

## Article

# Iran's Relations with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

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**Abstract:** The relationship between Iran and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) dates back to the founding of the OIC; however, both Iran's attitude toward its participation in the organization and the role it has played within it have undergone a complex and multifaceted process of transformation. The Eighth OIC Summit marked the zenith of the cooperative relationship between Iran and the organization. Serving as the rotating chair of the summit, Iran played a prominent and pivotal role. By proposing the concept of a "Dialogue Among Civilizations," Iran raised the organization's profile on the international stage and strengthened the OIC's cooperative ties with other international systems. Furthermore, Iran actively collaborated with the OIC in addressing crises within the Islamic world. This paper examines this subject across four sections: the evolving relationship between Iran and the OIC; the role Iran has played within the organization; the motivations driving Iran's participation; and the factors influencing the relationship between Iran and the OIC.

**Keywords:** Iran; Organization of Islamic Cooperation; "Dialogue Among Civilizations"; The Eighth OIC Summit

## 1. Introduction

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC---formerly known as the Organization of the Islamic Conference; hereinafter referred to as the OIC) is an international organization comprising 57 Muslim-majority states, aimed at fostering cooperation and solidarity among its member nations. Since its inception in 1969, the organization has striven to play an effective role in addressing the various challenges confronting the Islamic world.

Iran stands as one of the OIC's most pivotal members. A review of the relationship between the two reveals that, throughout various stages of the organization's history, Iran has played a significant role in considerably raising the OIC's profile on the international stage. Furthermore, Iran plays a prominent role---in conjunction with the OIC---in international affairs concerning issues affecting to the Islamic world, while simultaneously leveraging the organization's platform to advance its own national interests and extend its influence.

## 2. The Evolution of Relations between Iran and the OIC

The relationship between Iran and the OIC has undergone a complex and multifaceted evolutionary process. This paper delineates the evolution of this relationship into four distinct and pivotal stages. The first stage---characterized by closeness---and the second stage---marked by estrangement---both occurred prior to the Iranian Islamic Revolution, specifically during the Pahlavi dynasty era. The third stage was one of tension, while the final stage represented a restoration of relations; both of these stages took place following the Iranian Islamic Revolution, during the era of the Islamic Republic.

### 2.1. Closeness

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This phase commenced with the founding of the OIC in 1969 and extended through the organization's Third Conference of Foreign Ministers in 1972. As one of the founding member states, the Pahlavi Kingdom of Iran played an active role in the establishment and consolidation of the OIC, and consistently participated in the organization's internal activities and meetings [1].

### *2.2. Estrangement*

In 1973, Iran's stance regarding the Yom Kippur War (the Fourth Arab--Israeli War) led to its estrangement from the OIC. During this conflict, most of the Arab nations--which wielded significant influence within the OIC--either engaged in direct combat with Israel or imposed oil sanctions on countries supporting it; Iran, however, not only refrained from participating in the war but continued to export oil to the West and Israel [2]. Consequently, from that year until 1979, Iran's relationship with the OIC remained relatively distant.

