

Military Diplomacy: An Iranian Perspective

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Abstract

When it comes to diplomacy, it is generally believed that the entry into this field is possible only by experienced diplomats and through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in most countries. . But modern international relations, due to the increasing complexity and the variety of different issues, in the process of political dialogue and negotiations, need something more than what has been common before. Professional politicians must know all the tools of national power and use them as leverage to influence other countries to advance their interests. Military power is one of the most important components of national power and plays a vital role in pursuing the policies adopted by states. In fact, it has become an inseparable part of diplomacy because of the many capabilities that military power creates for foreign policy. In this regard, military diplomacy is a way for presenting military power to achieve peaceful ends, avoid violence, and increase deterrence, which has become a tool for achieving foreign policy goals, especially among the great powers. This article aims to study the role of military diplomacy in the foreign policy of states. Studies show that "adopting such an approach increases the ability of countries to pursue foreign policy goals through increasing the

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scope of action, providing a positive image, increasing the sphere of influence, shaping the security environment, expanding the operational environment and etc. "In light of the realization of these cases, we will see an increase in their power and role-playing in international developments." Efforts have also been made to outline the prospects for Iran's military diplomacy.

Keywords: Military Diplomacy, Foreign Policy of States, Military Tools, Peacekeeping

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Introduction

The production and preservation national power elements are most the important goals of the macro-policies of each country, and all kinds of intermediate and micro-policies, including domestic, foreign, security policies, and so on, emulate these macro-policies. Security, Independence, Survival, and Prosperity are among the vital elements that compel all states to strengthen their power to provide them. In the meantime, it has long been believed theoretically and practically that military power is a rapidly accessible tool with high capability in pursuing strategic goals. The use of military equipment not only in war but also in peacetime is an effective lever to advance political and security goals, especially in the face of other countries. Although some believe that states' tendency to use military force has diminished at times, especially since the end of the Cold War, this is indeed the appearance of the case. International relations history clearly shows not only the value of military power has not diminished, even in the age of diplomacy and conversation, but also there have been many cases since after the Cold War that indicate the increasing use of military means to advance the goals of countries. The key point to using defense power as a tool is in how states use it to achieve international interests. In other words, the difference between military power before and after the second half of the twentieth century is not related to the change in nature, but rather we see a change in approach to military power.

A review of global developments, especially since World War II, shows that the world is changing rapidly. Today the local events have become international aspect, they are happening up to date

and momentarily, and undergoing extensive changes around us. Activists in the field are not limited to states, and there are many problems that countries face including climate change and global warming, drugs, Contagious and non- Contagious diseases, the environmental degradation effects, the formation of complex cyber systems in the light of the communication revolution, the emergence of non-state actors, terrorism, war and migration. Therefore, the continuation of traditional security approaches, which are mostly in the form of tough military action, is no longer effective enough. Adopting a new approach is a serious need to face these events and challenges. Issues that cannot be resolved unilaterally and must be addressed in a coordinated manner and in the form of cooperation between states. Of course, this does not mean marginalizing the concept of hard military power. This type of power remains the first and best option for states to eliminate threats and establish relative stability. But there are two important points here. First, hard power is not the only form of power extracted from military tools, but other forms of power can be produced from it. Second, it is neither efficient, nor logical, nor cost-effective to produce a kind of power in the face of new developments and threats. Therefore, countries are thinking to develop the other ways of using military force. In this regard, the development of military cooperation through educational exchanges, intelligence and humanitarian operations for the development of soft military power is considered. With the change in the conventional mechanism of the army, today many civilian and diplomatic actions are taken by the militaries, which has often been in favor of presenting the state image in the international environment. This is especially important in justifying the presence of troops in other countries and increasing military budgets. These include the presence of an advisor in the form of military personnel training, carrying out various missions and territorial support at the invitation of other states, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. For this reason, countries with very high military capabilities –such as United

States and China - are also more active in military diplomatic activities. Iran is also considered as one of the fledgling states in the sphere of military diplomacy, which in addition of its efforts in strengthening cooperation with its traditional strategic allies in the region, it seeks to use the space created after the lifting of arms sanctions in November 2020 and wants to expand the level of its military cooperations with other countries, especially powerful countries like China and Russia, which also have confrontational policies with the United States.

I- Military Diplomacy

Military diplomacy, as its name implies, is a compound word consisting of the word's "diplomacy" and "military". The coexistence of two contradictory words seems to be one of the main reasons for the broad and sometimes different definitions among authors.

As Muthanna (2011) points out in her article, military diplomacy may be construed to be an oxymoron. Because militaries are traditionally associated with conflict and use of force whereas diplomacy is defined as an art of conducting relationship to gain without conflict. However, the profound changes that have taken place in international system since the end of the Cold War and the current emerging threats have made it necessary so that could be provided a companionship regularity of words in the form of military diplomacy, given the inadequacy of traditional hard power tools to meet foreign policy demands and the need for soft power. Thus, the simplest of the various interpretations of military diplomacy is "the peaceful use of military force, often without resorting to violence to achieve foreign policy goals and peaceful intentions." Or according to Smith military diplomacy "as the employment of a state's military capabilities during peacetime to shape the international political environment in ways supportive of national interests" (Smith, 2016: 9).

