Institute for Strategic Research

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Refferees

Iranian Exceptionalism and Iran-US Relations:
From 1979 to 2021

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Abstract

Iranian exceptionalism has been a major factor in preventing rapprochement between the US and Iran. There are two major factions within the foreign policy establishment of the Islamic Republic representing "reconciliation discourse" and "resistance discourse". These two can be seen as sub-discourses within the Islamic Revolution discourse engaged in a struggle over its "correct" interpretation. The "reconciliation discourse" seeks development as the main goal of Iran's foreign policy, and, hence, considers reconciliation with the US to be a precondition to that goal. Its arguments imply that Iran is not an exceptional country. The resistance discourse, on the other hand, is deeply exceptionalist and deems resistance against the US and maximalist independence to be the main objectives of Iran's foreign policy. This discourse strongly opposes mending ties with the US because such a move would be understood as a threat to Iran's exceptionalism.

Keywords: US-Iran Relations, exceptionalism, discourse analysis, reconciliation discourse, and resistance discourse

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Introduction

More than 40 years have passed since Iran and the US formally ended all diplomatic relations following the occupation of the US embassy by a group of radical anti-imperialist Islamist students. Throughout these four decades or so, many politicians have come to power in both countries expressing a desire to put an end to tense relations, but none has succeeded so far to make a genuine change. Instead, the history of US-Iranian relations has been one of incremental steps toward reconciliation, but most of its efforts have failed. This is despite the fact that the US has been able to maintain a level of diplomatic ties even with its worst rivals – the ones such as the USSR and China. Iran too has been able to reestablish diplomatic ties with nations such as Saudi Arabia, even though one might argue that Saudi Arabia poses a greater threat to Iran's regional power than the US. What sets the United States apart for Iran? This article aims to answer this question.

It argues that the belief in the exclusion of Iran is deeply embedded in the discourse of the powerful faction of the Islamic Republic, and that this exceptionalism is constructed in a way that requires the United States to act as another in order to remain internally cohesive and sensitive. This faction represents what is called "resistance discourse" in this paper. The resistance discourse has always employed its power and influence to prevent the other faction from achieving its competing goal of normalizing relations with the US. This second faction could be said to represent a sort of accommodation or "reconciliation discourse". It puts forth arguments that imply that Iran is not an exceptional nation. Therefore, Iranian exceptionalism is one of the obstacles

preventing any rapprochement between the US and Iran and also the main issue of contention within the opposing sides of the foreign policy establishment in Iran.

When it comes to exceptionalism, American exceptionalism is usually the one discussed or studied in the literature. The literature on American exceptionalism is incredibly rich and includes polemics arguing for and against the concept. Academic research has also thoroughly dealt with the subject in terms of history, foreign policy, sociology, etc. But exceptionalism is *not* exceptional to the US. Nicola Nymalm and Johannes Plagemann (2019) have argued that exceptionalism can be detected in the national ideology of almost every nation. There have been studies on the exceptionalism of Japan, Israel, Britain, China, and India, but in general exceptionalism is a neglected but majorly important subject-matter in the foreign policy analysis of nations other than the US.

Iranian exceptionalism in particular has been mostly ignored as no academic research deals with the subject matter in-depth. But Iranian exceptionalism is of paramount importance in understanding Iranian foreign policy, whether in dissecting the internal fractures and ideological differences or making sense of Iran's behavior at the world stage. This article aims to provide an important missing piece to the puzzle of the US-Iran relations.

Following a short discussion on the method, we will first provide an overview of the foreign policy discourses of the two major factions within the Islamic Republic in order to provide context for the role of exceptionalism within them, as these discourses are deeply embedded within the larger cultural contexts of political Shia theology and the Islamic Revolution discourse. Then Iranian exceptionalism as a point of contention between the two factions will be discussed. Finally, how exceptionalism serves as one of the causes of the perseverance of anti-US attitudes among Iranian foreign policy elites – turning rapprochement into a taboo – and therefore having a major impact on the US-Iran relations since 1979 will be examined.

Methodology

This article utilizes discourse analysis methodology. There have been many definitions of discourse in the academic literature. We do not use a critical or poststructuralist approach because our main goal is to show the importance of exceptionalism as indicating the competitive interpretations of the Islamic Revolution discourse and its impact on US-Iranian relations, so we use a purely descriptive approach. Our understanding of discourse here is more akin to what David Howart (2000, pp. 3-4) calls a "realistic" understanding, which essentially sees discourse as a social system that creates meanings between objective and moral norms.

Iver B. Neumann describes the process of discourse analysis in International Relations to take place in three stages: The first stage is to select the texts that would be suitable for discourse analysis. Even if analyzing the maximum number of texts may be better, it is impossible to do so. Neumann puts forth two criteria for selecting the texts: texts that are considered critical to the actors and are constantly referred to, and texts that showcase the contrast and conflict with other discourses and are written as polemics against them (2008, pp. 65-70). For this research, mostly the second type of the text was used; as the sub-discourses belong to the same larger discourse, central texts that are constantly invoked (the Qur'an, the hadith, the sayings of Ayatollah Khomeini) are common between the two and their disagreement is over the interpretations. Politicians' books, interviews, speeches, and statements as well as the content of websites representing the two discourses are the texts chosen for analysis and, of course, all of these texts are in Persian.

The second stage in Neumann's method is to determine which signifiers are rejected in the discourse and which ones are accepted, and also to gauge the level of internal contradictions among the signifiers. Neumann states that this would show how closed and unstable the discourse is (2008, pp. 70-73). For this research, this step is a very crucial one as it argues that the Islamic

Revolution discourse is flexible and this flexibility in itself has given rise to two opposing factions with two different discursive strategies to resolve what might be perceived as tensions. The interplay between the signifiers of the Islamic Revolution discourse is explained in the next section of this article.

The final stage of discourse analysis is to describe the hierarchy of signifiers within the discourse. Different signifiers may matter more or less due to a number of factors, such as historical longevity, the logical dependence of other signifiers on them, their importance with regards to the material realities that are relevant to the discourse, etc. (Neumann, 2008, pp. 73-75). This final stage is important to this research in the sense that it is employed to demonstrate that exceptionalism is the most important signifier when it comes to resistance discourse, and the same is true about development and the reconciliation discourse.

It must be mentioned that in each case the results of the research are presented and then a particularly illuminating example of a text is used to further elucidate the point. Therefore, this article presents its findings in the opposite direction of how the research itself is conducted; as first the texts were analyzed and then the conclusions were reached. It would have been impossible to quote the hundreds of texts which were analyzed for this research, but this research was conducted through the method described in this section.

I- Iranian Foreign Policy Discourses: An Overview

When it comes to the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, there are two broad interpretive divisions within the same discourse. The discourse can be called "the Islamic Revolution discourse", while the two interpretive sub-discourses can be named "reconciliation discourse" and the "resistance discourse".

Within the reconciliation discourse, Iran's development is conditional on solving its international disputes, and it seeks to mend historical wounds and reestablish more or less normal ties with the US, and consequently integrate the country into the

global economy. Almost all reformists, moderates, and some moderate principlists (*osoolgarayan*) belong to this sub-discourse. Three Iranian presidents (Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Mohammad Khatami and Hassan Rouhani), Mohammad Javad Zarif, the foreign minister, and Ali Larijani, the former speaker of parliament, are among the main figures. This article will argue that these people oppose the idea of Iranian exceptionalism, at least in its strongest form.

In the resistance discourse, on the other hand, Iran reconciles with the United States and integrates into the global economy (which they consider to be imperialistic) which would only open Iran to be exploited by great powers and more importantly would jeopardize Iran's security and its religious/national identity; as foreign powers would not be content with the early concessions and would demand further ones. This would lead to a slippery-slope which would ultimately turn Iran into a western "stooge" and a de-facto secular government. They, therefore, oppose any openings or negotiations with the US. Most moderate and almost all radical principlists belong to this camp. Former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Saeed Jalili, a senior nuclear negotiator under Ahmadinejad, and Ibrahim Ra'isi, the current head of the judiciary and former presidential candidate, are among the main figures.

These two rose out of and reside within the same discourse, and both have been struggling for dominance over its "correct" interpretation, elevating their chosen signifier as the central and more important one. In this section, the Islamic Revolution discourse and attempts for dominating its narrative will be discussed. In the next section, it will be shown how Iranian exceptionalism is at the heart of these discursive disputes.

The main author of the Islamic Revolution discourse is Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the 1979 revolution. Both factions claim to be the true followers of his words and example and claim to rightly represent the foreign policy implications of political Shiitesm.

There have not been many attempts to describe the Islamic Revolution discourse. Khosravi (2012, pp. 243-255) writes that the Islamic Revolution discourse has three "principles": to abide by the state's religious duties, to preserve the Shia state's existence, and to be mindful of the extent of the state's true abilities. Moshirzadeh (2007, p. 523) designates three signifiers which create the identity of the Islamic Republic: independence, justice, and resistance. For the purposes of this paper, two main signifiers are identified in the Islamic Revolution discourse: "conscientiousness" and "prudence". These are in tension to some degree and therefore make this interpretive struggle possible.

Conscientiousness or commitment to one's perceived obligations (*amal be taklif)* refers to the idea that unlike secular states, a Shia state will not only consider material interests, but defines for itself a religious mission and it must endeavor to complete this mission at the global stage, even when material costs are involved. As Khosravi mentions, this was due to Ayatollah Khomeini's belief that ultimate victory was a divine promise made to "true Muslims" and as long as they continued upon their struggle, victory would be theirs in the end. This idea led to Ayatollah Khomeini embracing concepts such as martyrdom and resistance against global imperialism (2012, p. 281).

Prudence (*maslahat*) however represents the pragmatic side of the coin. Rooted deeply in Shiite jurisprudence, prudence requires that the Shia state would not go so far in meeting its religious obligations as to endanger its own survival, or to overestimate its own powers or the realities on the ground. Prudence is meant to serve as a check on conscientiousness. The duality of these two signifiers can be seen in Ayatollah Khomeini's own handling of the Iran-Iraq War: refusing to end the war for years based on religious principles but then, once it was made clear to him that Iran was unable to continue the war due to economic and military problems, accepting the UNSC's ceasefire, citing the principle of prudence (Pear, 1988).

It is no surprise that although conscientiousness and prudence are not necessarily inherently contradictory and can be logically reconciled in many ways, their coexistence in a discourse might lead to multiple possible interpretations, because there can easily be disputes and uncertainties in determining where the line is; where conscientiousness ends and prudence begins? In the end, conscientiousness somehow rejects the importance of material factors and prudence acknowledges them, making the balancing act difficult.

None of the main actors in Iran's foreign policy reject these signifiers, regardless of their approach. Zarif, for example, believes that a values-based foreign policy is in Iran's favor, and that differences in values and identities mean that Iran and the United States will never fully overcome their differences and unite with each other.(Raji, 2013, pp. 352-353), and those who belong to the resistance discourse do not reject the importance of material interests, and frequently argue that anti-US policies will lead to more military and economic power for Iran; for example, Bijan Pirouz, a professor of International Relations at the University of Tehran and a fierce critic of the reconciliation approach, argues that Iranian negotiators had given up too many leverages in nuclear talks, something that would go against the value of prudence (Pirouz, 2015). That said, these two groups shift in how they prioritize these signifiers, i.e. which one they consider to be more important and central to the discourse. Reconciliation discourse considers precaution more important than conscientiousness and resistance discourse the other way around. Zarif emphasizes that without a prudent foreign policy, none of Iran's values will be actually successful in being implemented, clearly elevating prudence above conscientiousness (Raji, 2013, pp. 259-260), while, in the same aforementioned interview, Pirouz emphasizes Iran's values to be more than its material interests, clearly prioritizing the opposite. This disagreement has led to an internal dispute within the Islamic Republic, and a struggle to establish one's own interpretation as the more dominant one.

