


A Fundamental Analysis of British Foreign Policy and Its Impact on Iran-Britain Relations

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Abstract

After the end of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States and the collapse of the bipolar system, the British government, as a secondary power, sought to revise its foreign policy principles based on the necessities of the 21st century. Especially after the events of September 11, 2001, London officials reviewed the foundations of the country's foreign policy within the framework of a new international order centered on the United States. As a result of the new structure of British foreign policy, the political relations of this country with other international actors underwent changes, such that this issue also impacted the bilateral relations between London and Tehran. This research examines the foundations of British foreign policy as the main pillars of the country's foreign relations in the post-September 11 era. This article analyzes this topic using a descriptive-analytical method based on a foundational approach. The aim of this writing is to answer the main question: "What are the most important foundations of British foreign policy and what effects do they have on Britain's bilateral relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran?" The results of this research indicate that commercial diplomacy, energy security, US-British special relationship, the maintenance of the security and survival of the Zionist regime, and attention to human rights issues with specific perspectives are among the most important foundations and constructs of British foreign policy, each of which has in some way darkened and challenged relations between London and Tehran.

Keywords: Britain, Islamic Republic of Iran, Foreign policy, Fundamental analysis.

Introduction

The tradition of British foreign policy can be found in a statement by Harold Wilson, the prime minister of this country during the years 1964 and 1974, addressed to British statesmen. Shortly after taking office in October 1964, he declared, "We are a world power and a world influence, or we are nothing" (Oslo, 2005, p. 19), a perspective that was followed by subsequent prime ministers with interpretations specific to each era. In fact, the main direction of British political-security diplomacy, on a strategic scale, has been toward "increasing security and strengthening international standing" through intervention in global issues.

Naturally, officials in London are aware that the capacity and capability for military intervention of the UK is limited in practice and is accompanied by numerous challenges; for this reason, politicians in this country are compelled to use other tools such as political, security, economic, and cultural levers to intervene in international matters. This analytical background is embedded in the framework of the House of Commons, which refers to it as "the general conditions for establishing relations with other governments to secure Britain's interests"; Members of Parliament have obligated their government to ensure the following three conditions in bilateral and multilateral relations: first, to help guarantee Britain's security; second, to increase Britain's success through the development of business and investment opportunities for British companies; and third, to promote British values through the dissemination of culture and the English language, expanding educational opportunities and human rights standards (House of Commons, 2014, pp. 11-12).

On one hand, the utilization of multiple interventionist levers by English politicians concerning various countries depends on the nature of their opposing front, and on the other hand, the nature of other actors in the international system is based on the identity and role that London officials define for themselves. In other words, the British government, with an identity recognition of its position in the global arena, determines its strategic partners, regional competitors, and enemies, and based on that, it organizes the arrangement of its relationships. In fact, the self-defined identity and role of the British government constitute the principles of this country's foreign policy.

The history of political and diplomatic relations between Britain and the Islamic Republic of Iran over the past forty years indicates that the relationship between Tehran and London has never been

strategic and close. Despite the conciliatory approach of reformist governments in Iran to strengthen relations with England and to forget London's hostile actions against the Iranian people, the wall of distrust between the two sides did not crumble. Although, according to some British thinkers, the roots of the conflict between Iran and Britain should be sought in the confrontation between Iran and ancient Greece (Rezaei, 1385, p. 83), it seems that in addition to the components of strategic culture, the roots of this distrust and hostility must be sought in the principles of British foreign policy to determine what impact these foundations have on relations between Britain and Iran.

According to published research, the article by Ali Mohammadian and Ahmad Naghibzadeh (2018) titled "Britain's Middle Eastern Policy in the Post-Brexit Era: A Case Study of the Persian Gulf" examines the potential scenarios in the relations between Britain and the Persian Gulf in the post-Brexit period. Additionally, Hamira Moshirzadeh and Fatemeh Hamoui (2012), in an article titled "The Discourse of Britain's European Policy: A Metaphorical Analysis," have explored the reasons behind Britain's pessimistic and tense approach toward European unity within the framework of cognitive and perceptual theory. Furthermore, Mohammad Reza Saeedabadi and Sam Mohammadpour (2021), in the article "The Impact of Brexit on Three Key Principles in Britain's Foreign Policy," analyze three influential principles in Britain's foreign policy-making: the special relationship with the United States, the responsibility to protect, and multilateralism within the framework of ontological security theory. Abouzar Gohari Moghadam and Hojjatollah Noori Sari (2015), in the article "Cost-Benefit Analysis of Diplomatic Relations between Iran and Britain 1989-2011," have examined the bilateral political relations in three states: maintaining relations, reducing, and severing bilateral communications.

