partners to (possible) nuclear opponents, from allies to adversaries. In the next chapter various theories on alliance formation that could explain such variability will be discussed.

\textsuperscript{10} Menashi and Parsi, \textit{Israel i, Relations with Iran.}
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 141-142.
\textsuperscript{12} Trita Parsi, ‘Israel-Iranian relations assessed: Strategic competition from the power cycle perspective’, \textit{Iranian Studies} 38 (2005), 263.
\textsuperscript{13} Parsi, \textit{Treacherous Alliance}, 13-14.
1. Alliance Theory

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter the theoretical framework of this study will be set forth. The chapter consists of four subsections. In this first section the two theories under discussion will be placed in to the broader context of Alliance Theory in International Relations (IR). In the second section the theory of Stephen M. Walt on the origins of alliances\(^\text{16}\), the balance of threat theory, will be analysed and operationalised for the following research. In the third section the approach of Emanuel Adler and Michael N. Barnett and their concept of security communities will be discussed. The final section will provide for a conclusion and short summary of the chapter.

Although alliances are central to international relations, there is no consensus over when, how and why they come into existence. The theory that has dominated the study of IR for decades, the realist balance of power theory, has also been used to explain alliances. Kenneth N. Waltz is one of the theorists who apply the balance of power theory to alliance formation. According to Waltz alliances solely come into formation if states for security reasons choose to balance against the state that is most powerful.\(^\text{17}\) However, realism and the balance of power theory are no longer unchallenged and various other explanations on alliance formation, coming from different parts of the IR-spectrum, are put forward.

For instance the explanation of Deborah Larson, who focuses on the question when states decide to align with greater powers.\(^\text{18}\) If states choose to do so, they do not balance against the most powerful state, they bandwagon with it. Larson suggests that the reasons for bandwagoning should be sought in the domestic scene. Dominating élites of weak states, facing internal opposition, are not capable of opposing a hegemonic threat and therefore will be likely to align with it.\(^\text{19}\) The main differences between Larson’s approach and the traditional aggregate power model are the focus on the domestic level instead of the systemic

\(^{16}\) In this thesis the term ‘alliance’ will be used in its broadest sense to refer to formal or informal relationships of security cooperation between two or more states. This definition was offered by Stephen M. Walt in *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca and London 1987), I. And was also adopted by Michael M. Barnett and Jack Levy in ‘Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: the Case of Egypt, 1962-73’, *International Organization*, 45 (1991) 370.


\(^{19}\) Larson, *Bandwagon Images In American Foreign Policy*, 102-103.
level and the idea that states can choose to bandwagon with instead of balance against the supremacy of another state.

A theory that connects to Larson’s explanation is that of ‘regime security’. Elites assess whether the main threat to the regime lies in domestic opposition or in external threat: if the internal threat is stronger they may turn to external powers for protection and resources to fight the internal instability. The main difference with the traditional realist theory is that the emphasis is on the regime as the important actor, instead of the state.20

Another example of a study on alliance formation is that of Steven R. David. His main critique on the balance of power theory is that this theory is inadequate to explain Third World alignments, because it does not consider the specific characteristics of Third World states.21 Because Third World leaders often face internal threats, they sometimes seek to align with secondary (external) threats in order to address the primary (internal) threat. According to David the essence of the balance of power theory is correct: states align in order to better resist the threat they face. However Third World states have besides external threats a range of other threats to balance against, therefore David terms his theory omnibalancing.22

A fourth alternative approach to the realisation of alliances is that of Randall L. Schweller. His theory is a variant of Waltz’s theory and his objective is not to invalidate it, but to improve it. Schweller believes that bandwagoning is more common than Waltz suggest. He points to a category that he believes is overlooked by Waltz: unthreatened revisionist states. Such states often bandwagon with the stronger revisionist state for opportunistic reasons. Examples of this are Japan, Italy and the SU, which bandwagoned with Hitler Germany during World War II. Schweller’s argument therefore is that there is too much emphasis on balancing in the balance of power theory and that bandwagoning in alliance formation should be given more attention.23

These several examples demonstrate that there are very different views and approaches to alliance formation. To put the numerous theoretical studies and reflections on alliances in order, Wolfango Piccoli made a first attempt to arrange them in his study on Alliance Theory24 in three broad categories. Although his division is rather rough, it can be helpful in gaining insight in the broad field of Alliance Theory.

20 Raymond Hinnebusch, The international politics of the Middle East (Manchester 2003), 8.
22 David, Explaining Third World Alignment, 235-236.
24 Piccoli, Alliance Theory.
The first category Piccoli distinguishes is that of approaches focused on external security. Piccoli links these approaches to realism. Alliance theories in this category explain alliances through the systemic structure and anarchy in the world. In short, these theories are based on the idea that states in anarchy view their own survival as their highest priority. Alliance behaviour is determined by this security interest. Allies value each other for their military power and the assistance they can provide in the face of a common threat.\textsuperscript{25} Theories that fall in this category are for example that of Waltz and Schweller, as discussed above.\textsuperscript{26}

The second category contains approaches focused on internal security and can be linked to liberalism. These theories, among others, abandon the standard realist systemic level of analysis and instead focus on the domestic level. Theorists in this category argue for example that elites ruling a state give priority to holding on to their power and not necessarily act in order to increase the power of the state or to protect the territorial integrity of the state. When the dominating elites feel threatened from inside the state they might choose to ally with another state to prolong their position in power. Approaches in this category not necessarily exclude external threats as a reason to align; they merely assert the importance of the domestic level of analysis and internal threats as motives for alliance formation.\textsuperscript{27} Theories of this sort are that of Larson and David.\textsuperscript{28}

The first two categories both contain theories which are focused on the rationale of forming an alliance on the basis of countering threats, external or internal. The third category is more an accumulation of remaining theories than a category with a specific label. Approaches that Piccoli places into this third category are for example the theory of Paul Schroeder, which is based on the idea of alliances as “tools of management” instead of “weapons of power”. Schroeder argues that alliances constrain and control the actions of the

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, 3.
\textsuperscript{27} Piccoli, \textit{Alliance Theory}, 4-5.
allys; therefore he views alliances as a pact of mutual control. In such an alliance state A may choose to align with state B not for the primary purpose of increasing its own military power, but to restrain B from taking certain actions that might threaten A’s security and other interests. This leads Schroeder to believe that peace is better guaranteed if the international system would consist of states tied by strict alliances. Also George Liska’s approach is mentioned. He points to two functions alliances may serve: to keep an international equilibrium and to reinforce or legitimise a regime by its international recognition.

As was mentioned above these three categories are not a set division, nevertheless they can help structure the thinking on alliance formation. What is striking about the theories Piccoli describes is that it are all rational theories. It seems as if the study on alliance formation is dominated by rational approaches. This might be explained by the use of the term ‘alliance’, which has a strong connotation with strategic calculation and the rational choice of an ally.

In this research two very different approaches to alliance formation are under analysis. First the balance of threat theory of Walt will be discussed, followed by an examination of the concept of security communities by Adler and Barnett. Where Walt’s theory undoubtedly fits in Piccoli’s first category, since it is a realist theory focused on external threats, this is less clear for Adler and Barnett’s concept. Because of their constructivist position, it is difficult to place them in any category at all. Since Adler and Barnett are not preoccupied with rational threat calculations and involve concepts as identity and trust into their explanation of relations between states, their theory actually transcends these categories. Their focus is not on ‘strategic alliances’, but on ‘security communities’. In the third section of this chapter this will be discussed in more detail.

Exactly this very difference between Walt and Adler/Barnett is the reason these two theories are chosen to become subject of this research, they both represent the two ends of the IR spectrum. Where Walt stands in the realist and rational tradition of IR, Adler and Barnett approach the origins of relations between states from a constructivist perspective. Walt’s The Origins of Alliances and Adler and Barnett’s Security Communities are leading works in International Relations and are a useful starting point for this study. Moreover both theories

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31 Schroeder, Alliances, 1815-1945, 117-118 as quoted in Piccoli, Alliance Theory, 6.
aim to explain alliances and relations between states in general and are not focused on solely ‘small powers’, ‘third world states’ or ‘regional alliances’ (as other theories in the field), which would make them less fit to compare them in and apply them to the case of Iran and Israel.

It will be interesting to examine which of both theories can explain best the relations between Iran and Israel before and after 1979. Will it be the standard and rigid approach of Walt or the more comprehensive and relatively new approach of Adler and Barnett? Or maybe they will turn out to be complementary? Before such questions can be answered first an analysis and an operationalisation of both theories has to be made, starting with Walt’s balance of threat theory in the next section.

1.2 The Balance of Threat Theory

The theory of Walt on the origins of alliances can be placed in the (neo)realist tradition in IR. Political realism is the oldest and most frequently adopted theory of international relations and a tradition of analysis that stresses the inevitabilities states face to pursue a power politics of the national interests.33 Realism comes in many forms, but the most used division is that of ‘classical realism’ and ‘neo-realism’. Both share, however, core assumptions and ideas.

In short, these core ideas of realism are: sovereign states are the important actors in international relations and they are motivated by a drive for power and pursuit of the state’s interest. Realists see the condition of anarchy as the central problem of international relations. Since there is no central sovereign authority to regulate relations between states, every state is dependent on its own. This lack of world government, combined with the aggressive intent of states, means that conflict is an ever-present reality of international relations. Still, a semblance of order and security can be maintained by shifting alliances among states, which prevent one state from becoming too powerful and, consequently, constituting a threat to other states. Realists acknowledge that international institutions and law can play a role in international relations, but they can only be effective if backed by force.

Although neo-realism shares these ideas with classical realism, it places more emphasis on the anarchic structure of the international system and the impact this structure has on the conduct of states.34 Walt can be placed in this neorealist perspective.

34 Jill Steans and Lloyd Pettiford, Introduction to International Relations (2nd edition; Harlow etc. 2005), 49-52.
The starting point of Walt’s explanation why alliances come into existence is the balance of power theory of Waltz. According to this theory alliances solely are formed if states for security reasons choose to balance against the most powerful state. Traditional balance of power theorists assume that when a state is confronted with the supremacy of another state it has two options: balance or bandwagon. When a state chooses to balance, it allies with other states against the most powerful state and when it chooses to bandwagon it allies with the most powerful state. Walt applies the same reasoning to his idea on alliance formation. He agrees with the traditional balance of power theorists that states, faced with an external threat, have to choose between a balancing alliance or a bandwagoning alliance and that balancing is a far more current reaction than bandwagoning. Walt explains this belief as follows: if in status quo all states choose to balance, then states are more secure, because aggressors will always face joint opposition. Contrary, if in status quo all states choose to bandwagon, then states are less secure, because aggression is rewarded. Moreover, in a balancing alliance the freedom of action of the state is preserved most, since bandwagoning could mean acceptation of subordination to a potential hegemon. Because the intentions of an ally can change and perceptions are unreliable, it is safer to balance a potential threat than to hope that a strong ally will remain well-doing.

Although Walt agrees with the balance of power theorists on the ‘balancing’ part, he does not believe that states align against power alone. He argues instead that states balance against threats and that the distribution of power is only one of those threats. For example, states may balance by allying with other strong states if a weaker power is more dangerous for other reasons. The allied forces that defeated Germany in World War I and World War II were considerably superior in total resources, but they decided to align when became clear that the Wilhelmines and Nazis posted the greatest danger. Walt therefore calls his theory on alliance formation the balance of threat theory and proposes it as an improved alternative to the balance of power theory.

Thus, according to Walt alliances come into existence when two or more states together need to balance against a common threat. In his study on the origins of alliances Walt researched several historical alliances and identified from this four factors which can influence the level of threat a state may pose: aggregate power, geographic proximity,

35 Waltz, Theory of International Politics, 126-127.
37 Walt, Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power, 4.
38 Ibid., 15.
offensive power and (perceived) aggressive intentions. If the level of threat is high, the necessity for an alliance is also high; if the level of threat is low the necessity for an alliance is low.

Aggregate power refers to the total amount of resources a state possesses (e.g., population, technological skills, industrial capability and military forces etc.). Walt argues that the greater these total resources are, the greater a potential threat it can pose to other states.\(^{40}\)

The second factor geographic proximity refers to the idea that the ability to project power declines with distance. States that are in the same geographical region form a greater threat than those that are far away.\(^{41}\)

The third factor, offensive power, is closely related to aggregate power and proximity. States with large offensive power are more likely to provoke an alliance than states that are unable to attack because of distance, lack of resources or something else. However, specifically, Walt means with offensive power the ability to threaten the sovereignty or territorial integrity of another state at acceptable costs.\(^{42}\)

The fourth factor that can influence the level of threat is (perceived) aggressive intentions. Walt argues that states that are viewed as aggressive are likely to provoke others to ally themselves against them. Walt also claims that even states with rather modest capabilities may be able to provoke an alignment against them if they are perceived to be extremely aggressive or to have dangerous ambitions.\(^{43}\) At this point the balance of threat theory differs most from the balance of power theory, since states with minimal power still can give reason to balance against. This is interesting, because according to Walt especially this factor of perceptions of intent is likely to play a crucial role in alliance choices.

Two points are important to notice in relation to these factors. First, the higher the level of threat a state poses, the greater the probability that states will align against it. Second, Walt believes all factors are likely to play a role in the consideration of alliance choices and he does not put them in a hierarchical structure.\(^{44}\)

However, in this research the factors will be ranked in order to produce more concrete statements on Walt’s theory. For instance, the mere fact that state A borders on state B does not make it a direct threat to B. While if state C, which lays further from state B, intends to

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 23-24.
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 24-25.
\(^{43}\) Ibid., 25.
\(^{44}\) Ibid., 26.
destroy state B, there is an immediate sense of threat. In this example intentions outweigh geographic proximity.

The factor that Walt seems to attach most importance to is that of (perceived) aggressive intentions, since he himself states that it is especially likely to play a crucial role. This factor therefore will be ranked first. A methodological problem with ‘intentions’ is it measurability. How are intentions to be measured? In this case there are actually two cases that have to be examined: the intentions of the possible threatening state and how the intentions of this state are perceived by the possible allies. Although it would be virtually impossible to discover the exact intentions of all states involved in Iran-Israel relations, the factor has to be clearly defined in order to conduct the research. Therefore, in this study statements made by political leaders and state officials will be examined in order to determine the intentions of states, since these are the most important actors in Walt’s theory.

The second factor in order of importance is offensive power. Although this factor is closely related to aggregate power, more weight is attached to it, because if aggregate power cannot be converted into offensive power, a military attack is less likely. In this research offensive power will be defined in terms of specific military capabilities. That is, the already present military means and their mobility and the state of military technology of potential threatening states to Iran and Israel will be researched.

The third factor in the hierarchal structure of this study is aggregate power. Since aggregate power comprises the broad area of a state’s total resources, three important resources are singled out to be examined in this research. Population, technological capacities and industrial/economic capability will be analysed.

The fourth and remaining factor is that of geographic proximity. This will be measured on the basis of relevant maps. Naturally, this ranking of the different factors is not detrimental to the fact that a combination of these sources leads to a higher level of threat.

What shows from this paragraph on Walt’s theory on alliance formation is that it is solely focused on external threats. In his extensive work on alliances he does give attention to other possible sources of alliance formation. Nevertheless he concludes that the principal reason to ally is to balance against an external threat and nothing more. He supports this argument with the realistic rationale that in an anarchic world, where no world government exists, states facing an external threat will form an alliance in order to be able to deter or

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45 See for example chapter 6 on ideology and alliance formation in his book *The Origins of Alliances.*
defeat an attack.\textsuperscript{46} Walt explicitly rejects the suggestion that states might overcome the fears and dynamics associated with anarchy and inhibit conflict.\textsuperscript{47}

In the next paragraph the ideas of Adler and Barnett on security communities will be discussed. They place themselves in opposition to neo-realism and to Walt and believe that his emphasis on external threats is too narrow. Barnett also directly criticises the balance of threat theory. His main point of critique in this model is the factor (perceived) aggressive intentions, a factor that Walt attached special value to. Barnett reasons that it is unclear how these intentions are determined and what constitutes a threat.\textsuperscript{48} Although according to Barnett, Walt’s theoretical discussion does not offer a satisfying solution to these questions, he actually believes that Walt does have an answer: ideology. Barnett believes that in Walt’s research on the origins of alliances ideology plays an important role, however, because of his commitment to realism he is forced to dismiss ideology as a vital factor. Barnett therefore suggests that Walt should revise his model and that he should incorporate more ideational factors.\textsuperscript{49} A way to do so might be the concept of security communities, introduced by Karl Deutsch and further explored by Adler and Barnett from a constructivist point of view. In the next paragraph this concept will be discussed.