In recent years, with the reduction of conflict and direct

confrontation of countries on the battlefields, the function and even goals of the use of military power have undergone fundamental and significant changes. Today, the defense capabilities of countries on the one hand seeks to create attractiveness and provide a favorable image for the audience to increase the legitimacy of future measures to remove violence and threats from its face. Military power, on the other hand, is more of a show and a deterrent. This means that potentially threatening states, seeing the deterrent power of the other side, consider the cost of realizing their threat to be greater than the potential benefit and regret doing so. Military diplomacy is a new way of presenting military power in international arena, which is generally used to increase peace and avoid conflict. This is a special way of using military power through diplomacy, which aims to enhance the ability of any country to advance its demands as much as possible without resorting to violence and avoiding war. In other words, the most important feature of military diplomacy is its use for peaceful purposes.

The term and modern perception of military diplomacy could be defined as follows: “To provide forces to meet the varied activities undertaken by the Ministry of Defense to dispel hostility, building and maintaining trust, and assisting in the development of democratically accountable armed forces, thereby making a significant contribution to conflict prevention and its resolution.” The traditional role of the armed forces was defined by their capability and preparedness to use force and pose a threat for the purpose of defense, deterrence, compulsion, or intervention. Military diplomacy nowadays is primarily a peacetime activity, and has become a major task for armed forces and their responsible ministries. It is framed by cooperation among allies and other foreign countries, especially those undergoing a process of transition towards post-conflict and democratic societies, where it can be used as a tool to promote modern foreign and security policy (Swistek, 2012: 81-82).

Requirements of Military Diplomacy: In order to properly

benefit from military diplomacy, any country, in addition to being aware of diplomatic techniques and training of uniformed diplomats, must first provide the necessary requirements and infrastructure in the military sector. This is vital for the great powers because, in addition to protecting the interests and advancing foreign policy goals, they must meet the demands of other countries, including friendly countries, allies, or buyers of weapons and military technology, at a very high level of military capacity. Therefore, the most basic and at the same time the most important requirements of military diplomacy are:

Military budget. The military or defense budget is the part of the state budget that is allocated to military and defense affairs. The military budget is generally entirely in the hands of the state, except during wartime, and in some countries where people also participate in financing the war, which is actually part of the military and defense spending. The military budget is a quantitative and decisive element in the analysis of military power. Although today this element is used as one of the market elements and is more considered in the analysis, but it should be known that just considering the "military budget" cannot indicate the military power of a country. Although today this is used as one of the highlighted elements and is more considered in the analysis, it should be known that just considering the "military budget" cannot indicate the military power of a country. Therefore, several other factors should be considered in analyzing the element of "military budget", such as the size of the territory, population, morale, quantity and quality of the armed forces, number of factories producing weapons and military equipment in the country, the number of weapons imports and the type and quality of imported weapons. (Jamshidi, 1995). According to the latest statistics published in the New Year on the Global Firepower website, the United States is currently the world's largest military power. The US increased its military spending for the first time in seven years to reach \$649 billion in 2018. The US spending accounted for 36 percent of the world's military, 2.6 times as

much as the next largest spender, China. China allocated about \$ 250 billion to its military in 2018 (SIPRI, 2019: 6-7).

Military equipment. If military power is one of the most essential factors in maintaining and ensuring national security and the survival of the country, modern and advanced weapons, and equipment are essential and vital components of military power. Appropriate and usable weapons are the basic and vital necessities of the defense and military power of any political unit. The quality and quantity of modern and advanced weapons, new equipment, both land and sea important military bases, are fundamental and determining factors in maintaining and increasing military power. Therefore, in addition to the mentioned elements, in examining, measuring and recognizing the military power level of each political unit, it should be considered and studied the status of weapons, equipment, military bases, weapons factories, imported weapons, arms exporting countries, weapons depots, nuclear and non-nuclear arsenals; and measured the military power of that political unit by studying them (Jamshidi, 1995).

Military doctrine. In the process of forming today large societies, the first major goal has been to maintain survival and security, which have gradually been created specific organizations and methods and tools for it. Each country has its own ritual, order and special method to fight through its military organizations, which is mentioned in the form of military doctrine (Danesh Ashtiani, 2009: 18). In military organizations, the doctrine has an imperative nature and can be considered similar to the instructions. Thus, military doctrines can only be imagined in a formalized form and are developed up at the level of elites and commanders. The military nature is from top to bottom and it is imparted to the body and organizational stakeholders as the rules of permissible behavior in the face of events and issues (Danesh Ashtiani, 2009: 21-22).