### *2.3. Tension*

From the time of the Iranian Islamic Revolution until the conclusion of the Iran-Iraq War, relations between Iran and the OIC remained in a state of tension. This period is characterized as the "Phase of Tension" for two primary reasons: First, the Islamic Revolution profoundly reshaped the regional power dynamics of the Middle East as well as the trajectory of Iran's domestic and foreign policies; it not only alienated Iran from the West but also triggered tremors within the Islamic world itself [3]. Although the Islamic Republic of Iran harbored a negative perception of the OIC--believing that the organization's member states were unduly influenced by superpower policies and thus incapable of realizing revolutionary, anti-imperialist objectives--it nonetheless viewed the organization as a vehicle for achieving its own goals. At that time, Iran's foremost objectives in participating in the OIC were exporting the Islamic Revolution, resisting U.S. pressure, and pursuing an anti-Israel policy [4]. The aim of exporting the Islamic Revolution sparked widespread apprehension among Sunni-majority nations--such as Saudi Arabia--while Iran's distinct Persian ethnic identity further exacerbated the mistrust felt toward it by Arab states. Consequently, the Islamic Revolution catalyzed the formation of an anti-Iranian Arab bloc within the OIC [5]. Led by Saudi Arabia, the Gulf monarchies began aggressively promoting Arab nationalism in an attempt to forge a united front among the Arab states within the Islamic world to collectively oppose the nascent Islamic Republic of Iran [6]. Second, the Iran-Iraq War further intensified the tensions between Iran and the OIC. Throughout the conflict, the OIC's mediation efforts proved not only ineffectual but also compromised the organization's neutrality; in several resolutions it issued, the OIC frequently sided with the aggressor [7]. Although Iran found itself at a temporary disadvantage during the initial stages of the war, it steadfastly demanded that the OIC first formally designate Iraq as the aggressor before any room for negotiation could be established. However, the OIC struggled to maintain its neutrality; the League of Arab States functioned as a powerful lobbying bloc within the OIC, actively advancing Arab interests and ultimately steering the organization toward issuing official condemnations of Iran. This course of action eroded the OIC's credibility and diminished Iran's trust in the organization, leading Iran to conclude that the OIC had effectively degenerated into a mere instrument of the conservative Arab monarchies [8]; consequently, Iran began to boycott the OIC. In 1983, following mediation efforts by Bangladesh, an Iranian delegation attended the Foreign Ministers' Conference held in Dhaka that same year. During this period, the Iranian Foreign Minister asserted that responsibility for the Iran-Iraq War lay with Iraq and its supporters--namely, the entire Arab world--and argued that the OIC should therefore condemn the Arab states' conduct in backing Iraq against Iran. During the 1984 Islamic Summit Conference in Casablanca, the Arab states unanimously agreed to readmit Egypt--which had been expelled following the Camp David Accords--to the OIC, with the aim of strengthening the united front of Arab nations within the organization. In immediate response, Iran announced its refusal to attend the Casablanca Summit; consequently, under the manipulation of the

Arab states, the summit passed a resolution holding Iran responsible for the Iran-Iraq War [9]. Thus, throughout the decade spanning from 1979 to 1989, the OIC effectively became a platform through which Iran and the Arab states engaged in formal confrontation and mutual attacks.

#### *2.4. Restoration*

In 1989, following the conclusion of the Iran-Iraq War, relations between Iran and the OIC entered a new phase. Iran's then-President Rafsanjani advocated a "New Thinking" in foreign relations, positing that Iran should no longer seek to make enemies. This "New Thinking" was guided by three primary principles: first, the recognition that it would be difficult for Iran to alter the political systems of other nations sharing the Islamic faith; second, a gradual de-escalation of tensions with the West; and third, an improvement of relations with neighboring countries. Consequently, Iran actively engaged with the OIC and sought to mend its ties with Arab nations. During this phase, Iran pursued the following key objectives through its participation in OIC activities: First, the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 598. Iran expected the OIC to take appropriate measures to compel Iraq to fully comply with Resolution 598; accordingly, at the 18th OIC Conference of Foreign Ministers, Iran strove to garner support from member states regarding its implementation. As a first step, Iran demanded that Iraqi forces withdraw to the borders defined by the 1975 Algiers Agreement. Second, the enhancement and consolidation of its standing within the OIC. Iran aimed to raise its profile within the organization by actively participating in its various meetings; a pivotal moment in this engagement was President Rafsanjani's attendance at the 6th OIC Summit held in Dakar, Senegal, in 1991. That same year, Iran also established a permanent mission to the OIC in Jeddah. Third, the promotion of national economic recovery through the OIC framework. Iran sought to leverage the organization's resources and influence to revitalize its own economy, forging extensive cooperative relationships with the OIC's economic institutions, particularly the Islamic Development Bank. Fourth, participation in crisis resolution. A fundamental rationale for the establishment of the OIC was to address issues affecting the Islamic world and to manage crises; thus, Iran committed itself to actively participating---through the auspices of the OIC---in efforts to resolve the problems and crises confronting Islamic nations [10]. For instance, during the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993, Iran played an active role, working in cooperation with the OIC to help resolve these crises.

