

المركز العربي للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات  
ARAB CENTER FOR RESEARCH & POLICY STUDIES



(Doha Institute)

## **Case Analysis**

*Why was Mottaki Dismissed?*

*An inquiry into an event*

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*Doha, February - 2011*

## *Series (Case Analysis)*

# *Contents*

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<b><i>WHY WAS MOTTAKI DISMISSED? AN INQUIRY INTO AN EVENT .....</i></b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1 - THE DISMISSAL: THE SURPRISE AND THE QUESTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2 - THE REMOVAL IN THE IRANIAN MEDIA .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3-ATTITUDES OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4 - WHY WAS MOTTAKI DISMISSED? .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>13</b>

## Introduction

There is no doubt that tracing the ramifications of the Iranian events and the subtlety of their interconnected elements connotes a decisive factor in understanding the Iranian system and its relationship to others. However, if we evaluate the geo-strategic situation of the affairs of *bilad fars* (Persia/Iran), and its historical and cultural particularities as a civilization, we will also realize that there are more profound factors that contributed to the creation of this order. If such is the reality, then it is indispensable for the specialist to deepen his analysis and study of the factors that sustain and underlie these events; if it intensifies his daily following [of the events] on the one hand, then it also calls for him to avoid falling into modes of media coverage and its pressures, on the other.

Evaluating the many facets of the Iranian events and delving into their veracity has become a necessary precondition for any study in this field. Naturally, such an intention can only be rectified from within the constellation of the event itself, which provides for the observer and researcher an abundant and rich field of data and imposes the necessity of a mechanism for translation from Farsi into Arabic that conveys the various angles of the event as well as its more subtle intricacies.

This paper deals with the dismissal of the former Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Manushir Mottaki.<sup>1</sup> In it, I relied on a cluster of both official and oppositional Iranian electronic websites, as well as some that may be counted as intermediate between the two.

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<sup>1</sup> Manushir Mottaki was born in 1953 in the city of Benzarkez, in Northern Iran. He received his BA in the social sciences in 1976, from Amin Benglor University in India. He received his MA in International Relations from Tehran University in 1991. He is fluent in English, Turkish and Urdu. Like President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, he is affiliated with Islamic University of Engineers. He was elected in the first term of Islamic Shura Council (Parliament) in 1984. In 1985, he was appointed ambassador of Iran to Turkey. In 1994, he was the Iranian ambassador in Japan. In 1999, he became assistant to the Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister. He was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in the government of Ahmadinejad in 2005, and Ahmadinejad dismissed him in December 2010.

## 1 - The Dismissal: the surprise and the question

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad issued two decrees on December 13, 2010: the first mandating the dismissal of Foreign Minister Manushir Mottaki, while thanking him for the work he had undertaken, and, the second appointing the Head of the Iranian Council on Atomic Energy Ali Akbar Salehi <sup>2</sup> in his place as a substitute.

The unexpected decision to dismiss Mottaki triggered many questions about Iran, both internally and externally. First, it was decreed at a time when Manushir Mottaki was on a diplomatic mission overseas to deliver a message to his Senegalese counterpart, Abdullah Waad. Second, he did not offer any explicit, nor veiled, explanations or indications about the factors which motivated this decision, especially given that it took place days after the resumption of negotiations between Iran and the six major superpowers over Iran's nuclear program.

In an article posted on the electronic website of former Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sadiq Kharazai, there is a mention that, during a session of talks between President Waad and Manushir Mottaki, the director of the office of Senegalese President Abdullah Waad delivered a message to the President, stating that: "Mr. Mottaki was dismissed, a short while ago, from the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs." Immediately, after reading this short message, Abdullah Waad informed his guest, Mottaki, that 'news about your dismissal reached us, and in light of this, we will treat you from this moment forward as [simply] a friend.' Additionally, electronic sites mentioned that the Senegalese authority transported Mottaki back to his place of residence in an ordinary car, without security guards.<sup>3</sup> The news website "Asr Iran (The Age of Iran)" published a news analysis, which mentioned that the Senegalese government conveyed to its Iranian counterpart its indignation and its deep resentment over the decision of Ahmadinejad, which it considered an affront to the Senegalese.<sup>4</sup>