Military attaches. According to the levels of diplomatic relations between the countries, the deployment of military affiliates is done along with the sending of foreign diplomatic

missions according to the level of military cooperation between the two countries and with the consent of the host government. The attaché, as the counterpart of the ambassador, is a diplomat in uniform with full diplomatic status whose duty was once to observe and assess military developments in a foreign country, as well as to maintain a close relationship with the foreign military elites. This practice emerged as part of nineteenth-century European diplomacy, and continued nearly unchanged until the mid-1980s. An important shift in the nature and purpose of international military relations took place along with the fall of the Iron Curtain. With the change in the perception of security in favor of the comprehensive approach and enhanced security, the role of the military attaché and his duties expanded as well (Swistek, 2012: 81). The military attaché manages the day-to-day bilateral relations for national policymakers and combatant commanders. Transforming the attaché corps will substantially improve the steady state military diplomacy. The military attaché corps must adapt to the new strategic environment, which demands skillful military diplomacy and knowledgeable professionals (Shea, 2005: 52).

The information, experiences, and teachings of military attaches are very influential in the development and military power of any country. Countries implement the deployment of military attaches, to show peace and friendship with their neighbors. Laying the groundwork for holding joint exercises or military student exchanges, transferring experiences in countering terrorist and sabotage acts, as well as providing conditions for purchasing military weapons, are among the matters organized by a military attach (Mizan News Agency, 2016).

Military diplomatic techniques. Military diplomacy uses a variety of techniques to advance foreign goals. These techniques are so effective in portraying the military that, along with military affiliates, they have also become influential actors in the field. The most important technique in military diplomacy, which is in fact the basic principle at all levels of diplomacy, is military

dialogue between officers and senior military commanders of countries. Such negotiations usually take place by agreeing on joint decisions and concluding military contracts such as sending arms and military equipment, the establishment of military bases or joint multilateral cooperation in the protection of common resources or areas such as waterways, seas and the likes.

Increased responsiveness to public opinion is one of the changes that is quite evident in the defense ministries of countries. At present, most state and non-state organizations explain their goals and intentions and answer questions and ambiguities by appointing a spokesman in order to present a responsible and accountable image. Following this rule, the Ministry of Defense also holds meetings with the media and press throughout the year, and the military spokesman answers questions along with raising various issues. Thus, the mass media, including press, radio, television, and social networks, are another important tool used by the military. Today, the media play a very important role in presenting a real or unreal image to direct the world's public opinion. The presence of ministers and senior military officials in the picture frame in explaining positions, as well as broadcasting news and reports from meetings, visits, and agreements in the framework of military cooperation will be very effective in presenting a positive and trustworthy image to the audience. Military agencies have specialized websites and blogs that inform the audience about their goals and plans.

Components of Military Diplomacy: The main components of military diplomacy include activities and actions that are used in the framework of bilateral and multilateral cooperation between states. Military diplomacy encompasses a wide range of actions, some of which are markedly different with each other. The reason for this breadth, as mentioned earlier, is the inclusion of conflicting concepts of diplomacy and military affairs in the form of military diplomacy. But the common denominator of all these measures, which bring them together in the form of military diplomacy, is their co-operative, peaceful, and, most importantly,

military nature.

Different authors have presented several categories of components of military diplomacy. Some of these classifications are general and some include more detailed components. For example, Dhruva Jaishankar, in an article entitled "India's Military Diplomacy", provided a general classification of military diplomacy, which includes (i) the education and training of foreign officers and cadets, (ii) military visits with significant public exposure (such as port calls by naval vessels or the military's participation in parades), and (iii) humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in foreign countries (Jaishankar, 2016: 19). In another category, Steven Smith addresses more of these components. His categorization includes components such as Weapons Sales, Strategic Security Dialogues, Defense Attaché Offices, High-level Military Exchanges, Functional and Educational Military Exchanges, Port Visits, Combined Exercises and Training, Exercises Observation, UN Peacekeeping Operations, Anti-Piracy Operations, Humanitarianism Assistance/Disaster Relief (Smith, 2016, Figure 5: 19). In the following, some of these components will be examined.

Strategic Meetings and Dialogues. As is clear from the definition of military diplomacy, this refers to "all diplomatic activities related to national security and military diplomatic activities", thus distinguishing it from "political diplomacy." (or regular diplomacy) conducted by civilian politicians or diplomatic officials and other civilian officials (other than soldiers and military officials). In form, military diplomacy and political diplomacy do not look all that different, consisting mostly of such things as visits, meetings, discussions, negotiations, receptions, press conferences, diplomatic protocol, participation in international conferences, treaty signings, and exchanges of diplomatic documents. In the case of military diplomacy, however, the content is mainly military in nature, soldiers are participating and the military coloration is strong (Matsuda, 2006:

3). Meetings and dialogues generally revolve around security and strategic issues, but such meetings are also held to plan joint operations and exercises, as well as military visits. Meetings range from senior military officials to lowranking officers.