In 1997, the 8th OIC Summit, held in Tehran, opened a new chapter in the development of relations between Iran and the OIC. The successful convening of this summit garnered positive responses from Islamic nations---particularly those beyond the immediate region. The initiatives undertaken by Iran's then-President Khatami, who served as the summit's chairman, considerably raised the OIC's profile within the international community while simultaneously boosting Iran's influence within the organization.

### **3. Iran's Role in the OIC (1997--2000)**

In 1997, the Eighth Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was held in Tehran; commencing that year, Iran assumed the rotating chairmanship of the organization for a three-year term. During the period from 1997 to 2000, cooperative relations between Iran and the OIC reached their zenith. This era can be described as a "golden age" in the history of the OIC; under Iran's leadership, the organization succeeded in raising its profile and influence on the international stage, while also playing an effective role in addressing crises within the Islamic world. The following discussion examines the significant role that Iran played within the organization during this period.

#### *3.1. Proposing the Concept of "dialogue among Civilizations"*

At the 8th OIC Summit in 1997, Iran's then-President Khatami proposed the "Dialogue Among Civilizations" initiative as a counterpoint to Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis, which was met with an enthusiastic response from member states.

Consequently, the 8th Islamic Summit incorporated Khatami's initiative into its final declaration. As stated in the Tehran Declaration, the "Dialogue Among Civilizations" was regarded by the heads of Islamic states as a novel initiative for improving the global landscape and international relations. The Summit also agreed to convene a specialized conference dedicated to studying the initiative, and it was decided that experts from member states would aim to present it to the United Nations with a view to formulating a related international instrument. Subsequently, President Khatami presented the initiative before the United Nations General Assembly, where it received an equally enthusiastic reception. Acting upon Khatami's proposal, the United Nations designated 2001 as the "United Nations Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations." Furthermore, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Gian Domenico Picco as his Special Representative to facilitate the advancement of the initiative within a structured framework. Given the United Nations' positive response, the OIC---under Iran's leadership---dedicated itself to refining and promoting the initiative. In April 1999, the Islamic Conference on Dialogue Among Civilizations was convened in Tehran, attended by representatives of Islamic heads of state and the OIC Secretary-General. The three-day conference concluded with the issuance of a declaration outlining the substance of the initiative---the first international document specifically addressing the subject of dialogue among civilizations. The convening of this conference demonstrated the determination of Islamic nations to advance the dialogue among civilizations initiative [11].

The concept of "Dialogue Among Civilizations" posits that culture and civilization serve as the foundation of international relations, playing a decisive role in international politics. This theory advocates for the rejection of exclusion, power politics, and oppression, while emphasizing dialogue as a substitute for conflict. Its key tenets include: (1) respecting the dignity and equality of all human beings regardless of the size of their nations, without discrimination; (2) embracing cultural diversity as an enduring characteristic of human society and a valuable asset for the progress and well-being of all humanity; (3) seeking common ground both between different civilizations and within their respective cultural contents in order to address shared global challenges; and (4) recognizing that cooperation and mutual understanding constitute effective mechanisms for promoting shared global values and eliminating global threats. The core concepts of the initiative are "cultural diversity" and "tolerance." By acknowledging and respecting distinct cultures---and by allowing these cultures to articulate their own perspectives---tolerance creates the possibility for interaction and dialogue among different civilizations, facilitating the realization of its ultimate objective: global peace and security [12]. As Khatami has observed, the "Dialogue Among Civilizations" serves as both a prerequisite for and an imperative toward international peace; furthermore, peace achieved through dialogue and consensus is inherently more sustainable than peace imposed by force.

The concept of "Dialogue Among Civilizations" affects the OIC in two primary ways. First, serving as a tool for de-escalating tensions among member states [13], it enables them to resolve internal conflicts through dialogue and consensus grounded in mutual trust. Second, it works to forge a new image for Islam on the international stage. The West---by propagating the "Islamic Threat Theory"---has tarnished Islam's reputation, fostering negative perceptions of the Islamic world within the international community. As a concept originating from within the Islamic world itself, the "Dialogue Among Civilizations" counters this narrative; it demonstrates that Islamic civilization is one that champions peace, tolerance, and respect for diverse cultures, thereby constructing a more positive image for the Islamic world.