On December 18<sup>th</sup> 2010, the Iranian Foreign Ministry held a reception on the occasion of the transfer of responsibilities for the outgoing, removed minister and his incoming replacement; however, both Manushir Mottaki and President Ahmadinejad were absent, while Vice President

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<sup>2</sup> Iranian academician and politician who served as the representative of Iran to the International Atomic Energy Agency for more than four years. He is the head of Iranian Council on Atomic Energy and worked as a professor as well as dean of the Sharif University of Technology. He is a member of the Iranian Academy for Sciences and the International Center for Theoretical Physics in Italy. He received his BA from the American University of Beirut (AUB), and his PhD in mechanical engineering at MIT in the US in 1977, during the course of exchange programs between the former Iranian government and MIT to train the first generation of Iranian nuclear scientists. In January 2004, he was nominated for the post of Scientific Advisor to Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>3</sup><http://www.irdiplomacy.ir/index.php?Lang=fa&Page=24&TypeId=&ArticleId=9794&BranchId=10&Action=ArticleBodyView>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.asriran.com/fa/news/149437/25>

Muhammad Reza Rahimi was in attendance. According to the report transmitted by the online Iranian journal *Jamejam*, Rahimi affirmed at this meeting that Mottaki was aware of the decision to remove him *before* his trip to Senegal, adding: “Given the dedication of Mottaki and his loyalty, he undertook to travel for his mission and to fulfill it in the best way.” Rahimi denied, during this meeting, the removal of a government official during the carrying out of his mission, considering that to constitute unethical conduct and indicating that the (Iranian) state does not utilize such a method in its conduct. He added that, “the work of officials in the Islamic Republic is based on love,” and affirmed that the position of Manushir Mottaki within the state is preserved in full.<sup>5</sup>

Following on these remarks, Manushir Mottaki issued a communiqué posted on electronic websites, in which he described the means of his removal as humiliating and un-Islamic in conduct, as well as in contravention of political and diplomatic norms. He denied knowledge of his impending removal previous to his strip to Senegal, just as he denied knowledge of who would succeed him in his post and the date for the occasion of transfer of authority at the ministry. Also, he asserted that President Ahmadinejad was aware that Mottaki would travel for the purpose of his last mission to two countries at least.

In the context of absolute denial of the truthfulness of what Rahimi claimed, Mottaki affirmed that he was made aware of the news of his removal by the Senegalese authorities during his meeting with them. He concluded his communiqué with a call to government officials to desist from engaging in lies because such is not commensurate with the principles of the Islamic order and the history of its senior founders, just as it is not in accordance – in his view – with the culture of the Iranian people or their etiquette or norms.<sup>6</sup>

The decision to remove Manushir Mottaki was a subject for announcements in the United States and the European Union; however, internal reactions in Iran were greater than what transpired outside. I will let it suffice here to convey the greatest amount possible of these reactions and will begin with the initial reactions in the Iranian media.

## 2 - The removal in the Iranian Media

The Iranian media reacted to the decision of President Ahmadinejad, which led to the removal Manushir Mottaki, and what accompanied it of developments; most journalistic and electronic forums reproached the timing of the decision and the means of its execution.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://ww.jamejamonline.ir/papertext.aspx?newsnum=100893894066>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.aftabnews.ir/vdcae0n6o49n6u1.k5k4.html>



Husayn Shari‘atmadari, editor-in-chief of the conservative newspaper *Kayhan (Universe)*, as well as the representative of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei at the Kayhan Establishment for Printing and Publication, was harshly criticized for his editorial on the decision to remove Mottaki. Shari‘atmadari wrote: “The decision to remove the Foreign Minister during a foreign diplomatic visit might possibly be construed to be a public humiliation of the person of the Foreign Minister in addition to it being an indication of a sudden and unforeseen failure in the foreign policy of a particular country.”

Shari‘atmadari also mocked the timing of the decision saying: “There was no decree of *fiqh* (i.e., Islamic jurisprudence) advising the President that it was [Islamically] preferable (*mustahibb*) to remove the Foreign Minister on the eve of the nineteenth and twentieth of the month of Muharram, or that delaying his removal until after these two days was a matter that was [Islamically] reprehensible (*makruh*).”