1.3 Security Communities

Adler and Barnett argue that the idea of a security community was always more celebrated than investigated. At first proposed by Richard van Wagenen in the early 1950s, it was not until the 1957 study by Deutsch and his associates that the concept of security community received its first full theoretical treatment. Deutsch defined the security community as a group of people that had become integrated to the point that there is a “real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way”.\textsuperscript{50}

Deutsch found that security communities come in two varieties: amalgamated and pluralistic. In an amalgamated security community two or more previously sovereign states unify formally, in a pluralistic security community states retain their sovereignty. However, despite its potential theoretical and practical importance, the concept of security community

\textsuperscript{46} Walt, \textit{Alliances in Theory and Practice}, 4.
\textsuperscript{49} Barnett, \textit{Identity and Alliances in the Middle East}, 402-403.
\textsuperscript{50} Adler and Barnett, \textit{Security Communities}, 6.
never generated a robust research agenda. Adler and Barnett put forward two important reasons for this. First, it was the Cold War era and structural realism and rational choice methods dominated the field of IR. The idea of a security community seemed hopelessly romantic against the prospect of a nuclear war. Second, Deutsch’s conceptualisation of security communities contained various theoretical, conceptual and methodological problems that scared off future applications. 51

In their book entitled Security Communities (published in 1998) Adler and Barnett want to revive Deutsch’s concept and provide for a theoretical framework for security communities with an emphasis on the conditions under which security communities are likely to emerge. Their concern is the pluralistic security community, because it is the form that is closest to the developments that are currently unfolding in international politics and theory. 52

As Deutsch did, Adler and Barnett believe that a security community can be distinguished from other kinds of communities by the fact that its members entertain dependable expectations of peaceful change. 53 That is, they have to be confident that disputes will be settled without war. 54

Hereto Adler and Barnett add three characteristics by which a community is defined. First, members of a community have shared identities, values and meanings. Secondly, those in a community have many-sided and direct relations; interaction occurs not indirectly and in only specific and isolated domains, but rather through some form of face-to-face encounter and relations in numerous settings. Thirdly, communities exhibit a reciprocity that expresses some degree of long-term interest and perhaps even altruism; long-term interest derives from knowledge of those with whom one is interacting, and altruism can be understood as a sense of obligation and responsibility. 55 In an article of his own Adler defines as such that ‘security communities are socially constructed because shared meanings, constituted by interaction, engender collective identities. They are dependent on communication, discourse, and interpretation, as well as on material environments’. 56

From these definitions one can already see that the approach of Adler and Barnett to IR is different from that of Walt. Where Walt’s ideas are shaped by realism, Adler and

51 Ibid., 7-8.
52 Ibid., 5.
53 Ibid., 34.
54 Ibid., 414.
Barnett practise a constructivist approach to IR. In the introduction to their book they state that they believe their considerations on security communities contribute to the constructivist research programme.\textsuperscript{57} Therefore, to understand the concept of security community as formulated by Adler and Barnett, one has to understand the fundamental ideas of constructivism.

The term ‘constructivism’ was first introduced by Nicholas Onuf at the end of the Cold War in 1989. In simple terms it means ‘people and societies, construct, or constitute, each other’.\textsuperscript{58} Constructivists are divided between modernists and postmodernists and as with all IR-theories not every theorist who is labelled ‘constructivist’ will assent to all ideas ascribed to constructivism. Nevertheless, there are three core ontological propositions about social life they all have sought to articulate and explore, propositions which they claim clarify more about world politics than rival realist assumptions. First, to the extent that structures can influence the behaviour of social and political actors, individuals or states, constructivists hold that normative or ideational structures are just as important as material structures. This in contrast with the neo-realist sole emphasis on the material structure of the balance of power.\textsuperscript{59}

Second, constructivists argue that understanding how non-material structures condition actors’ identities is important, because identities inform interests and, in turn, actions. Neo-realists are not preoccupied with the origins of interests and preferences of actors, only with how actors pursue their interests. They see interests as pre-determined and unchanging. Constructivists, in contrast, believe that the development of interests is crucial to explaining a wide range of international political phenomena.\textsuperscript{60}

Third, constructivists maintain that agents and structures are mutually constituted. Hereby they mean that normative and ideational structures may well condition the identities and interests of actors, but those structures would not exist if it were not for the knowledgeable practices of those actors.\textsuperscript{61}

In short, constructivism is neither pessimist or optimist, objectivist or subjectivist, materialist or normative, but stands somewhere in between. It challenges both the material

\textsuperscript{57} Adler and Barnett, \textit{Security Communities}, 15.
\textsuperscript{59} Christian Reus-Smit, ‘Constructivism’ in: Scott Burchill (et al.), \textit{Theories of International Relations} (3\textsuperscript{rd} edition; Houndmills etc. 2005), 196.
\textsuperscript{60} Reus-Smit, \textit{Constructivism}, 196-197.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 197
and rational ideas of mainstream IR-scholarship and it questions the taken-for-granted assumptions.\textsuperscript{62}

Since Adler and Barnett built on this constructivist tradition and believe that security communities are socially constructed they argue that security communities have a history and exhibit an evolutionary pattern. In concrete this means they indicate three phases through which security communities develop: nascent, ascendant and mature. In the nascent phase governments do not seek explicitly to create a security community, only the basic expectations of a peaceful change are met. Following is the ascendant phase, which is defined by: increasingly dense networks and new institutions and organisations that reflect tighter cooperation. In this phase collective identities emerge. The final phase is that of maturity, at this point members of a security community share an identity and a security community comes into existence.\textsuperscript{63} An example of a security community in its mature phase is Western Europe.\textsuperscript{64}

However, in this research the relations between Israel and Iran are the central point of interest and to analyse these relations the nascent phase of a security community is particularly interesting. The factors that Barnett and Adler point to as important indicators for the realisation of a nascent security community could also explain the realisation of relations between Iran and Israel in the early 1950s and the severing of these relations after 1979.

Although in this nascent phase a security community can resemble a strategic alliance as Walt describes, it is to be distinguished by the dependable expectations of peaceful change that members of a nascent security community have. Because of these expectations actors behave very differently than they would in Walt’s model. A key element is ‘trust’\textsuperscript{65}, since actors trust each other to settle their disputes by other means than war, they can let (part) of their guard down and cooperate more freely. In Walt’s model this would be inconceivable, since the main actor, the state, always has to be cautious about other states intents and can only trust itself to secure its own interests and to protect the state. Cooperation between two states then only occurs in the presence of a common threat.

For Adler and Barnett such a mutual security threat can be a trigger for the development of close security ties between states, but they believe that states frequently develop security ties for other reasons. Examples of such reasons are: to deepen the institutional and transnational linkages that bind these states together; to capitalise on

\textsuperscript{62} Ulusoy, \textit{Revisiting Security Communities After the Cold War}, 169.

\textsuperscript{63} Adler and Barnett, \textit{Security Communities}, 49-55.

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 69.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 414.
particular visions of a better material progress (economic, environmental, etc.); and to promote ideas about ‘cooperative security’, that is the insight that the security of states is interdependent.\textsuperscript{66} Besides this, also cultural political, social, and ideological homogeneity can lead to greater interaction and association between states. In general Adler and Barnett believe that the trigger mechanisms of a security community are likely to have material and normative bases, for example rapid shifts in the distribution of military power (material) and new ways of thinking about organising political life (normative). Other factors they mention are: cataclysmic events that cause changes in material structures, mindsets and sensibilities and transnational, domestic or international processes that generate common interests.\textsuperscript{67}

The “problem” with this list is that it is very broad, the formation of a security community can be triggered by multiple factors, which is according to Adler and Barnett inherent to their comprehensive constructivist approach. Therefore they do not call their ideas on security communities a ‘theory’, but merely a ‘conceptualisation of the mechanisms and conditions by which security communities develop’.\textsuperscript{68}

However, Adler and Barnett do signal several key points that suggest and foster the origins of a security community in its nascent phase and that are verifiable. These points will form the benchmarks of this research and will be examined in the case studies of Iran and Israel. Successively these are: \textit{economic and political transactions}, the establishment of \textit{third parties}, the confronting of \textit{domestic instabilities} and (the referring to) a \textit{common identity}.\textsuperscript{69}

The first factor is that of economic and political transactions. The importance of transactions for the forming of a security community was already emphasised by Deutsch and for Adler and Barnett they form a cornerstone for trust and sense of community.\textsuperscript{70} In this research economic and political transactions (in broad sense) will be defined as the exchange of commodities and services.

The second factor, the establishment of third parties, is related to the economic and political transactions. When states begin to consider how they might coordinate their relations, they often establish third parties, that is organisations and institutions, which can organise the transactions and can observe whether the participating states are honouring their

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 50.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 51-52.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 49.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid. 50 and 415-416.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid. 416.
contracts and obligations. Therefore, in examining Iran-Israel relations it has to be investigated whether such organisations have been established or not.

The third factor is that of confronting domestic instabilities. Adler and Barnett reason that states seeking security cooperation in the nascent phase of a security community can be triggered rather by domestic threats than by systemic threats (cf. Walt). States can decide to coordinate their policies to confront such domestic instabilities. In the case of Iran and Israel possible internal opposition in both states will be investigated.

The fourth factor and probably the most intangible one is that of (referring to a) common identity. Although Adler and Barnett believe that in the early stage of a security community references to a common identity have to be treated sceptically, since there is no reason to assume that such references are more than fabricated conveniences and instrumental constructs, the search of cooperation can be driven by (the idea of) a common identity. Adler and Barnett conclude that the originating of a common identity usually starts with the political elite. Policymakers and politicians play an important role in extending the boundaries of identity. Even if there is nothing more than the idea of common identity, this still can lead to a transnational identity, if presented well. In the words of Adler and Barnett: ‘there is nothing like a good myth to instil a sense of confidence and forge a shared identity’. Therefore in this research the focus will be on the political leaders of Iran and Israel and their possible references to a common identity.

Another interesting point Adler and Barnett make, is that the forging of a collective identity by political leaders upon its society, can lead to resistance of societal groups who perceive that they are forged to transfer their loyalties and make political and economic sacrifices. In that case a (nascent) security community can be destabilised. This might have been the case in the severing of Iran-Israel relations after 1979, which is remained to be seen in the fifth chapter.

1.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the theories of Walt and Adler and Barnett have been placed in the broader context of Alliance Theory. From all the different explanations on the origins of alliances these theories are to be analysed in this study for two specific reasons. First, they both aim to explain alliances and relations between states in general and are not focused on an
isolated part of international relations (e.g. ‘third world states’ or ‘regional alliances’). This makes them suitable for application to the case studies of Iran and Israel before and after 1979.

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<td>- (perceived) aggressive intentions</td>
<td>- (reference to) a common identity</td>
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Table 1 Comparing Walt and Adler/Barnett

Second, both theories represent two ends of the IR perspective. The found differences between Walt and Adler/Barnett can be briefly represented in the subsequent table (table 1). To see which of both theories holds more value it is interesting to test them in practice. Therefore, in the following chapters both theories will be examined in the cases of Iran-Israel relations before and after 1979. In the case of Walt this means that the external threat comprised of the factors aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power and (perceived) aggressive intentions will be tested. If these are in a large measure present in for
Israel and Iran potentially threatening states, as the SU and Iraq, than the level of threat is high and according to the balance of threat theory an alliance between the two states is to be expected. Vice versa, when the level of threat is low, relations between two states are expected to be severed.

In the case of Adler and Barnett this means that the factors economic and political transactions, third parties, domestic instabilities and (reference to) a common identity will be examined. When these things occur a nascent security community is coming into existence and friendly relations between states are to be expected. On the contrary, if none of these factors occur, then a security community is not to be expected and relations between states are distant.

The structure of the research will be as follows: in the first chapter Walt’s theory will be tested in case of Iran-Israel relations before 1979, in the second chapter this will be the case for the theory of Adler and Barnett. Subsequently, in chapters three and four, the both theories will be scrutinised in a case study of Iran-Israel relations after 1979. The final chapter will consist of an evaluation of the research results and a conclusion.
2. The Unholy Alliance

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter Walt’s balance of threat theory will be examined in the case of Iran-Israel relations between 1948 and 1979. The leading question for this chapter is: How can Walt’s balance of threat theory explain the relations between Iran and Israel in the period 1948 – 1979? In answering this question Walt’s balancing-hypothesis and the level of threat, influenced by the four factors aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power and (perceived) aggressive intentions as discussed in the former chapter, will be tested.

2.2 Balancing Against Threat?

According to Walt’s theory the flourishing relations between Iran and Israel in the period 1948–1979 can be explained through the existence of a common external threat against which both states had to balance. In this period Iran and Israel did face a common security dilemma. Both feared the spread of Soviet influence in the region and the threat of pro-Soviet Arab states. More specifically, they both regarded the pan-Arab, anti-Western regime in Egypt, under the rule of Gamal Abdel Nasser, as a major threat.\(^76\) In 1952 Nasser had staged a coup, which toppled the monarchy of King Farouk. In 1956 he became President of Egypt, which he stayed until his death in 1970. Nasser’s policy was focused on the spread of pan-Arabism in the region and he inspired several Arab revolutions in the surrounding states of Egypt. Iran’s main concern in connection with Nasser was the territorial claim several Arab states made over the Iranian province of Khuzestan, an oil-rich area. This joint interest caused the Arab states to ally against Iran, which made Iran feel like it was surrounded by anti-Iran Arab states. After the Suez War of 1956, Nasser emerged as the leader of these hostile Arab states.\(^77\)

The Suez Crisis also is exemplary of the poor relations between Israel and Egypt. The war started with a military attack of Britain, France and Israel on Egypt, following the decision of Nasser to nationalise the Suez Canal. For Israel the war was an opportunity to strengthen its southern border and weaken Egypt. Also it needed the Suez Canal to become accessible again for Israeli shipping. The crisis took one year and was ended by the UN. From a military perspective the war was a success and the canal became fully open to shipping again. Politically, the relations became strained. Nasser gained approval of the Arab states and

\(^{76}\) Parsi, Treacherous Alliance, 22.
\(^{77}\) Ibid.
pan-Arabism in the region was growing. Israel became more confident of its military capacity and it also had impressed Iran with its conduct in the Sinai.

After the war Iran helped Israel to finance an oil pipeline, which enabled Iranian oil export to bypass the strategic and vulnerable Suez Canal. This reduced the dependence of Iran on Egypt and also improved the cooperation between Israel and Iran. In turn, these close relations between Israel and Iran were condemned by Nasser and caused an even larger estrangement between the Israel-Iran alliance and Egypt. Only when Anwar El Sadat in 1970 came into office in Egypt, the relations started to change. Sadat minimised Soviet influence in Egypt and developed friendly relations with the Shah. Moreover, in 1979 Sadat signed a peace treaty with Israel, which led to mutual recognition and an end to the state of war between the two states, which formally had existed since the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

Besides Egypt, Iran and Israel also saw Iraq as a major menace. When the Iraqi monarchy collapsed in 1958, Iraq’s new regime shifted to pan-Arabism and developed close ties with Nasser. Within a few days after the coup the Iraqi government started cultivating ties with Egypt, Syria and the SU. Moreover, Abdul Karim Quassim, the new prime minster of Iraq, decided to end the 1937 treaty between Iran and Iraq concerning the Shatt-Al-Arab waterway. This waterway separated Iran and Iraq and Iraq now claimed the entire river. In 1959 Quassim ordered his armed forces to block oil tankers from Iran to use the water. Quassim also provided Mullah Mustafa Barzani, a Kurdish rebel, with arms. Leading Barzani forces to make a number of attacks in Iran.