### *3.2. Enhance Cooperation between the OIC and Other International Organizations*

Every international organization, aiming to raise its profile within the global community and foster its own development, must cultivate and expand cooperative relationships with other regional and international bodies. The OIC recognized this imperative long ago and committed itself to building such relationships; to this end, the 16th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers adopted a resolution titled

"Cooperation between the OIC and International and Regional Organizations." During Iran's tenure as rotating chair, the OIC's relationships with other entities experienced further development. Specifically, the OIC deepened its cooperation with organizations with which it had already established ties and, in the realm of collaborative engagement, initiated negotiations---for the first time---with several key international organizations.

At the Eighth OIC Summit, the organization adopted resolutions regarding the development of cooperative relations with the United Nations, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and other international bodies [14]. As rotating chairman, Khatami played a pivotal role in deepening the cooperative relationship between the OIC and the United Nations. His pacifist philosophy---along with the "Dialogue Among Civilizations" initiative---served as two key factors in strengthening OIC--UN cooperation during the period from 1997 to 2000. During this phase, the OIC engaged in extensive cooperation with the United Nations across three levels. The first involved joint efforts to resolve crises within the Islamic world; for instance, the two organizations collaborated closely in addressing crises in Afghanistan, Palestine, Kosovo, Tajikistan, Iraq, Chechnya, and Lebanon. The second entailed expanding cooperation between the OIC and specialized UN agencies, including UNICEF, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), UNESCO, and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). The third encompassed cooperation in other domains---specifically, close collaboration in areas such as human rights, disarmament, and environmental protection. A notable example was a conference jointly hosted by the two organizations in Geneva in 1998, during which representatives discussed avenues for enriching the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as Islamic perspectives on human rights [15].

During its tenure as OIC chair, Iran also exerted significant effort to foster cooperation between the organization and the European Union. Iranian ambassadors held numerous meetings with leaders and foreign ministers of EU member states, engaging in in-depth discussions regarding avenues for OIC--EU collaboration. Given the positive image cultivated for the OIC by the "Dialogue Among Civilizations" initiative---as well as the organization's notable role in resolving crises within the Islamic world---the EU expressed its willingness to engage in dialogue with the OIC and to deepen their bilateral relationship. Consequently, in 1999, the OIC and the EU convened their inaugural dialogue meeting in Helsinki, aimed at consolidating cooperation at both the international and regional levels. This meeting marked a pivotal exchange between the two parties and represented the entry of OIC--EU cooperation into a new phase. During this round of discussions, the two sides focused primarily on issues such as Palestine and the Middle East, developments in Afghanistan, the participation of OIC member states in UN peacekeeping operations, the Dialogue Among Civilizations, terrorism, and human rights.

### *3.3. Actively Participating in Resolving Crises in the Islamic World*

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran repeatedly and explicitly emphasizes that protecting and supporting the oppressed---as well as Muslims worldwide---is a fundamental responsibility of the state. For instance, it stipulates that the government of the Islamic Republic is duty-bound to base its general policies on the alliance and unity of Islamic nations, and to strive for the realization of the political, economic, and cultural unity of the Islamic world. Furthermore, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic is based on the principle of rejecting domination by others or submission to their authority, and on protecting the rights of all Muslims. Consequently, supporting and addressing the concerns of Muslims constitutes one of Iran's primary diplomatic objectives. Against this backdrop, and in its capacity as OIC Chair, Iran committed itself to leveraging the organization's capabilities to actively participate in resolving the various crises confronting the Islamic world---including the conflict between Turkey and Syria, as well as crises in Afghanistan, Palestine, Kosovo, Iraq, Chechnya, and Lebanon. Among these issues, the Palestinian cause holds a particularly prominent status in the eyes of both Iran and the OIC. Within the OIC framework, Iran---in collaboration with other member states---has striven to play an effective and constructive role in addressing the Palestinian issue.

The Palestinian issue---and the imperative to restore the national rights of the Palestinian people---is not only a matter of paramount concern for the OIC, but also one that occupies a central position in Iran's foreign policy. Consequently, Iran has consistently sought, at various junctures---particularly during its tenure as rotating chair---to actively engage with the Palestinian issue through the organization.