In the context of revealing the reasons for the removal, Shari‘atmadari mentioned Mottaki’s rejection of a directive endorsed by Ahmadinejad, several months previous, which resulted in the appointment of a number of his long-time associates as special representatives for the president in a number of foreign posts; at the forefront of these was his controversial son-in-law – Asfandiyar Rahim Musha’i. Mottaki considered these appointments to be tantamount to the level of the foreign diplomatic apparatus, and his apprehensions are identical to those expressed by (Leader) ‘Ali Khamenei – the matter which obliged Ahmadinejad to modify the job titles from ‘personal/special delegates’ to ‘advisors’.<sup>7</sup>

Under the heading: “By Decision of the President of the Republic, Mottaki has Gone and Salihi has become Foreign Minister”, the website “News Net,” which is affiliated with the Iranian Television Broadcasting Organization (IRINN), claims that the removal came at a time when Mottaki was outside the country on an official visit to Senegal for the purpose of conveying a message from Ahmadinejad to Abdullah Waad. The site revealed a number of views of readers who criticized the decision of the president, and among these was one who stated: “I am among the supporters of Ahmadinejad, but I feel embarrassed and shamed by this behavior.”<sup>8</sup> The Iranian press, in the two days following (December 14-15), reflected similar reactions to a large extent; indicating consensus over the censure of the style chosen by the president in removing his Minister and among these forums, we would mention the following:

- The semi-official newspaper *Hamshahri* published a news analysis by Muhammad Ali Badri in which he indicated that news of the removal of Mottaki had become widespread

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<sup>7</sup> <http://h-shariatmadari.blogfa.com/post-112.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.irinn.ir/Default.aspx?TabId=15&nid=199623>

a few days previous. He then presented a series of events that had deepened the chasm between the minister and the president during the period of his tenure of responsibility as head of the Foreign Ministry. Among the most important of these were the heated debate that accompanied the appointment of Mottaki at the beginning of the first government of Ahmadinejad, as well as differences between the minister and the president over a commission which was sent by the former to investigate the actions of the Iranian ambassador in Italy, and Ahmadinejad's appointment of a group of diplomatic representatives for himself in some countries.<sup>9</sup>

- The newspaper *Sharq*, which is a reformist journal, wrote under the title “Mottaki Informed of his Removal in Senegal” that Ahmadinejad surprised Mottaki with his removal, and he had survived the resignation or removal of twenty-one ministers during past years in the tenure of President Ahmadinejad in office. The newspaper added that Mottaki remained quiet throughout these years until last fall when Ahmadinejad appointed a group of his close associates as diplomatic representatives for him; the Minister [Mottaki] expressed his indignation over these unsound proceedings. This was a matter which, in the end, invited the wrath of the president.<sup>10</sup>
- The newspaper *Jahan-e-sanat*, which is an economic forum, published, under the title “The Removal of the Last Traditional Rightist in the Government” that “the removal of Mottaki constitutes a transformation in the conceptualization of the work of the Foreign Ministry and its philosophy.”<sup>11</sup>
- The independent newspaper *Arman* in which Ali Zamani wrote under the title, “The Surprise Removal of Mottaki” that the Leader of the revolution commended – on the occasion of ‘The Week of the State’ – the balanced and harmonious performance of the Foreign Ministry. After this comment, everyone waited for Ahmadinejad to renege on his initiative to expand the group of his close associates within the diplomatic core. It added afterwards, a few days later, a remark about the Armenians made by Muhammad Baqa’i – a close associate of Ahmadinejad – which was broadcast and incited outrage in Turkey and the reproach of Mottaki, who said that the remark was offensive and inappropriate and exposed action which was inequitable and irregular. At the end of his article, the writer pointed out the remarks of a number of persons in parliament and politics who considered the decision [to remove Mottaki] hasty and harmful to Iranian diplomacy.<sup>12</sup>
- The independent newspaper *Farheekhtegan*, published journalist Armin Muntazari’s article entitled “Mottaki has been Removed,” which describes the decision of Ahmadinejad as strange, asking: ‘Why did Ahmadinejad address his Minister Mottaki in