This disagreement is reflected in the way the two groups interpret the broader discourse, the Shiite political discourse. One of these differences is their interpretation of the story of Imam Hassan's peacemaking. Hassan Ibn Ali, the second Imam in Shia theology, was engaged in a war against the Muslim ruler at the time, Muawiyah I, as he and not Muawiyah was the rightful caliph of the Muslims. This conflict ended when the two sides agreed to a peace accord. This is interpreted in radically different ways. For the reconciliation discourse, the story represents the importance of peacemaking, negotiating with the enemy, and taking material limitations into account. Rouhani has brought this interpretation up on many occasions, stating that what must be learnt from Imam Hassan is the importance of "rationality, prudence, and moderation", and that at times "heroic flexibility" is more important than "heroic jihad" (Mashregh News, 2015). The resistance discourse, however, underlines that Imam Hassan did not genuinely seek peace, but a group of cowardly and traitorous followers forced him to accept it against his will. In this interpretation, if Imam Hassan's army had persisted against all odds, they would have received the divine reward of victory, but negotiations and peace over the holy person were started by people who did not have faith. (See, for example Ghazanfari, 2013, p. 25).

Interpreting common narratives in a different way is a discourse strategy, enabling general interpretation to dominate discourse but so are alternative definitions for important signals. The two rival discourses prioritize signifiers and interpret common narratives differently, but sometimes they define a common signifier in rather diverging ways. One of these common signifiers is "independence". One of three main values espoused in the main revolutionary slogan of dissidents against the Shah's regime ("freedom, independence and the Islamic Republic"), independence, has been one of the core values and main signifiers of the Islamic Revolution discourse. While the reconciliation discourse defines this sign in a minimalist way, the resistance

discourse has a maximalist definition.

The reconciliation discourse defines the independence of a country as enjoying "legal right" to national sovereignty, foreign actors not meddling in its internal affairs, and being treated as an equal player by other states on the world stage. This is a minimalist definition as it would be difficult to consider a nation "independent" if any of these conditions were not met. This definition does not exclude economic interdependence, cultural exchange, international cooperation, or being politically influenced by foreigners. It considers independence a matter of international law and emphasizes that no nation can be free from influence in the globalization era. Zarif, for example, explains that independence is an immensely important value for the Iranian people because of the historical memories of colonialism. He uses the Qajar Dynasty as an example, claiming that during this era "a few foreign embassies" made all the important decisions for Iran and the state had no sovereignty, but also emphasizing that independence does not mean "separating ourselves from the world" and "not interacting with other nations" (Shafaghna News Agency, 2019).

According to the resistance discourse, independence means no interdependence with other states (especially Western democracies), complete autonomy, and minimalizing and hopefully stopping any influence from the outside world (again, especially from the West). This definition of independence means eschewing political, social, economic, and, most importantly, cultural influences, which are compared to "invasion" and "pollution" in discursively strategic metaphors. This definition comes very close to the idea of an autarky. Thus, South Korea and Saudi Arabia, for example, are regarded as being deprived of independence (Sadr Hosseini, 2019).

Created in the same discursive environment but using different narratives and interpretations, the reconciliation discourse and the resistance discourse end up with different foreign policy priorities. The reconciliation discourse considers

Iran's development to be its chief value and the main purpose of its foreign policy. Development is tied to prudence as a signifier, and serves as the lodestar of all policymaking decisions. Policy positions such as reconciliation with Iran's neighbors and Western powers, joining international agreements, and emphasizing multilateralism are all justified through the idea of development, which is related to prudence. Hashemi Rafsanjani, the most influential representing this discourse, who was named as "the reconstruction commander", elevated development into a quasi-religious aspiration equal to jihad (IRNA News Agency, 2018). Rouhani, his disciple and successor, campaigned with the slogan "centrifuges must spin, but also must the wheel of economy", signaling that he considers development to be more important than resistance with the aim of preserving Iran's nuclear program, and also stating that Iran's independence would be impossible without its development (Ilna News Agency, 2013), thus revealing that he considers development to be more important than the enshrined and pseudo-sacred values of the 1979 revolution, resistance and independence. This means that the reconciliation discourse values development above most and considers it as the main, if not the only, argument for its political legitimacy.[1]

The resistance discourse, on the other hand, believes that Iran's main priority must be resisting imperialism. This does not mean that it does not value development, but that complete separation and autonomy from the West is the pre-condition to Iran's development. Thus, the preferred policies would include opposing negotiations with the US, opposition to Iran complying by some international regulations (such as the FATF), and creating self-sufficiency in Iran's economy rather than integration into the globalized system. For the followers of this discourse,

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1. Which might be part of the reason that Rouhani has lost support after economic downturns in Iran, while Ahmadinejad's supporters remained loyal to him even after economic crises. The resistance discourse, unlike the reconciliation discourse, does not stake its legitimacy entirely upon development.

resistance is deeply rooted in Shia theology and ideas such as resisting sinful temptations and the principle of "the denial of dominance to infidels" (the idea that infidels shall never rule over the Muslims). Also, social conservatism in domestic politics and the idea of protecting Iran's Shia culture from "corrupting" influences is another context giving rise to its foreign policy. This is evident in how an article in one of Iran's major newspapers representing this discourse seeks justification for resistance in foreign policy in the Qur'an, stating that resistance is a religious value on both the individual and policymaking levels; that resistance is a "lifestyle" (Farzaneh, 2015).

II- Exceptionalism in Iranian Foreign Policy Discourses

This article argues that Iranian exceptionalism is one of the roots of the discursive disagreements over Iran's foreign policy. While proponents of reconciliation believe Iran to be a "normal" nation, the supporters of resistance see it as an "exceptional" one. This disagreement brings about two different interpretations of the Islamic Revolution discourse and hence different policy preferences.

In many cases, the reconciliation discourse defines Iran as an unexceptional nation. Reconciliation with the Western nations requires normalizing Iran's behavior to some extent. This can be repeatedly observed in the language of its proponents as they constantly use words like "normal" in a positive light, and use words that would characterize being exceptional is a negative light, e.g., "isolated". Rouhani constantly characterizes his foreign policy as seeking "win-win" resolutions to contentious issues with Western powers, which implies that Iran and Western democracies are similar to a degree that makes it possible to find ways to satisfy all parties and their interests. Rouhani believes that Iran's foreign policy must be based on "mutual understanding" and "common interests" (Jahan News, 2019). In every aspect, he relies on what Iran has in common with the world, not what separates it, and this pattern is not indicative of an exceptionalist

attitude. This is true about the rhetoric of other figureheads as well, especially when it came to Mohammad Khatami and his "Dialogue among Civilizations" initiative, which regarded "the idea of alliance of civilizations, in the sense that all civilizations merge together as one" (Khatami, n.d.), as a noble aspiration.

This opposition to the idea of Iranian exceptionalism is imbedded into the foreign policy of the proponents of the reconciliation discourse. All of their arguments either explicitly or implicitly reject the idea of Iran's exceptionalism. One favorite argument is to state that Iran is one of the few nations acting in a certain manner, and this unusual status is construed as a negative, which implies that Iran should act similarly to other nations, which in turn implies that Iran is not exceptional. For example, an anonymous columnist in one of Iran's reformist newspapers argues that Iran should comply by FATF regulations because 194 nations have already done so and only Iran and North Korea are included in the institution's black list (Shargh Daily, 2018).

Finally, this opposition to exceptionalism is directly connected to the idea of development as the main priority in foreign policy. It is argued that there are universal and quasi-scientific laws that govern all nations alike, and development would be achieved if these laws are followed. These laws are objective and apply equally to secular and Shia nations. The idea of the universality of the laws of development is reiterated by Mahmoud Sariolghalam (Sariolghalam, 2010, p. 16), one of Iran's best-known public intellectuals and a leading figure in the reconciliation discourse. Rouhani, whom Sariolghalam once served as an adviser, also thinks the same, stating that because Iran seeks development, there is no "inherent difference between our foreign policy and other nations'" (Rouhani, 2011, p. 81). It is not that the reconciliation discourse does not acknowledge the differences in goals and values when it comes to Iran's foreign policy, but that Iran's similarities are more important and should guide its actions. Iran is regarded as subject to the laws of the international system and economy and therefore it is basically a

normal and unexceptional nation.

The resistance discourse, with exceptionalism as its integral aspect, leads to a foreign policy the meaning of which is linked to this concept. From this point of view, Iran, due to its religious identity and theocratic government is an exceptional nation; this exceptionalism enables it to transcend material concerns and resist the imperialist powers (who control the material world), and if this resistance fails, it is due to a lack of faith among internal actors, not because of having been overcome by material forces. One can argue that within this framework everything begins with exceptionalism.[1]

Exceptionalism both necessitates and justifies resistance in foreign policy. According to its proponents, Iran is exceptional because it resists, and it must resist because it would cease to be exceptional if it stops resisting. In this understanding, resistance and exceptionalism mutually constitute each other. If Iran stops resisting, it will become a nation like South Korea (Sadr Hosseini, 2019) – which is undesirable not because South Korea is poorer or less secure than Iran, but because it is defined as an unexceptional nation in this discourse. In this discourse, the "ultimate" goal of the US is to normalize Iran, which means not only putting an end to Iran's anti-US activities in the region, but to secularize it and destroying its religious and consequently exceptional identity, which is why resistance must continue (Mohammadi, 2016). Some advocates of this discourse believe that without Iran, there will be no resistance against imperialism – not even other US rivals/opponents such as China, Russia, Cuba, or Venezuela would be willing or able to properly resist the US and what it represents (Fazaeli, 2017). In short, if some American exceptionalists consider the US to be indispensable in preserving

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1. This does not mean that all people who prescribe resistance against the US are necessarily exceptionalists as many Iranian scholars, especially those ascribing to the realist school of international relations, believe so on the basis of power and security concerns and they believe this to be a universal rule of power which applies to all nations in similar conditions.

the liberal world order, Iranian exceptionalists consider Iran to be indispensable in opposition to the same global system.

The same mutual relationship exists between Iranian exceptionalism and a maximalist definition of independence. Iran is exceptional because it is the only "truly" independent nation, free from all foreign influence, and this independence is invaluable because it enables Iran to preserve its exceptional identity (which is deeply tied to Shiism). This is evident in the fact that exceptionalists are concerned with the issue of "cultural invasion". Stopping "cultural invasion" is their main priority in both domestic and foreign policies; thus, for example, teaching English in primary schools was banned in order to stop the tide of "cultural invasion" -- a decision opposed by the reconciliation-advocate Rouhani (Rahimpour, 2018). The aim of this "invasion" is to destroy Iran's independence, i.e., its cultural identity/ exceptionality.