#### **4. Iran's Motivations for Participating in the OIC**

##### *4.1. Identity*

According to constructivist theory, ideas serve not only as a roadmap guiding action but also as a means of constructing an actor's identity, thereby defining that actor's interests [16]. In this sense, Islamic doctrines and values have shaped Iran's national identity and have, in turn, become integral to Iran's interests. When Iran conceptualizes its relationship with the world through the lens of its own religious values, it develops a characteristic diplomatic philosophy and a distinctive cognitive framework for foreign policy---an approach that can be described as "faith-based diplomacy," which advocates for solidarity and cooperation among nations within the Islamic world and seeks to shape the international order by promoting Islamic values.

Many scholars argue that shared values and ideas are crucial factors in fostering solidarity among political entities, providing a foundation for agreements between nations. When cooperation between states is grounded in shared values that each affirms, they are less likely to perceive their national identities as being compromised and will consequently be more motivated to engage in cooperation. In this context, Islam serves as the shared ideational bond between Iran and the OIC member states. As an organization of Islamic nations dedicated to strengthening cooperation and solidarity among them, the OIC aligns with the ideological underpinnings of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy. This shared ideational foundation has enabled Iran and the OIC to forge a collective "Islamic" identity---one that has become a primary driving force behind Iran's engagement with the organization.

Beyond a shared religion, Iran also shares a common culture with OIC member states---particularly those in the Middle East and Central Asia. Historically, Iran and the Arab world have maintained close interactions characterized by mutual influence. In the 6th century BCE, the rise of the Persian Empire saw it establish dominion over present-day Iran and surrounding regions; during this era, Persian culture exerted a profound influence on neighboring territories, including the Arabian Peninsula and Syria. Concurrently, Islam---originating in the Arabian Peninsula---began to shape Iran as well. Since the 7th century CE, Islam has gradually emerged as one of Iran's dominant religions, and throughout this process Iranian and Arab cultures intermingled, giving rise to a distinct and unique cultural tradition.

Iran also shares numerous commonalities---including linguistic ties and customs---with the nations of Central Asia, comprising the Asian portions of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. These shared characteristics can be traced back to the era of the Persian Empire, during which it exerted a profound and lasting influence upon these countries.

In summary, Islam and a shared culture have shaped the identity of both Iran and the OIC member states; moreover, they serve as a key driving force behind Iran's engagement with the organization, providing a solid foundation for bilateral cooperation.

##### *4.2. Potential Opportunities*

Another significant driving force behind Iran's engagement with the OIC lies in the potential opportunities the organization offers. First and foremost, the OIC serves as a vital platform for economic cooperation. Comprising numerous member states, it encompasses a vast economic market, presenting substantial opportunities for trade and investment. Iran can leverage this platform to expand its export markets and attract foreign capital. Furthermore, the organization has established several specialized agencies to facilitate economic cooperation among member states, notably the Standing Committee

for Economic and Commercial Cooperation and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade. These institutions aim to foster trade exchanges among member states by organizing trade fairs, specialized exhibitions, and other commercial events, while also encouraging networking among business professionals from member countries [17]. This framework can enhance economic interactions between Iran and other OIC member states and facilitate the organization of such commercial engagements.

Second, the OIC has provided Iran with a platform through which to garner support from Islamic nations in the face of Western pressure, helping Iran secure greater international recognition. For instance, the organization issued two resolutions in defense of Iran addressing U.S. military actions and threats directed against the Islamic Republic. The first expressed concern over escalating tensions between the United States and Iran, and opposed the use of force---or the threat thereof---as well as the imposition of economic sanctions. The second condemned U.S. military operations against Iran and voiced concern regarding assistance provided to the United States by certain governments, affirming solidarity with the Iranian people. The OIC also explicitly opposed U.S. economic punitive measures against Iran; in the Tehran Declaration issued at its Eighth Summit, it called upon all governments to repeal the "D'Amato Act [18].

Finally, a nation's ability to project its voice internationally---engaging in global communication to serve its national interests---both advances specific objectives and serves as an indicator of that nation's standing within the international system. The OIC provides Iran with an international platform through which it can advance its political agenda and enhance its influence within the Islamic world. The "Dialogue Among Civilizations" initiative stands as a prime example of how Iran has utilized the OIC to bolster its influence---not only within the Islamic world but also on the broader international stage---garnering positive responses from Islamic nations and recognition from the international community.