This research is of an applied nature and has been conducted with a descriptive-analytical approach. At the same time, an effort has been made to first clarify the foundations within the framework of a foundational analysis so that the frameworks and boundaries can be specified. Here, foundationalism is a term related to theories of epistemology, according to which knowledge must rely on justified belief or some other certain principle.

1. Structural and Strategic Determinants of British Foreign Policy Toward Iran

The establishment of a parliamentary system in Britain has led to parties playing a prominent role in the political structure of this country. Although the main focus of disputes between the Conservative and Labour parties has often been on domestic policies in the pursuit of the Prime Minister's seat, key British parties agree on principles that constitute the backbone of the country's foreign policy. In fact, regardless of which party and which individual forms the British government, there are principles governing the foreign relations of this country that are known as the "Key Principles in British Foreign Policy." Certainly, historical background, the ideology of liberal democracy, and the structure governing the international system have all influenced the minds of English politicians in recognizing their identity on the global stage. The result of these identity foundations has been the formation of the foundations of British foreign policy in the post-September 11, 2001 era, which includes trade diplomacy, energy security, a special relationship with the United States, the security and survival of the Zionist regime, and the strengthening of human rights standards. Each of these components influences relations between London and Tehran in some way and collectively provides an analytical framework for predicting the trends of bilateral interactions.

The roots of Britain's special relationship with the United States must be sought in the events following the end of World War II. During that period, the outcome of the war for the British government was nothing but imposing heavy financial damages, economic bankruptcy, and social disintegration. The United States government, which had been preserved from the war damages due to its geographical conditions, appeared as one of the two main poles in the new international power structure, relying on its economic and military power. Washington's concerns about the imminent dangers of communism persuaded American policymakers to implement the Marshall Plan, not only for the reconstruction of Europe but also to prevent the European countries affected by the war from turning toward the Soviet Union. On the other hand, Britain was forced in the new circumstances to hand over its international position to its Anglo-Saxon nephews and return to the international arena as a secondary power. Perhaps for this reason, Margaret Thatcher described Britain as a "middle-ranking power" due to its entrapment in recession and economic weakness. Edward Heath also had the same perception of his

country's position in the global system and referred to Britain as a "first-rate second-class power" (Harvey, 2011: 13-14).

Acceptance of this mental and practical situation convinced British authorities to establish closer relations with their superiors to maintain their influence in the international arena. Naturally, in the bipolar system of the Cold War era, Britain, as a liberal democratic system, leaned toward its harmonious pole, namely the United States, and was inherently in contradiction and conflict with communist ideology.

Therefore, special relations between Britain and the United States of America began in the 1940s to varying degrees, despite some ups and downs, in the form of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to counter the threat of the Soviet Union; relations that are now referred to as the cornerstone of British foreign policy. In this regard, the US Congress in its report introduces special relations with Britain as follows, "The UK is often perceived to be the leading allied voice in shaping U.S. foreign policy debates, and observers assert that the UK's status as a close ally of the United States has often served to enhance its global influence. British support, in turn, has often helped add international credibility and weight to U.S. policies and initiatives, and the close U.S.-UK partnership has benefitted the pursuit of common interests in bodies such as the UN, NATO, and other multilateral institutions. The U.S.-UK political relationship encompasses an extensive network of individuals from across the public and private sectors. Relationships between the individual national leaders, however, are often analyzed by some observers as emblematic of countries' broader political relations" (Mix, 2013, p. 7).

These bilateral relations between Washington and London have been closely intertwined for decades, regardless of their political orientations, and strong bureaucratic interactions have been established between the two countries in various diplomatic, military, or intelligence sectors (Dormandy, 2013:4). While the necessity or special nature of relations in the United States is not in question, in Britain, this is one of the issues that is the subject of ongoing discussions about the need for its continuation and its consequences (Dormandy, 2013, p. 4). Tony Blair declared on November 10, 1997, in the first year of his premiership, "Powerful in Europe and powerful with America. There is no choice between the two. Being powerful with one means being powerful with the other. Our goal should be to deepen our relations with America at all levels; we are the bridge between the United States and Europe.