This schism as it exists today may be argued to date back to July 20th 1988, when Iran accepted UNSC Resolution 598, which ended the Iran-Iraq War. Prior to this event, Iranian leaders had a more or less common understanding of the discourse of the Islamic Revolution. It is true that even before this date there were differences and people like Hashemi Rafsanjani were considered more pragmatic and moderate but at least in public, their perception of discourse was like that of a more radical faction, with both actors outside the discourse, internal or external, as "enemies."Ayatollah Khomeini continuously rejected all calls to accept the ceasefire. It was only when he agreed to abide by UNSC Resolution 598, an act that he likened it to "drinking a poisoned cup", that the two sides diverged and began interpreting the discourse differently. As a result, not only the outside group but also the opposition within the group became the main "enemy" of the discourse.

This schism was created because the two sides tried to justify the events culminating in ceasefire differently. Hashemi Rafsanjani, who was responsible for convincing Ayatollah

Khomeini to end the war, and his followers, described this as an act of prudence, while the other side decided that victory would have been possible, and Ayatollah Khomeini was forced by traitorous advisers to put an end to the war[1] (Ghazanfari, 2013, pp. 9-11; 47; 215). These opposing justifications of UNSC Resolution 598 have remained at the heart of the conflict to this day The narrative of caution versus the narrative of surrender is constantly reproduced and linked to contemporary political differences. The metaphor of the "poisonous cup" is still one of the most widely used metaphors in Iranian foreign policy discussions.

In this narration, representation is attributed not to the external enemy, but to the internal enemy. If one searches for pro-resistance texts on websites and social networks, one will find that mentioning the names of domestic rivals is much more than mentioning the names of foreign enemies, and vice versa, which reveals that these two discourses are engaged in a struggle over the "correct" interpretation of the Islamic Revolution discourse. In the next section, the consequences of this struggle for Iran-US relations are discussed.

III- Iranian Exceptionalism and the US

It seems that Iranian exceptionalism is, at least, one of the important factors in reproducing the hostility towards the US.[2] The historical roots of the current struggle go back to the CIA-backed 1953 coup d'état, in which Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossadegh, a nationalist and a liberal reformist, was removed from office. Before this event, the US was perceived favorably by the Iranian anti-imperialist activists, including Mossadegh himself. It was seen as a benevolent world power which had no history of colonialism in Iran and represented the value of freedom; it was an ally against

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1. The fact that this exactly mirrors the discourse over Imam Hassan's peace is no coincidence.

2. This article focuses on the Iranian side of the equation. It can be argued that American exceptionalism is also a major factor.

the UK and Tsarist Russia which were comprehended as imperialist powers (Ansari, 2012, pp. 135-136). The 1953 coup d'état changed this perception, and American reputation transformed into one of colonialism and imperialism, the pivotal moment which gave rise to anti-US sentiments in Iran (Mousavian & Shahidsaless, 2014, pp. 23-24).

This anti-US attitude grew stronger in the years to come. The Iranian opposition saw the Shah as a "supporter" of the United States, whose monarchy depended on their support, so it was essentially a foreign asset. They did not consider him a true patriot due to the US economic and military support of his regime. This led to anti-US attitudes becoming ingrained in the rhetoric of all revolutionary factions, from the Islamists to the secular left (Stempel, 2009, pp. 64-71; 81-82; 88). By the time that the Iranian Revolution of 1979 took place; the US was not merely a symbol of imperialism in the mind of the revolutionaries and masses, but its very embodiment. The UK and the Tsarist Russia were almost forgotten, and words such as "imperialism" harkened only the US. Therefore, it is not surprising that the United States played a major role in the discourse of the Islamic Revolution. . This attitude culminated in a group of radical Islamist university students storming the US embassy and taking several American diplomats' hostage. The incident, which led to the resignation of Iran's caretaker Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, intensified anti-American sentiment among Iran's elite. Not long after the revolution, any contact with the US became a grave taboo.

Since then, the history of US-Iran relations has been one of disagreements, misunderstandings, and failed attempts at reconciliation. Reconciliation with the US has been the main point of disagreement between the two foreign policy factions. Hashemi Rafsanjani, Khatami, and Rouhani all argued for a degree of reconciliation, while being staunchly opposed by their opponents.

None of the signifiers of the resistance discourse are definable without an "Other". One must resist *against* something; be independent *from* something; be exception *in comparison* to a

normal. Inherently, these signifiers require an Other to derive meaning from. For the resistance discourse, the US has been defined as this Other. If we want to think of this in terms of Derridean binary oppositions, the US has become synonymous with the less equal or "governed" binary, or in more colloquial language with the less desirable element in the dichotomy: i.e., if we define the binary oppositions as resistance/surrender, independent/dependent, and exceptional/unexceptional, relationship with the US means that Iran has surrendered, is dependent, and has lost what made it exceptional, while the opposite is true if Iran's contentious relationship with the US continues. Due to this, the US is considered a threat to Iran's exceptionalism in the resistance discourse, and therefore a threat to Iran's identity.

One might posit that the true binary opposition is anti-imperialist/imperialist, and the US is simply an imperialist power. This attitude was exemplified in the slogan "neither East, nor West", this meant denying allegiance to the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War, as both were considered imperialist powers. (Keddie & Gasiorowski, 1990, p. 3). This slogan is considered so important for Iran's foreign policy that it is engraved on the entrance of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But in practice Iran has never really had such a contentious relationship with powers that challenged the US, whether the USSR or Russia and China afterwards. Some might suggest that the binary opposition is actually better defined as East/West, or maybe Islamic Republic/liberal democracy. But Iran has been able to revive or pursue its relations with European nations without much controversy at home and even whenever the proponents of resistance criticize Europe, they do so in terms of Europe being an obedient "side-kick" or a "lapdog" of the US. For example, a former member of Iran's Parliament asserted that Europe would not help Iran after the US withdrew from the nuclear agreement because European nations have no "free will of their own" and they are a "slave" to the US (Rezai, 2019),

demonstrating that Europe, independently of the US, is not a threat in his understanding.

As far as foreign policy is concerned, for the resistance discourse, no other nation is as important as the US, and no other nation poses such existential, discursive, and ontological threat to Iran. This is a theme that is repeated in this discours. For example, it is said that it is impossible for Iran to remain independent without struggling against the US (Saam Daliri, 2019); if Iran attempts to coexist peacefully with the US, its very "identity and ontological security" would be seriously jeopardized; enmity against the US and "Zionism" is an "integral element" of the Islamic Revolution discourse; and mending ties with the US would only lead to a "crisis of identity" (Ghaderi Kangavari, 2015, pp. 5-6).

The US is defined as a monolithic and unchanging entity in this discourse: there is no real difference between the Democratic and the Republican parties and neither between different US administrations throughout its history. An example of this is an official statement made by the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the anniversary of the hostage crisis at Iran's embassy, in which it was emphasized that the US has never done "anything" but "warmongering, creating divisions, and exploiting other nations", and it is reiterated that the US has never been and will be different in its entire history (ISNA, 2016). The US is also defined as a declining power and complete decline in its power is seen as the ultimate endpoint to resistance. The US is an entity which has and always will try to destroy Iran's Shia identity and subjugate it; but it is also declining and therefore the resistance can continue until it is no longer a superpower. All of this culminates in the assertion that Iran must continue to resist the US in order to preserve its exceptionalism. Iran's exceptionality would fade away if resistance against the US comes to an end. Iran can continue resisting against the US infinitely because it is an exceptional nation, and reconciling with the US would be an act of "normalization" (see, for example, Mohammad Dehghan's,

a member of the Guardian Council, remarks in Fars News Agency, 2019).

The reconciliation discourse perceives the US differently. The opposition to the US is not considered as being and integral part of or inherent to the Islamic Revolution discourse, but a historical anomaly. For example, while Zarif recognizes that there are cultural and ideological differences and disagreements between Iran and the US, he does not attribute the hostile state in US-Iran relations to these differences, but to mistrust, lack of political will, and mutual misunderstanding, and states that he does not consider the US to be Iran's "enemy" and dislikes the use of this word in a diplomatic context (Raji, 2013, pp. 167-170; 88). These factors can clearly be overcome without creating a discursive or identity crisis for Iran. Seyed Hossein Mousavian, a former diplomat known as one of the main spokesmen for the reconciliation discourse Seyed Hossein Mousavian, a former diplomat known for being one of the main spokespeople of the reconciliation discourse, is even franker on this issue and emphasizes that enmity with the US is not an inherent characteristic of the Islamic Revolution discourse, and it must end at some point, even claiming that Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei could potentially be open to such rapprochement, claiming that Ayatollah Khomeini was initially opposed to hostage taking, and that Ayatollah Khamenei agrees that the US and Iran will one day reinstate diplomatic ties (Mousavian & Shahidsaless, 2014, pp. 5; 57-59; 164; 263). It does not matter whether Mousavian is correct in his interpretation of the Iranian leaders' positions or not. What matters is the fact that obedience to both Supreme Leaders is crucial to Islamic Revolution discourse, and Mousavian attempts to argue that reconciliation with the US is not a threat to Iran's Shia political identity.

The reconciliation discourse differs from the resistance discourse in perceiving the US in other critical ways. It does not consider the US to be static throughout its history. Mousavian, for example, says he is optimistic that the US approach to Iran will

change one day. (Mousavian & Shahidsaless, 2014, p. 6). It also does not consider the US to be monolithic and acknowledges the differences between the two major parties; Zarif, for example, praises Obama for being a "symbol of change" and considers that a source of soft power for the US (Raji, 2013, p. 119).

But the importance of reconciliation with the US goes beyond mere possibility. The reconciliation discourse considers rapprochement with the US to be a necessary precondition to Iran's development. If the aim is to be integrated into the global economy, reconciliation with the US is inescapable. Mousavian narrates that Hashemi Rafsanjani came to the conclusion that Iran's development would be impossible without mending ties with the US (Mousavian & Shahidsaless, 2014, pp. 108-109). For the reconciliation discourse, the binary opposition is development/backwardness, and the US is associated with the governing and desirable signifier, the complete opposite of the resistance discourse.

There is no sign of exceptionalism in the reconciliation discourse as far as the US is concerned. In this narration, both Iran and the US are "normal" nations, their differences are the consequences of "normal" inter-subjective and material factors, and "normal" solutions are available. This understanding becomes apparent in one of Rouhani's statements as a presidential candidate. He argues for diplomacy as a solution to Iran's nuclear disagreement with the US and emphasizes that nations such as Libya were unable to continue resisting against the US pressure and abandoned their nuclear programs, and if Iran aims to preserve its own, it needs to turn to a "constructive interaction" (*Iranian Diplomacy*, 2013). This statement not only reveals that Rouhani considers resistance useless, but he considers Iran to be unexceptional enough that it would face the same fate as Libya if it continues on the same road.

Conclusion

It can be argued that Iranian exceptionalism is at the heart of

disagreements about the US among Iranian political elite. One faction perceives Iran to be exceptional and it consequently opposes any mending of ties in order to protect Iran's exceptional identity. The other faction considers Iran to be a normal country, subject to the laws of the international society of the states, and believes that these laws require rapprochement with the US as a precondition to Iran's development. These two factions have extremely different approaches toward the US because one of them believes in Iranian exceptionalism and the other does not.