Export and import of weapons. Arms exports are primarily a sign of national self-sufficiency in the construction of military equipment and modern science and technology. In this regard, since 1950, the United States and Russia (or the Soviet Union before 1992) have always been the largest suppliers and exporters of weapons in the world. According to the latest figures from the Stockholm Center for Peace Studies (SIPRI) published in the 2019, the United States, Russia, France, China, and Germany are currently the world's largest arms exporters from 2014 to 2018, accounting for 75 percent of total global exports. The United States, with 34 percent and Russia, with 22 percent of arms exports, ranks first and second in the world (SIPRI, 2019: 8-9).

Joint exercises. Exercises are generally held to simulate combat conditions, test military capabilities, prepare troops for training in the face of a possible real situation, and test new military achievements. Joint exercises are also held in this direction, mostly among allied or Commonwealth of independent Nations, in order to coordinate more forces with each other. In general, countries such as the United States, Russia, China, and NATO member states hold numerous exercises throughout the year with allies and friendly countries. These exercises are usually conducted bilaterally or multilaterally throughout the year, and the purpose of such exercises in addition to counterterrorism encompasses other objectives, including search and rescue, special operations exercises, humanitarian aid, peacekeeping, antipiracy, and etc. Exercises with foreign militaries provide opportunities to learn new skills, benchmark state capabilities, gather intelligence on foreign capabilities and intentions, shape the security environment by displaying state capabilities, and, in some cases, build partner capacity (Allen & et.al, 2017: 13). The Union Exercise in 2003, the Coordination Exercise in 2006, and a series

of Peace Mission exercises held over several consecutive years are among the exercises conducted in the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization with the participation of Russia and China (Wang & Kong, 2019: 73). Or in another example the United States participated in fifty-two exercises in the Middle East in 2014, including Eagle Resolve, hosted by Qatar and involving twelve nations and 2,000 US service members and Eager Lion, conducted in Jordan and involving nineteen nations and 5,000 US service members (Reveron, 2016: 168).

Military Base. Military bases are two types: 1- Internal military bases such as air, naval, ground, missile sites, or military centers. 2. Military bases of a foreign country (usually powerful countries on the territory of other countries). In the study of military power, this type of military base must be considered. In the case of domestic military bases, their number and quality, their internal capabilities, whether they are advanced or not, etc. must be considered, but it is more important to investigate foreign military bases because these types of bases are considered points for the country of the owner of the base (Jamshidi, military investigation, 1995). Russia has 21 military bases outside its territory, while it is between 600 and 900 bases worldwide for the United States (Tasnim News Agency, 2018). Since World War II, the United States has relied on a network of global military bases and forces to provide forward, collective defense shields against the Soviet Union, to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and to fight terrorism (Davis & et.al, 2012: xi). As a result, having foreign bases increases the presence and influence of countries in strategic areas and the control of competitors in those places.

Non-traditional security operations. Undoubtedly, the main concern of states in today's world is to address the security issues and new threats that surround them, and not just one country, but almost all countries are affected in some way. The need to find solutions to such problems has led countries to new ways that were not common in the past, and often require cooperation and

collective action to overcome these threats. Security dialogues, mainly in the form of bilateral or multilateral dialogues in the form of regional and international organizations, have created many opportunities for the expansion of diplomacy in recent years. The fight against terrorism, separatism, drugs, human trafficking, and many other new issues are among the important issues facing states. Non-traditional operations involve a wide range of military activities that assist the foreign partner and bring the public interest to the international community. . These include non-invasive evacuations, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR), and anti-piracy operations. In the following, some of these measures will be reviewed and explained.

Humanitarian assistance. More actors are engaged in providing humanitarian assistance today than in the 1990s, and there has been a particularly significant increase in the number of NGOs that have joined the established humanitarian agencies. Thus, even without the involvement of foreign military assets, there is greater competition among humanitarian actors. This has had the positive effect of focusing attention on quality control and on the need for coordination in order to avoid duplication of effort and to improve the targeting of aid to the people affected by disasters. At the same time, there is a trend for armed forces around the world to go beyond traditional war-fighting and take on humanitarian and development-related tasks. Some of the factors behind these developments are post-cold war realignment, the professionalization of armed forces (the phasing out of conscription and a greater investment in individual soldiers' training and salary) and a search for new roles as 'forces for good' or 'humanitarian warriors. It also reflects moves towards more comprehensive approaches to security (Wiharta & et.al, 2008: 8-9). The international humanitarian community by and large recognizes that the military can play a vital role in disaster response. It can provide, among other things, a search and rescue capacity unmatched by the humanitarian community; logistical

support; expertise and material resources for infrastructure projects; trained manpower; and, on occasion, security for relief workers (Madiwale and Virk, 2011:1086).