Let us make use of it. When the areas in which Britain and America work together on the international stage are limited, we cannot succeed" (Harvey, 2011, p. 7). Therefore, the English think tank Chatham House, in its 2013 report, while examining the special relationship between Washington and London, mentioned three main benefits that the United States derives from these relations as follows, "First, having a partner presence in the European Union that pursues common goals, purposes, and shared interests for the United States. Second, Washington benefiting from London's assets in the fields of intelligence, defense, economy, and diplomacy, and third, creating a different perspective in understanding challenges. These three pillars are extremely important for America" (Dormandy, 2013, p. 9).

The U.S. Congress in its 2013 summary of Washington-London relations outlines the future of the special relationship as follows, "Most analysts agree that the U.S.-UK political relationship is likely to remain close; that the "special relationship" will remain strong on many vital issues in which the UK is a crucial U.S. ally; and that the two countries will remain key economic partners. Observers also assert that the main dimensions of the U.S.-UK relationship are deep and enduring in that they go beyond the personal dynamics of individual leaders and are not subject to sudden moves or policy shifts by either country. Analysts observe that many concerns and assertions about an impending break-up of the "special relationship" tend to be exaggerations" (Mix, 2013, p. 13).

Also, the British House of Lords report entitled "British Foreign Policy in a Shifting World Order" says about British relations with the United States: "Below the political level, our witnesses asserted, the UK and US are deeply entwined through defense and intelligence links, and connections between officials, which should withstand political decisions by the Administration. The Government should reach out to those parts of American society which share our views and values; and the Government should increase support for the Marshall Scholarship scheme". (House of Lords, 2018, p. 14).

Although there has been a close relationship between the two countries over the last decades and they do have many common interests, these interests have also diverged from time to time and even while pursuing the same strategic goals their tactics can be different. In the case of Iran, it should be said that although a few Anglo-American disputes were mentioned in this paper, it should not be forgotten that these disputes do not signify support for Iran

but are rather disagreements over how best these countries can best pursue their own interests. (Bakhtiari, 2014, p. 203). In other words, in the case of Iran, there may be some minor differences between London and Washington on how to deal with Tehran (as in Donald Trump, the president of the United States, unlike Britain, withdrew from the nuclear agreement with Iran), but due to deep ties American and British political, security and military, Whitehall officials supported the policies of the White House in the direction of economic sanctions against Iran, the policy of maximum pressure, sanctions against Hezbollah in Lebanon and support for Iran's internal unrest. As the Guardian revealed in a report in 2021 that the British government also played a role in the assassination of Martyr Soleimani. This newspaper writes, "RAF intelligence base linked to US drone strike on Iranian general Qassem Soleimani". (Guardian, 2021).

Another foundation of Britain's foreign policy in the post-September 11, 2001 era is attention to maintaining the security and survival of the Zionist regime. After the end of World War I in 1918, the military forces of the British government did not leave Palestine; they stayed to pave the way for the establishment of a Jewish state. The British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour, on November 2, 1917, during World War I, issued a statement in the form of a letter addressed to Lord Rothschild (as one of the main leaders of the Jewish community in Britain) in which he spoke of the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine as a "national home for the Jews." (Balfour Declaration, 1917).

Although the current relations between Britain and the Israeli regime revolve around political-security issues, the main structure of the Zionists' relations with London authorities is based on ideological and belief components. The Puritanism school, whose ethical norms are entirely consistent with the Torah, is referred to as English Judaism. According to the beliefs of the Puritans, before the return of the Messiah, the Jews had to return to their holy lands (Sahib-Khalq, 2004). In fact, aside from Britain's political goals and historical role in the establishment of the Zionist regime in occupied territories, strong religious motivations have also been influential in London's comprehensive support for the Zionists.

Therefore, David Cameron, the conservative Prime Minister of Britain, emphasized his country's role in ensuring the security of the Israeli regime in his March 2014 speech to the members of the Knesset in occupied territories, stating, "Britain has played a vital and honorable role in helping to secure Israel as a homeland for the

Jewish people. And just as in our historical partnership, today we are creating the same relationships between two countries that begin with our commitment to Israel's security. So let me be very clear - with me, you have a British Prime Minister who believes in Israel's indefatigability and whose commitment to Israel's security will always be the foundation. I am proud to pursue the strongest and deepest possible relationship between our two countries, from our trade, which has doubled in a decade and is now worth £5 billion a year, to global collaboration between our top scientists, academics, and technology experts. Israel's technology protects British and NATO forces in Afghanistan, and in the UK's national health service, one-sixth of prescription drugs are sourced through Israel; and I believe that like our closest allies, Britain and Israel share history, values, capabilities, and of course, a historical responsibility to fulfill it" (Cameron, 2014).

