

# Editorial Note

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The present Note is written with a mixed sense of pleasure, pride, and humility looking to the future and what lies ahead. It is certainly a matter of pleasure and pride for all of us at the Iranian Journal of Foreign Affairs – IRFA as it has come to be called by its slowly growing readership – that the first issue came out at long last back in mid-March, and more importantly, that it was not found to be disappointing. That proved to be a great moral boost, which I presume is critically needed to stay the course. In fact, we were truly humbled by many words of encouragement, which far exceeded what we deserved or expected. We also received many helpful suggestions and recommendations, beginning with form and format and extending to content and analysis, which we appreciate and will take into consideration.

Many welcomed IRFA since the first issue appeared on the Website because of the potential it has to partly fill in the existing paucity of English-language journals in this field coming out of Iran. That is really what makes our task all the more challenging, if not outright daunting.

The range of practical difficulties that producing a quality English-language journal in a non-English-speaking country and environment involves cannot be overstated. The decision to

undertake to publish such a journal on a quarterly basis claiming to aspire quality, as underlined in very clear terms in our mission and also in the note in the first issue, was not easy at all, and in fact the reason why it took us much longer than expected to launch the journal. We are also conscious of the actual constraints of trying to provide independent and objective perspectives on the issues we deal with. This is quite a challenging undertaking in itself, and makes the task all the more trying as we struggle to screen through a growing number of solicited and unsolicited articles and essays, in both English and Persian.

With these few brief reflections on the feedback on the first issue, I feel particularly pleased to present the second issue and look forward to receiving further substantive comments and observations on the content of the second issue. I also welcome more submissions – full-length articles, book reviews, and short analytical notes – on the wide spectrum of regional and international issues of importance to and affecting Iran and its foreign affairs and policy.

And finally, a word on the content of the current issue, which I am pleased to add, comes out on time. As in the inaugural issue, we have tried to remain faithful to the thrust of our mission; tackling issues and topics directly related to Iran's foreign policy priorities. We have brought together a total of seven articles and two book reviews, the majority of which, interestingly enough, have been authored by retired and active Iranian career diplomats – in fact a mere coincidence than otherwise. The first article deals with question of stability and



security in the Persian Gulf from the particular vantage point of the future approach and policies of the post-Saddam Iraq. The second article discusses the nexus between the requirements and challenges of a proactive diplomacy and the most critical sector of the Iranian economy – oil and gas industry. The next article on the Iranian foreign policy approach towards the United States – by an academic – argues that there exists a dichotomy between the medium-term suspicious approach and the long-term proactive approach. While the fourth article sheds light on the approach and conduct of the UN Security Council towards three consecutive wars in the Persian Gulf between 1980 and 2003, the fifth tries to explore the role of the Ba’athist Iraq in the controversy on the Iranian islands of Abu Musa and the Tunbs. The sixth article tackles the Afghan drug problem as an international security issue and its impact on Iran. The last essay in the issue – by a Greek Iranologist – provides a brief look into the current state of Iranian Studies. As for the book reviews, the Journal’s Editor puts his pen to the paper in a somewhat unconventional piece introducing and summarizing an American book on the US foreign policy towards the Islamic Republic, which also includes some personal reflections at the end. The second review looks into a book in Persian on the role of the new Iraq and the emerging security system in the area.

**Mahmood Vaezi**

**Editor-in-chief**