UN peacekeeping. According to Handbook on UN about Peacekeeping Operations (2003) the military component will not normally be structured, trained or funded for the direct delivery of humanitarian assistance, which is a civilian task. The military is more likely to be asked to provide a secure environment in which humanitarian assistance can be delivered successfully or to provide security and protection for humanitarian relief operations. This may take the form of ensuring freedom of movement, convoy escorts, protection of humanitarian personnel and storage sites, among other assistance. The military component often, however, has assets and capabilities, such as transport and other logistical support, which are useful in a humanitarian effort. The use of military assets for humanitarian tasks should be coordinated by an appropriate civilian authority as part of a coordinated plan of emergency relief. Within the UN system, managing humanitarian assistance is normally the task of the humanitarian coordinator in that particular mission area. Military contingents also undertake humanitarian activities on their own initiative, using their own resources. Some states consider this humanitarian dimension an essential part of their peacekeeping contribution and, often, an important factor in mobilizing national support for the military deployment. Humanitarian projects undertaken by the military can contribute significantly to improving relations with the local population and the parties to the conflict, thereby increasing security and building consent. These activities should be in line with international humanitarian objectives and the policy framework adopted in the mission area and should prevent parallel efforts with humanitarian organizations. It is important that these initiatives help build local capacity and long-term sustainability, especially in protection of civilians. In specific circumstances, the mandate of a peacekeeping operation may include the need to protect vulnerable civilian populations from imminent attacks.

The military component may be asked to provide such protection in its area of deployment only if it has the capacity to do so. Identifying and assembling military capability for deployment in a peacekeeping operation is called force generation. Since the UN does not maintain military capability of its own, it is dependent on contributions from member States. The peacekeeping costs of the UN are shared among the entire membership of the organization according to a pre-agreed scale of assessments; the five permanent members of the Security Council pay a slightly higher proportion because of their special responsibility for maintenance of international peace and security. Contributing States are reimbursed by the UN for the personnel and equipment they provide for peacekeeping service. Within the Secretariat of the UN, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) coordinates the Organization's needs for military expertise and capability (United Nations, 2003: 64).

Anti-piracy operations. Piracy has increased dramatically in the last two or three decades, although it has been around for a long time especially as the global trade increased throughout the 1990s, piracy increased in key shipping lanes in the South China Sea, the Strait of Malacca, and the Indian Ocean (Reveron, 2016: 211). As piracy developed in Eastern Africa, pirates garnered world attention because their activities affected commerce in the waters of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, which are strategic links between Europe and Asia. The area is an essential oil transport route, with 30 percent of the world's oil passing through the Gulf of Aden. Although pirates do not routinely target the larger tankers transiting the area, but they became very bold in pursuing their goals. A significant attack against a large tanker in the Gulf of Aden could cause delays or closure of the traffic through Bab el-Mandeb Strait, thus preventing Persian Gulf tankers from reaching the Suez Canal and leading to greater energy costs and a disruption to European energy supplies (Reveron, 2016: 212). With improving security by shipping companies in recent years, countries have been engaged in

international maritime coalitions or individually, on key routes of transport or escorting commercial ships. For example, the UN Security Council authorized and the United States sponsored Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) attempts to disrupt piracy and armed robbery at sea and to engage with regional and other partners to build capacity, develop task force leadership experience, and improve relevant capabilities in order to protect global maritime commerce and secure freedom of navigation (Reveron, 2016: 213). China since 2008, which deployed its first anti-piracy escort task force to the Gulf of Eden, has so far deployed a number of them to the region for protecting the security of Chinese ships and staff passing through the Gulf of Eden and Somali waters, and as well as protecting ships providing humanitarian supplies for the World Food Program and other international organizations and securing foreign ships in transit lanes (Smith, 2016).

Military Diplomacy Objectives: Military diplomacy, regardless of the important effects and consequences that may have on the foreign policy of countries, tries to achieve certain goals within the framework of the defined military structure by the decision-makers of this field. Although it is possible that each country, based on macro-defined strategies, geopolitics position and military capabilities, set different goals for itself, however, some sharing can be observed, especially in some important goals. The most important goals that armies use diplomacy are "supporting public diplomacy", "gathering information" and "sending a signal to an international audience".

Supporting public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is essential for the development of any country's foreign policy, and its main goal is to communicate and interact with domestic and foreign audiences - whether governments or people. (Krasnyak, E-international Relations, 2019). In recent years, along with the development of a comprehensive approach to a new range of security threats and to changes within the perception of security, public diplomacy again moved more toward a focus on foreign