The lobby of the Conservative Friends of Israel is one of the most active groups in the British Parliament building known as Westminster; they claim that although they have had less media coverage compared to other English lobbies, eighty percent of the members of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons are members of this lobby. According to a 2009 documentary on Channel 4 in England called "Inside the Israel Lobby in Britain," financial contributions to the Conservative Party from all members of the Conservative Friends of Israel lobby and their businesses have exceeded £10 million in the past eight years (Powerbase, 2009). The level of support and backing from London authorities for the Israeli regime is to the extent that they oppose any civil action to restrict the Zionists. For example, while the National Union of Students in Britain has taken steps to boycott Israeli goods, Tobias Ellwood from the British Foreign Office reiterated London's commitment to opposing sanctions against Israel (Presstv, 2015). In previous years, the British government also prevented the implementation of academic sanctions against the Zionists by higher education institutions in the country and openly opposed such actions.

The UK Foreign Office, for the first time in 2003, published a draft of its ten-year foreign policy strategy. The draft emphasized that "the UK's foreign policy actions in the past 15 years have been dedicated to stability in Europe, but after September 11, combating international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have been highlighted as a necessity, and the combination of these two dangerous issues has posed a security

threat. Dealing with this threat requires new measures, including strategies to use force to prevent threats and risks." (Shirzadi, 2003, p.1168). The fight against terrorism led the UK authorities to once again define the activities of resistance groups in the West Asia region as terrorist movements under the pretext of combating extremist trends. One of the challenges in London's relations with Tehran is the issue of "anti-Zionism" of the Islamic Republic and Tehran's support for Islamic resistance groups; groups that Western authorities label as terrorist groups. Perhaps for this reason, the UK Parliament has mentioned Tehran as a threat to Britain's security and claims that "Iran has been seen as a threat to the security of Britain and its regional partners in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf for decades."

Ideologically committed to the destruction of the Israeli government and describes Israel as the cancer of the Middle East. It provides human resources, equipment, and advisors (including support for intelligence gathering capabilities) by spending billions of dollars from the budget. Both Israel, which believes that any attack is aimed at Iran, and Saudi Arabia, which sees Iran as a rival for its influence, have pressured their Western allies to limit Iran's programs. In this context, the British Parliament proposes that the direction of the Foreign Ministry and common interests toward Iran should be as follows, "Further increase in regional stability and security through reducing Iranian threats to British regional partners (related to the survival of Israel) and cooperation to end Iran's anti-Western influence in Syria, Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian territories, and other areas" (House of Commons, 2014, p. 11). These positions were reiterated multiple times before the signing of the comprehensive joint action plan between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the six international powers. The signing of the JCPOA, which London officials referred to as a security agreement for the Zionist regime, led to a slight change in their position toward Iran. Therefore, British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond in an interview on August 24, 2015, with BBC Radio 4 in response to the question of whether Iran is really committed to the destruction of Israel, said, "This position was before Rouhani, and Rouhani has a different approach" (Hammond, 2015). After the military operation of the Islamic Republic of Iran's "Vadeh Sadeq" against the Zionist regime, the London authorities announced, "UK have imposed a new wave of sanctions against Iran, following its drone attack on Israel." (BBC, 2024).

2. Material Interests and Pragmatic Dimensions in British Foreign Policy Toward Iran

In a world where oil is rightly considered a vital force for future trade and international security, Winston Churchill advised the British authorities that safety and assurance in oil supply lies only in the diversity of oil sources. For this reason, international relations researchers believe in the importance of energy in today's world, considering that oil policies are not just an industrial or regional issue, but a global security issue. Oil policies are the core of world politics. Others also believe in the importance of energy-rich regions, considering the geographical and political connections between energy suppliers and consumers, that if the main natural resources of the West Asia and North Africa region were bananas, this region would not attract policymakers' attention for decades (Sedgwick, 2007, p. 13). In this context, the British government has always strived to secure the main oil supply arteries of their country. "Developments in the energy system are shifting the foundations of energy security in the UK and across the world." (Marks, 2013, p. 1).