## **5. Factors Influencing Relations between Iran and the OIC**

As one of the key member states of the OIC, Iran has played a significant role within the organization at various stages and remains committed to addressing the challenges facing the Islamic world in concert with other member states. However, due to the influence of certain factors, Iran and the OIC hold divergent---and at times opposing---positions in specific areas, which has resulted in constraints on the relationship between the two sides.

The first factor is Iran's national policy. As an Islamic state, Iran bases its national policy primarily on Islamic principles as its guiding ideology. Islam not only shapes Iran's national identity but also serves as a vital resource for projecting its influence across the West Asia region. Consequently, in the conduct of its foreign relations, Iran frequently prioritizes religious and ideological considerations. This national policy diverges significantly from those of certain OIC member states, often preventing the two sides from reaching consensus when confronting crises within the Islamic world and thereby hindering their potential for joint cooperation. Regarding the Palestinian issue, for instance, the Islamic Republic opposes Zionism and supports the Palestinian people's cause for statehood. With respect to certain pro-American Arab states, Iran---viewing matters through the lens of Pan-Islamism---accuses them of betraying the collective interests of the Islamic world. In regional affairs, Iran maintains a Pan-Islamist stance, opposing external interference in the internal affairs of Islamic states and advocating that matters concerning the Islamic world should be resolved by Islamic nations themselves [19].

The second factor involves territorial disputes between Iran and certain OIC member states---specifically, the dispute between Iran and Iraq regarding the demarcation of the Arvand River (Shatt al-Arab) boundary, and the dispute between Iran and the UAE over three islands in the Persian Gulf [20]. Such divergences impede the ability of Islamic states to reach agreements and adopt unified stances when addressing global issues, and exert a negative influence on the cooperative relationship between Iran and the OIC [21].

The third factor is the influence of Western powers, specifically Europe and the United States. For a long time, Islamic nations have occupied a unique status within the foreign policy strategies of major powers. Factors such as strategic geopolitical importance, control over vital international shipping lanes, and abundant reserves of oil, natural gas, and other minerals have led major global powers to pursue their interests within the Islamic world--particularly in the West Asian region [22]. Consequently, Western powers have sought to expand their influence within Islamic nations, attempting to advance and safeguard their interests by exerting control over these countries. Among OIC member states, some are dependent upon the United States and European nations in various sectors, a dependency that hinders broad cooperation among member states in the economic, political, and security spheres and undermines the organization's overall cohesion. To a certain extent, this dependency also constrains Iran's relationship with the organization; due to sanctions imposed by the U.S. and Europe, Iran faces difficulties in engaging in extensive cooperation with those member states that prioritize their relationships with Western powers.

Friendly relations between Iran and other Islamic nations would serve to enhance Iran's regional influence--a prospect that, from the U.S. perspective, poses a threat to American interests and security. Consequently, the United States and Israel have sought to portray Iran as a threat to regional security. Given that some OIC member states are subject to Western influence in matters of foreign policy, this hostile framing of Iran inevitably hinders its ability to cultivate relationships with these nations.

## 6. Conclusion

As one of the key member states of the OIC, Iran has played a pivotal role in consolidating and raising the organization's profile. During its tenure as rotating chair, Iran transformed the organization into a dynamic entity actively engaged on the international stage. During this period, it actively participated in addressing crises within the Islamic world--efforts that garnered recognition from the United Nations. Furthermore, Iran introduced the "Dialogue Among Civilizations" initiative, which served to enhance the image of the Islamic world and project a positive identity for Islamic nations within the global community, while also significantly bolstering the OIC's influence on the international stage.

Although the relationship between Iran and the OIC faces certain constraints and challenges, it remains a vital cooperative partnership that offers numerous opportunities and advantages to both parties. As a prominent representative of Islamic nations on the global stage, the OIC serves as a vehicle for Iran to advance its political objectives and national interests, while simultaneously reinforcing its regional influence. For the OIC, this relationship provides the opportunity to leverage an active member state to amplify its own international standing. Consequently, the relationship between the two can be characterized as mutually complementary.

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