This paper does not intend to argue that exceptionalism is the only factor involved. There are certainly a multitude of factors, including subjective and material ones. However, exceptionalism is an important factor when it comes to the durability and intensity of the struggle. It is precisely due to the fact that Iran's identity in the resistance discourse is completely intertwined with its opposition to the US that any rapprochement is being resisted. Iran has continuously mended ties and negotiated with rivals such as Saudi Arabia and Europe, and at times the relations have deteriorated again. But all in all, the US has not been merely a rival, but a discursively defined other.

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Diplomacy and Bureaucracy: Iran and Saudi Arabia in Two Administrations

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Abstract

The Islamic Republic of Iran's Middle East policy and its fundamentals are among the most discussed issues in the Middle East's international politics. The present paper seeks to analyse the structure and formation of Iran's foreign policy interests in the region with a view of bureaucratic diplomacy. Based on Graham Allison's framework of organizational trend and bureaucratic politics, this study assesses two recent Iranian presidents' foreign policy toward Saudi Arabia. Bureaucratic diplomacy of Iran, along with military and security apparatus formulate and implement Iranian foreign policy tactics. Ahmadinejad focused on developing a personal relationship with Saudi leaders, which was not aligned with his bureaucratic diplomacy, though. However, Rouhani embarked on making use of JCPOA as a model to negotiate with Saudi Arabia. The region's constant evolving situation, the hostile approach of Saudi Arabia, and the maximum pressure of the U.S. on Iran prevented Rouhani's

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bureaucratic diplomacy from succeeding.

Keywords: Bureaucratic Politics, Geopolitical Rivalry, Iran, Organizational Trend, Saudi Arabia

Introduction

Preservation of the state's national interest, alongside each state's armed forces, is one of the main tasks of each country's diplomatic apparatus. Every country has a spectrum of interest groups and various organizations that shape and implement foreign policy. Rosenau considers state decision as the choice selected by the people (Rosenau, 1969: 20). Accordingly, Iran's post-revolution foreign policy made all the state apparatuses dealing with foreign policy formulate and implement republican and Islamic ideals. In this regard, bureaucratic measures have to be taken in the strategic interaction environment. These organizations acted through various channels of competition and compromise. The Allison bureaucratic politics crafts the analytical level to assess such dynamism in which he argues that the external environment's feedback affects politicians to rank decision-makers (Alisson, 1969: 695). Hence, the present paper analyses the bureaucratic diplomacy's action within the two presidential administrations toward Saudi Arabia. Precisely, it asks how bureaucratic diplomacy as an institution shaped the stream of Iran's foreign relations toward Saudi Arabia.

Iran's Middle East policy and foreign relations toward Saudi Arabia is partly influenced by the division of objectives that each institute and interest groups aimed to implement toward foreign policy strategy. This division stems from the definition of the goals. If the country's independence and sovereignty are the primary drivers of foreign policy, reconciliation and de-securitization should be embodied in a way that does not contradict the main objectives (Sajadpour, 2004: 57). The state

apparatus was competing over which purpose should be included in the foreign policy agenda since the early years of the revolution. The extent and access to that objective's information and precision defined each state institute's limit concerning its area of action. This process leads to forming a network and acts toward Saudi Arabia in which bureaucratic diplomacy is part of it. The table below depicts Allison's role models in full or partial access to the information provided to the decision-makers. Each section of this table has a consequence for the decision-maker that enables it to make a decision.

Table 1. Consequences that the Decision Makers Are Facing, Regarding the Degree of Access to Information

Actors Information Access and Detailed Analysis of Outcome		
Complete Access		Incomplete Access
Logical Actor	Informed	Semi-Informed
Outcome Analysis	A More Detailed Analysis without View of ding Evolutionary Changes of Foreign Policy	No Prospect for Comprehensive Understanding of changes and the Possibility of Decision with Negative Consequences
Organization Process	Detailed Information and Broader Options for Decision Making	Prudent and Vigilant about Decision Making its Probable Consequents
Outcome Analysis		
Bureaucratic Politics		

Source: Authors

The current work's hypothesis infers that foreign policymaking is a volatile process of action, and the effectiveness of its tactics depends on how the bureaucracies act within the broader spectrum of organizations and interest groups of foreign policy circles. The Ahmadinejad bureaucratic foreign policy toward Saudi Arabia lacked harmony, while Rouhani's bureaucratic diplomacy has a better arrangement. However, it was negatively affected by the

geopolitical evolution of the region. Bureaucratic diplomacy of Iran's Middle East policy implemented the tactics of Iran's strategic action through the region along with other institutions. The region's hybrid geopolitics necessitated particular action consisting of pragmatism and ideals derived from the Islamic Revolution. Some analysts (Dehghani & Radfar, 2010: 48) have pointed out the importance of ideals in Iran's revolutionary foreign policy.

Theoretical Framework

Foreign policy analysis is achieved through a detailed assessment of state institutions' role in the formulation of decision-making processes. Graham Alisson altered how a foreign policy analyst views a state's foreign relations. Considering the state as a harmonized player prevents researchers from understanding roles and structures and their influence on the formation of foreign policy decisions. Functions and structures act in interaction with each other, and sometimes one of these elements limits the other, affecting policy formulation and implementation (Carlsnaes, 1992: 250). Revolutionary states are more capable of being exposed to further threats than the steady states in a regional security complex due to the radical changes. Like other revolutionary states, the Islamic Republic of Iran initiated new approaches toward international politics, deriving from further Islamic jurisprudence readings (Fiqh). These strategies elaborated on the political dimension of Islamic government and its idealistic wisdom about the internal as well as world politics (Moslem, 2002: 48-49).

Allison depicted bureaucratic politics in his series of works during four decades. This is a clear indication of the progress of foreign policy research and its depth in this sub-field of international politics. Pursuing national interest necessitates a level of threat de-escalation. Threat de-escalation is a strategic, diplomatic, and historic process typically incorporated by bureaucrats to reduce the level of threat from other states and

actors in their periphery. His foreign policy formulation theory characterizes each country's social and political system's dynamism, which in turn affects its foreign policy decision-making and strategies. For instance, Iran is a scene of modern and traditional forces in political and social spheres, which their interactions have formed a mixed foreign policy before and after the Islamic revolution. The development process as the aftermath consequence of modernism in Iranian society has been uneven. This uneven process has influenced foreign policy by establishing the state apparatus spectrum (Matin, 2013: 131-132).

This research incorporates Allison's models for a comprehensive understanding of Iran's strategic approach in the Middle East, focusing on Saudi Arabia under Ahmadinejad and Rouhani administrations. To give an accurate assessment of the importance of both the role and structure, this research analyses each president's interaction with its bureaucratic diplomacy and the role of the presidential administration in the arrangement and formulation of tactics for implementing strategic goals. In addition to the structure, the president's perception of the external environment seems significant.

I- Rational Actor and State System

As mentioned above, this research reviews the importance of bureaucratic politics and organizational process as Allison's analytical concepts to better understand the multidimensional policymaking system of Iran's Middle East policy. The table above clearly indicates how access to the information by each actor model can lead to a distinguished outcome. Understanding of dynamics between the interest groups and state institutions convince the decision-maker to take prudent action and the researcher to dig for a deeper cause and conceptualize the interaction between varied factions. As Allison and Schelling pointed in their respected rational choice and game theories, this policymaking model deals with the state as a rational and harmonized actor in international politics. They pursue a unified

interest that can be achieved through negotiations and an agreed bargaining process (Freyberg-Inan, 2003: 82).

The internal politics imperative's impact on foreign policy decision making cannot be ignored. For instance, factors including higher authorities' orders and the duties lead to these unpredicted implications: first, it lowers each decision's effectiveness outcome by its later modification resulted from last-minute compromise with interest groups. Second, it prolongs the formulation of strategies and operational tactics. As an example of a state with an evolved foreign policy, Iran reflected how states might change their foreign policy direction over time. This should be considered into account how domestic politics can dramatically change foreign policy (Ehteshami & Hinnebusch, 2002: 283). Decision making in Allison's bureaucratic politics and the organizational process can be imagined within this scheme:
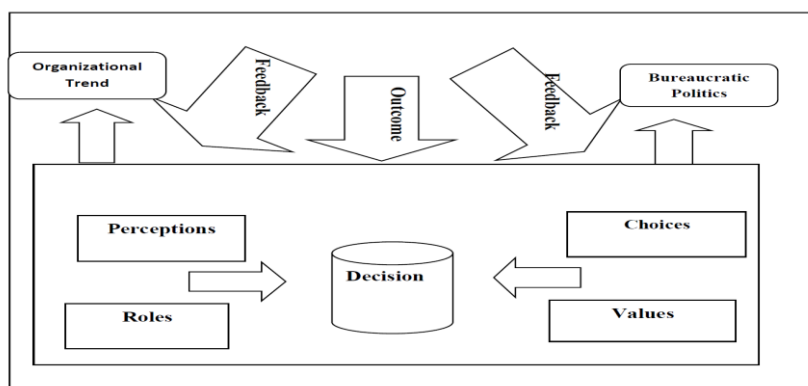
Schema 1. Decision Making Process and Bureaucratic Politics and Organizational Trend

Decision Making in Iran's Middle East Policy: Role of Bureaucratic Apparatus in Formation and Implementation

The Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy evolved from turbulent years of post-revolutionary state to a stable and active participant of regional security dynamism in the Middle East. Bureaucratic diplomacy evolved from a traditional one to a more

goal-oriented asymmetric approach. After the revolution, the first generation of diplomats was not diplomats by profession, but they had a deep impact on forming the country's foreign policy in the following years. The Iraq invasion by the U.S. strengthened these ties, which was laid by this generation in the early 1980s. These officials acted beyond the organizations and had effective relations with the country's key decision-maker in those years. (Veisi, 2020: 2).

Iran started to restructure its foreign policy based on its geopolitical loneliness, and the coalition of Arab countries supported Sadam Hussein of Iraq. Iran saw its help to the world market to prevent the collapse of production in relation to Iran and Iraq.. Its acts also financed Saudi Arabia's aid to Saddam's Iraq (Shariati & Ghaffari, 2019: 54).

Some researchers later convinced this perception of the external environment that Iran's foreign relations were formulated in harmony. The state apparatus's role was neglected for a more in-depth analysis. The growing regional part of Iran in the post-U.S. and Iraq invasion brought attention to state institutes dealing with Middle East policy formulation and implementation in the region. Iran's foreign policy toward the Middle East is now based on various coalition and opposition building within active players. It is also formed based on different interests internally and externally. The mass mobilization of Iranians to Islamic ideals turned out to be trans-frontier and proved the importance of domestic factors in reframing alignment. (Courrier International, 2018:16).

Dehghani focused on the ideological aspect of revolution exclusively. He believes in ideological factors highly influential in Iran's practical shifting of its foreign policy. He analysed Iran's foreign policy during three decades and concluded that discourses exposed Iran to political and historical changes. Iran evolved from an actor with ideological interests to a player with a pragmatic and broader interest in the greater Middle East (Dehghani, 2015: 20).