In general, Britain is increasingly concerned about oil and natural gas for two reasons: first, the government must ensure Britain's access to oil for domestic consumption. Second, it also sees international access to energy resources as essential to facilitate global economic growth or at least stability. These two concerns collectively form Britain's energy security concept. As North Sea oil and gas resources decline, future resources will increasingly come from international markets. As a result, increased competition among oil and gas consumers worldwide leads to uncertainties about the future of international energy transactions, which can lead to increased political interference. Critics argue that Anglo-American interventions are a war for oil (Sedgwick, 2007, pp. 14-15). For this reason, the British House of Commons emphasizes energy security in its strategic report on the London-Tehran relationship, "In our view, the objectives of the Foreign Office and common interests with Iran should be as follows: a free path for greater diversity in energy and hydrocarbon supplies for Britain and other EU countries through Iran's natural resources" (House of Commons, 2014, pp. 11-12). Reviving trade relations between London and Tehran will enable Iran to play a significant role in diversifying Britain's energy sources and help Britain secure its energy security through the supply of oil and natural gas resources (House of Commons, 2014, p. 14).

In fact, the issue is energy security, which makes maintaining

maritime security in the waters of the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Indian Ocean essential for Britain. As Michael Fallon, the British Defense Secretary, pointed out, "The Persian Gulf is a very important region for us. We have commercial and political interests in this area. There are also threats in this region that directly challenge us and affect our security." (Nadimi, 1393). In 2012, Britain imported over four hundred million pounds of crude oil from the West Asia and North Africa region. In the same year, about 30% of Britain's natural gas imports entered the country by sea, with over 97% of this amount coming from Qatar and Egypt. Qatar has now become the most important supplier of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to Britain, and with the increasing energy demand in Britain in the coming decade and the rise in LNG storage capacity, the importance of Qatar as a partner for Britain in LNG exports is increasing. On the other hand, Britain and its European partner, France, are also sending a message to Arab countries in the Persian Gulf that "we are heavily reliant on this region both strategically and in terms of its natural resources such as energy, and we are ready to contribute our share to the responsibility of maintaining energy security." (Nadimi, 1393).

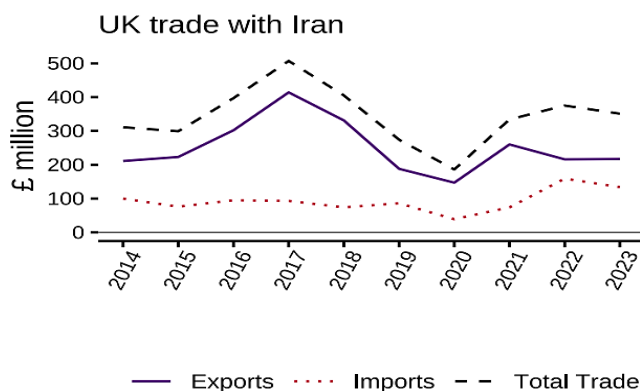
The Financial Times wrote in a report in 2019, "Iran II. Material Interests and Pragmatic Dimensions in British Foreign Policy Toward Iran alleged attempt to disrupt the passage of a UK crude tanker through the Persian Gulf has added to fears in oil markets, boosted prices and raised insurance costs for shippers[...] However, the recent tensions with Iran highlight one longer term risk the UK faces to its energy supplies: its growing reliance on imports of liquefied natural gas. The UK gas market is regularly topped up with LNG cargoes from Qatar and other countries and is expected to become more reliant on shipments of the supercooled fuel as North Sea output declines in the coming years. So far this year the UK has imported an average of five Qatari cargoes a month." (Sheppard, 2019).

Commercial diplomacy, which is one of the vital pillars of the UK's foreign policy, involves activities aimed at developing trade between the origin and destination countries by government representatives with diplomatic positions. A wide range of actors play a role in commercial diplomacy: from high-ranking political officials (such as the head of state, prime minister, minister, or parliament member) to ambassadors and lower political levels such as diplomatic envoys who are known as commercial diplomats (Naray, 2008, p. 2).

The UK government has made it clear that increasing British

commercial interests will be at the core of its foreign policy. The UK Department for International Trade and Investment has stated that we must adopt a comprehensive approach within the government toward trade and investment policy, involving all ministries and utilizing our overseas networks. Commercial diplomacy is at the heart of the government's agenda for growth. Commercial diplomacy is about using diplomacy to help create and enhance conditions for strong economic growth in the UK through trade and investment (DFID, UKTI and FCO, 2011).

