

Editorial Note

With this Note for the fourth issue, I and the IRFA family are in fact celebrating the successful completion of the first year of our collective endeavor in producing this journal. The Note is written with a combination of joy and a much bigger sense of responsibility that we all feel and share. The fact that we have made it, against quite a number of serious odds, to move from the inaugural issue which took almost two years to come out to the second, third, and now the fourth, within a span of eleven months – just over a month late for the current issue - has indeed been a feat, to be proud of, and also to feel humbled because of the bigger task lying ahead.

Since the third issue appeared in mid-October 2010, we have been engaged with the all-too-important administrative process of applying for certification with the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. That, as everybody involved in this line of activity knows fully well, is a time-consuming process and even at times tricky and cumbersome. We are right in the middle of it and look forward to an early completion of the process so that we can enjoy the privileges of academic recognition, similar to other colleagues - and journals - who have trekked along the same road. This process has also brought us in closer touch with the distinguished members of the Editorial Board. Moreover, a meeting back in late November with the Iranian members of the Board living here in Tehran also gave us the opportunity of

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receiving a dearth of helpful scholarly comments and observations on all aspects of the journal, which we have tried to take on board for the current issue. As a concrete outcome of the meeting, we have succeeded in preparing the much-needed Instructions for Authors, a shorter version of which is reproduced in this issue, with the full version to be found on the CSR website. We look forward to continue our close liaison with the Editorial Board, particularly we hope, with a sense of anticipation, to receive their contributions to the future issues of the journal – which could be made in three distinct forms; full-length articles, book reviews, or short analytical notes.

As in the previous issues, we have assembled seven articles and two book reviews for the current issue. The first article, written jointly by an Iranian member of the Editorial Board and a CSR research fellow, deals with Iran-US relations, especially from the vantage point of Iran's security environment and its current imperatives. In the second article, also by an Iranian academic/analyst, the state of Iran's relations with China, an important partner and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has been explored. The third article, authored by an Iranian academic, looks into the relations between Iran and the Arab states of the Persian Gulf [GCC] during the 2005-09 period. In the fourth article, another joint endeavor by Iran's former ambassador to Riyadh and a CSR research fellow, Iran-Saudi relations since the establishment of the Islamic Republic have been addressed. The fifth article, authored jointly by two Iranian academics, explores the reasons and rationale for Israel's opposition to the idea of a nuclear-free Middle East. In the sixth article, an Italian academic presents an analysis of the current state of Shi'ite Studies, with particular focus on the nexus with the Islamic Republic. The last article in the issue contains the report of a roundtable held in October 2010 between the Center for Strategic Research (CSR) and the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) on Iran-EU relations and regional issues. In the first book review, an Iranian academic living in the United States reviews a recent American book on why the U.S. intelligence failed in



Iran (1979) and Iraq (2003). The last piece in the issue contains a review by an Iranian analyst of a book authored by an Iranian career diplomat/academic on the implications and repercussions of the current NATO missions for Iran.

In this Note, I would also like to draw attention to an important aspect of IRFA – its content and the range of issues it tackles. The articles assembled in the issue, as in the previous issues, reflect our preoccupation with some of the extremely critical issues in Iran’s foreign relations, including in particular, the state of relations with the neighboring countries and also with important international players such as China in this issue and Russia in the previous one. The relations with the United States – or lack thereof – and in fact, the dispute-ridden nature of these relations, particularly on the nuclear dossier, and the significant negative impact of continuing tension with Washington on Iran, inclusive of its foreign relations, has been one of the key issues we have kept addressing. We have carried at least one article in each issue on the nuclear dossier and relations with the U.S. This emphasis, aside from the particular bilateral aspect and the complexities involved, is also related to the pervasive impact of the U.S. global role and presence and influence in our region and immediate neighborhood. As clearly reflected in the detailed discussion of the first article in this issue, developments in Iran’s security environment since 2001 as a result of the U.S. military engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq have created a highly sensitive situation as well as new security imperatives for Iran. The current unfolding tumult across the region, inclusive of the Persian Gulf area, is destined to have further grave implications for Iran and its precarious security environment, and on that basis, for the country’s foreign policy.

S.M.K. Sajjadpour
Editor-in-Chief