Israel had been at war with Iraq since its origin and Iraqi forces took part in the 1948, 1967 and 1973 wars between Arab states and Israel. Since Iraq was regarded as a mutual enemy, Iran and Israel decided to a joint Israeli-Iranian operation against the Ba’thist regime in Iraq. Now Iran and Israel provided Barzani with military support, to oppose the government in Bagdad. The operation was successful, since it disabled Iraq to directly challenge Iran. The collaboration on the Iraq issue continued to 1975, when it abruptly ended with the realisation of the Algiers Agreement, as was mentioned in the introduction of this study.

According to Walt’s balancing-hypothesis, states which face an external threat have two options: balancing against the threatening state with other states or bandwagoning with

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78 Ibid., 23.
79 Ibid., 27-28.
81 Sobhani, The Pragmatic Entente, 35-36.
82 Parsi, Israel and the Origins of Iran’s Arab Option, 505.
the threatening state. Walt believes states will be inclined to balance instead of bandwagon, since this option serves best the interest and security of the state. In the period of 1948-1979 this is also what seems to be happening in the Middle East. Iran and Israel form an alliance to balance against their Arab neighbours and against Soviet influence in the region. Nevertheless, there can be some doubts about that. Naturally one could argue that there could also be other explanations for the alliance behaviour of Iran and Israel in this period, for example trust and identity as Adler and Barnett point out. However, this point will be addressed in the next chapter on security communities.

Another remark, which is more inherent in the balance of threat theory itself, is the Shah’s policy to keep the Arab option open during the Israel-Iran alliance. Iran did not always act as a good ally to Israel and sometimes openly seemed to collaborate with the external threat, for instance when signing the Algiers Agreement with Iraq or during the 1973 war, when Iran supported both Egypt and Israel with oil. This appears to be a more balancing/bandwagoning policy, than purely balancing and thus not consistent with Walt’s balancing hypothesis. Walt argues that states have to choose between balancing or bandwagoning and sees balancing as far more current. However, he does not examine a combined option. This point is connected with the other element of Walt’s theory: the level of threat. If this is decreasing then there is less necessity for a balancing alliance. This might have been the issue in the present case. Therefore in the next paragraph the level of threat to Israel and Iran will be examined on the basis of the four factors Walt identified as the important sources of threat.

2.3 The Level of Threat

As was discussed in the former paragraph Iran and Israel faced a common security issue in the period 1948-1979. Both states feared Soviet influence in the region and the dominance of Arab states, in particular that of Egypt and Iraq. In this paragraph the level of threat these states posed towards Iran and Israel will be researched. Successively the factors aggressive intentions, offensive power, aggregate power and geographic proximity will be discussed in the hierarchical order that was determined in the first chapter.

2.3.1 Aggressive Intentions

As was mentioned above, the Egyptian President Nasser had a policy which was focused on the spread of pan-Arabism in the region. Nasser effectively articulated the unique relationship between Palestine, imperialism, and Arab unity to the Arab masses. Nasser saw
pan-Arabism as a powerful force against foreign domination in the Middle East. He associated the Arab-Israeli conflict with the interference of Western powers in the region and set himself up as the leader of the struggle for Arab independence and oneness against external forces allied by regional “reactionary” regimes. Both Israel and Iran were targeted by Nasser and labelled reactionary.  

In the case of Israel this should also be placed in the context of the wars of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Egypt was part of the group of Arab states that attacked Israel in the war of 1948, while in 1956 Israel in turn attacked Egypt after Nasser decided to close the Suez Canal to Israeli shipping. In 1967 Nasser mobilised his troops on Israel’s southern border and sought support from other Arab states to conquer Israel. In response Israel launched a pre-emptive strike and Egypt was defeated. In this war Israel gained control of the Sinai Peninsula. In 1969 Nasser again started a war with the goal to regain the Sinai, this war ended with the death of Nasser in 1970. Under the leadership of Sadat, Egypt entered its last war with Israel in 1973, which began with a massive surprise Egyptian attack on the holiest day of Judaism, Yom Kippur. Seen from this perspective, the threat that was posed by aggressive intentions of Nasser towards Israel was tremendous. Since Israel’s existence relations between the two states were overtly hostile and it was clear to Israel that if Egypt had a chance it would start an attack.

In the case of Iran the threat of Egypt’s intentions might have been less immediate, since both states were not actually at war. However, the Shah viewed Egypt’s aggressive posture and the risk of a military engagement with Egypt as substantial. He particularly feared the Egypt-Iraq alliance and considered an Egyptian attack through Iraq as an inconvenient possibility. This connects to how the Shah perceived the aggressive intentions of Iraq.

Since the monarchy of King Faisal II in Iraq was abolished through a bloody coup by Quassim in 1957, the relations between Iran and Iraq became stressed. The Shah had developed friendly relations with Faisal and was shocked by the radical coup and the killing of the royal family in Iraq. In the following period the leaders of Iraq succeeded each other in a fast pace, though all shared an anti-Iran attitude. In the first public statement Quassim gave after the coup he proclaimed the liberation of “our beloved country from the corrupt clique of imperialism,” announced “the formation of a popular republic adhering to complete

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Iraqi unity,” and called for “brotherly ties with Arab states”. These statements were followed by the establishment of close cooperation between Iraq and Egypt and diplomatic relations between Iraq and the SU. Iraq also started directly to interfere in Iran. In 1959 Iraq laid claim over the Shatt-al Arab waterway, the river which separates Iran from Iraq. It also ordered its troops to prevent Iranian oil tankers from moving down the waterway and block their passage. Furthermore it started to provide Barzani forces with arms and from Northern Iraq these forces made several attacks into Iran. This was an interesting turn in events, since Israel and Iran also had supported Kurdish rebellions to fight in Iraq. The Kurds in Iraq strove for independence and after Quassim came to power he promised Barzani to give the Kurds regional autonomy if they would support his policies, for instance in Iran. The Kurds in Iran caused fewer troubles than in Iraq, though there were some disturbances, fuelled by Barzani. Although the alliance between Barzani and Iraq was of short duration, since it soon became clear that Quassim did not want to give the Kurds any autonomy, the perception that Iraq was a sworn enemy entered permanently into the Shah’s strategic calculations.

For Israel the aggressive intentions of Iraq towards Israel resemble somewhat with that of Egypt. As with Egypt the ‘phase of intentions’ was more or less passed over, since Iraq is officially at war with Israel from the establishment of the state in 1948. As Egypt, Iraq was involved in the 1948, 1967 and 1973 war with Israel. After the 1948 war Iraq outlawed the practise of Zionism in its state, dismissed Jews from civil service and placed the whole community of Iraqi Jews under surveillance. In 1950 Iraq enacted a denaturalisation law, which enabled Jews to leave the country after renouncing their Iraqi nationality. Approximately 100,000 Jews left Iraq in the period 1950-1951. Iraq continued this anti-Israeli and anti-Zionism policy during the whole period of 1948-1979. In 1972 Iraq signed a Friendship Treaty with the SU, which committed the two countries “to wage an unrelenting struggle against imperialism and Zionism”. And according to the Political Report of the Iraqi Ba’th Eight Regional Congress in 1974: “Our struggle is directed mainly against certain international forces… imperialism, Zionism and their local allies.” This resembles very much the statements of Nasser on Western imperialism and pan-Arabism. The level of threat that was posed by these Iraqi intentions towards Israel was high.

87 Ibid., 36-37.
88 Ibid., 89.
In the discussion of the intentions of both Egypt and Iraq the Soviet intentions already filter through. Naturally these intentions should be seen in the perspective of the Cold War, Iran and Israel were supported by the US and the SU wanted to diminish the American influence in the region. Therefore it supported Arab states as Egypt and Iraq. However, it also directly targeted Israel and Iran themselves.

When Israel came into existence, the Soviet intentions appeared to be benign. The SU gave support to the partition plan of the UN and three days after Israel declared independence the SU recognised it de jure. However, after Israel emerged as an ally of the US the SU structurally started to support Arab states over Israel. The official position of the SU on Zionism was that it was a tool used by the Jews and Americans for ‘racist imperialism’. After the Arab states lost the war in 1967 the Soviet spokesmen even spoke of Jews as Nazis and accused them of genocide. The SU consequently used its veto in the Security Council when it tried to exhort Arab states of hostilities towards Israel. That the intentions of the SU were not friendly also shows from the fact that since 1955 the SU sustained a vast program of arms delivery to the Arab states.

For Iran the friendship treaty between Iraq and the SU confirmed Iran’s suspicions of the hostile intentions of the SU. Although Iran was well aware that its regional importance confined Soviet attacks, it remained sceptical of Soviet intentions. There was Soviet military involvement in regional conflicts, as well as in internal affairs of Iran. Besides the strong ties between Iraq and the SU, Iran was also concerned of the Soviet support of terrorist organisations in Iran and the SU naval build-up in the Indian Ocean. This scepticism of Iran for example showed in the fact that the contacts between the Iranian Foreign Ministry and the Soviet Embassy were kept at an absolute minimum.

### 2.3.2 Offensive Power

In terms of offensive power the SU posed the greatest threat to Iran and Israel. The Soviet military expenditures and armed forces transcended in this period by far the expenditures and forces of Iran and Israel combined (see tables 2, 3, 4 and 5). However, it was the period of the Cold War and the SU mainly used its offensive power to support other states in order to extend their sphere of influence. The Middle East also got dragged into the

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94 Ibid., 109-110.
superpower struggle and since Iran and Israel both were supported by the US and most Arab states by the SU, Iran and Israel mostly had to fear the Soviet ability to supply their Arab enemies instead of a direct Soviet attack. The latter probably would have caused an American reaction and might have led to a direct (nuclear) confrontation between the two superpowers, something that both states were trying to avoid.\(^\text{95}\)

From the Arab states Egypt posed the biggest threat, comprising 30 percent of the population of the Arab world, Egypt was the most powerful Arab state in the region. Its size also gave it considerable military potential.\(^\text{96}\) However, Egypt’s military manpower potential was far greater than its material and production base. And when Egypt lost the Sinai to Israel in the 1967 War the Egyptian government believed this was attributable in part to the fact that the Israeli military was better educated than that of Egypt and most Arab states. This is confirmed by the military expenditures per capita (see table 3). For instance, although Israel’s total military expenditure is below that of Egypt in 1963, its military expenditure per capita transcends Egypt’s. This indicates more quality, thus more developed equipment and better educated officers. Nasser therefore decided that the Egyptian armed forces should also gain more expertise, though he needed foreign assistance to do so.\(^\text{97}\) In 1955 Nasser already had signed his first arms deal with the SU\(^\text{98}\), though in the beginning the soviet military assistance to Egypt was modest. However, it expanded rapidly after the war in 1967 and by the time Nasser died in 1970, the SU was involved in all levels of Egyptian defence planning.\(^\text{99}\)

When Sadat came to power the relations between Egypt and the SU became strained. The SU became more reluctant to supply Egypt with offensive weapons and Sadat ordered all Soviet advisors and technicians to leave the country. Sadat did participate in the 1973 war, though afterwards he took part in peace negotiations, which eventually led to peace between Egypt and Israel in 1979. In this period the Egyptian armed forces and military expenditures declined (see tables 2 and 4). Herewith the level of threat that Egypt posed also diminished.\(^\text{100}\)

In the wars of 1948, 1967 and 1973 Israel had faced combined armies of Arab states including Iraq. However, in none of those wars did the whole Iraqi army participate. Iraq had the aspiration and potential of becoming the most powerful Arab state and improved its offensive capabilities through the acquisition of Soviet Scud missiles in 1977. This was

\(^{95}\) Parsi, Treacherous Alliance, 20-24.
\(^{96}\) Walt, The Origins of Alliances, 53.
\(^{97}\) Barnett and Levy, Domestic sources of alignments and alliances, 379 – 385.
\(^{99}\) Barnett and Levy, Domestic sources of alignments and alliances, 384
\(^{100}\) Sobhani, The Pragmatic Entente, 68 and 94.
### Table 2 Military Expenditures (in millions of 1973 United States Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>3171</td>
<td>1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>3691</td>
<td>4796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>1228</td>
<td>3781</td>
<td>2346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>30500</td>
<td>48900</td>
<td>58000</td>
<td>66000</td>
<td>71000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Worlds Armament and Disarmament, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook 1979*

n.a. = data not available

### Table 3 Military Expenditures per Capita (in constant dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1963</th>
<th>1968</th>
<th>1973</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>17.28</td>
<td>18.21</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>10.93</td>
<td>27.89</td>
<td>64.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>29.09</td>
<td>43.51</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>119.74</td>
<td>298.28</td>
<td>1003.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>284.68</td>
<td>300.82</td>
<td>326.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4 Armed Forces (in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>3110</td>
<td>3195</td>
<td>3598</td>
<td>4800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 5 Armed Forces per 1000 people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>8.13</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>8.56</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>10.70</td>
<td>10.24</td>
<td>10.14</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>27.25</td>
<td>33.82</td>
<td>40.09</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>13.82</td>
<td>13.41</td>
<td>14.41</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

particularly dangerous for neighbouring Iran.\textsuperscript{101} However, the armed forces and the military expenditures of Iraq never exceeded those of Iran in this period, which made Iraq less threatening in terms of offensive capabilities than Egypt, which did surpass Iran. For Israel the offensive power of Iraq did exceed Israeli offensive power in the first two decades of its existence; however from 1968 the offensive capabilities of Israel exceeded those of Iraq (see tables 2 and 4).

2.3.3 Aggregate Power

As with offensive power, the SU also posed the greatest threat in terms of aggregate power. In size, population and GDP it outshined the states of Israel and Iran combined (see tables 6 and 7). However, this dominance was not owed to the efficient economy of the SU, which was relatively small and mal functioning.\textsuperscript{102} The SU was numerically simply many times larger than Iran and Israel. Moreover, the Soviet economic policy was primarily focused on the rapid development of heavy industry to support the defence sector.\textsuperscript{103} This is connected with the offensive capabilities of the SU, as discussed above. The fact that the whole economy was directed at developing a large military complex and aggregate power was dedicated to create offensive power raised the level of Soviet threat towards Iran and Israel.

In the case of Egypt this is more varied. During the early 1960s Egypt’s economy demonstrated relatively strong growth rates and Nasser was confident that his foreign policy, directed at supporting the Arab cause, was affordable. Any potential resource shortage was solved by nationalisations, which gave the state direct access to an immense resource base. However, this economic optimism quickly disappeared after a balance-of-payments crisis in 1964. After the 1967 war Egypt lost three of its major resources: the Suez Canal, the Sinai oil fields and tourism. These three resources provided together $400 million to $500 million annually.\textsuperscript{104} When Nasser died and Sadat came to power he had to face a deteriorating economic situation. Sadat decided that foreign investment was the solution to this situation, though in order to attract MNCs peace in the region should be maintained and consolidated.\textsuperscript{105} Sadat’s efforts to make peace with Israel thus coincided with his economic goals. As the aggregate power of Egypt increases, its offensive power decreases (see tables 2, 4 and 7 1973-

\textsuperscript{101} Parsi, \textit{Treacherous Alliance}, 50, 74-75.
\textsuperscript{103} Davis, \textit{Country Survey XVI}, 150.
\textsuperscript{104} Barnett and Levy, \textit{Domestic sources of alignments and alliances}, 382.
\textsuperscript{105} John Waterbury, \textit{The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat. The Political Economy of Two Regimes} (Princeton 1984), 133-134.
1978), which made Egypt less threatening towards the end of the period for both Israel and Iran.