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.hamshahrionline.ir/print-123174.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.magrian.com/npview.asp?ID=220680>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.jahanesanat.ir/2919/12/14>

<sup>12</sup> <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:JPSb3SJNVQIJ:www.armandaily.ir>



his letter of removal without any title, finding it sufficient to refer to him only as Mr. Mottaki?’ Then she pointed out that the lack of agreement between Ahmadinejad and Mottaki is nothing new, mentioning a number of incidents in which the differences between the two men had come into prominence in previous years. She made reference to the indignation of some of the members of the Shura Council over the decision to remove Mottaki, mentioning some of the remarks of some members who praised Mottaki for his work and qualifications, as the minister who was best suited to his post within the government.<sup>13</sup>

In turn, the electronic sites followed the news of Mottaki’s removal, and presented their visitors in their front pages with news stories and numerous analyses. Among these sites were the following:

- The news website “Tabnak” expressed its bewilderment over the sudden event in a brief analysis entitled “Manushir Mottaki in Senegal, the Removal Tehran”. Reported in it the two texts of the two directives issued by Ahmadinejad: the removal of Mottaki and the appointment of Salihi.<sup>14</sup>
- The news website “Khabaronline (News Online)” mentioned the news of the removal, opening a window for the readers and allowing them to comment on the event. In the context of covering the event, the site reported the reactions of the members of the Majlis, as well as international ones. It subsequently published a remark of Qasim Rawanbaksh, the political editor of the magazine *Proto Sukhin (Light of Discourse)* and one of the students of Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi – the head of the Imam Khomeini Establishment and one of the symbols of the hard-line conservative current – who confirmed that it was among the rights of the president to remove his minister; however, he ought to do that without paying for it from his political capital. He also added that he was waiting for the day when he would hear the news of the removal of the director of the Office of the President, Rahim Masha’im, whose mistakes Ahmadinejad overlooks, even though they are numerousness.<sup>15</sup>
- The news website “Farda” carried a remark by member of the Shura Council Ali Reza Zakani, pertaining to the means whereby the news of Mottaki’s removal was conveyed to him when he was a guest of the President in Senegal. He said: ‘It is not only out of spite for the Minister, but it is in spite of the whole Republic as well’, adding that ‘the country has paid a heavy price as a consequence of this hasty decision.’<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> <http://farheekhtegan.ir/content/view/17814/31>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.tabnak.ir/fa/news/136099>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.khabaronline.ir/bnews.aspx?id=1175>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.fardanews.com/fa/news/130332>

- The news website “Raja News,” loyal to and supportive of President Ahmadinejad, defended the decision by saying: “The diplomacy of the ninth and tenth republics of Iran has been distinguished by effectiveness and proactive aggressiveness, and it is a method continually approved and repeatedly reaffirmed by the Leader of the Revolution, in what the President of the Republic has done to reinforce and corroborate this in initiatives, positions and speeches. As for the Foreign Ministry, it did not provide – in this context – any acceptable practical results; this has redoubled the opportunities for change, at the level of the presidency of the government, vis-à-vis appointing a person whose capabilities and specialization are comparable to those enjoyed by the President of the Republic.” The journal added that that new opportunities to activate the role of Iranian diplomacy in explaining the discourse of the Islamic Revolution came about due to the climate that Ahmadinejad engendered at the international level; however, the diplomatic core did not take advantage of these opportunities. In some unofficial meetings, Iranian diplomats ignored the official policies and political stances of the state.<sup>17</sup>
- The semi-official news agency website “Mehr News” carried the ceremony of transfer of responsibility which Mottaki was expected to attend along with the new foreign minister, Salihi. Among that which was conveyed in this news coverage was Mottaki’s failure to attend the occasion, when he is the first aid to the President of the Republic, confirms that no one in the regime of the Islamic Republic has concluded his farewell in this way.”<sup>18</sup>

### 3 - Attitudes of Members of Parliament

Personages in parliament announced their positions of solidarity with Foreign Minister Manushir Mottaki. Most of the members of parliament expressed their rejection of the style of the dismissal, over and above the decision to dismiss itself. Some others affirmed the qualifications of Mottaki, and the efficacy of his diplomatic skills, on the consideration that among ministers his is one of a minority who has served as representatives in parliament. Previously, a member of the Parliamentary Council on Matters of National Security, Muhammad Karami Rad communicated a warning to Ahmadinejad when the dismissal of the minister was only a rumor, saying: “The President can expect a powerful reaction from the Majlis (Parliament) in the event of the dismissal of Mottaki.”<sup>19</sup> Ultimately, he described the actual dismissal as “the path to weakening the Iranian Foreign Policy Apparatus.”