II- Iran's Middle East Policy Apparatus

Iran's Middle East policy results from interactive communications of the state apparatus with a strategic approach that acts as a system despite differences in tactics. Iran's foreign policy objectives formed to work independently compared to its external actors of the Middle East and their regional allies. Without the existence of any regional security architecture that was tasked for consensus building and mediated among states, this policy increased any collision with the Arab countries and their foreign supporters. These countries also suffer from an internal legitimacy that makes them vulnerable to any popular uprising. The pre-revolution state in Iran exploited the region's potential to influence its western neighbours in the area. Mohammad Reza Shah Iran last monarch addressed its neighbourhood because the instability affected the region and emanated from radical Islamism and nationalism. He exploited the Kurds and Shias' resentments in Iraq against the Baath political system to secure its ambitious neighbour's borders. The state intelligence apparatus (SAVAK) ran activities to gather intelligence and allegiance against Saddam and the Baath party in Iraq (Reisinezhad, 2019: 1).

The bureaucratic structure of Iran's Middle East policy, from the pre-revolutionary years, sought to prevent any insecurity disruption, especially at the time of the Arab nationalism outbreak. After the Islamic Revolution, each president, alongside the military-security apparatus, pursued his policy within the accessible resources and authorities it could perform. The International Institute of Strategic Studies believes that Iran incorporated proxy networks such as interest groups close to the government (Iraq) and influential community groups of Shia (Hezbollah- Lebanon) to form the Middle East's future security architecture. Utilizing the conventional forces might affect the state's ability to counter the opposed countries' conventional forces. State security and stability are the utmost important priority that could not be endangered by symmetrical forces (IISS, 2019:12). The revolutionary institutes played a more significant

role in forming Iran's Middle East policy. The Iraqi invasion of Iran and the participation of Arab countries that provide financial and logistical support to the Iraqi government increased the role of this targeted apparatus. Now, the most determinant factor behind Iran and Saudi Arabia, the regional rivalry of the two states, points their focus attention to Iran's strategic action that is embodied by military and intelligence measures of the IRGC (KFCRIS, 2017: 3). This project depicts the multidimensional nature of Iran's Middle East policy based on a bureaucratic perspective:
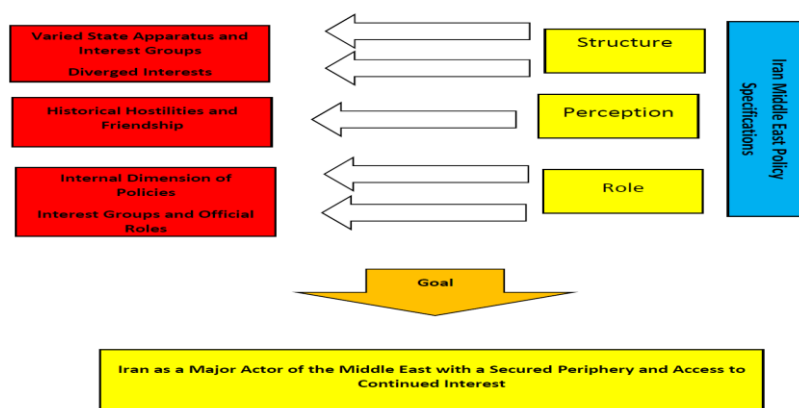
Schema2. Iran Middle East Policy Specifications

The early moment of Ahmadinejad's foreign policy approach and his views about global justice shaped his attitude over how Iran's foreign policy should be conducted despite the importance of Iran's Middle East policy and security-military aspect of the country's relations with Neighbours. The Foreign ministry engaged in a day-to-day interaction with other states of the region. Amouzegar notes that Ahmadinejad's foreign ministry approach focused on changing diplomacy and its management. This administration mode ranged from routine activities to the general direction of implementation diplomacy (Amouzegar, 2013: 13).

Liberation movement office in foreign ministry acted as a

liaison office to achieve the ideas of revolution in cooperation with the military apparatus. Its transfer to other entities later in 1984 indicates that the country's bureaucratic foreign policy, especially in the Middle East, restructured to deal with Iraqi aggression at the multilateral level as Iran faced very eminent danger. Iran's Middle East policy changed in the late 1980s to a pragmatic one that had come under pressure several years before the invasion of Iraq and the diplomatic-logistical support of Saudi Arabia.The improvement of Iran-Saudi Arabia relations continued with the Hajj ceremony and the positive personal encounters between Hashemi and Abdullah. This process continued during the presidency of Seyyed Mohammad Khatami and culminated with the participation of the Saudi Crown Prince in the 1997 meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Tehran.

In the post-war years, two Iranian ambassadors to Saudi Arabia during the presidencies of Hashemi and Khatami, Nouri Shahroudi and Sadeghi, were able to establish close ties with the Saudi elite and facilitate the improvement of bilateral relations between the two countries. Due to the two presidents' foreign policy perspectives, the role of diplomacy was increased, and threat de-escalation of Iran's Middle East policy was significant. Sadeghi later on and during Javad Zarif's tenure as the foreign minister was sent to Saudi Arabia until diplomatic relations were suspened. (Alsultanand, 2017: 37).

Iran and Saudi Arabia during the 1980s experienced a tense relationship due to their regional and bilateral position toward each other. Saudi Arabia supported the Baath regime of Iraq financially, which irritated Iran.The consequences of the war in reconciliation were not successful. The confrontational character of bilateral relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia developed during the Islamic revolution and deteriorated along with a geopolitical competition to an uncontrollable pace (Rouhi, 2016: 280).

III- Saudi Arabia and Bureaucratic Foreign Policy

The critical factor shaping Saudi Arabia's foreign policy's foundation is the internal security of the Saudi kingship and royal family's grip on power in the peninsula's political hierarchy. Saudi Arabia, due to the lack of some basic factors such as low population density in its vast territory, lack of water resources for agriculture, shortage of human resources, and the need for indigenous technology, is dependent on other countries protecting its territory and securing the kingdom. The royal family is the embodiment of bureaucracy in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, bureaucrats have family ties with the king. In connection with Iran, King Abdullah's bureaucratic diplomacy differed from King Salman; the latter used full hostile foreign policy toward Iran (Jain, 2015: 283). Saudi Arabia initiated its narrative of national identity after the Mecca incident. It formed a strong government to control its internal dynamics to maintain the growing youth sympathy with Ikhwans in its territory. Cooperation between Saudi rulers and Hanbali leaders shaped a stable statehood in Saudi Arabia later on and anarchical movements at the same time in many Arab states during the 1980s (Kechichian, 1986: 56). Saudi Arabia suffered a tribal narrative of identity that made it vulnerable to the internal and external impact of dramatic change in its regional neighborhood. Orthodox identity narrative of Bin Salman based on the loyalty to the royal family gained momentum during his early year's appointment as the crown prince. The scandal over the killing of a dissident Saudi journalist in Istanbul eroded this new attempt and increased the state-society gap again (Al-Rasheed, 2019: 10).

The bureaucratic foreign policy of Saudi Arabia utilized the mediation policy as its frequent instrument of diplomacy, aiming for eminent reflection of their efforts and formation of events according to their interest. Failure of mediation diplomacy of Saudi Arabia in the Middle East and toward the region's challenging issues is affected by its strategy and interest-based how to deal with other contenders (Kamrava, 2013: 18). Saudi

Arabia shifted the mediation policy to active containment diplomacy that seeks to incorporate any activity to press Iran for a regional system's structural overhaul. The foundation of mediation policy consisting of financial leverage, flexibility, and in-depth knowledge is utilized to implement a stringent policy toward Iran. Iran and Saudi Arabia's cultural differences shifted to geopolitical competition for regional hegemony. Fearing from Iran is based on Saudi Arabia's effort to change the balance of power to its benefit. Every step within this framework should be analyzed according to the concept of balance of power. Saudi Arabia intensified its hostility toward Iran by all means, which "other" as a concept is one of them (Nourmohammadi & Seifi, 2020: 177).

IV- Iran's Middle East Bureaucratic Policy

Iran-Saudi Arabia bilateral relations during the Ahmadinejad presidency formed at geopolitical upheaval. The occupation of Iraq by U.S. forces and the power vacuum of a post-Saddam Iraq intensified regional competition over influence between Iran and Saudi Arabia. President Ahmadinejad initiated a warmer approach toward King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia by visiting Saudi Arabia on working trips. He elaborated on one of the central visions of Iran's foreign policy based on a desire for regional security free from external actors. The idea later faded, and Iran and Saudi Arabia competed for regional supremacy that separated them and led to no security architecture in the Persian Gulf (Mabon, 2013: 2). In his structural theory of decision-making, Rosenau discussed the information provided by structures to decision-makers. During the Ahmadinejad presidency, bureaucratic diplomacy provided details on approaching Saudi Arabia through a briefing of the president who views foreign policy embodied in his global justice doctrine. These briefings are supposed to inform decision-makers over the regional trends which based on that, the decisions are formulated. Ahmadinejad's foreign policy doctrine was not in line with the geopolitical situation and sought contradictory goals that sent mixed messages to other Arab states.

Ahmadinejad's presidency and bureaucratic foreign policy interaction reflect a common problem over how bureaucracy and president perception of the external environment cause competition within state bureaucratic apparatuses. Ahmadinejad consecutively visited Saudi Arabia that was mostly working trips. On his last trip, he invited the Saudi king to participate in the Non-Aligned Movement summit, while the Saudi side sent a deputy foreign minister to the forum. The absence of any coordination between the president and his bureaucratic foreign policy has been seen regarding the approach taken toward Saudi Arabia (DW, 2012:1). President Ahmadinejad's foreign policy doctrine and his policy of restructuring the Middle East's regional security made his approach toward Saudi Arabia not practical. King Abdullah prioritized preserving the status quo, but the fear of a Shiite uprising in the eastern and resource-rich territories of Saudi Arabia convinced the kingdom to take a hostile stance toward Iran. Internal security and destabilizing effect of Arab Spring in Saudi territory accelerated their effort to minimize Iran's influence toward the Shiite population in their region (Philby, 2016: 4).

Saudi Arabia seeks a diminished position of Iran's influence in the broader Middle East, especially in the Persian Gulf. It sees the Houthi government as an Iranian ally in its southern border, which can transform its backyard sphere of influence into an area where Iran can play a more significant role and deprive Saudi Arabia of its historical role. Hossein Sadeghi, the last ambassador of Iran to Riyadh, believes that a re-reading of priorities in foreign policy objectives is needed to reach a shared view with Saudi Arabia while pursuing its national interest. A very detailed, challenging, and lengthy negotiation is required to decrease hostilities and define each country's areas of interest (Masoumi, 2020: 5).

Saudi Arabia shaped its foreign policy based on containment of Iran. Saudi society that demographically comprises tangible Shiite population in the Eastern side of the country necessitated prudent state policy and conservative foreign policy that refuses

any dramatic change of status quo in the Middle East. This perception of eminent threat from domestic and regional political forces was destabilizing due to a negative view of Iran's Islamic revolution. The Saudi state establishment took more offensive steps in foreign policy toward Iran at the end of the Ahmadinejad presidency and did not pursue rapprochement despite a new president to the office.