The economy of Iraq and thus its aggregate power suffered in this period from the several changes in leadership, especially from the coup of Quassim which toppled the monarchy of King Farouk in 1958. Besides these changes in government the economy also lacked efficiency and planning, which lead for instance to chronic underemployment in the agricultural sector. However, there was one important factor that contributed greatly to Iraq’s economy: its oil industry. Especially in the 1970s, when the oil price was extremely rising, Iraq’s economy witnessed an unprecedented high growth rate in oil output, oil revenue, national income (see table 7), per capita income and industrial growth.

Table 6 Total Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1947</th>
<th>1957</th>
<th>1967</th>
<th>1977</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>19.087.849</td>
<td>24.026.000</td>
<td>30.907.000</td>
<td>38.794.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>17.000.000</td>
<td>19.253.000</td>
<td>26.284.000</td>
<td>34.570.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>4.800.000</td>
<td>6.538.000</td>
<td>8.440.000</td>
<td>12.000.497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.937.000</td>
<td>2.669.000</td>
<td>3.613.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>200.200.000</td>
<td>236.000.000</td>
<td>259.028.800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n.a. = data not available

Table 7 Gross Domestic Product (in millions of current United States Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>2706, 41</td>
<td>3679,35</td>
<td>3875,50</td>
<td>5825,89</td>
<td>8424,89</td>
<td>25000,96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>4660,00</td>
<td>7800,00</td>
<td>24330,00</td>
<td>70080,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>955,08</td>
<td>1426,88</td>
<td>1978,20</td>
<td>3160,64</td>
<td>5493,61</td>
<td>24560,62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>2660,86</td>
<td>3963,41</td>
<td>9240,44</td>
<td>12500,92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SU</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>47000,00</td>
<td>60000,00</td>
<td>923000,00</td>
<td>153600,00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


n.a. = data not available


107 Alnasrawi, The Economy of Iraq, 87.
Besides economically important, the oil was also strategically important. Iraq was a member of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and this organisation decided in response to the US assistance to Israel in the 1973 war to proclaim an oil embargo. For Iran, which was also member of the OPEC and also earned high oil revenues in this period this was not a direct threat. For Israel it was more dangerous, since Iraq and other Arab oil producing country could influence oil importing countries, as the US, with the threat of high prices or an embargo.

2.3.4 Geographic Proximity

The fourth source of threat, geographic proximity is evident in this case. The SU, Iraq, Egypt, but also other aggressors as Syria are all neighbouring states of Israel or Iran (see map 1). There is however a difference between the levels of threat the different aggressors caused to Israel and Iran in terms of distance. For Israel Egypt posed the major threat, since it is a direct neighbour, but also because Egypt holds a strategic important position at the Suez Canal. The relevance of this point can be found in the Suez War of 1956.
Besides Egypt, Israel is surrounded by other Arab states from which attacks are easily launched, for example Jordan and Syria. And although Iraq is not a direct neighbour of Israel, it is possible for the Iraqi forces to cross Jordan in 48 hours and thus it is close enough to actively support other Arab states in possible strikes. This Israeli concern with the surrounding Arab states also shows from the ‘doctrine of the periphery’ Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion formulated in the late 1950s. The idea of this doctrine was to weaken Israel’s Arab (neighbouring) enemies by forming alliances with the non-Arab nations in the region’s periphery, such as Turkey, Ethiopia and Iran.108

Iran also felt isolated with an increasingly hostile SU in the north and the growing pan-Arabism in many Middle Eastern states. Geographically the alliance between its northern and western neighbours, Iraq and the SU, posed the main threat to Iran’s security. Although Iran and Israel hold a different position on the map and therefore have different security considerations, Iran also believed that in the face of a hostile international and regional environment its security was best guaranteed in the framework of the doctrine of the periphery.109

2.4 Conclusion

The leading question of this chapter was: How can Walt’s balance of threat theory explain the relations between Iran and Israel in the period 1948 – 1979? In conclusion to this question can be said that Walt’s theory can perfectly explain the relations between both states in this period. Israel and Iran faced a common security issue: both feared isolation in a region dominated by Arab states and heavily influenced by the SU. According to Walt’s theory both states decided to balance in response to these external threats and formed an alliance. Following Walt’s theory there is only a necessity to form an alliance if the level of threat is high.

In the case of Iran and Israel the level of threat in the period of 1948-1979, constructed of Walt’s four sources of threat, is summarised in tables 8 and 9. The level of treat is labelled ‘high’, ‘medium’ or ‘low’, an analytical estimate based on the former analysis. Although there are some small differences between Iran and Israel, the tables show for both states a clearly threatening situation. Considering the ranking that was determined in the former chapter, the factor ‘aggressive intentions’, which was ranked first, plays an important part. All three

108 Parsi, Israel and the Origins of Iran’s Arab Option, 494.
109 Sobhani, The Pragmatic Entente, 35.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Threat</th>
<th>Aggressive Intentions</th>
<th>Offensive Power</th>
<th>Aggregate Power</th>
<th>Geographic Proximity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>high/medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 Level of Threat towards Iran 1948-1979

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Threat</th>
<th>Aggressive Intentions</th>
<th>Offensive Power</th>
<th>Aggregate Power</th>
<th>Geographic Proximity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high/medium</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 9 Level of Threat towards Israel 1948-1979

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Threat</th>
<th>Aggressive Intentions</th>
<th>Offensive Power</th>
<th>Aggregate Power</th>
<th>Geographic Proximity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium/low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>high/medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 Level of Threat towards Iran 1970-1979

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Threat</th>
<th>Aggressive Intentions</th>
<th>Offensive Power</th>
<th>Aggregate Power</th>
<th>Geographic Proximity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>medium/low</td>
<td>medium/low</td>
<td>high/medium</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 Level of Threat towards Israel 1970-1979
threatening states show highly aggressive intentions towards Israel and Iran. The other three factors confirm this situation to a great extent.

However, towards the end of the period the flourishing relations between Iran and Israel somewhat cooled down. At the same time the level of threat also changes. This change is summarised in tables 10 and 11. For both Iran and Israel, Egypt ceases as an external threat. This is caused by the new benign intentions of Egypt and the lowering of its offensive capabilities. Indirectly this also decreased Soviet influence, although it did not make the SU less threatening in terms of intentions, power and proximity, therefore it does not show in the table. With the diminishing of the level of threat the necessity for an alliance also decreased, this is consistent with Walt’s theory. This could also offer an explanation to Iran’s seemingly balancing/bandwagoning behaviour, since the threat was diminished the balancing was less required and it was safe to support the threatening states to some point. Also the fact that the relations were not completely severed, corresponds with the balance of threat theory. After all, Iraq and the SU still contributed to a threatening environment for both Iran and Israel.

From this chapter shows a strong realist perspective on Iran-Israel relations before the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. Two states that based the decision to form an alliance of necessity in order to secure their own interests on strategic and pragmatic calculations. In the following chapters it will become clear whether this is the only explanation for the alliance behaviour of Iran and Israel and whether Walt’s realist balance of threat theory is also applicable to Iran-Israel relations in the period after 1979.
3. A Security Community in the Making

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter once more the Iran-Israel relations between 1948 and 1979 will be examined, although this time on the basis of Adler and Barnett’s theory on security communities. The leading question for this chapter is: *how can Adler and Barnett’s theory on security communities explain the relations between Iran and Israel in the period 1948 – 1979?* To answer this question, first the distinguishing factor of a security community, dependable expectations of peaceful change, will be discussed in the case of Iran and Israel. Second, the four indicators of a nascent security community, economic and political transactions, the establishment of third parties, domestic instabilities and common identity will be analysed.

3.2 Expectations of Peaceful Change?

In the former chapter Iran-Israel relations were analysed with the help of the balance of threat theory of Walt. This resulted in a realist analysis of Iran-Israel relations with a strong emphasis on external threat. In this chapter the emphasis will be more on the interstate relations between both states and what they have in common. It will be interesting to see whether this approach will lead to a different understanding of the bond between Iran and Israel and whether it can provide an alternative explanation for these relations.

As was discussed in the first chapter the distinguishing feature of a security community compared to other communities is that the members of a security community entertain dependable expectations of peaceful change. They are confident that disputes between members of the community will be settled without war. According to Adler and Barnett these expectations are already present in the nascent phase of a security community. In the case of Iran and Israel it is hard to determine whether such expectations of peaceful change actually existed in Iranian and Israeli society, although it is possible to examine if there was good reason to develop these expectations.

The beginnings of Jewish relations with Iranians date back to late biblical times. In the Jewish collective memory, Iran (previously Persia), is cherished as a friendly state. This idea goes back to the days of Cyrus the Great, who granted the Jewish people in Persia significant
liberties, an exception in the history of the Middle East. During the period of 1948-1979, under the reign of the Shah, such perceptions of Iran were reinforced through the close ties between both states. This image of Iran continued despite the fact that over history there were also frequent periods of persecution and harassment of Jews in Persia. This is an interesting notion, because of the constructivist perspective of Adler and Barnett. According to constructivists, identity is constructed, which means that a reference to a myth can have stronger impact on the construction of an identity than historical facts. In the case of Israel and Iran, Israelis believed Iran to be a friendly nation, despite of former persecutions. This belief could be the foundation of expectations of peaceful change. From the Iranian perspective there were also positive experiences with Jewish people, because Jews enjoyed a lot of freedom under the reign of the Shah the Jewish community in Iran was substantive. Among this community were also people with substantive influence on Iranian society, which was in favour of the Iranian image of Jewish people and consequently Israel.

Also from a more practical point of view one could argue that there was a basis for dependable expectations of peaceful change, since the establishment of the State of Israel there had been no war or other kind of armed conflict between Iran and Israel. Especially in the case of Israel this was not something to be taken for granted, since its existence it was in a state of war with many states in the Middle East. The fact that Iran had no part in this could inspire confidence in a peaceful future between both states.

With these ideas in mind it is interesting to examine whether the relations between Iran and Israel before 1979 can be defined as a nascent security community as further described by Adler and Barnett.

3.3 Nascent Security Community

To see whether the relations between Israel and Iran during this period can be seen as a nascent security community the four indicators of such a community, as defined in the first chapter, will be discussed. Successively economic and political transactions, the establishment of third parties, domestic instabilities and common identity will be examined. For Adler and Barnett economic and political transactions form a cornerstone for trust and sense of community, therefore in this chapter will be analysed if such transactions were developed.

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111 Ibid.
112 Ibid.
Further the establishment of third parties will be researched. Adler and Barnett see the establishment of such parties as an indication that states want to coordinate their relations in view of the long term and thus contribute to the establishment of a security community. There will be therefore examined whether such parties were set up by Iran and Israel.

Subsequently the indicator of domestic instabilities will be analysed. Adler and Barnett argue that states who seek security cooperation in the nascent phase of a security community can be triggered by domestic instabilities. To confront these, states can decide to coordinate their policies.

The final indicator that will be discussed is (references to a) common identity. Although Adler and Barnett believe that in the early state of a security community such references should be treated sceptically, since it is hard to distinguish between real feelings of common identity and fabricated conveniences and instrumental constructs, the search of cooperation at first can by driven by (the idea of) a common identity. Since Adler and Barnett conclude that the originating of a common identity usually starts with the political elite, the emphasis in this research will be on the political leaders of Iran and Israel and their possible references to a common identity.

3.3.1 Economic and Political Transactions

Iran was one of the first Muslim countries to develop diplomatic and trade relations with Israel after its establishment in 1948. The first political contacts, however, were more from necessity than clearly intended. It started with Iranian refugees, who lived in Palestine during the 1948 War. After they fled the country, their properties were put under government custody. Subsequently the Iranian government, at the request of the refugees, sent an unofficial convoy to Israel, to settle the claims and redeem the properties. After the war cooperation grew and Iran served as a transit point for Iraqi Jews, who needed to flee from Iraq and wanted to live in Israel.

In 1950, Iran recognised the State of Israel de facto (not de jure) and diplomatic relations were developed. However, when in 1951 the Mossadeq government in Iran came to power the Iranian consulate in Jerusalem was closed, due to “financial difficulties”.

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115 Weis, Israel and Iran.
Nevertheless, the de facto recognition was not withdrawn and economic cooperation continued.\textsuperscript{116}

Iran exported agricultural products to Israel in exchange for the import of industrial goods, medical equipment and technical assistance. In 1953 the National Banks of Israel and Iran signed an agreement to open a line of credit.\textsuperscript{117} The total value of Israeli exports to Iran amounted 33 million dollars during 1973-1974 and increased to 230 million dollars during 1977-1978. Iran also supplied 60 percent of Israel’s oil.\textsuperscript{118} Israel had started to buy Iranian oil in 1957, after the Suez Crisis. Iran helped Israel to finance the Eilat-Ashkelon pipeline, which transported Iranian oil to Israel, bypassing the Suez Canal.\textsuperscript{119} With the mutual expanding export El-Al Airline eventually even needed to open a direct line to Teheran.\textsuperscript{120}

All this economic activity also led to military cooperation. Three examples illustrate this, which are: Operation Flower, Iraqi Kurdistan and the bond between the SAVAK and the Mossad. Operation Flower was a joint, top-secret missile project of both states which was aimed at developing a missile system that would be capable of launching a nuclear attack.\textsuperscript{121} A testing range was located near Rafsnjan, a rural area of Iran. For Iran this was also a way of developing the areas around central Iran and 3000 housing units for the employers of the range were build. Israel received 260 million worth of oil from Iran in its first contribution, which helped Israel to finance its own military projects.\textsuperscript{122}

As was discussed in the former chapter both Israel and Iran had their reasons to be suspicious of Iraqi intentions and they decided to a joint military operation against Iraq. Their tactic was to arm the Kurdish rebels in Iraq, so the Iraqi army would be kept occupied in the North and unable to exert pressure on Iran at the southern border and on Israel on the eastern flank.\textsuperscript{123} Besides providing the rebels with sufficient arms to conduct full-scale attacks, the Iranian and Israeli officers also decided to train them together.\textsuperscript{124}

During the different military operations between both states also the bond between the national intelligence agencies, the Israeli Mossad and the Iranian SAVAK, intensified. When


\textsuperscript{118} Abadi, \textit{Israel’s Quest for Recognition and Acceptance in Asia}, 45.

\textsuperscript{119} Parsi, \textit{Treachorous Alliance}, 23.


\textsuperscript{121} Sobhani, \textit{The Pragmatic Entente}, 128.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 131.

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 46

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.
the SAVAK was established by the Shah he had obtained support from the Mossad in building and administrating it. All the sensitive dealings between Iran and Israel went through these secret services. Besides training the officers of SAVAK, the Mossad also trained four hundred Iranian pilots, paratroopers and artillery men. The sale from high-tech military equipment to Iran also went through the Mossad.

However, despite all this economic and political cooperation major disagreements between both states also remained. The Shah of Iran for instance insisted that Israel would end the Arab-Israeli conflict by leaving the occupied territories. This would lead to stability in the region and was thus important to Iran. Israel did not agree and continued building operations in these areas. Israel in turn, wanted Iran to be more open about its friendship with Israel, though Iran rather kept the alliance low profile. During the 1970’s there was for example no official Iranian mission in Israel, the six members that manned this mission were according to their records serving in Bern. The Iranian embassy in Israel was referred therefore to as “Bern 2” in official documents. This sort of uneasiness between both states remained during the whole period of 1948-1979.

3.3.2 Third Parties

The indicator of ‘third parties’ is related to the economic and political transactions. Adler and Barnett argue that as soon as states begin to consider how they might coordinate their relations they often establish third parties. These organisations or institutions can organise the transactions and can observe whether the participating states honour their obligations towards each other.