relations as a strategy, a tool for cross-national interaction, and a mechanism to promote the development of interdependences and therefore to support efforts to maintain and expand peace. So, a new pillar was added to the structure of public diplomacy: the impact on foreign policy. The purpose of this element is to influence decisions and decision-makers in foreign governments. Even when the actions of public diplomacy largely originate from governments and governmental bodies, however, it does not seek to have a direct impact on foreign governments and decision makers. Countries that engage in public diplomacy campaigns seek to facilitate their foreign policy goals by creating a positive atmosphere among foreign populations. Ambassadors were once key players in public diplomacy, but today the actors involved in such campaigns are diverse in nature and in large numbers. The ambassador, as the senior diplomat in a foreign country, still remains the primary vehicle for diplomatic messages and efforts, but actions on the ground (and particularly away from the embassy) are usually the responsibility of other government-funded bodies, multinational organizations, cooperative networks, or non-governmental organizations. Along these lines, the military has also recently gained more responsibility within the area of public diplomacy in some nations (Swistek, 2012: 80-81). Since military force and public diplomacy do not contradict each other in the present century and actually complete and strengthen each other as two sets of tools in the service of political goals, there is no boundary between these tools in politics and their composition can be discussed. Military power in global politics is primarily considered to support political power and to create a "field of power" of public diplomacy (PODBEROZKIN, 2016: 23). One of the most important military actions in this regard usually begins after the end of civil wars in crisis hit countries. The peace and stability operation is being conducted by troops invited by the host country or with or without UN permission. In interaction with the host countries and their people, the army defines its mission of controlling the crisis, stabilizing the ceasefire situation, and

ultimately helping peace-keeping process monitoring and helping in elections are other actions. However, the intervention of military forces, which are largely owned by great powers, is also another way to disseminate public diplomacy and to communicate with communities and states, which is done in order to legitimize and justify the presence of these forces and ultimately increase regional and international influence.

Collecting Intelligence. Military diplomacy offers opportunities to collect intelligence on foreign capabilities and intentions and on potential operating areas (Allen & et.al, 2017: 10). Nearly all military diplomatic activities can be employed to gather some kind of intelligence because military diplomacy by definition provides some degree of access to foreign militaries. Senior-level meetings and dialogues provide opportunities to collect political intelligence about policy preferences and personnel intelligence about foreign military leaders, functional exchanges and military exercises offer technical intelligence about foreign military capabilities, and naval port calls and non-traditional security operations can be used to collect intelligence about potential operating areas (Allen & et.al, 2017: 10-11).

Sending signals to an international audience. Military diplomacy is usually used by the military to send specific messages to international audiences. Like the international audience of the army's actions, which include a range of friends, allies, partners, competitors and enemies, these messages may also bring a range of messages, including "reassurance" or "deterrence" to the audiences (Gibson, 2018). For example, when a country, together with its allies, is conducting joint exercises, it sends several messages at the same time. One message is to create confidence for allies and friends and to introduce themselves as responsible, committed, and reliable partners. But at the same time, the set of military actions and maneuvers within the framework of these exercises sends deterrent messages to potential competitors.

II- Military Diplomacy and Foreign Policy

In general, military diplomacy seeks to influence foreign policy and ensure national interests. In fact, the main task of military diplomacy is to present a positive image of governments and the peaceful and non-violent demonstrations of their military forces. It is notable that military diplomacy may have different forms of influence on the foreign policy of each country. In this section we intend to point out some of the most important impacts of military diplomacy on foreign policy.

Protecting economic interests. Military diplomacy can affect the economy of countries in three ways. The first path is a direct influence. In addition to self-sufficiency, governments' serious efforts to produce weapons and military equipment will also lead to economic growth and development in the export debate. Exports through taking of a significant volume of the market, which is generally under the control of great powers such as the United States, Russia, France, China, and Germany, will annually generate large financial transactions for these countries. The second route is to protect international trade and transportation routes. The threat of these routes in any way can directly affect the global economy. Controlling critical transit routes, especially international straits, or forming forces to escort ships and secure routes against piracy is done in this regard. For example, we can point out the measures that some states adopt to secure the Gulf of Eden against Somali pirates. The third way in which governments indirectly support the economy is to use the military to combat drug trafficking and thus prevent the movement of illicit money into world markets. The combination of these measures demonstrates the constructive role of the military and the need to increase international military cooperation between countries to better coordinate the emerging potential threats that lurk in the economies of nations.

Positive image. The most prominent impact of the use of military diplomacy by states is to provide a responsible and committed image of itself among people and other governments.

The great powers usually try to present a desirable and efficient image of themselves in the form of military aid, arms sales and military training, in addition to meeting the needs of their partners and allies. But this is not the only thing the military can do. In fact, the most important focus of great powers should be to influence on views of societies and ordinary people. Participation in humanitarian operations and disaster relief is one of these ways. For example, in September 2004, the disastrous tsunami and earthquake in Indonesia received an immediate humanitarian response from the United States. The relief efforts of the United States, orchestrated by U.S. military, increased the Indonesian public's support of American engagement in the region (Karadag, 2017: 73). Relief operations are more important than other assistance because, in this situation, the army directly contacts the community of a foreign country during service, which helps to improve the country's reputation among public opinion. Holding military tours and caravans, along with a large number of soldiers, up-to-date and advanced equipment, and passing through specific countries, is another way of having a direct and profound effect on the people who gather to see and greet the caravans. In general, influencing societies can be more valuable and lasting than influencing governments.