V- Rouhani's Middle East Policy

Agency role model analysis of Graham Allison shifts attention toward how foreign policy of different states formulated in a distinguished manner and evolved within its system during the time. Rouhani, as the president, introduced a new set of ideas based on moderation and interaction with the world as its norms. Rouhani, as an experienced diplomat, put forward the bold agenda with P5+1 over the nuclear issue. This agenda could be extended to the regional issues, but the Middle East's geopolitical factors have been influential, limiting the scope of Rouhani's foreign policy. This geopolitical factor severed the country's loneliness as many regional and external actors sought to undermine Iran's increasing role in the Middle East's regional dynamics (Juneau, 2014: 104).

Saudi Arabia's diplomatic bureaucracy reconciled with internal instability, reorganized its mediation and diplomacy, and lowered its identity range from leading the Islamic world to leading Sunni Arab states. The Saudi government decided to confront Iran because of Iran's threat of its role in the incident. Saudi Arabia's leadership tried to reconstruct the national identity of its citizens based on a narrow definition of identity constructed on the radical Wahhabi phenomenon (Darwich, 2016: 3). Saudi Arabia's foreign policy toward Iran is structured on the basis of image distortion, secret diplomacy with the opposition, and the distribution of resources among various actors to confront Iran geopolitically and legitimize its regional discourse and diplomacy. Iran's bureaucratic diplomacy was met with extensive Saudi

diplomatic operations: persuading the United States to pull out of the nuclear deal and continuing negotiations in regional and Islamic organizations to form a coalition of forces against Iran.

Rouhani's policy toward Saudi Arabia was not on the agenda for negotiations with Saudi Arabia, in part because of the geopolitical confrontation between the two countries, which was reluctant to resolve regional issues. In the absence of any pragmatic agenda for negotiations, the two states exchanged friendly and hostile messages over foreign media. Javad Zarif, the foreign minister, applied some soft approach toward Saudi Arabia through public diplomacy and tried to explain a new area of Iran's foreign policy, especially its post JCPOA approach toward its neighbors. For example, Al-Alam TV, which supports Iran's national priorities, projected that Iran is not a threatening country, avoiding any controversies that were likely to create tension in the negotiations (Baghernia & Mahmoudinejad, 2018: 390). Iranian bureaucratic diplomacy actively participated in the Yemeni talks with other parties and arranged for the Houthi delegation to meet with the ambassadors of Britain, France and Germany. The missing part of this puzzle is that Saudi Arabia was not interested in Iran's initiative. Rouhani's bureaucratic diplomacy order to continue Yemeni crisis without accompanying Saudi Arabia did not reduce tensions with Saudi Arabia. . A broader mandate with a detailed agenda and reconciliation is needed to reduce the tensions. Esfandiary and Tabatabai (2016) assert that the Yemen crisis can trigger this process. Zarif wrote on his Twitter in Arabic declaring that "Iran sees no benefit in continued war and its siege in Yemen, but it welcomes peaceful solutions." He added that "Iran welcomes all initiatives which invite to talks and persuades everyone to use peaceful solutions" (Dehshiri & Shahmoradi, 2020: 210).

Zarif's diplomatic approach to Saudi Arabia was mixed with social and warning signals, and each part of his message was activated based on Saudi time and policy toward Iran. Ongoing hostility of Saudi Arabia toward Iran shifted Zarif's approach

toward Saudi Arabia by taking an informative and warning style at the media level (Zarif, 2016: 11). Iran-Saudi tensions stem from the search for security rooted in regional security architecture and its implications. On the contrary, in Yemen, for example, the Saudi's seeks to secure its periphery and diminish any Iranian influence that might change the balance of power to benefit Iran. The lack of diplomatic relations allowed Saudi Arabia to pursue its policy without being limited to the line of communication. In the absence of this line, Saudi Arabia can use its leverage to observe the results of wait and see policy.

In Syria, Saudi Arabia has developed a containment policy toward Iran in line with US and Israeli strategies. Rouhani pursued a multi-level strategy embodied in the Astana talks, in which Saudi Arabia had no role. The two countries developed a program that was not interconnected at any level. Rouhani's diplomatic bureaucracy did not prioritize discussing Syria with Saudi Arabia as the Syrian government concurred with its major cities. In turn, Saudi Arabia relied on the asymmetric approach and negotiated a concerted Arab and American approach (Al-Rasheed & AbdolMohammadi, 2018: 6-7). The lack of Saudi incentives to deal with Iran was reinforced by Trump's election as president. . Saudi Arabia may have considered the unpredictable nature of Trump's foreign policy, and instead of forming a coalition of Sunni Arab countries against the United States, it first turned to the Trump administration. Also, against the initial critics of Saudi Arabia, Trump coordinated with them to pursue his foreign policy in the region with the support of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia also translated oil for a security policy to gain Trump's support toward Iran (Mossalanejad, 2017: 39;47). In the Biden administration, however, some analysists see the opportunity for a new beginning between Saudi Arabia and Iran (Wintour, 2021). Additionally, Saudi leaders have said that they should be included in any potential negotiations between the Biden administration and Iran on a new nuclear deal, to ensure it addresses Iran's missile capabilities and its "malign activity"

(Reuters, 2021).

Saudi Arabia pursued its traditional policy of mediation and coalition building, such as the liberation of Kuwait. It participated in an anti-ISIS alliance involving air raids. Saudi concerns of Iran formed a foreign policy approach of containment in Bahrain and Yemen. Saudi Arabia motivated those governments' hostile position toward any measure that Iran put forward to decrease hostility within those countries. Iran's consequent successes to uproot these terrorist cells from Iraq and Syria changed the regional balance in favor of Iran (Saikal, 2016: 172-173).

Bureaucratic politics can show how the eternal environment has affected the perception of statesmen. The Iraq invasion of Iran in the early years of the 1980s exacerbated the pessimism about any regional cooperation between Iran and Persian Gulf countries over security issues. Soltaninejad, based on his principles of approximation to the world, intended Rouhani's diplomacy to do so. However, the history of mistrust and the conduct of Saudis against the Islamic Republic of Iran by supporting its arch enemy, Saddam Hussein, led to any dramatic change in general terms of Iran's Middle East Policy for any compromise or concession toward Saudi Arabia (Soltaninejad, 2018: 727-728).

Rouhani's Middle East policy is facing a type of Saudi foreign policy that is eager to spend as much power and energy as to stop Iran from advancing its interest in the region. Saudi Arabia views the U.S. withdrawal from JCPOA as a key milestone in its success. They understood the lack of time to implement this strategy and quickly achieved it with the Trump administration's support. Iran was empowered with JCPOA and gained its strategic confidence, making Saudi Arabia vulnerable to regional security and domestic politics. Javad Zarif's initiative to reach out to the public is an eminent indicative of bureaucratic diplomacy involved in supporting the country's Middle East policy. To achieve this, bureaucratic diplomacy facilitated the Islamic Republic's position on Saudi Arabia's aggressive policy. In addition, Iran's diplomacy expresses readiness for a broad-based

negotiation with the Saudi government and the definition of regional security arrangement. The foreign minister reached out to some Persian Gulf countries that already had a moderate approach toward Iran. However, bureaucratic diplomacy faced geopolitical fluctuations, which limited its scope of action. Saudi Arabia leads its foreign policy with a small group of the royal family and their inner circle. At the same time, Iran implements its foreign policy with various organizations and interest groups with a different view of foreign relations toward the Saudis. Rouhani's foreign policy required rigorous negotiations to reach a genuine security agreement with Saudi Arabia. Concessions may accompany this decision.

Conclusion

Iran's state key decision-makers view Saudi Arabia's intention and its approach toward Iran pessimistically. In addition to Saudi hostility, the region's geopolitical dynamics deteriorated the situation and decreased the chance of any diplomatic breakthrough between the two countries. The diplomatic bureaucracy of Rouhani's foreign policy proposed the Hurmuz Initiative with the participation of regional players and significant powers. The Saudi perception of a constant need to gain U.S. support in dealing with Iran is the primary bureaucratic politics trend and fundamental obstacle, which Iran failed to address.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia's foreign policy reduced the role of the foreign minister in fulfilling the demands of the king and his crown prince, who had set strategies and minimized any action independent of the United States as a provider of security. . Saudi Arabia expressed a set of clear goals toward Iran and the area of its interest. The precise definition of goals made that country eager to pursue its clear mandate. In fact, unlike Iran, Saudi Arabia limited its plans to contain Iran at any price. Contrary to Saudi Arabia, Iran set different goals, such as keeping the resistance axis operational aligned with the procurement of the country's urgent needs at the time of massive pressure due to the

U.S. unilateral sanctions. Saudi Arabia gained confidence since the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal. Its reliance on Trump's pressure on Iran prior to its departure from JCPOA and convincing the Americans to act within a reciprocal base, and benefiting them from massive military purchases; made them feel that they are on the right path.

Ahmadinejad had the opportunity to establish consensus within a broad range of organizations involved in forming and implementing Iran's Middle East policy. However, the president's inner circle could not conceive of a wider range of foreign policy stakeholders, which could bring Iran and Saudi Arabia to the negotiating table. Instead, Ahmadinejad took a dual approach based on the cultivation of personal relations with leaders of Arab countries and to address Arab nations in which these elements naturally contradicted each other. Rouhani's presidency is a scene of evolving Middle East policy of Iran exposed to a hostile environment. To expand the positive result of JCPOA to the region, foreign minister Zarif embarked upon a regional tour to improve relations with countries of the southern shore of the Persian Gulf.

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Containment Strategy of the United States and the United Arab Emirates toward Iran

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Abstract

The relationship between the United States and the United Arab Emirates is becoming increasingly complex and strategic. The two countries' strategic partnership in the fields of security, military, political and intelligence has also acted as a facilitating variable in this field. The UAE acts as the US financial arm in support of institutionalization and democratization and promotion of liberal values in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya, Yemen and, Palestine. The article's main question is that, how and why the United Arab Emirates and the United States are trying to contain Iran in the middle East? In this regard, using the theoretical propositions of aggressive realism, the hypothesis is that the United States has defined a unique role for the UAE in transferring responsibility to regional actors to decrease Washington's balance cost in the Middle East and North Africa. The method used in the present article is based on descriptive-analytical approach and the data is collected through library

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researches, interview with experts and reliable internet sources.

Keywords: Containment Strategy, United States, United Arab Emirates, Foreign policy, Iran

Introduction

Since the UAE's independence from Britain in 1971, Abu Dhabi and Washington have had friendly relations. The two countries have gradually expanded their strategic partnership including defense, legal, energy, security and cultural exchanges. Bilateral cooperation between the United States and the United Arab Emirates is vital due to its physical and security presence in two critical parts of the world, namely the Middle East and North Africa. Economic relations between the two countries are also high, with the UAE being Washington's third largest export destination, with annual imports of $ 15 billion to $ 20 billion. From the US point of view, the UAE is like a regional headquarters to trade in the Middle East, North Africa and parts of Asia (US Department of State, 2020)

As a major opponent of Iran's growing influence in the Middle East, the United States, and Arab governments, including the United Arab Emirates, have organized and performed a series of countermeasures to control Iran's influence and curb its growing regional power. In the recent years, the growth of Iran's regional influence and power, especially after the US invasion of Iraq and the shift in the balance of power in Iran's favor, changed the perceptual and mental structure of the leaders of Western and Arab governments in the region. Iran's success in keeping Bashar al-Assad in power and helping to restore stability in Syria, the destruction of ISIS by strengthening the resistance axis, the attractiveness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the people of Bahrain and Afghanistan, and the emergence of a new power on the Arabian Peninsula called the Ansarullah movement; all shows

Iran's upper hand in determining regional equations. In addition to these factors, Iran's institutional and coalition-building power, especially its success in bringing Russia into the Syrian crisis and advancing the Astana peace talks in cooperation with Ankara and Moscow, highlighted the strategic depth of Iran's power.