<sup>17</sup> [http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:FIKWK\\_t4FwJ:www.rajanews.com](http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:FIKWK_t4FwJ:www.rajanews.com)

<sup>18</sup> <http://mehrnews.com/fa/newsdetail.aspx?NewsID=1211817>

<sup>19</sup> <http://iraniandiplomacy.ir/index.php?Lang=fa&Page=24TypeId=&Articled=9699&BranchId=10&Action=ArtcileBodyView>

The Head of the Parliament, Ali Larijani, was outspoken in his rejection of the means by which the dismissal of the minister was handled because it did not respect the privacy of the man, and it adversely affected the reputation of the country at the international level.<sup>20</sup>

The President of the Committee on Foreign Relations in Parliament, Hishmet Allah Falahat Bishah said: “This matter is in contravention of custom, and we are awaiting an explanation from the President of the Republic,” adding: “the dismissal of an official when he is on a mission outside the country is conduct which contravenes international diplomatic norms.”<sup>21</sup>

Representative Qudrat Allah Ali Khani pointed out that “the timing of the order to dismiss will invite the world to mock us as a consequence of dealing with a foreign minister of ours in this fashion.”<sup>22</sup>

Conservative Representative Isma‘il Kawthari, assistant to the head of the Parliamentary Committee on Matters of National Security, affirmed: “I reject the way the dismissal was conducted as he [Mottaki] was on a foreign mission when the decision was issued.”<sup>23</sup>

A number of representatives demanded that the president provide clarification of the way in which he dismissed Manushir Mottaki and were among those who asserted that it was “hasty and inappropriate and that it was not commensurate with the values of the Republic or the ethics of the Iranian people.”<sup>24</sup>

From his perspective, Representative Ali Mutahhari confirmed that the decision to dismiss constituted a humiliation for Mottaki, and a blow to the international standing of the Republic. He demanded that the President provide clarification to the people for this hasty conduct and indicated that the differences which shattered relations between the president and the minister over the appointment by the president of diplomatic representative for him in the affairs of some nations in the five continents revolved around an action which the Leader of the revolution criticized as an inequitable act of the sort which ought to be transcended in diplomatic work.<sup>25</sup>

#### **4 - Why was Mottaki Dismissed?**

Despite that the initial reactions to the decision to dismiss were in response to considerations of the moment and its pressures, the readings and analyses which were written afterwards exposed a

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

number of latent sources behind the decision of President Ahmadinejad. The newspaper *Abrar*, affiliated to Ahmadinejad, published an unsigned article, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2010, directing harsh criticisms towards the dismissed Foreign Minister Manushir Mottaki, saying: “It’s best if we return to the period which witnessed the appointment of Mottaki as the head of the Foreign Ministry and if we all recollect that tidal wave of dismissals, which the new minister undertook at the beginning of his work as the head of Iranian diplomacy; dismissals which reached a number of ambassadors at different points around the globe.” It went on to add: “Here in Tehran, we also saw how Mottaki dismissed a large number from among a circle of foreign ministries, their directors and experts, in a surprise fashion, without regard for professional conduct or the strictures of the Islamic religion for dealing with others. Didn’t these deserve consideration for their privacy and their public personas? Now you are experiencing precisely the same thing, Mr. Mottaki.” In regard to the matter of support for Ali Larijani, the head of the parliament, and Representative Kazim Jalali for Manushir Mottaki, the writer said: “Why didn’t they lift a finger on the day when Mottaki was busy dismissing the employees of the Foreign Ministry and its experts? Were these dismissals conducted in a manner that respected the privacy of those individuals?” Subsequently the writer addresses Mottaki: “If we want to discuss the history of your work and the fruits of your administration of foreign affairs for years, how will the reactions of people be to you? No doubt you have read and seen some of your policies and stances brought forth many criticisms of experts of foreign ministries, Parliament members, journalists and minders of the system of the Islamic Republic.”<sup>26</sup>