Shaping the security environment. Security and confronting threats have been some of the most obvious tasks defined for the armies. This task has always been the responsibility of the military throughout history, both in times of domination by traditional threats, mostly by governments, and in times of non-traditional threats. In addition to the states, numerous inhumane and non-governmental factors have posed emerging challenges. The major difference in providing security should be searched in the use of military power tools in the past and present. States believed in coercive, violent, and war-fighting practices in the past. Of course, this was mostly due to overcoming the hard view of power among governments, and the threat was usually the governments themselves. But with the transformation in the nature of the threat

and changing the view to power, a different atmosphere was found. This does not mean the disappearance of traditional threats, but it is important that today some new nontraditional threats are more challenging than traditional threats, and states have no choice but security and military cooperation to resolve these threats. Increasing the risk of terrorist groups, climate change, pandemic diseases, migration and, such cases, are only part of these threats. Thus, the major powers intend to increase cooperation through strategic security talks, forming alliances, and sharing spending with other countries, rather than the continued use of force and violence, which generally wastes a great deal of material and material costs. In addition to eliminating the threat, they can persuade their allies and partners and legitimize their actions in the fight against some states that jeopardize their interests and introduce them as threats and destructive elements of the international system. Therefore, the best option for great powers is to shape foreign perceptions to shape the desirable security environment in their favor.

Increasing sphere of influence. Increasing spheres of influence is usually the goal of powers seeking regional and international supremacy. Achieving this goal today will be possible by building trust and increasing cooperation with neighbors through the establishment of international institutions and regimes, especially economic and military organizations. . The great powers must always seek the influence of regional and international competitors and not easily cede their sphere of activity to them. China, for example, has made extensive efforts to build trust between its neighbors and, as far as possible, to curb their inclination toward the United States. The establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the establishment of the Shanghai Security Cooperation Organization with the participation of Russia are two important steps taken by China in this regard. China relies heavily on military diplomacy to strengthen its peaceful foreign policy. Russia, however, is pursuing its military agenda more intensively, and in addition to

its close relationship with China in recent years in developing economic, political, and military cooperation, its main focus is on maintaining its backyard and countries that were former members of the Soviet Union and have not yet joined NATO and the European Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which consists of these countries, has made it possible for Russia, in addition to increasing cooperation, to make its members more and more dependent on its protectionist measures. The US approach is to enter into bilateral and multilateral alliances with allies and partners around the world to ensure security and to persuade them to have a direct military presence in their territories. Thus, one of the most important elements of military diplomacy for the United States is the establishment of hundreds of military bases in most countries of the world. This crucial capability, which is largely accompanied by an increase in operational geography, not only increases the scope of the United States' response to potential threats, but even allows the United States to take a more active and effective action to introduce threats, persuade others, and eventually create a coalition against them. The US military presence is not only to meet the challenges, but also to prevent the growing influence of rivals, especially Russia and China, in their territories and to become a regional hegemon.

Increasing the amount of action. One of the important consequences of military diplomacy in foreign policy is increasing the extent of action and its effectiveness in the regional and international arena. Military diplomacy, due to its great diversity in its goals and components, has led countries to conduct various measures including humanitarian and anti-terrorist operations and more, or in other words, doing a wide and diverse range of such actions can be justified in the form of military diplomacy. For example, comparing the developments of Russia in the last decade with the 1990s clearly indicates an increase in the extent of the country's action in international developments. In the 1990s, despite the vast land and borders, due to the collapse of the

communist system and the joining of some of the newly independent countries from the former Soviet Union to the European-American NATO coalition, the country's influence reached its borders. But now Russia, backed by extensive reforms in the military structure and ultra-advanced technologies and Putin's powerful leadership, is seeking to increase its share in international equations and it is more openly following its policy of confrontation with the West. Good trade and political relations with South American countries, the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, active presence in the Ukrainian crisis, and the military presence in Syria against terrorism and the support of the ruling government can be considered as an important example of the increase in Russia's actions in the use of military force.

Expanding operational geography. Another important outcome of military diplomacy is the expanding operational geography of countries, which is directly related to the extent of action. In fact, with the increase in the scope of activity of each government, wider areas are considered where effective measures can be taken. Establishing military bases, conducting joint exercises in the host country, or sending military experts and consultants will provide the field for countries to be present in the wide geography of the world. The United States is a suitable example in this area. Allocating the biggest military budget along with equipping with the most advanced weapons and military equipment, holding the highest number of joint international exercise far beyond the borders in the host countries, and having the largest military bases, which has dramatically increased its global influence and maneuverability, is one of the reasons for the vast operational geography of the world's most powerful country. In the former example, Russia has expanded the geographical scope of its action from regional to trans-regional.