This paper evaluates the strategies adopted by the UAE and the United States to counter Iran's strategic expansion and regional influence. In this regard, the main question of the article is that, how and why the United Arab Emirates and the United States are trying to contain Iran in the middle East? In response, using the descriptive and analytical method, the hypothesis is tested that the United States has defined a special role for Abu Dhabi in the context of transferring responsibility to regional actors in order to reduce the costs of Iran containment and Washington's balancing in the Middle East and North Africa. The article first presents a theoretical framework and then containment policy's place in the US national security strategy is explained. In the next step, the joint mechanisms of the UAE and the United States in controlling Iran will be examined, and finally, the strategies of Washington and Abu Dhabi in controlling Iran will be examined.

Theoretical Framework

The division of realism into offensive and defensive realism offers interesting propositions about countries' motives, motivations, and strategies for gaining relative power and increasing power. The central issue in the debate between defensive and offensive realism is whether incentives from the international system will encourage countries to maintain and increase their security by trying to maintain the status quo, or whether they want to achieve maximum security by increasing their relative power and influence.

Offensive realists believe that anarchy forces governments to maximize their relative power or influence. Anarchy is a Hobbesian situation where security is scarce, and governments

strive to achieve it by maximizing their relative advantages. In his famous work, The Tragedy of the Great Powers Politics, John Mearsheimer presents five main assumptions of offensive realism. The first proposition emphasizes the anarchic nature of the international system. There is no government above governments in the international system, and each government considers itself the highest authority. Second hypothesis; That the great powers inherently have a degree of offensive military capabilities that enable them to harm and possibly destroy each other. The great power is also a country that can significantly threaten the survival of neighboring countries and change global influence in its favor (Trevino, 2013: 384). Third assumption; That is governments can never be sure of the intentions of other governments. In particular, no government can be sure that the government will no longer use its offensive military capability against it. Fourth hypothesis; That the first and foremost goal of the great powers is to ensure survival. In particular, governments seek to preserve the territorial integrity and independence of their domestic political order. Finally, the fifth assumption; That is, governments are rational actors. They are aware of their external environment and choose the appropriate strategic behavior to survive in this environment (Toft, 2005: 383).

Based on these assumptions, aggressive realists argue that country leaders should pursue security policies that weaken their potential enemies and increase their power over other countries. In their view, if a country wants to survive, it must be a good offensive realist; Because from the point of view of offensive realists, the competitive nature of international politics is constantly intensifying, and therefore countries must increase their power to such an extent that no country can covet to attack them. Offensive realists believe that the great powers are striving to achieve four primary goals: First, they seek to become regional hegemons. The second goal is that they intend to maximize the amount of wealth they control in the world. Third, achieving superior ground power. Given that the land force is the main and

superior form of military power, countries aspire to have the most equipped army in the region. Ultimately, the great powers seek to achieve nuclear supremacy, although this is very difficult to achieve.

War and blackmail are strategies that the great powers can use to increase their share of world power. In the blackmail strategy, governments try to achieve their goals without war and by threatening to use military force against their rivals. The great powers seek to gain power over their rivals, and prevent them from gaining power to their detriment. Balancing and buck passing is one of the main strategies used for this purpose. From Mearsheimer's point of view, the balance of power is the most crucial way to control potential competitors (Mearsheimer, 2001: 147-157).

According to Mearsheimer, governments are always trying to maximize their relative power. However, by considering the power and possible actions of their competitors, they estimate the costs and benefits of possible aggression. Only when the benefits outweigh, the costs do they increase relative power. The great powers use two strategies of balancing and buck passing in order to control and contain their enemies and rivals. In the buck passing strategy, governments try to delegate the task of confronting the aggressor to another major power, instead of direct balancing. In a bipolar system, buck passing is less likely because there is no third power. In a balanced multipolar situation, buck passing is more likely because each power can be confident that the aggression of another major power can be controlled (Toft, 2005: 388).

In multipolar systems without potential hegemony and without a common border with the aggressor, the buck passing strategy is a common mechanism. Threatened competitors tend to use this strategy in situations where they face a dominant threat. As a general rule, the greater the potential for hegemonic power, the more likely a balanced coalition will be formed. Buck passing often takes place in unbalanced multipolar systems because

governments try to avoid containment costs (Eugen Preda, 2016: 93).

I- Containment Policy and US National Security Strategy

The United States, in the form of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, countered European efforts to strengthen their presence in the Western Hemisphere. One of the most critical applications of restraint policy in American foreign policy was the Truman Doctrine, which was based on the idea of George Kennan. The goal of the strategy was to protect US interests from the Soviet Union's growing efforts to strengthen its influence in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Communism was controlled through various mechanisms, from proxy war (Korean War) to economic and political support. Various regimes and organizations during the Cold War, including the Marshall Plan and the NATO, SEATO and CENTO alliances, were implemented. Although he emphasized the use of containment through political and economic leverage and considered it part of diplomacy, the United States also used military, espionage, sabotage, and intelligence-propaganda tools in addition to these two levers (Nouri, 2019: 251-252).

The policy of "dual containment" became the official US policy toward Iran and Iraq during the presidency of Bill Clinton. Martin Indyk was the main designer of this strategy. With the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the United States has repeatedly accused Iran of having "expansionist ambitions," "a human rights violator", "distributor of weapons of mass destruction", "the most active state sponsor of terrorism", "a major factor in regional instability", "the disruptive of peace process between the Arabs and the Zionist regime", "a member of the axis of evil" (Soltani Nejad and et al, 2013: 108). They have also focused the implementation of the containment strategy to prevent Iran from projecting its power in the region.

The containment strategy concerning the Islamic Republic of

Iran has been to counter nuclear power, missile power and regional influence. The 2017 US National Security Document states that "economic instruments such as sanctions, anti-money laundering and anti-corruption and anti-corruption measures (especially multilateral economic pressure) can be an important part of broader deterrence, coercion and Restrict America's Enemies" (Jahanian and Eslami, 2020:144)

II- Joint Mechanisms to Contain Iran

The UAE's close ties with the Treasury Department, the Commerce Department and the US Federal Reserve to implement the policy of maximum pressure and anti-Iranian sanctions continue as the country struggles to play a new role in the liberal economic order. Such an approach has exposed the common economic leverage of Washington and Abu Dhabi in dealing with Iran. The following examines each of these common mechanisms:

In 2012, the US State Department signed an economic policy dialogue (EPD) with the UAE State Department to address various issues, including trade, investment, special cooperation and competition. EPD acts as a platform for developing new initiatives to strengthen economic and trade relations between the two countries. The United States holds EPD meetings with its most important trading partners (UAE-US Economic Policy Dialogue, 2020).

The Treasury Department handles federal finances through tax collection and billing, and manages government accounts and public debt through currency management. The Treasury Department also enforces financial and tax laws. In addition to its domestic mission under the auspices of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), the Department, imposes economic and trade sanctions on foreign countries and actors based on US foreign policy and national security objectives (U.S. Department of The Treasury, 2020).

The UAE's cooperation with these ministries, especially in the implementation of the campaign of maximum pressure against

Iran, has paved the way for improving US-UAE economic relations. Recent meetings between Mohammed bin Zayed and Emirati officials with US Treasury Secretary Mnuchin aimed at strengthening the anti-money laundering regime and implementing the provisions of the Financial Action Task Force indicate an increase in the UAE's moves to limit Iran's strategic capability through international economic regimes. It should be noted that the UAE, with the establishment of an institution called IRPO, continuously reports all internal developments in the economic and political dimensions in order to counter Iran's nuclear and missile program (U.S. Department of The Treasury, 2018). For example, in 2018, the UAE, along with six member states of the Terrorism Financing Targeting Center (TFTC), imposed sanctions on members of Hezbollah's parliament.

The Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) provides the framework and strategic principles for trade and investment dialogue between the United States and other TIFA Parties. The United States and TIFA partners consult on a wide range of trade and investment issues. The agreement was signed in 2004 to facilitate and increase trade and investment between the UAE and the United States (Office of the United States Trade Representation, 2020). This agreement is crucial because it provided the first foundations for raising the level of economic relations between the two countries to a strategic stage.

III- US and UAE Strategies to Contain Iran

By projecting and highlighting the UAE as a regional model and flagship of economic and technological development in the light of strategic relations with the West and encouraging other Islamic countries to move in this direction, Washington seeks to create a positive image of the UAE dependent model against Iran's Indigenous and independent approach. Utilizing Abu Dhabi as the US proxy arm in the region and facilitating US offshore balancing through Abu Dhabi's active presence in Islamic civil strife while fomenting dualism and multiplicity through Iran, Saudi Arabia,

Turkey and the UAE create a kind of security umbrella for the West and the Zionist regime. Under these circumstances, the puzzles of maximum pressure policy are strengthened by reducing the UAE's trade relations (ports, banking and transit, insurance) with the Islamic Republic of Iran. The following is a detailed review of the most important strategies adopted by the UAE and the United States of America to contain Iran's economic channels and resources and regional influence.

Iran's Regional Power: The primary political strategy to contain Iran in the region is the Iranophobia project, which intensified after 2016 and when Trump came to power. The joint strategy of the UAE and the United States can be clearly seen in the joint stances of the two countries' officials, and in talks and negotiations with other regional governments and international organizations. On this basis, Iran is portrayed as a significant cause of instability in the region. Holding the Warsaw Summit in 2019 and then the Manama Summit in Bahrain to review Iran's threats in the region and advance a common strategy to shape world leaders' perceptions of Iran's potential and actual threats are among the most important areas of US-American cooperation with Arabic, especially the UAE, in the region (Asharq Al-Awsat, 2019).

Sanctioning: In the previous period of sanctions, more than 50% of Iran's total foreign trade volume was conducted through the UAE according to available statistics. Being aware of this issue and the dependence of Iran's trade on the transfer of money and the settlement of currencies such as the dollar and the euro through the UAE channel, Washington and Abu Dhabi organized and implemented large-scale programs to increase economic pressure on Iran. The encouragement of UAE banks and financial institutions not to cooperate with Iranian financial institutions and businessmen in 2019 caused the exchange rate in the Tehran market to experience an unprecedented jump. The UAE's public and private institutions, in cooperation with US agencies such as the Treasury Department, OFAC, the State Department and the

Ministry of Energy, also act as a constraint on Iran's foreign trade. (Financial Times, 2019).

UAE-US Military Cooperation: Another strategy to contain Iran in the region is to expand military cooperation between the UAE and the United States. Under the new Washington-Abu Dhabi Partnership Agreement, 4,000 US Navy and Air Force will be deployed to protect Emirati ports and airports, including Jebel Ali Port and Al-Dhafra Airbase. To this must be added the purchase of more than $ 15 billion worth of military equipment from American companies between 2014 and 2019, which shows the growing military cooperation between the two countries in the face of the military threat from Iran (BBC Persian 2013). According to available statistics, in 2018, the country has spent nearly six percent of its GDP on purchases and military operations in Libya and Yemen and balancing with Iran (Dudley, 2019).