In an article in the conservative newspaper *Keyhan*, Iranian journalist Sayyid Husayn Zirhani traces the reasons for the decision to dismiss back to Mottaki’s rejection of Ahmadinejad’s style of diplomacy. This was especially so after he charged Asfandiyar Rahim Masha’i with delivering a message to King Abdullah of Jordan directly, subsequent to the debate which took place over the appointment of Masha’i and a group of his proponents to represent the president in some countries. Ahmadinejad retreated after the complaints of Mottaki and the intervention of Khomeini. Zirhani added that the meeting of Masha’i with King Abdullah was inappropriate to rank within the hierarchy of the presidency of the Republic. He concluded by saying: “The President should have waited until Mottaki returned from his mission outside the country so that it could not be said that the president cannot tolerate whoever criticizes the head of his office.”<sup>27</sup>

Previous ambassador of Iran to China, Jawad Mansouri, penned an article in the newspaper *Ibtikar* in which he mentioned that Ahmadinejad does not typically abide by any restrictions or

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<sup>26</sup> <http://abrarnews.com/politic/1389/890929/html/index.htm>

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.tebyan.net/politics\\_social/politics/domestic\\_policy/political\\_terminology/2010/12/14/147893.html](http://www.tebyan.net/politics_social/politics/domestic_policy/political_terminology/2010/12/14/147893.html)

customs in his appointment of ministers and officials or their dismissal. Thus, the surprise dismissal of Mottaki does not represent an exception in this context. Mansouri confirmed that Ahmadinejad desires that his ministers listen to his orders in an absolute fashion and not incline towards any other side.<sup>28</sup>

Among the readings and analyses which deconstructed the event of the sudden dismissal in Tehran, Persian “Radio Farda,” which is funded by the United States Congress, broadcasted a radio seminar under the title of “The Dismissal of Mottaki, the Appointment of Salihi, and the Unforeseen Change in Foreign Policy”.<sup>29</sup> Participating in the broadcast was Abu al-Fadl Islami – former expert of the American-Canadian section and twenty-year veteran of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, who had resigned the year previous, and is currently residing in Tokyo. Also participating was Dawud Hermidas Bawand, professor of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Tehran, and Mansour Ferhang, Tehran’s former ambassador to the United Nations during the interim government in 1979 and professor of Political Science at the Bennington Institute in the state of Vermont.

At the beginning, Abu al-Fadl Islami pointed out that Ahmadinejad chose Sa‘id Jalili as a minister for foreign affairs at the time of the formation of his first government. News spread in the corridors of the ministry, and all were prepared to accept Jalibi. However, at the last moment, it was confirmed that Mottaki was the one who was appointed foreign minister, and Sa‘id Jalili was subsequently appointed as deputy to the minister. Islami added: “Jalili was running all the sections of the Foreign Ministry, and all would refer back to him whenever needed. Therefore, when he became head of the Supreme Council on National Security, Mottaki found himself in a comfortable situation, and he let be known some of his views opposing the policies of Ahmadinejad and his approaches/orientations. Political Science Professor Dawud Hermidas Bawand indicated that the centers of decision-making at the level of foreign policy are multiple, and, at the head of these is Leader ‘Ali Khameini, then the foreign minister, then the Council of National Security. On this basis, Hermidas believes that Ahmadinejad desires to distance any dissension or lack of harmony from the activation of foreign policy. He added that these proceedings, normally, signify the existence of a new style in administration of diplomatic work, and it is what led incontrovertibly to the replacement of a large number of officials, saying: “I suspect that we will see these changes soon in the Foreign Ministry”.