Many countries today, especially the great powers, use military diplomacy as a foreign policy tool. The US, UK, France and NATO members can be considered the world's leaders in military diplomacy. China has stepped up its military-diplomatic

efforts and could be one of the group's leaders. The US, UK, France, NATO members and Australia have very focused and relatively transparent policies and programmes. While the United States engages countries across the globe through its theatre commands, India and China focus on the developing world on the continents of Africa and Asia. Australia focuses on its immediate neighborhood of the Asia-Pacific region (Muthanna, 2011: 8).

III- An Iranian Perspective

Meanwhile, Iran, as one of the influential actors in the Western Asia, is at the beginning of the path of military diplomacy. In fact, one of the obstacles to Iran's non- active participation in military cooperation with other countries has been Western arms embargo due to numerous political differences and tensions following the UN Security Council sanctions against its nuclear program. (Especially Resolutions 1747 and 1929), However, over the years, Iran has sought to address its shortcomings in this area through localization of equipment and self-sufficiency in security.

A prerequisite for recognizing Iran's actions in the field of military diplomacy is to study the general principles and goals of this country as the main source of inspiration and influence in the decision-making process and determine its macro and micro strategies. Among the most important principles is "denial of domination", "Advocacy of justice" and "interaction based on mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs". In short, according to the rule of negation of domination, while emphasizing its independence, Iran strongly rejects any intervention of other countries and attempts to influence and dominate the country. Also, based on the principle of mutual respect, Iran respects the sovereignty of other countries and regulates the development of cooperation with them in various fields within this framework. Also, Iran's security and defense strategies are formed in the form of the principle of advocacy of justice, defending the oppressed people, and supporting them. Supporting Muslim countries and emphasizing cooperation and

integration between these countries is also one of the inspiring and pursued goals of Iran in the region and the world. (See Pir Mohammadi, 2016: 17 to 19). An examination of Iran's actions in the last 40 years, especially in the field of military policy, shows a significant adaptation between them and the stated principles. According to the studies of Postinchi et al. (2013), Iran's defense policy and strategy can be divided into two categories: balance and resistance against regional and international enemies and rivals, as well as development of relations and interaction with regional and trans-regional allies and friendly nations which some of them are defined in the axis of resistance. In Iran's view, the United States is trying to pursue a policy of regional and international hegemony. Therefore, it is natural for Iran to formulate a regional balance strategy by forming its own nuclei of resistance against it [consisting of governmental and non-governmental actors] (Postinchi et al., 2013: 57). Thus, by adhering to the general principles and rules by which Iran acts, military assistance and security cooperation within the framework of military diplomacy with allies and strategic partners in the fight against terrorism and regional security becomes meaningful. Sending military advisers to Iraq and Syria in their fight against terrorist groups, especially ISIS, has been a clear example of intergovernmental military action. Strategic partnerships with influential non-state actors such as Lebanon's Hezbollah, liberation movements in Palestine, and support for the suffering people of Yemen are also expanding in support of oppressed Muslim nations and strengthening the axis of resistance.

On the other hand, with the signing of (JCPOA) the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action () between P+1 groups namely the U.S, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany on the one hand and Iran on the other, as well as the lifting of sanctions, especially the arms embargo that was ended on October 18, 2020, suitable ground has been created for serious security and military cooperation between Iran and other countries, especially China and Russia. Holding two important naval exercises in 2019 (with

the participation of China, Russia, and Iran) and in 2021 (with the presence of Iran and Russia) in the strategic geography of the Indian Ocean near the Straits of Hormuz, Bab al-Mandeb, and Malacca, indicate Iran's efforts to use the opportunity of cooperating with major world powers. These developments reflect the attention of China and Russia to cooperating with Iran to ensure an active presence in this strategic region and to ensure the security of maritime trade.

Conclusion

The military's attention to the use of diplomacy has been increasing with greater acceleration in recent decades. So, the great powers try to follow their political and military goals at the regional and international level in the form of military cooperation and various contracts in addition to economic profitability. The post-Cold War space, the spread of terrorism and emerging threats have made it more necessary to change the approach to the use of military power and to increase cooperation among countries in this regard. States, especially great powers are looking for new solutions to increase influence on other states, including their decision-makers and people. Therefore, in addition to having a military presence in the target countries, they must create space for real or self-declared needs. In this way, the Armed Forces are another means for applying foreign policy objectives to influence foreign audiences, along with other tools of public diplomacy such as ambassadors, state representatives, or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The use of military diplomacy in creating a positive picture of states and peaceful and non-violent demonstration of their military forces helps mutual trust in each other and reduces the animosity and crises while increasing the extent of their action and influence level of these countries. As a result, all of these factors increase the ability of governments to follow foreign policy concepts and play a role in the international arena. The Islamic Republic of Iran also regulates its defense and security policies based on defined strategic principles and goals,

such as "denial of domination", "Advocacy of justice" and "interaction based on mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs". Accordingly, Iran's behavior involves a set of balances with rivals and dominating powers and also interaction with other governments, especially the strategic allies that form the axis of resistance. Military cooperation with the Syrian and Iraqi governments in the fight against terrorism is defined in this context.

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