Britain considers arms sales to repressive regimes as lucrative relationships with countries in the Persian Gulf region as part of its commercial diplomacy approach in foreign policy. The Cameron government claims that Britain's national security interests are best served through commercial cooperation with strategic political partners (Michou, 2012, p. 1). From the perspective of British policymakers, Iran is also a potential export and investment market for Britain. Evidence suggests that Iran is the largest untapped global market. In fact, reviving trade relations between London and Tehran allows Britain to have a smoother path to diversify its energy sources and secure its energy security through its oil and natural gas interests (House of Commons, 2014, pp.13-14). Therefore, safeguarding Britain's commercial interests in the Persian Gulf region, laying the groundwork for the development of Britain's commercial interests in Iran through a foundation that increases bilateral trade as much as possible, and pursuing a serious approach to recognize Iran's value as an export market and a place for British companies to operate are among the objectives of the foreign ministry of this country in its relations with Tehran (House of Commons, 2014, pp. 11-12).



Source: ONS, UK trade in goods and services, Q2 2024

One of the emphasized principles of liberal democracies such as Britain is the observance of human rights domestically and internationally. Therefore, London authorities even emphasize the continuity of respect for human rights in their strategies to combat terrorism, as they attribute it as the basis for successful actions in the fight against terrorism at home and abroad (UK Foreign Office, 2013, p. 25). The British Foreign Secretary stated in a speech on February 13, 2013, that England is involved in promoting justice and human rights with countries where there is a threat to the security of England and a need to develop legal and criminal justice systems (UK Foreign Office, 2013, p. 24).

British authorities, regardless of the nature of Islamic penal laws, have always accused the Islamic Republic of violating human rights and use this as a pressure tool against Iranian authorities. In this regard, British parliamentarians have proposed to the Foreign Office authorities and the common interests of this country to take action toward what they call the grounds for increasing human rights standards in Iran, especially in relation to the use of executions, freedom of the press, and the creation of cultural and educational links that allow Iranians to directly see what Britain is proposing (House of Commons, 2014, pp. 11-12). Also, the British Parliament report stated that “In coordination with the EU and US, in January 2023 the UK imposed further sanctions on senior commanders and judicial officials, and the Basij resistance force (an internal security force operating with the IRGC). As of 24 April 2023, 145 individuals and five entities are sanctioned under UK human rights sanctions against Iran.” (Commons Library Research Briefing, 2023, p. 27).

However, Mr. Richard Dalton, former British ambassador to

Tehran, believes, "For the British government, human rights are a fundamental issue and always a priority for us as long as it does not conflict with the national interests of Britain. But if human rights in other countries conflict with our national interests, then it will fall to the bottom of Britain's shopping list and interests" (Tafreshi, 2014). For this reason, David Cameron, the Prime Minister of Britain, defended Israel's military aggression against Palestinians in Gaza in 2014, stating, "Tel Aviv had the right to 'defend' itself when it started the war in Gaza." This was while the International Federation for Human Rights declared in its report that Israel had committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during its destructive military assault on Gaza in July and August 2014 (Cameron, 2015).

Furthermore, reconciling conflicting interests, namely commercial diplomacy and respect for human rights and freedom of expression, is the puzzle of Britain's intervention in Southwest Asia. Analysts believe that regional trade delegations and dangerous arms manufacturers' visits have a negative impact on Britain's soft power strategy (Michou, 2012, p. 1). Christopher Walker, in discussing Britain's one roof, two climates policy in the events of Bahrain, said, "On the one hand, Britain expresses disappointment at the failure of international efforts to initiate dialogue in Bahrain, and on the other hand, sends John Yates, a former London police commander, to advise Bahraini authorities on ways to deal with protests in the country" (Walker, 2012).