As for the matter of the effect of the dismissal of Mottaki on the foreign policy of Iran, diplomat and academic Mansour Farhang said: “The presence of Mottaki or his absence will not leave any effect on the foreign policy of Iran. In my opinion, the one difference between Ahmadinejad and

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.ebtekarnews.com/Ebtekar/News.aspx?NID=75596>

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.radiofarda.com/content/f7\\_viewpoints\\_over\\_iran\\_foreign\\_policy\\_after\\_motakki/22533153.html](http://www.radiofarda.com/content/f7_viewpoints_over_iran_foreign_policy_after_motakki/22533153.html)



Mottaki is the style of their talking to journalists: the first uses rough language, whereas the second chooses softer, more accommodating words.” Farhang added: “Thus, we see that the Western media does not find in the discourse of Mottaki any subject worthy of attention that might possibly incite battles in the West with Iran, and it is searching for evidences that will clearly demonstrate the irrationality of the Iranian regime and to convince those concerned to redouble pressure on it, in its heading towards a deterrent /pre-emptive war. On this basis, Ahmadinejad provides these fronts with sufficient fuel to drive home their media attacks.”

This seasoned diplomat sees that the event of the dismissal has roots in the personality of Ahmadinejad which has begun to exhibit strange characteristics in the last five or six years, the most important of which is that the man began to feel that he was the bearer of a global message that placed him above all; that which drives him towards autocracy. Moreover, Ahmadinejad is in need of a compliant and responsive work group that responds to all his orders and approaches adding: “Whoever has followed the stands of the various currents within the centers of power in Iran and their activities over the last seven or eight years, will notice that the security apparatuses and the internal intelligence have taken control of important and vital positions; there is no doubt that Ahmadinejad has clients in these apparatuses, which has conferred on him the courage and security necessary to proceed with his choices.

Farhang concluded his discussion with the remark: “The future alone is capable of revealing to us to what extent Ahmadinejad has been able to succeed in his endeavors. However, I do not doubt that he is a deluded and autocratic man, the likes of which Iran has not known since the Revolution up until today at the political level.” Commenting on this view, Abu al-Fadl remarked that Ahmadinejad at the beginning of his government was not even able to refuse the appointment of Mottaki who was foisted upon him, yet when he perceived the support of powerful and controlling fronts, he undertook to dismiss him when he was outside the country on an official mission.

In what pertains to the mode of work of the Foreign Ministry, Abu al-Fadl Isalmi remarked: “Through my experience in the Foreign Ministry, which lasted more than twenty years, I saw clearly how it was not possible to undertake even the most minor administrative procedure before we dispatched a letter to Kamal Kharazi, foreign minister during the tenure of al-Khatimi who would, in turn, copy this to the office of the Leader where the latter would reply to us with one of two sentences: “There is good/benefit (*maslahah*) in it [i.e., the proposed procedure],” or “There is no good/benefit in it.” This sentence was well known, and Kharazi would transmit it to us immediately upon its arrival from the office of the Leader. In my belief, the Foreign Ministry does not have any role in foreign policy.”



Among the criticisms which were directed towards the Minister, and which some Iranian analysts confirm constituted the reason behind the President's decision is what was published by a number of news websites and websites of student unions, as well as a number of sources of record. Among these was an article that stated: "When Mottaki arrived at the Foreign Ministry he implemented a number of changes and new appointments until the ministry became a ministry of friendship and foreign affairs instead of a ministry of foreign affairs". The article added: "Mr. Mottaki and his deputies succeeded in gathering together in the ministry a number of their relatives and friends."

In this context, the writer clarifies that Mottaki's wife, Ms. Tahirah Nazari, specialist in pharmacology, was appointed by her husband as advisor to him without her having even the least connection to foreign affairs. In a subsequent stage, Mottaki placed Ms. Nazari at the head of a section which he invented in the Iranian Foreign Ministry, the section of "Human Rights and Women", which elicited astonishment among observers at the time.<sup>30</sup> The Foreign Ministry justified it as the desire of the ministry to activate communication between the wives of Iranian diplomats.<sup>31</sup>

The aforementioned article reported a set of infringements pertaining to the appointment of a number of relatives of Mottaki in different sections of the Foreign Ministry, as well as in Iranian foreign embassies, in addition to some of the privileges obtained by the wife and children of the minister through programs of the ministry, such as traveling abroad. These are the positions recorded by the writer of the article against the close deputies of Mottaki in the ministry.<sup>32</sup>

Some trace the reason for the dismissal of Manushir Mottaki back to what occurred immediately before his dismissal, when he took part in the Seventh Manama Summit, held December 3-4, 2010. The website "Titronline" mentioned that Mottaki described Hillary Clinton's remark on the possibility of permitting Iran to enrich uranium on particular conditions as a "step forward" at the time when all Iranian officials were reiterating that the matter of uranium enrichment in Iran is "not subject to negotiation."<sup>33</sup> Similarly, the website reported a statement attributed to Mottaki that he returned the greeting of Clinton, whereas other websites have circulated a statement attributed to Mottaki the import of which is that he ignored the American Secretary of State.