In the case of Iran and Israel only a few of such organisations were established and those were not very ambitious. An example of this was the Iranian Israeli Trade Company (IRIS), which was founded in 1953 to encourage business ties between both states. Through this company several important oil agreements between the two states were signed and the development of the Eilat-Ashkelon pipeline was guided.

On the strategic political field agreements were also signed, for instance in the case of the missile range, though no official political institutions were established. There were a lot of

125 Haggai Ram, *Iranophobia. The Logic of an Israeli Obsession* (Standford 2009), 53.
130 Uri Bialer, *Oil and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-63* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire 1999), 173
131 Bialer, *Oil and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 186.
economic and political transactions between both states, though most cooperation seemed rather ad hoc and not directed at the long term, which is detrimental to the idea of a possible developing security community. From this also shows the informal character of the alliance, to which both Israeli and Iranian officials usually referred to. An Iranian official described it as “relations of love without a marriage contract.”  

This absence of formal institutions with a vision for the long run did not necessarily mean the non-existence of a nascent security community, though it strikes a note of how both states envisaged each other. It also shows a difficulty with the theory of Adler and Barnett, which is more aimed at identifying factors that could stimulate the development of a security community than at drawing sharp conclusions on which factors will definitely do so. How many third parties should states constitute and how ambitious need these parties to be in order to develop a (nascent) security community? For Adler and Barnett there will be no definitive answer to this question, since every case is different and it is not their intention to identify a single pathway to a security community.

Nevertheless, through their approach a concept as third parties is elucidated on in this analysis and it shows another, more burdensome, side of the Iran-Israel relations than in the analysis of Walt’s theory, where everything turned on the external threat.

**3.3.3 Domestic Instabilities**

Instead of examining external/systemic threats Adler and Barnett reason that cooperation in the nascent phase of a security community is rather triggered by domestic threats. States can decide to coordinate their policies to confront such domestic instabilities. Both Iran and Israel had to deal with domestic instabilities during the period of 1948 - 1979, although of different kind.

Israel declared its independence on 14 May 1948, the following day Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon attacked the new state, starting the first Arab-Israel war. Thus besides the usual struggles of building a new state, also foreign intervention had to be taken into account when developing Israel’s state structure. Since its existence the Israeli society is divided over how to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict. Socialist groups support a passive stand, labour and

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centralist parties express a reservist military approach and (religious and secular) nationalist parties articulate a strong use of force.\textsuperscript{134}

On top of this Israel had a huge influx of Holocaust survivors, refugees from the SU and from Arab states who wanted to make a new living in the new state. This resulted in an enormous increase in population coupled with economic and financial difficulties. To David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel, the complicated task to manage these internal struggles.

Ben-Gurion believed that the war of 1948 was a phase in an ongoing struggle for survival and that Israel had not yet reached her natural borders, the borders of the state were defined by the limits of the Israeli forces rather than by negotiation with the Arabs.\textsuperscript{135} He had a major role in the Qibya Massacre, which led to discussion in Ben-Gurions own party, Mapai (Labour), on the use of force. Moshe Sharett raised the issue in a Mapai meeting, which indicated a split in Mapai. Eventually Ben-Gurion had to step down and Sharett became the new prime minister in 1953.\textsuperscript{136} However in 1955 Ben-Gurion returned to office, although the discussion on the use of force and the Arab-Israeli conflict continued to hold a grip on Israeli society.

After Ben-Gurion’s reassignment in 1963 the labour/left Mapai party continued to stay in power and provide the prime minister until 1977. In this year the right-wing Likud Party, under leadership of Menachem Begin, rose to power and won the elections. After the Yom Kippur War a discussion on Israel’s preparedness for the war had burst out. Begin proposed a more hard-lined policy and belonged to the “territorial” school, which argued that Israel should hold on to as much territory as possible, since the more territory Israel held, the more “Jewish” it would be. The Mapai party was more associated with the “sociological school” which argued that the internal structure of Israel was more important than the extent of its territory.\textsuperscript{137} With Begin as prime minister, Israel was led by the right-wing for the first time in its existence. Interestingly this downfall of three decades of labour party runs almost parallel with the fall of the Shah in Iran.

Iran was since 1921 under the rule of the Phalavi Dynasty. The first Shah of this dynasty is often depicted as a great reformer and moderniser, who established new institutions

\textsuperscript{134} Gad Barzilai, ‘War, Democracy, and Internal Conflict: Israel in a Comparative Perspective’, \textit{Comparative Politics} 31 (1999) 323.
\textsuperscript{135} Colin Shindler, \textit{A History of Modern Israel} (Cambridge 2008), 101.
\textsuperscript{136} Shindler, \textit{A History of Modern Israel}, 104-108.
\textsuperscript{137} Parsi, \textit{Treacherous Alliance}, 69.
as conscription to the army, mandatory family names and new ministries for industry, roads and agriculture. During the rule of the Shah the military grew tenfold and the bureaucracy seventeen fold. However, through these new institutions he was also able to expand his control and power into all sectors of the Iranian state.\textsuperscript{138} He manipulated elections, banned all political parties and closed down independent newspapers.\textsuperscript{139} He also implemented a new dress code; all adult males had to wear Western-style clothes and women were encouraged not to wear a veil in public.\textsuperscript{140} This led to strong opposition from the Muslim clergy, the ulema. In 1935 a protest against the rulings on Western dress and the veil led to a massacre and several hundred people were shot by the Shah’s troops.\textsuperscript{141}

In 1941, the allied forces of Britain and the SU intervened in Iran, supposedly because of the Shah’s pro-Nazi standpoints, though both states also had significant strategic stakes in the region.\textsuperscript{142} It was decided to exile the Shah, but to keep the monarchy and the shah abdicated in favour of his son, Mohammad Reza. The allies maintained control of the state until after the end of the war in 1946.

The new Shah took more enlightened decisions than his father and proclaimed amnesty for all political prisoners, who were arrested under the previous regime. Nevertheless, he faced internal opposition from the start of his reign. In 1951 Muhammad Mossadeq became prime minister of Iran, after democratic elections. Mossadeq was known for his opposition against the Phalavi dynasty.\textsuperscript{143} As prime minister, Mossadeq tried to reform the electoral law and attempted to weaken the Shah by demanding power over the armed forces. When the Shah resisted, Mossadeq took his case publically and three days of general strikes and riots followed.\textsuperscript{144} Mossadeq also had nationalised all British oil companies, which had led to a major oil dispute between Iran and Britain. When Mossadeq broke diplomatic relations with Britain altogether, the British government decided to help the Shah and prepared with the US a coup to remove Mossadeq as prime minister.\textsuperscript{145}

The result of the coup was the removal of Mossadeq and the end of pluralism in Iranian politics. From then on the Shah ruled as a dictator over Iran. As the opposition against the Shah grew, also the repression increased. The security agency SAVAK grew increasingly

\textsuperscript{138} Ervand Abrahamian, \textit{A History of Modern Iran} (Cambridge 2008), 66-72
\textsuperscript{139} Abrahamian, \textit{A History of Modern Iran}, 73-74.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 83-94.
\textsuperscript{142} Axworthy, \textit{Empire of the Mind}, 227-228.
\textsuperscript{143} Abrahamian, \textit{A History of Modern Iran}, 114.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 117.
\textsuperscript{145} Axworthy, \textit{Empire of the Mind}, 237.
efficient and brutal. In 1963 Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini started to preach publicly against the Shah’s government. He criticised its corruption, the weak position of the poor and the relationship of the Shah with Israel. In 1964 Khomeini was exiled, though the internal discontent with the Shah was there to stay, ultimately resulting in the Islamic Revolution of 1979, which will be further discussed in chapter 5.

From this analysis shows that several motives for cooperation between Iran and Israel can be indicated, for example political and economic motives. Although domestic instabilities do not seem to have been the decisive reason, but one among others, for Iran and Israel to become allies, the alliance could certainly be helpful to oppress such instabilities. Through the intensive cooperation between the Mossad and the SAVAK, for instance, the officers of the Iranian national intelligence service were well trained and able to support the Shah’s repressive regime. For Israel the oil trade with Iran is an example of how the alliance also was valuable in internal politics, through this the Israel economy could keep on going.

3.3.4 Common Identity

At first sight it might appear that there existed no common identity between Israel and Iran during the period 1948-1979. There are indeed important differences between both states, for instance in religion: Israel is a Jewish state, while Iran is an Islamic state.

However, identity does not always have to be constructed on similar features; it can also be based on a common reaction against something, against ‘the other’. In the case of Israel and Iran this could be that both states are not Arab or Sunni states, while the majority of states in the Middle East are Arab and Sunni. Israel and Iran share that they are both excluded of this group. Haggai Ram, author of Iranophobia, a study on Israeli identity and the Israeli threat perceptions of Iran, argues that there are a lot of similarities in the way both states tried to shut themselves off from the ‘Arab Orient’. According to Ram both states wanted to define their state-structures in the classic Orientalist terms as Euro-American. To achieve this,
they implemented colonial ideas of modernisations, such as secularisation. Thus, before 1979 both Iran and Israel were guided by political theologies with a strategic objective to transform their identity into European and secular as opposed to the Arab Orient. In defining the Jewish and Iranian identities as European, accepting the notion of “history” as a term referring to the Christian West was crucial.\footnote{Ram, To Banish the “Levantine Dunghill” from within, 252.} According to Ram each of the two states invoked a pre-Islamic, pre-Arab and secular mythical past, which both stretched back to the great Persian Achaemenid. In the case of Israel the identity was constructed on the myth of return, originating in the biblical story of Cyrus and Ezra. In the case of Iran it was based on the origin myth of the “Aryan hypothesis”, which comprised the pre-Islamic imperial past of Iran.\footnote{Ibid.} Ram argues that the flourishing relations between Israel and Iran before 1979, which he describes as “a love affair”, rested on the shared perception of both states of each other as carriers of the Western identity to the Middle East.\footnote{Ibid., 253.} For Ram these shared perceptions of time, space and civilisation provided the essential requisite for the strategic, political and economic relations between Iran and Israel during the period 1948 – 1979 and not the other way around.\footnote{Ibid.}

This view is in contrast with the analysis based on Walt’s theory in the former chapter, where identity did not play a significant part and the cooperation between both states was explained through shared external threats. However, it does connect to the idea of Adler and Barnett that identity is a fundamental element in examining relations between states and that a common identity contributes to the development of a security community.\footnote{The greater part of the literature on Iran-Israel relations has been written by two authors: Trita Parsi and Haggai Ram. It is interesting to see that both authors seem to represent one of the perspectives on IR and Alliance Theory. Where Parsi emphasises the common threat as a binding factor and thus connects to the balance-of-threat theory, Ram focuses on identity and is therefore more consistent with Adler and Barnett (cf. the references in chapters 2 and 4.)}

To support his view, Ram refers to the doctrine of the periphery, an example that was also mentioned in the former chapter, although now from a different angle. David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s first prime minister, developed this doctrine with the strategic goal of diminishing Soviet influence and pan-Arabism in the region. However, Ram believes that Israel’s objective was far more ambitious: to create a de-Arabicised Middle East rearranged around non-Arab states, which would be connected to each other through their secular and modern identity.\footnote{Ibid.}
Ben-Gurion did not see Israel as a part of the Middle East, but as a part of Europe. From 1952 he repeated that “although Israelis were sitting in the Middle East, this was a geographical accident, for they were a European people”. “We have no connection with the Arabs,” he said. “Our regime, our culture, our relations, is not the fruit of this region. There is no political affinity between us, or international solidarity”. The doctrine of the periphery fits these ideas.

The Shah of Iran also conducted a firmly anti-Arab policy. The tensions between Arabs and Persians have deep historic roots. The Arab invasion during the 17th century and the following Islamisation of Iran still reside. While Iran largely accepted Islam, its ethnic and cultural identity remained unchanged. Moreover, Iran did accept Islam, but Shi’a Islam, while most Arab states are adherents of Sunni Islam, which caused friction. Iranians are still proud to successfully resist the Arabisation of their state. The Shah, inspired by the purist doctrines of President Kemal Atatürk of Turkey, attempted to recreate the Persian Empire and thus to reduce the influence of Arab culture, language and religion in Iran.

The Shah’s emphasis on Iranian cultural values of tolerance, universalism, expediency and nationalism also led him to develop a positive attitude towards Israel. This also shows from his book, Mission for My Country, were he writes: “We never believed in discrimination based on race, colour, or creed, and have often provided a haven for oppressed people of backgrounds different from our own… For example, it was characteristic of Cyrus the Great that, when he conquered Babylon, he allowed the Jews, who had been exiled there by King Nebuchadnezzar after the conquest of Jerusalem in 597 B.C., to return to Palestine with their sacred vessels and rebuild their destroyed temples.” The Shah refers here to the myth of Cyrus the Great, which was also an important frame of reference in the collective memory of Israel, as was mentioned in the first paragraph.

Although it is difficult to determine whether a common identity between two states exists, it can be established that Iran and Israel during the period 1948-1979 had identifiable interfaces: anti-Arab, modern, secular and Western-oriented.

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158 The division between Sunni and Shi’a Islam is the oldest division in Islam and originates from the question who would succeed the prophet Muhammad as leader of the Muslim community after his death. Although the majority of Sunni and Shi’a Muslims do not allow their theological differences to cause hostility between them, current global political conditions caused a degree of polarisation in many Muslim societies. See: ‘Sunni and Shi’a’, BBC Religions, available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam.
159 Parsi, Treacherous Alliance, 42
3.4 Conclusion

The leading question of this chapter was: how can Adler and Barnett’s theory on security communities explain the relations between Iran and Israel in the period 1948 – 1979? In answer to this question can be said that it does not give such a convincing explanation as Walt’s theory, though it does shed new light on Iran-Israel relations.

The four elements which Adler and Barnett describe are all identifiable in the relations between Iran and Israel, although some are underdeveloped. Especially the establishment of third parties, which would express the will to commit to a long-term cooperation, is not particular evident. Still there are significant political and economic transactions and there are identifiable interfaces which could shape a common identity. Also both states suffered from domestic instabilities, which could enhance cooperation.

On the basis of this one could see the relations between Iran and Israel during 1948-1979 at best as a fragile nascent security community. Although the analysis of Adler and Barnett’s theory does not provide for such a solid explanation of Iran-Israel relations as the analysis of Walt’s balance of threat theory, it does provide for new insights. Walt’s theory is purely focused on the level of external threat and therewith ignores factors as common identity, interstate political and economic transactions and domestic threats. The analysis on security communities demonstrates that Iran and Israel had more in common than solely external threats during the period 1948-1979. Naturally the strategic component as discussed in the former chapter played an important part, though combined with the analysis of the current chapter a broader picture delineates. To fully understand the bond between Israel and Iran till 1979 both analyses are required.
4. The Changing Balance of Threat

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter Walt’s balance of threat theory will be examined in the case of Iran-Israel relations between 1979 and 2009. The leading question for this chapter is: How can Walt’s balance of threat theory explain relations between Iran and Israel in the period 1979 – 2009? In answering this question the same structure as provided in chapter 2 will be followed. First Walt’s balancing-hypothesis will be examined, followed by an analysis of the level of threat, influenced by the four factors aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power and (perceived) aggressive intentions.

4.2 The End of Balancing?

As discussed in the second chapter the relations between Iran and Israel were friendly in the period 1948 – 1979, which could be explained by Walt’s balancing hypothesis. This hypothesis holds that alliances come into formation when a common threat exists and this threat has to be balanced. However, in the period 1979 – 2009 the threat towards Iran and Israel shifted.