The first time the British newspaper *The Guardian* revealed the secret military aid from Britain to the Bahraini regime. These weapons and military equipment include various sound suppressors, long-range optical devices, various rifles, light and heavy artillery, and tools for training new military forces. Various tools and equipment for the navy have also been delivered to this country. Out of 158 items authorized for sale by Britain, 44 items are regularly made available to Bahrain. A British government-connected merchant, Vince Cable, says, "We are in contracts with governments that do not impose democracy on their people and have very bad human rights records. We openly deal with these governments and by no means reject this issue." (*The Guardian*, 2012). Also, Human Rights Watch website stated in a report that "The UK government is on notice of the risk its arms may be used in Gaza. Indeed, it has previously admitted that its arms were used in the 2008-2009 hostilities in Gaza. And during the 2014 Gaza hostilities, the government warned that it would suspend existing

licenses if significant hostilities resumed, as it would not be able to ensure that UK arms were not being used to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law [...] The UK should follow its own laws and immediately suspend licenses for arms and military equipment to Israel." It is also stated in this report, "Since 2015, the UK has licensed at least £474 million worth of military exports to Israel, including components for combat aircrafts, missiles, tanks, technology, small arms and ammunition. The UK provides approximately 15% of the components in the F-35 stealth bomber aircraft currently being used in Gaza". (Ahmad, 2023). In fact, "The principal reason is that they are not motivated by concerns about international law or supporting human rights. These principles might occasionally inform policy-making at the margins but only when there are no other higher priorities to be pursued, such as securing oil interests, arms exports, or geopolitical gains [...]. In the case of Gaza, Palestinians are seen as unpeople since supporting them holds little merit or gain for British planners. What does Palestine have to offer Whitehall in comparison with Israel? In supporting Israel, Whitehall can demonstrate British subservience and usefulness to its major ally, the US. Israel is a buyer of British arms, a strategic ally to police the region and an increasing, albeit still fairly small, trade partner. And a quarter of the UK's entire parliament of MPs has received funding from the Israel lobby, buying an influence over UK policy-making that is way beyond anything the Palestinians can induce." (Curtis, 2024).

Conclusion

According to what has been stated, commercial diplomacy, energy security, special relations with the United States, maintaining the security and survival of the Zionist regime, and human rights issues are among the most important components of the UK's foreign policy. However, these foundations are not equally prioritized and important, but from the perspective of London authorities, some issues take precedence over others; metaphorically, the foundations of British foreign policy can be illustrated in three parts of a tree: the first part including commercial diplomacy and energy security, as the roots of the tree, are considered vital components of the UK's foreign policy foundations, which reflect the critical importance of economic interests in the realm of this country's foreign relations. The second part, which is the special relationship with the United States of America and the maintenance of the security and survival of the Zionist regime, is like the trunk of the tree of British foreign policy, and the third part, which is human rights issues, forms the

branches and leaves of this tree and represents the external appearance of British foreign policy.

In fact, if a government aligns itself with London in terms of commercial interests, oil and gas sectors, and follows the policies of this country toward the United States and Israel, human rights will not have much of a place in their bilateral relations and will be at the bottom of the list of priorities of British authorities. On the other hand, if a government is considered a threat to London in the energy security sector and is in conflict with the interests of the United States and the security of the Israeli regime, human rights will find a multiplied importance in London's list of demands. Based on this, the impact of the mentioned foundations on London's relations with Tehran can be summarized as follows: the increase in commercial diplomacy has been the main motivation for strengthening bilateral relations; since the beginning of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, contrary to political ups and downs, commercial cooperation has been less turbulent. The concerns of the British government, especially in the field of energy security and particularly in oil and gas security, have led to the energy supply route through the Strait of Hormuz becoming a concern for British authorities, and Tehran being perceived as a threat to London's oil and gas security. Convergence and proximity with the Arab government of the region to secure the required oil and tension in British-Iranian relations due to the Islamic Republic's dominance over the strategic Strait of Hormuz will be more significant in this context.

Accompanying the United States policies in pressuring Tehran and striving to weaken the axis of resistance as a threat to the survival of the Zionist regime will further darken the London-Tehran relations. The conflicting positions of the two sides on the (destruction and security) of the Israeli regime hinder the strengthening of relations. Human rights excuses have been less important than challenging areas in bilateral relations. However, historical structures and high walls of mistrust still cast a shadow over the future of London-Tehran relations. In general, Britain's foreign policy foundations indicate that bilateral relations will be accompanied by tensions and seasonal crises in difficult and turbulent conditions. It should be noted that after Britain's withdrawal from the European Union, known as Brexit, the role of the union in British foreign policy has been greatly reduced (although in some cases, such as the Iran nuclear case, the European Troika issues a joint statement). On the other hand, Britain's separation from the European Union has strengthened London's special relationship with Washington against Tehran.

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