In another related incident, the website mentioned that the Iranian Foreign Ministry did not register any official position in regard to an article written by the British ambassador in Tehran,

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.abrarnews.com/politic/1386/860535/html/index.htm>

<sup>31</sup> <http://news.gooya.eu/politics/archives/047354.php>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.edalatkhahi.ir/002497.html>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.titronline.ir/vdcj.hevfuxexsfzu.html>

published by the website of the British Foreign Ministry, which evinced indignation among students and conservative representatives.

## Summary and Conclusions

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad affirmed on more than one occasion that he will not show courtesy to anyone among ministers or government officials, nor hesitate to dismiss any of them, if the good and interests of the country dictate such a matter. Thus, the dismissal of Mottaki was the seventh decision that Ahmadinejad had taken in this sphere, despite the advice and warnings which admonished him to desist from this conduct which exposes the programs of the government to faltering and failure. Despite this, Ahmadinejad decided, in a sudden fashion, to fire 14 of his advisors three weeks after dismissing the former Foreign Minister Manushir Mottaki. Mahdi Kelhir, one of the media advisors to the president said to the Iranian news agency “Mehr” that he and 13 other advisors met with President Ahmadinejad, and received from him directives terminating their service as advisors to the presidency.<sup>34</sup>

The explications of the decision to dismiss Mottaki have multiplied. Some hold that the reason for his dismissal is the lack of conviction of President Ahmadinejad in Mottaki from the very first day, either because he was considered affiliated to Ahmadinejad’s competitor – the head of the Parliament, ‘Ali Larijani – or due to the divergence in the points of view despite belonging to the same political school.

Other readings saw that the decision of Ahmadinejad is not something new but rather a dimension of his mode of conduct whereby he deals with everyone. Others believe that the reason for the wrath of the president was the opposition of Mottaki to a number of his decisions, and perhaps the reason was the position of minister at the most recent Manama Summit. Alternatively, it might have been his silence over the behavior of the British ambassador; whereas others have asserted that the dismissal of Mottaki is among the symptoms of the psychological state which Ahmadinejad has reached, where he sees himself as the bearer of a message and where it is incumbent on those close to him not to oppose his views and approaches. Still another group believes that the position of Ahmadinejad is nothing more than punishment of Mottaki for what he committed, in terms of errors and infractions, within the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

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<sup>34</sup> <http://news.esteqlal-af.com/post-1797.html>

If we take all these givens in total and add to it the health of Leader Ali Khomeini, along with the nature of immediate surroundings of Ahmadinejad,<sup>35</sup> we may conclude that he sees himself as an extraordinary president in decisive circumstances while at the same time readying himself for a future stage – the nature of which we do not know. It might be a preparation to confront the external threat, or it might be a step towards consolidating the Iranian presence in the region. Possibly, it might portend a constitutional amendment that would grant him a third term in the wake of the political vacuum that ensued after the last elections, or, perhaps it might be preparation for a plan to restore to the Revolution its radiance and clean the house of “enemies and traitors”.

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<sup>35</sup> The website *Awasi* in January of 2011 published a news item, leaked by one of the conservatives named Husayn Allah Karam, who was the military attaché to the Iranian embassy in the Ukraine. It stated that, the brother-in-law of Ahmadinejad—Rahim Masha’i—who is also the director of his office, heads a secret deviant association by the name of “Tariq al-Haqiqah (The Path of Truth)” which believes that time for the appearance of the Mahdi has drawn near, and the association has begun preparations to receive him. In this context is strengthening of Iranian relations with four Arab countries: Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.