The three main and common aggressors before 1979 were Egypt, Iraq and the SU. As was reviewed in chapter 2, the threat that Egypt posed decreased at the end of the 1979s after Nasser died and Sadat had signed a peace agreement with Israel. After the Islamic Revolution in Iran there was a major setback in Iran-Israel relations, the new Khomeini government immediately severed all official relations and Khomeini systematically referred to Israel as “Little Satan”, the US being “Great Satan”.161

However, despite this firm anti-Israel stance, both states still shared common threats: the SU and Iraq. From a strategic and geo-political perspective nothing much had changed. Khomeini tried to befriend the Arab states under the cloak of Political Islam and with his rhetoric on Israel, though it did not work. The Arab states viewed Islamic Iran as a greater threat than Imperial Iran, because of the tension between Shiite Muslims, who live principally in Iran and Sunni Muslims who are a majority in the Arab states. This tension prompted a strengthening of the anti-Iran Arab bloc.162

This became painfully clear when Iraq invaded Iran in 1980, hoping to make use of the revolutionary chaos in Iran. During the Iran-Iraq war, which would last until 1988, Israel

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162 Parsi, Israel – Iranian Relations Assessed, 257.
feared that an Iraqi victory would strengthen the Arabs and weaken the Israeli position. Both Iran and Israel thus had an interest in an Iraqi defeat. When applying Walt’s balancing-hypothesis to this situation one would expect that both states would abandon their ideological differences and balance against Iraq. This is also what seemed to be happening. Only days after the war started, Israel offered assistance to Iran and in the period 1980-1983 Iran purchased over 500 million dollars worth of arms from Israel, most of it was paid for through deliverance of Iranian oil to Israel. However, when confronted in public, both states firmly denied any form of cooperation. Nevertheless the rumours on an arms deal between Iran and Israel continued and in an NBC interview in 1982 Israel’s minister of defence, Ariel Sharon, admitted Israel had provided a ‘small amount of military aid’ to Iran.

It can be argued that the real turning point in Iran-Israel relations was not the Islamic Revolution of 1979, but the events of 1991. In this year the SU collapsed, which ended the Cold War and also the fear of Soviet influence in the Middle East. In the same year Iraq was defeated by allied forces under the leadership of the US and the UN in the Persian Gulf War. The war was a response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and was executed in such a way that the Iraqi forces were severely weakened. With the Soviet threat disappeared and the Iraqi threat diminished, there was no common threat left for Iran and Israel to balance and therefore no necessity for an alliance from Walt’s perspective.

After 1991 both states emerged as the two most powerful states in the region and became diametrically opposed to each other. Israel started to seek peace with the Arab states and depicted Iran as the main threat to the region. The Israeli Prime Minister Rabin missed no opportunity to stress the “Iranian Danger”, Iran’s “dark murderous regime” and the “turbid Islamic wave”. Iran became the major enemy of the Rabin government. Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres developed a view which he called “the New Middle East”, in this view Israel would significantly increase its role in the region as it made peace with the Arab states. From the Israeli perspective this role it aspired would come at the expense of Iran, whose isolation and threat depiction was believed to be necessary for the success of the peace process.

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163 Ibid., 255.
164 Parsi, Treacherous Alliance, 107.
165 Parsi, Treacherous Alliance 143.
166 Ibid., 159.
167 Parsi, Israel – Iran Relations Assessed, 263.
169 Ibid., 261-262.
Iran saw the Israeli vision of the New Middle East as leading to Iran’s long-term isolation and as a consequence became the main opponent of the peace process. It increased its rhetoric against Israel and accused Arab governments in support of the peace process of treason. Also it started to financially support Palestinian (terrorist) groups, as the PLO, who rejected a peace with Israel.\textsuperscript{171}

The balance of threat theory could explain this turn in Iran-Israeli relations, the common threats were disappeared, and thus the balancing could end. Moreover, it seemed that Iran and Israel became each others threat after both states emerged as the most powerful states of the region. Following the reasoning of Walt now both states had to balance each other, which might explain the efforts of the two states to win over the Arab states to their side. To further analyse these changes the level of threat during this period has to be examined, on the basis of Walt’s four sources of threat.

### 4.3 The Level of Threat

As was discussed in the former paragraph there was a major shift in threat perceptions of Iran and Israel in the period 1979-2009. Until 1991 there still was the common threat of the SU and Iraq, little of this was left after 1991. In this paragraph the level of threat these states posed will be discussed more in depth to see whether Walt’s theory is accurate. Successively the factors aggressive intentions, offensive power, aggregate power and geographic proximity will be discussed, following the same structure as in the second chapter.

#### 4.3.1 Aggressive Intentions

Before 1979 the Egypt of Nasser had expressed rather aggressive intentions towards both Israel and Iran. This changed after Nasser was succeeded by Sadat, who in 1979 signed a peace agreement with Israel and since then the relations between Egypt and Israel improved. During the peace process Sadat even addressed the Israeli Knesset stating: “I come to you today on solid ground, to shape a new life, to establish peace”.\textsuperscript{172} Because of Sadat’s new attitude towards Israel, which was aimed at peace, the aggressive intentions towards Israel during this period diminished.

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid.,264-265 and John K. Cooley, ‘Iran, the Palestinians and the Gulf’, \textit{Foreign Affairs} 57 (1979), 1017.

\textsuperscript{172} President Anwar Sadat, \textit{Statement to the Knesset 20 November 1977}, http://www.knesset.gov.il
In the case of Iran it was more complicated. Before the 1979 Revolution Sadat had developed a warm relationship with the Shah.\textsuperscript{173} And he let the exiled Shah stay in Egypt. However, Sadat also tried to develop relations with the new Khomeini government, though Khomeini rejected any form of cooperation.\textsuperscript{174} After making peace with Israel, Egypt became more isolated and no longer took the lead in pan-Arabism and its membership of the Arab League was suspended. A new ally would strengthen Egypt’s regional position, though Khomeini rejected any relations with Egypt and tried to win legitimacy in the Arab world by accusing Sadat of betraying the Palestinians when signing the peace agreement with Israel. By May 1980 all bonds between Egypt and Iran were severed. In 2003 the Iranian President Mohammad Khatami and the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak met in Geneva.\textsuperscript{175} Khatami invited Mubarak to come to Iran, though this visit did not occur. Relations between Iraq and Egypt might not have been flourishing during this period, nevertheless Egypt did not express aggressive intentions towards Iran. This diminished the overall level of threat Egypt posed to Iran.

In terms of aggressive intentions Iraq shows most resemblance with the period before 1979. The Iraqi President Saddam Hussein practised a firm anti-Israel stance and supported Palestinian militant organisations. In 2003, after Hussein’s government was toppled in the US-led operation called ‘Iraqi Freedom’, the aggressive posture towards Israel somewhat declined.\textsuperscript{176} Although the current government still refuses to recognise Israel.

The aggressive intentions of Iraq towards Iran were even more immediate and it acted upon these intentions right after the Islamic Revolution, when it invaded Iraq in 1980. The war ended in 1988 with a cease-fire, which was reached after months of intense negotiation. After the Persian Gulf War of 1991 Iraq’s army was decimated, though Iran and Iraq continued to see each other as enemies. Iraq wanted revenge and Iran believed that the Iraqis would not miss an opportunity to attack Iran. This was also due to the fact that Hussein, who started the Iran-Iraq War, continued to reign in Iraq.\textsuperscript{177}

During the Iran-Iraq war the Soviet hostilities towards Iraq were also reinforced. The SU did not want Iran to win the war and therefore extended support to Iraq. After the disintegration of the SU, however, things changed. Iran no longer had to fear a great power at

\textsuperscript{174}Parsi, \textit{Treacherous Alliance}, 93.
\textsuperscript{176}‘Historic handshake: Barak meets Iraq’s President in Athens’, \textit{Haaretz}, 1 July 2008.
\textsuperscript{177}Parsi, \textit{Israel-Iranian Relations Assessed}, 259.
its northern border and the support of the US towards Iran declined, as a result of the end of the Cold War. Consequently relations between Iran and Russia improved; Russia was no longer a threat, but a partner for Iran.\textsuperscript{178}

For Israel this new friendship between Iran and Russia was problematic, since it suspected that Russia had become a transit point for arms that were delivered by Iran to terrorist groups as Hezbollah.\textsuperscript{179} Nevertheless Russia’s intentions towards Israel were less aggressive than the Soviet intentions were. Where the SU publicly condemned Israel’s role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, Russia lowered its political profile in this conflict.\textsuperscript{180}

\textbf{4.3.2 Offensive Power}

Alongside the benign intentions of Egypt its offensive capabilities also became less threatening. The total military expenditures in the period 1988 – 2008 declined every year, except for a small increase in 2003 (see table 12) and the military expenditures per capita even halved during this period (see table 13). Its armed forces remained rather constant (see table 14). Egypt still needed to be considered a military factor of importance, though Israel and Iran’s relative position towards Egypt in offensive capabilities improved significantly during the period 1979-2009 compared to 1948-1979.

During the 1980s Iraq’s military expenditures grew enormously and the size of its military increased tenfold in less than a decade. Its offensive capabilities grew accordingly and included chemical weapons. In the latter years of the Iran-Iraq war it also demonstrated the reach of its offensive power when it stroke Teheran with ballistic missiles, three hundred miles from the Iraqi defence lines.\textsuperscript{181} After the 1991 Persian Gulf War Iraq’s annual military expenditure dropped from 26.4 billion dollars in 1990 to 2 billion dollars in 1991.\textsuperscript{182} Its armed forces, which numbered 1 million in 1989 dropped to 382.000 in 1994 (see table 14). However, even if the defeat was disastrous, Iraq still was a vital military player in the Middle East and it could still pose a threat to its immediate neighbour Iran.\textsuperscript{183}

The threat the SU posed in terms of offensive power till 1991 is comparable to threat it posed during the period 1948-1979, its offensive capabilities transcended that of Israel and Iran by far, though the main concern was the use of these capabilities to support the Arab states, for instance during the Iran-Iraq war. The collapse of the SU therefore had two

\textsuperscript{178} Parsi, \textit{Treacherous Alliance}, 142.
\textsuperscript{179} Ariel Cohen, ‘Russia’s New Middle Eastern Policy: Back to Bismarck?’, \textit{Jerusalem Issue Brief} 6 (2007), 3-4.
\textsuperscript{180} Parsi, \textit{Treacherous Alliance}, 148.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., 99.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 140.
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid.
consequences in the level of threat towards Israel and Iran. First, the Soviet offensive capabilities were split up and second, the Arab states lost their Soviet support. Both led to a decrease in the level of threat.

Table 12 Military Expenditures (in millions of 2008 United States Dollars)

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<td>2,215</td>
<td>2,816</td>
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<td>8,964</td>
<td>8,981</td>
<td>10,421</td>
<td>12,135</td>
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<td>Soviet Union</td>
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n.a. = data not available

Table 13 Military Expenditures per capita (in millions of 2008 United States Dollars)

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>37,68</td>
<td>32,78</td>
<td>37,90</td>
<td>31,71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>26,13</td>
<td>35,17</td>
<td>66,36</td>
<td>83,06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>64.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>2306.22</td>
<td>1787.44</td>
<td>1542.86</td>
<td>1614.66</td>
<td>1721.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


n.a. = data not available

Table 14 Armed Forces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>395,000</td>
<td>430,000</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>440,000</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>320,000</td>
</tr>
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<td>Iran</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>550,000</td>
<td>504,000</td>
<td>513,000</td>
<td>545,600</td>
<td>540,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>222,000</td>
<td>642,500</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>382,000</td>
<td>375,000</td>
<td>389,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>165,600</td>
<td>141,000</td>
<td>141,000</td>
<td>172,000</td>
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<td>167,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>3,658,000</td>
<td>5,115,000</td>
<td>3,988,000</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


4.3.3 Aggregate Power

Egypt profited economically from the fact that it was the first Arab state to make peace with Israel, combined with its size it made Egypt the centre of regional economic activities. One of the main problems of Egypt’s economic policy has been that the whole economy was government controlled. In 1996, however, President Mubarak installed an economist, Kamal
el Ganzouri, as Prime Minister. He developed a policy directed at integrating Egypt’s economy in the global economy. Egypt’s economy now has high potential for growth in sectors like tourism, agriculture and high-technology.\textsuperscript{184} This increased Egypt’s aggregate power, though in GDP both Israel and Iran still surpass Egypt (see table 16).

Iraq’s aggregate power has suffered severely from the different wars Iraq fought under Saddam Hussein. Because of its oil industry Iraq was before 1990 one of the more prosperous and economically advanced Arab states. However, after the Iran-Iraq war and the Persian Gulf War Iraq suffered from chronic inflation and a lack of foreign investment. This was also due to the fact that the UN imposed an international sanction regime on Iraq, which closed the Iraqi economy of from the world.\textsuperscript{185} This resulted in a severe decline in GDP compared to the period before 1979. It is interesting to see that Israel, with a relative small population has an absolute GDP higher than Iraq’s GDP in the period 1979-2009 (see tables 15 and 16). In terms of aggregate power the level of threat that Iraq posed to Iran and Israel clearly decreased.

The SU still had great aggregate power during the period 1979-1991, simply because of its enormous size. Nevertheless it was clear that it suffered from a severe economic crisis: the growth rates were declining, the scarcity of exploitable resources increased and the imbalance between military production and consumer goods worsened.\textsuperscript{186} This, among other things, eventually led to the end of the SU. After this the threat that the SU had posed to Iran and Israel in terms of aggregate power, as with intentions and offensive power, evaporated.

### Table 15 Total Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>48,001,000</td>
<td>54,981,000</td>
<td>61,489,000</td>
<td>67,573,000</td>
<td>74,296,000</td>
<td>81,527,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>44,635,000</td>
<td>53,705,000</td>
<td>60,232,000</td>
<td>65,120,000</td>
<td>69,227,000</td>
<td>73,312,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
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<td>17,226,000</td>
<td>19,693,000</td>
<td>23,144,000</td>
<td>26,862,000</td>
<td>30,096,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>3,971,000</td>
<td>4,305,000</td>
<td>5,015,000</td>
<td>5,821,000</td>
<td>6,454,000</td>
<td>7,051,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>284,000,000</td>
<td>273,000,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{185} Batsheba Crocker, “Reconstructing Iraq’s Economy”, \textit{The Washington Quarterly} 27 (2004), 74 - 75.

\textsuperscript{186} Seweryn Bialer, “The Death of Soviet Communism”, \textit{Foreign Affairs} 70 (1991), 166-167.
Table 16 Gross Domestic Product (in billions of 2005 United States Dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1979</th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>27,84</td>
<td>47,01</td>
<td>76,96</td>
<td>124,63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>89,17</td>
<td>106,38</td>
<td>130,4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>19,95</td>
<td>31,63</td>
<td>64,8</td>
<td>84,39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>43,55</td>
<td>61,69</td>
<td>104,69</td>
<td>140,56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>882,72</td>
<td>1193,24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: International Macroeconomic Data Set, United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

4.3.4 Geographic Proximity

Before 1991 the map of the Middle East looked different than in 2009, with the major change being the disintegration of the SU. This also influenced the level of threat that was posed by geographic proximity (see map 2). Iran no longer had to fear a superpower at his border, since the SU no longer existed.

Map 2 The Middle East

Source: Central Intelligence Service (CIA) [http://www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)
As regards Iraq and Egypt nothing changed in the position of these two countries with regard to Iran and Israel. In terms of geographic proximity Egypt still posed the greatest threat to Israel and Iraq posed the greatest threat to Iran. However, during this period the development of missile programs in the Middle East did change the reach of offensive power from several countries.

The Iran-Iraq war had shown Iran’s vulnerability to ballistic missiles, as Iraq had easily attacked Teheran with Scuds which were launched from deep inside Iraq. In reaction to this weak spot in its defence Iran started to develop its own long-range missiles.\footnote{Parsi, Treacherous Alliance, 144.}

During the Persian Gulf War of 1991 Iraq hit Israel with Scud Missiles; this emphasized something that Israel was not aware of before: states as far away as Iraq could hit Israel. The doctrine of the periphery, as described in the second chapter, herewith lost most of its rationale.\footnote{Ibid., 161.} Especially since the new Iranian missiles had a range of nine hundred miles and could reach Israel.\footnote{Ibid., 144.}

4.4 Conclusion

The leading question of this chapter was: How can Walt’s balance of threat theory explain relations between Iran and Israel in the period 1979 – 2009? In conclusion to this question can be said that Walt’s theory can give a good explanation of Iran-Israel relations during this period. In general, relations between both states were hostile after the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. However, until 1991 both states still shared common threats: the Soviet influence in the region and Iraq. According to Walt’s theory this should lead to cooperation, which was visible during the Iran-Iraq War. Despite hostile expressions of Khomeini towards Israel, it did support Iran against their common enemy Iraq. The level of threat, constructed of Walt’s four sources of threat, during the period 1979-1991 is summarised in tables 17 and 18. The most important source of threat, aggressive intentions, is for both Iraq and the SU towards Israel and Iran high. The overall level of threat that these states pose together is also high.

After 1991, with the collapse of the SU and the decimation of the Iraqi forces, the level of threat shifts significantly. The period 1991-2009 is summarised in tables 18 and 19.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Common) Threat</th>
<th>Aggressive Intentions</th>
<th>Offensive Power</th>
<th>Aggregate Power</th>
<th>Geographic Proximity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>medium/low</td>
<td>medium/low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17 Level of Threat towards Iran 1979-1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Common) Threat</th>
<th>Aggressive Intentions</th>
<th>Offensive Power</th>
<th>Aggregate Power</th>
<th>Geographic Proximity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium/low</td>
<td>high/medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium/low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18 Level of Threat towards Israel 1979-1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Common) Threat</th>
<th>Aggressive Intentions</th>
<th>Offensive Power</th>
<th>Aggregate Power</th>
<th>Geographic Proximity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium/low</td>
<td>medium/low</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>medium/low</td>
<td>medium/low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19 Level of Threat towards Iran 1991-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Common) Threat</th>
<th>Aggressive Intentions</th>
<th>Offensive Power</th>
<th>Aggregate Power</th>
<th>Geographic Proximity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium/low</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium/low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20 Level of Threat towards Israel 1991-2009
The Soviet threat completely disappeared, which also led to an indirect decreasing of the threat the Arab states posed, since they were no longer backed up by the SU. The only common threat towards Israel and Iran that is left is Iraq, which still shows highly aggressive intentions towards both states.

However, these intentions are not supported with strong offensive or aggregate power. Moreover Iran and Israel both emerged as the strong regional powers after 1991, which made them more threatening towards each other. At this point relations between both states are extremely hostile and not cooperating, which corresponds with the balance of threat theory.
5. Identity Change

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the final analysis of relations between Iran and Israel will be made, the examination of Adler and Barnett’s ideas on security communities in the case of Iran-Israel relations during the period 1979 - 2009. The corresponding question is: how can Adler and Barnett’s theory on security communities explain the relations between Iran and Israel in the period 1979-2009? Because relations between both states were deteriorating after 1979, first the possible collapse of a security community will be discussed, followed by an examination of the economic and political transactions, the presence of third parties, domestic instabilities and common identity during this period.

5.2 The End of a Security Community

Although the theory of Adler and Barnett on security communities is aimed at explaining how a security community might come into existence, it is also possible that such a community disintegrates. Adler and Barnett acknowledge this possibility and even argue that the implosion of communities happens frequently, often as a consequence of the collapse of an empire or other systemic shocks. An example of this is the fall of the SU, due to which many communities in the states of the former SU ended. Besides external forces, communities can also be disrupted from within. Because a common identity is necessary for the build up of a security community, and identities are sensitive to change, the same forces that can help develop a security community also can break it down. Barnett also argues this in an article of his own: a shared identity might not only be the basis of an alliance, a change in identity can also undermine the alliance. To be part of a community a state has to have a stable identity and it has to be able to “keep a particular narrative going”. Thus, a state has to have a clear idea of its historical roots and its future, when such ideas between states are diverging, the community will collapse.

Therefore, Adler and Barnett argue, many of the social processes that encourage and serve the continuation of a security community are also associated with its regression. Most important herewith is the loss of mutual trust. Obviously, the most compelling evidence that a

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190 Adler and Barnett, Security Communities, 57-58.
191 Ibid., 58.
192 Barnett, Identity and Alliances in the Middle East. 404.
security community has stopped to exist is the occurrence of war between its members. In the third chapter four indictors that could foster the development of a security community were discussed in the case of Iran-Israel relations before 1979. Successively these were economic and political transactions, third parties, domestic instabilities and common identity. After 1979 Iran-Israel relations went further and further downhill with as an all time low until now the Lebanon war of 2006, in which Iran publicly supported Hezbollah against Israel.

As was argued in the third chapter one could see relations between Iran and Israel before 1979 as developing into a fragile security community. Not every condition was entirely met, although important indicators as the absence of war, frequent economic and political cooperation and similar ideas on the development of the state and its future in the region were present. Since relations worsened during the period 1979-2009 one would expect, the basis of the ideas of Adler and Barnett, a tangible change in the four indicators mentioned above. Therefore these will be analysed once more and compared to the results from the analysis in chapter three.

5.3. Regressive Alliance

During his exile Khomeini had criticised the Shah for his relationship with Israel. Under leadership of Khomeini the religious opposition grew, he accused Israel of the suppression of the Palestinians and of obstruction of the spread of Islam. Thus when Khomeini came into power he immediately severed all relations with Israel. To see what the effect of all this was on the interstate relations in this paragraph consecutively the political and economic relations, the establishment of third parties, domestic unrest and the common identity will be examined.

5.3.1 Economic and Political Transactions

Before 1979 Iran and Israel had established flourishing trade relations, though after Khomeini’s rise to power relations in many respects were the same as in 1948: Iran under the influence of anti-Israel politicians and an isolated Israel in the Middle East. Nevertheless there were still 90,000 Jews living in Iran, which were of Israel’s concern. Nowhere in the Islamic world had Jews enjoyed the freedom they had under the rule of the Shah. With the

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193 Ibid.
arrival of Khomeini this changed. Although he had promised not to harm the Jewish community, its chairman was soon executed by the new regime in April 1979.\textsuperscript{197}

Since all diplomatic relations were severed, it was difficult for Israel to raise the issue in Iran. However, an opportunity presented itself in November 1979 when the Khomeini regime became in desperate need for spare parts for this US made weapons, which were hard to obtain because of a US arms embargo against Iran. Both states made a secret agreement on government level: in exchange for spare parts, Iranian Jews would be allowed to leave Iran.\textsuperscript{198}

In addition to the concern about the Iranian Jews, there was also an economic reason for Israel to sell weapons to Iran: the arms industry made up 20 percent of its exports and accounted for 60,000 jobs.\textsuperscript{199} With the start of the Iran-Iraq war the incentive for Israel to trade arms with Iran became even greater, since a victory of Iraq was not in Israel’s interest.\textsuperscript{200} This was because Israel saw Iraq as a destabilising factor in the region and because it was afraid Iraq was developing a nuclear weapon, which could be used against Israel in the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict.\textsuperscript{201} If Iraq would defeat Iran it would be enabled to do so.

What is interesting during this period of arms sales is that a majority of the Israeli officials, including Yitzhak Rabin still seemed to regard Iran as a ‘natural ally’.\textsuperscript{202} They made a distinction between Iran the state entity and its regime, being confident that Khomeini’s revolution was declining and the Khomeini government would soon be overthrown. Through the arms trade the relations with Iran would keep continuing and the channels to more moderate Iranians would stay open.\textsuperscript{203} At this point Israel apparently still had some trust in Iran and in a common future.

Khomeini supported an Islamic organisation of society and loathed Judaism and Israel’s supposed obstruction of Islam. Thus ideologically, the arms trade with Israel by the Khomeini government seems not to be reconcilable. It made numerous attempts to get Israel expelled from the UN, it sponsored several children’s drawing contests on the theme “Israel Must Be Erased from the Earth” and it proposed the creation of a pan-Islamic army to liberate Palestine.\textsuperscript{204} However, instead of making friends with this anti-Israel stance it created more

\textsuperscript{197} Ibid. 143-144.
\textsuperscript{199} Sobhani, \textit{The Pragmatic Entente}, 146.
\textsuperscript{200} Parsi, \textit{Treacherous Alliance}, 104.
\textsuperscript{202} Parsi, \textit{Treacherous Alliance}, 104.
\textsuperscript{204} Parsi, \textit{Treacherous Alliance}, 102.
distance between Iran and the Arab governments, who feared the Iranian ambition to become the leading state in the Middle East. Consequently, at the start of the war with Iraq, Iran was rather isolated and a shift was made from radical Islam to nationalism. The arms trade with Israel was in the national interest and could help the survival of the Islamic Republic.  

After the end of the Iran-Iraq war with an armistice and the death of Khomeini in 1989 the new leadership sought renewed political contact with the West, particularly with the US to rebuild the Iranian economy. For the relations with Israel this meant a “cold peace”, in which Iran opposed the Jewish state at a rhetorical level without translating this rhetoric in operational policy.

After the two major shifts in the Middle East, the collapse of the SU and the defeat of Iraq in the Persian Gulf War in 1991, the economic and political relations between Iran entirely ceased to exist. In 1996 the Likud government in Israel did try to reduce tensions between both states, though this failed. The continuing conflict between Iran and Israel has since the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Iran primarily been manifested in confrontations through proxies. The most striking example of this is probably the Lebanon War of 2006, in which Iran supported Hezbollah against Israel.

5.3.2 Third Parties

As was discussed in the third chapter, Iran and Israel never established very ambitious institutions to regulate and formalise their relationship, though the few agreements that did exist were all abolished by the new Khomeini government. On the establishment of third parties during this period one can be brief: there were none. The economic and political transactions that did take place were as much as possible concealed from the public, this at the insistence of Iran and to the discontent of Israel. Although Iran let prevail the concept of national interest over ideology in the arms deals with Israel, it still held on to its Islamic ideological ideas, in which is no place for Israel. As Shmuel Bar from the Israeli Institute of Policy and Strategy puts it: “in the Iranian worldview you can do business with Satan himself,

Sobhani, The Pragmatic Entente, 154-156.
Parsi, Treacherous Alliance, 132.
Ibid.
Ibid.
but Satan always remains Satan”.\textsuperscript{211} From this one can conclude that part of the trust that the Israeli officials still seemed to have in future relations, did not exist in Iran.

5.3.3 Domestic Instabilities

In Israel the Arab-Israeli conflict continued to divide the Israeli people. After the rise of power of Likud in 1978, Israel’s foreign policy hardened. It opposed Palestinian statehood and took the view that Israel should hold on as much territory as possible, if necessary with the use of force.\textsuperscript{212} This hard-lined approach caused Palestinian resistance and in 1987 the first Intifada took place, a Palestinian uprising that continued several years and took its toll on Israeli society.

In the 1992 Israeli elections the Labour Party in Israel won a landslide victory. The Israeli public was tired of years of Intifada and conflict and wanted peace. This in combination with the weakening of the Arab states and the PLO led the Labour Party to conclude that Israel’s long-term security was served best by trying to make peace with the Arab states. By befriending the underdeveloped Arab states Israel could gain a consumers market which existed of 250 million consumers. This new idea became at the expense of Iran, since Rabin believed that the Israeli population would be more likely to accept peace with the Arabs if he could point towards another threat and he turned Iran into the scapegoat.\textsuperscript{213} Also the notion that Iran’s regime was not going to change in the near future had sunk in. Therefore Rabin, who only a few years earlier had argued that “Iran remained a geo-politically ally”\textsuperscript{214}, now did not miss an opportunity to stress the “Iranian danger” and Iran’s “dark and murderous regime”.\textsuperscript{215} In this case domestic politics thus did not cause an alliance, though the existence of a non-alliance was used to appease the population.

Rabin acted upon these ideas and played a leading role in the signing of the Oslo Accords, which granted the Palestinian authorities partial control over occupied territories. However, in 1995 Rabin was assassinated by an orthodox Jew, who opposed the Oslo Accords. Shimon Peres became the new prime minister.

In 1996 the division once again showed when Benjamin Netanyahu defeated Peres on an anti-Oslo platform in the elections. The new Likud government froze the peace process and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{211} Parsi, \textit{Treachorous Alliance}, 109
\item \textsuperscript{212} Ibid., 69.
\item \textsuperscript{214} Parsi, \textit{Israel-Iranian Relations Assessed}, 256.
\end{itemize}
re-evaluated Israel’s relations with Iran, which resulted in Likud seeking to settle the political issues with Iran.\footnote{216} Netanyahu’s aim was to turn the Israeli public against the Oslo Accords and thus against the Palestinians. Using Iran to reach this would have been counterproductive, since blaming Iran for Palestinian terrorist actions would not lead to the desired anti-Palestine sentiment.\footnote{217} Thus good relations with Iran were preferred.

However, the shift between Labour and Likud kept continuing, with Labour leader Ehud Barak winning the elections in 1999 and again with his resigning in 2001 in favour of Likud leader Ariel Sharon. After Sharon suffered a serious stroke, Ehud Olmert assumed office. Olmert did believe that Israel might needed to relinquish some of the occupied territories, though he also stated to “firmly believe in the historic right of the people of Israel to the entire land of Israel”.\footnote{218} During the Lebanon war in 2006 Olmert’s popularity decreased and people called for his resign, although he stayed in office until 2009.

In Iran Khomeini established immediately after the fall of the Shah a Revolutionary Tribunal established to oversee the domestic politics, which made Khomeini in charge of every important aspect of Iranian society. Khomeini was declared Supreme Leader for life.\footnote{219} The Iran-Iraq war gave the state an immediate impulse to expand the control of the government on society. Khomeini presented it as a patriotic and religiously-inspired revolutionary war.\footnote{220}

However, the end of the war with an armistice in 1988 brought division into the Iranian society. On the one hand, the hard-line revolutionaries argued that Iran had proven to be weak and needed to rearm “to defend the revolution”. On the other hand, a group led by Hashemi Rafsanjani, the new president, argued that Iran needed to end its international isolation and that economic development should be the focus point.\footnote{221} Within a year after the armistice Khomeini had died, Khamenei became the new Supreme Leader.

The economic crisis that resulted from the war, the fall of the oil prices and the declining foreign investments did lead to discontent, though instead of a new revolution it paved the way for reform. After Rafsjani resigned in 1997 Sayyed Muhammad Khatami won elections. Khatami was a reformer and allowed the publication of reform newspapers, which led to more public debate. Khatami also improved foreign relations and even announced that

\footnote{216}{Ibid.}
\footnote{217}{Ibid.}
\footnote{218}{Speech by Acting Prime Minister Ehud Omert to the 6th Herzliya Conference, January 24, 2006.}
\footnote{219}{Abrahamian, A History of Modern Iran, 163-164.}
\footnote{220}{Ibid., 171-176.}
\footnote{221}{Parsi, Treacherous Alliance, 132.}
Iran would accept a two state solution for Palestine if the Palestinians agreed to this themselves. The Khatami government also adopted less severe rules on women’s clothing and other traditional interpretations of the shari’a. This to great discontent of the conservatives, who used the Guardian Council to veto most of the reform bills. In the 2005 elections the conservatives won, in the most part because large numbers of women, students and intellectuals stayed home out of protest. The new president Ahmadinejad returned to a firm anti-Israel stance and declared that “Israel must be wiped of the map”.224

From this paragraph can be concluded that both Iran and Israel suffered from domestic unrest during this period. Two interesting notes about this can be made: first, there can be argued that there is a connection between the domestic politics and the alliance behaviour. In Iran the Khomeini government chose to severe all relations with Israel, while the Shah had developed warm relations with Israel. In Israel on the other hand the attitude towards Iran was also determined by which party was in government, Likud or Labour. In this sense Adler and Barnett are right when they argue that the domestic level is as important as the systemic level.

Second, however, there should be noted that both states suffered from domestic instabilities during both periods, while the relations differed from friendly to hostile. Thus the mere fact that there are domestic instabilities in a state does not necessarily lead to an alliance. Therefore one can question the value of the indicator ‘domestic instabilities’ in determining the establishment of a (nascent) security community.

5.3.4 Diverging Identities

During the period under discussion the identities of Israel and Iran were no longer converging to a similar anti-Arab, pro-Western, modern and secular identity. On the face of it this divergence is mainly caused by the Islamic revolution in Iran, which led to a considerable change in the Iranian state and therefore, as will be argued, in its identity. However, the state of Israel was during this period also subject to change.

As was discussed in the part on domestic instabilities the Israeli society was divided over the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Oslo Accords, which tried to find a solution. This division is also connected to the Israeli identity, the peace process is not simply a territorial

222 Abrahamian, A History of Modern Iran, 187-189.
223 Ibid., 193.
issue; it concerns the fundamentals of Israeli national identity.\textsuperscript{225} During the first three decades of Israel’s existence it was governed by the centrist, secular and leftist Labour party which believed that Israel should leave occupied territory in order to maintain a Zionist and liberal identity. In the religious view Judea and Samaria, which were handed over to Palestine in the Oslo Accords, are part of Israel and connected to the “Jewish Soul”, in this view the peace process threatens the very idea of Zionism.\textsuperscript{226}

Three developments in the late 1980s and early 1990s created a crisis about Israeli identity. Until then the debate over Israel’s relation to the territories it had captured during the 1967 war had been mainly academic, when Israel started to negotiate with the Arab states it suddenly became tangible. This connects to the second development, the readiness of Arab states to negotiate with Israel, something that had not occurred before. The third event was the collapse of the SU and thus the end of the Cold War. This tested the relations between Israel and the US, because the US no longer needed Israel in its struggle against the SU, and completely changed the political landscape of the Middle East.\textsuperscript{227}

The continuing change from Labour to Likud during this period shows this identity crisis, both parties tried to shape the national identity by redefining the dominant narrative that informed this identity.

Labour politicians articulated a view of Israeli identity defined by Zionism\textsuperscript{228}, democracy, progression and secularity. They imagined a future for Israel in which it was no longer an isolated state in the region and could share with others. This Zionist and liberal identity made the Oslo Accords possible.\textsuperscript{229} However, the religious community was angered by this narrative, which it viewed as an assault to its core values. The Likud party in response articulated an Israeli identity that is Jewish, nationalist, and liberal and retains control over the territories.\textsuperscript{230}

The important differences between both narratives and the connected imagined futures for Israel divided Israeli society even further.\textsuperscript{231} This continuing change also had its impact on

\textsuperscript{227} Ibid., 72-73.
\textsuperscript{228} Zionism is a nationalist Jewish political movement that, in its broadest sense calls for the self-determination of the Jewish people and a sovereign Jewish homeland. Zionism is often equated to Judaism, however this is a misconception. There are for example Jews who oppose Zionism and non-Jews who support it. See: David M. Gordis, ‘Zionism, Israel and World Jewry: A Reappraisal’, Judaism 39 (1990), 262 - 274.
\textsuperscript{229} Barnett, The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process. Re/creating the Un/thinkable, 75-79
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid. 82.
\textsuperscript{231} Ibid.
Israel’s foreign relations and thus for its relation with Iran, as was also deliberated on in the section on domestic instabilities.

In Iran the establishment of the Islamic Republic dramatically transformed the state’s internal policies, economy, and society, and also had great impact on the entire Middle East.\textsuperscript{232} To its former allies, Iran had unexpectedly changed from “an island of stability” to one of the leading threats in the region.\textsuperscript{233} Given the constructivist assumption that identity is constructed, the Khomeini government had a unique possibility after the revolution to forge a new identity for what it called “the true Iran”.\textsuperscript{234}

Where the Shah during his rule emphasised the Indo-European heritage of Iran and sought to eradicate references to Iran’s Islamic heritage (he altered for instance the official calendar), Khomeini underlined the Shi’ite Islamic dimension of Iranian identity.\textsuperscript{235} Besides the immediate renunciation of the cooperation with Israel, Khomeini also started to “export the revolution” by supporting terrorist organisations in neighbouring states.\textsuperscript{236} In Israel the analyses of the revolution in Iran became firmly rooted in a narrative of the “absences” and “failures” of Iranian modernity, causing an even greater wedge between Israel and Iran.\textsuperscript{237}

It can be argued that the Iran-Iraq War heralded once again a shift in Iranian identity. Khomeini tried to become a figurehead for pan-Islamism in the region, although in this he encountered opposition of his Arab and Sunni neighbours. The attack by Iraq made this painfully clear. Khomeini became more aware of the concept of national interest and as the war continued he stressed more the importance of nationalism and Shi’a Islam, in contrast with Sunni Islam and pan-Islam. He presented the conflict with Iraq as a re-enactment of the prophet’s war against unbelievers.\textsuperscript{238}

This consequent disposition of Iran as an Islamic Republic, which will protect fellow Muslims also influenced the relation with Israel. Based on its newly constructed Islamic identity the Khomeini government placed itself in a position in which it has to reject the existence of Israel and the peace process.\textsuperscript{239}

When Khatami became president it became clear that Iran was reorienting its identity, somewhat in reaction to the top-down effort to promote the Islamic and revolutionary identity

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{232} Suzanne Maloney, ‘Identity and Change in Iran’s Foreign Policy’ in: Shibley Telhami and Michael Barnett ed., \textit{Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East} (New York 2002), 88.
\textsuperscript{233} Maloney, \textit{Identity and Change in Iran’s Foreign Policy}, 89.
\textsuperscript{234} Ibid., 88-89.
\textsuperscript{235} Ibid., 94-99.
\textsuperscript{236} Ibid. 104.
\textsuperscript{237} Ram, \textit{Iranophobia}, 32.
\textsuperscript{238} Maloney, \textit{Identity and Change in Iran’s Foreign Policy}, 106.
\textsuperscript{239} Ibid., 108.
\end{footnotesize}
after 1979. Through the reforming decrees of Khatami the public debate accelerated leading to new agenda’s and a renewed western orientation. However, Iranian society has not reached a comfortable consensus on this renewed identity. Although progressive forces try to push religion to the margins, it is still an explicit part of the Iranian identity. A polarisation between a conservative Islamic and a progressive secular narrative occurs. With the election of Ahmadinejad the pendulum at the end of 2009 was in favour of the conservative story.

From this paragraph can be concluded that the identities of Israel and Iran were no longer compatible. Moreover, both identities changed in comparison to the period before 1979, though also during the period 1948-1979 both national identities were subject to change, which completely runs counter the idea of a stable and common identity that can form the foundation of a security community.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the relations between Iran and Israel during 1979-2009 were analysed on the basis of the theory of Adler and Barnett on security communities. The leading question was: how can Adler and Barnett’s theory on security communities explain the relations between Iran and Israel in the period 1979-2009? In answering this question it can be said that from the current analyses it becomes clear that if there was a possibility for the development of a nascent security community before 1979, it surely was not after 1979. There were no dependable expectations of peaceful change, if they were (still) there they would have been offset by the Lebanon War of 2006. Also the political and economic transactions were reduced to a minimum and third parties were rare even before 1979.

During roughly the first decade Israel did seem to have still some trust in Iran and in future relations, though because of the lack of trust in and cooperation with Israel on Iran’s part an asymmetric relation developed. And the more Israel seemed to realise that the Islamic Republic was there to stay, the more aloof it became towards Iran.

The domestic divisions in both Iranian and Israeli society did not bring the two states closer, as would have been expected, since Adler and Barnett argue that domestic divisions can lead to cooperation with another government to suppress the domestic unrest. The fact that both states suffered from domestic instabilities in both periods of friendship and hatred is detrimental to domestic instabilities as an indicator for a possible security community.

\[^{240}\text{Ibid. 114-115.}\]
Nevertheless, this analysis does show that domestic politics have profound influence on external relations. In Israel it depended on whether Labour or Likud was in power which approach towards Iran was taken. In Iran the fall of the Shah led to an Islamic Republic wherein only with great difficulty and incidentally was place for transactions with Israel. In this both states seemed to be rather pragmatic and rational, which coincides with Walt’s idea on state behaviour, though guided by internal reasons, which deviates from Walt’s theory which only takes external influences into account.

Another interesting note in comparison to the analysis on basis of Walt’s theory is the influence of the collapse of the SU and the diminishing threat of Iraq in 1991. Where in the Walt-analysis this seemed to be the explanation for the complete severance of Iran-Israel relations, in the current explanation a broader picture is formed. The systemic forces are brought into the analysis, though as one of the forces which also simultaneously influence each other. Other events that on the basis of this analysis have contributed to the decline of Iran-Israel relations were the loss of trust of Israel that the Khomeini government would be overthrown by more moderate Iranians, the shift in Israeli government and the willingness of the Arab states to start peace negotiations with Israel.

Also an important shift in Israeli identity at the end of the 1980s and the early 1990s was identified, which connects to the last conclusion on this chapter: because both national identities of Iran and Israel were instable and suffered from continuing change after 1979, one of the most important foundations of an alliance in the vision of Adler and Barnett was gone: a common and stable identity.
Conclusion

As was stated in the introduction, the research question of this study is: to what extent can Alliance Theory offer an explanation for the difference in the relations between Iran and Israel in the periods 1948 - 1979 and 1979 - 2009? To answer this question three contrasts were analysed: the relations between Iran and Israel, the periods 1948-1979 and 1979-2009 and the theories of Walt and Adler and Barnett on alliances.

The research question followed from two purposes: to provide an analysis of Alliance Theory in International Relations (IR) and to gain insight in the relations of Iran and Israel. In the first chapter a start was made with the first purpose, providing an analysis of Alliance Theory in IR. What was concluded from this chapter is that there exists a whole range of theories on alliance formation. All these theories contain different ideas on how alliances come into existence, although the majority seemed to draw on rationalist principles.

However, more (post)modern approaches are emerging and the realist theories are receiving more and more competition from theories from other IR-perspectives. Therefore two differing theories, from both ends of the IR-spectrum, where chosen to be further analysed. First, the balance of threat theory of Stephen M. Walt, who can be placed in the traditional realist strand of IR. And second, the theory of Emanuel Adler and Michael N. Barnett on security communities, who come from the modern constructivist corner.

Besides this contrast, which is helpful in gaining insight in a broad range of ideas on alliances, both theories also aim to explain alliances and relations between states in general and are not focused on an isolated part of international relations (e.g. ‘third world states’ or ‘regional alliances’). This made them suitable for comparison in the two case studies of Iran-Israel relations before and after 1979.

In the second and fourth chapter the balance of threat theory of Walt was tested. In short, Walt’s argumentation is that alliances are based on a common external threat. The higher the level of threat, the higher the necessity for cooperation. Walt identifies four factors that can influence this level of threat: aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power and (perceived) aggressive intentions. From the analyses in chapters two and four showed that Walt’s theory could provide for a good explanation of Iran-Israel relations. When the threat that was posed by the three main aggressors, Egypt, Iraq and the SU, was high, the relations between Iran and Israel were friendly and vice versa.

However, because of the strong emphasis on external threat of this theory, the analysis is also led in this direction and it therefore only looks into the threat other states pose towards
Iran and Israel. And although the balance of threat theory provides for a good explanation of why the two states decided to cooperate, it does not shed light on the nature of these relations, simply because to Walt this is not of any relevance. This does not make Walt’s theory less true, although it makes it only partly helpful with the second purpose of this study: to gain insight in Iran-Israel relations.

In this sense, the theory of Adler and Barnett is complementary to that of Walt. Instead of strategic and interest-based alignments, Adler and Barnett see, because of their constructivist worldview, alliances that develop into security communities based on shared identities and trust. In the third and fifth chapter the factor that sets a security community apart from other kind of communities, that is that its members entertain dependable expectations of a peaceful change, was discussed. Also the four indicators, which according to Adler and Barnett suggest and foster the origins of a security community in its nascent phase were examined in the case of Iran-Israel relations. Successively these indicators are: economic and political transactions, the establishment of third parties, the confronting of domestic instabilities and (the referring to) a common identity.

As was stated in the introduction, in this analysis two periods that roughly represented a period of friendliness and a period of hostility were compared, with the Iranian revolution of 1979 as a turning point. However, through the application of both theories this rough division could be more differentiated and a diversified image of Iran-Israel relations showed.

Through the Walt-analyses actually four periods were to be distinguished. In the second chapter these were the periods 1948-1970 and 1970-1979, in which the new benign intentions of Egypt towards both Iran and Israel played a crucial role. Because of this, the overall level of threat as of 1970 diminished and the necessity for an alliance also decreased. This shift could explain why Iran took a more distant approach towards Israel during the late seventies. From this can also be concluded that although the Islamic revolution in Iran was a major setback for Iran-Israel relations, it was not the sole reason relations deteriorated.

In the fourth chapter the periods 1979-1991 and 1991-2009 could be distinguished. Until 1991 Israel and Iran still shared common threats: the Soviet influence in the region and Iraq. According to Walt these shared threats should lead to cooperation, which was indeed visible during the Iran-Iraq War. Despite hostile comments of Khomeini on Israel, it still supported Iran against their common enemy Iraq. After 1991, with the collapse of the SU and the defeat of the Iraqi army, the level of threat heavily decreases, while relations worsened to a point of non-cooperation and extreme hostilities.
However, as was mentioned above, the application of Walt’s theory only shows a particular and threat-based image of Iran-Israel relations. The analysis of Adler and Barnett’s approach led to more insight in the nature of these relations. An interesting point that could be concluded from the third chapter on the 1948-1979 period is that relations between both states were not as easy as might have showed from the chapters on Walt’s theory. Iran tried to keep the alliance low-profile, while Israel wanted Iran to be more open about their friendship. Also the lack of third parties indicated the informal character of the alliance and the absence of commitment to long-term cooperation. On the other hand this chapter also showed that besides external threats, both states also had economic and political motives to cooperate. It could even be established that Iran and Israel during this period had identifiable interfaces: anti-Arab, modern, secular and Western-oriented, for Adler and Barnett this is important since such similarities can foster cooperation and the development of a security community.

This connects to the most important conclusion on the fifth chapter: during the period 1979-2009 both national identities of Iran and Israel were instable and suffered from continuing change after 1979. In Israel Labour and Likud were in an ongoing struggle for power, which had also implications for the relations with Iran. This depended on which party was in government. In Iran the fall of the Shah led to an Islamic Republic upon which Khomeini forged a new identity for what he called “the true Iran”. Herewith one of the fundamental elements of an alliance in the vision of Adler and Barnett was gone: a common and stable identity.

Whereas Walt’s theory is very strict and therefore easy to verify, Adler and Barnett’s theory is more a broad approach or what they call a ‘conceptualisation of the mechanisms and conditions by which security communities develop’. This is at the same time its weakness and its strength. A weakness, because it does not lead to incontrovertible results, as the indicator ‘domestic instabilities’ shows. Both Israel and Iran suffered from these in both periods of alliance and hatred, thus domestic instabilities not necessarily lead to friendly relations.

But also a strength, because it stimulates to thinking outside the box and to form a broader idea on the nature of the relations between Iran and Israel. Through the approach of Adler and Barnett the political and economic dimension of the relations was highlighted and the importance of domestic politics and identity in a state’s decision to align were put forward. What was missing in the rigid approach of Walt was made complete by the more disordered approach of Adler and Barnett.
Therefore it is unnecessary to pick one of both theories as ‘the better one’, since both theories are complementary by having a completely different focus. Moreover, the analysis of two (similar) cases is not enough to dismiss one theory as inferior.

Thus, returning to the research question: to what extent can Alliance Theory offer an explanation for the difference in the relations between Iran and Israel in the periods 1948 - 1979 and 1979 - 2009? In answer to this can be said that Alliance Theory, comprising both the balance of threat theory and the theory on security communities, can provide for a broad and solid explanation on the difference in the relations between Iran and Israel in the periods before and after 1979.
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