Reconciling Arabs and the Zionist Regime: As mentioned, Iranophobia and the distribution of threatening perceptions among the Arab rulers of the region, especially the UAE, have led to the closeness of the Zionist regime with this country in recent years. The regime, as a permanent enemy and constant threat to Islamic countries, has given way to Iran as a hegemonic state in the discourse of Emirati rulers (Iran Press, 2019). In August 2016, the UAE participated in the Red Flag exercise alongside Israel, Spain and Pakistan. In March 2017, the Israeli regime and the UAE Air Force flew together in a joint Greek maneuver. Another operational manifestation of this issue can be seen in the cooperation of the Zionist regime and the US Naval force in the region, which will bring the regime closer to the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf. The UAE's support for the unilateral deal of the century, which was unveiled with the UAE ambassador to the United, revealed the increasing convergence on the Hebrew-Arab front against Iran. In addition to these cases, we should mention the role of the Action Group against Iran in the US State Department, which during secret meetings has paved the way for the proximity of the positions of the UAE and the Zionist regime

(Jakes and Wong, 2019).

Claim of Ownership of the Three Islands: Other strategies to contain Iran are claims to ownership of the three islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa**.** Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington, 2019). In 2012, the UAE government made three diplomatic proposals to resolve the dispute over the sovereignty of the islands with Iran. First, referral to the International Court of Justice; second, the use of arbitration in international law, and third, intensive negotiations between the two parties.

The US media, with the financial support of the UAE government, has produced several programs on the UAE's sovereignty over the islands, aimed at convincing world public opinion that "these islands are occupied and the hegemonic nature of the Iranian government." which must be controlled or destroyed by creating an international coalition. In addition, Abu Dhabi has sought to use its institutional power in the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League to reach a consensus against Iran.

Elimination of Iran from Regional Trends: Another joint action of the UAE and the United States is excluding Iran from regional trends and the exclusion of Iran from the future equations of the West Asian region. Not inviting Iran to attend the Oslo Peace Summit on the Yemeni crisis, excluding Iran from the list of countries invited to the Geneva II conference on determining Syria's future, and not inviting Iran to attend Persian Gulf maritime security meetings are three prominent examples of a joint effort by the United States and the United Arab Emirates to contain Iran's power (Keck, 2014).

Iran's exclusion from regional trends would mean Iran's non-participation in determining the future status of the entire region, especially in disputed areas such as Yemen, Syria and Iraq. (Younes, 2019). Following the United States, the Arab governments of the region, especially the UAE and Saudi Arabia, have made Iran's presence in regional equations and meetings conditional on the full resolution of bilateral issues. Following the

US and the Foreign Ministry's 12-point statement on lifting sanctions, the UAE has set six basic conditions for re-establishing relations with Iran and re-introducing Iran to regional arrangements.

Renewing Relations with the Syrian Government: The UAE's foreign policy between 2011 and 2019, in the peak of domestic and foreign movements to overthrow the Assad government, was focused on following US foreign policy. It even financed part of the Salafist groups opposed to the Assad government (AL Mustafa and Fenton-Harvey, 2020).

Since 2019, with the growth of the Resistance Front's conquests in Syria and the certainty of Assad's continued presence in power, the UAE has sought to downplay Iran's role in shaping Syria's future by promising financial and political assistance in parallel with the Trump administration (IRNA, 2020). With Saudi financial support for Syria, the US-Emirati Comprehensive Plan has made financial assistance and a return to the Arab League conditional on a reduction in Iran's military presence in the country. Iran's domination of the ports of Latakia and Tartus, and the two countries' agreements in infrastructure and large-scale construction, have increased the level of concern of hostile governments such as the UAE and the United States to contain Iran. In the first step, the UAE reopened its embassy in Syria in 2018. In the next step, the Crown Prince of the UAE, Mohammed bin Zayed, expressed his solidarity with the country in the face of the coronavirus crisis during a telephone call with Bashar al-Assad.

Some analysts have called such developments a sign of the UAE's support for Damascus' reunification with the Arab League. Although UAE Minister Zaki Anwar has declared the nature of the call humanitarian, the political aspect of such an approach is particularly significant given the UAE's interest in actively participating in the Syrian reconstruction process and its concerns about Turkey's growing role. (Yeranian, 2020). The UAE's efforts to get closer to Russia, including calling Turkey's overthrow of

Russia's Sukhoi 24 terrorist attack in November 2015 and supporting Russia's position in Idlib, also serve as a behind-the-scenes goal to neutralize the Iran-Turkey-Russia tactical alliance in the Syrian crisis.

Deepening the Crisis in Iraq: The structure of the political system in Iraq, along with a 65% Shiite majority in the country and Iran's logistical and financial support in the fight against ISIS from 2014 to 2018, has brought most of the parties in Iraqi power closer to Iran's regional approach. To this must be added the $ 12 billion annual trade between Iran and Iraq, which shows the extraordinary level of bilateral cooperation. This has led to the formation of an American-Arab coalition centered on the UAE and Saudi Arabia to counter Iran's structured influence in the internal power relations in Iraq (Almogbal, 2020). Supporting Sunni parties, encouraging Kurdish parties to secede, providing financial and logistical support to terrorist movements, and creating new Arabic-language media to lead the wave of protests against Iran and Shiite parties are among the coalition's most important measures to curb Iran's influence in Iraq (Hamasaeed, 2019).

In Sunni areas, the UAE's strategy has supported centrifugal tendencies, including diplomatic, political and financial support for the Sunni region plan. In addition to the UAE's regional goals of expanding influence and influence over Iraqi political processes, such measures seek to increase pressure on Iran's regional policy through leverage. In 2020, an UAE security team arrived in Erbil to meet with Sunni leaders. In this meeting, the preparations for the project of creating a Sunni region in the northwestern provinces of Iraq (Salah al-Din, Al-Anbar and Ninawa) and mobilizing them inspired by the Kurdistan region model were discussed. (Al-Minar, 2020).

In parallel, the UAE has made sectarian efforts to divide Iran's allies in Iraq, including through close ties with Muqtada al-Sadr (leader of the Sadr movement) and Sayyed Ammar Hakim (head of the National Hekmat Movement) (The New Khalij, 2019). In

this regard, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi intend to use Muqtada al-Sadr as a key lever to weaken Iran's influence in the regions. (Abu-Nasr, 2017).

Closer Ties with the Kurds of Syria and Iraq: At the heart of the UAE's strategy for establishing close ties with the Syrian and Iraqi Kurds is to increase the country's political weight in developments in Iraq and foment ethnic-religious divisions in the country. The UAE invests in Iraqi Kurdistan is the highest level of foreign investment in the region (Sputnik, 2019).

Abu Dhabi considers Iraqi Kurdistan as a stable region inside Iraq, which has a special place in drawing the subsequent scenarios of this country according to the political trends and the share of Kurds in the cake of power in Iraq (Al-Rabeai, 2019). During the referendum on the independence of Kurdistan, despite the UAE's diplomatic stance on refusing to hold the referendum, there were reports that Abu Dhabi sponsored the referendum and that the UAE consul in Erbil visited polling stations (Emirate Alyoum, 2017). Abu Dhabi's approach in this regard even provoked a reaction from Baghdad. The coincidence of these trips with the internal protests in Iraq (2019-2020) made doubts about the UAE's interference in the internal affairs of Iraq a reality. One of the goals of the Emirati project is to increase pressure on Iran and Turkey (two countries that include other Kurdish minorities in West Asia in their territory).

Confronting the Ansarullah Movement in Yemen: With US military and technical support, the UAE government, along with Al Saud, has been trying to reduce Iran's influence in Yemen in recent years. US-UAE cooperation in supporting separatist forces in southern Yemen and the suppression of the Ansarullah movement (Zaidi Shiites close to Iran) reveals another aspect of the two countries' strategic plan to cut off Iran's influence in the region.

In addition to the geopolitical importance of the efficiency of the government close to the UAE in Yemen, the country has another geostrategic goal in confrontation with Iran. The main

goal of the United States, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia is to prevent Ansar al-Allah from taking complete control of the Bab al-Mandeb Strait in the Aden Sea, to use the capacity of Yemeni ports (especially Al-Hodeida and Ras Isa), and to prevent the UAE from diminishing in importance (Bender, 2015). Containing Iran's influence in the region will open the door for hostile governments to focus on the Strait of Hormuz.

Supporting Al-Khalifa in Bahrain: After the start of the Islamic Awakening in 2011 and the growing dissatisfaction with the Al-Khalifa government in Bahrain, the Islamic currents in the country, especially the Bahraini Shiites, formed nationwide protests to change the regime in Bahrain. The UAE and the United States saw the movement as dependent on Iran and part of a strategy to expand Iran's influence. Along with Saudi Arabia, the two countries provide security support to Al Khalifa by sending equipment and military forces in the form of island shield forces, navy and police to suppress the protests. In addition, a $ 10 billion support package was provided to Al-Khalifa as part of the Cooperation Council (Cafiero, 2018).

On the one hand, the UAE supports the existence and survival of the Al Khalifa regime and the repression of its internal opposition by the regime. On the other hand, Bahrain supports the UAE's claims about the three Iranian islands and its ambitions in the region. It should be noted that the US Navy Command in West Asia is based in Bahrain with about 7,000 military officers. (Military Bases, 2019). Strategically, Iran's dominance in the region and establishing of an Iranian-affiliated Shiite state will lead to Iran's complete domination of the Oman Sea and the Arabian Sea.

Institutionalization and Multilateralism: Institutional confrontation with Iran's growing power in the region is another strategy of the United States and the United Arab Emirates to prevent Iran from expanding its influence. Efforts to integrate the anti-Iranian strategy of Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain and other Arab states even after the boycott of the country in 2017 within

the framework of the P-GCC strategy, the creation of new institutions within the P-GCC such as Terrorist Financing Targeting Center in Riyadh, formation of US-led Gulf security arrangements, formation of Arab NATO and United Arab Army, Warsaw and Manama Initiative with the help of other Arab countries in the region are measures to confront Iran.

The scope of these institutions has also expanded to anti-Iranian meetings with Israeli officials. In December 2018, Yossi Cohen, the then head of Mossad, in a secret meeting with the heads of the intelligence agencies of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt, discussed the mechanisms of countering the influence of Iran and Turkey.

Another area that can be mentioned as a platform for cooperation between the UAE and the United States is their support for separatist and subversive movements, groups and currents in Iran. In the latest examples of this strategy, the Al-Ahwazi separatist group, formed with the financial and logistical support of the UAE and the United States, launched a sabotage and assassination operation in Iran in 2018, which some Emirati officials welcomed. This terrorist group even has a particular office in the UAE and Saudi Arabia (Parsi, 2018).

Supporting the terrorist group of MEK has also been on the agenda of the Emirati officials. In this regard, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the UAE, Anwar Gargash, supported and appreciated the presence of the former Minister of Intelligence of Saudi Arabia, Turki Al-Faisal, at the Conference of the MEK in Paris. Another example is the support of the Jundallah group, which was reduced after the arrest of the group's leader. Behind the UAE's support for the Kurds in Iraq and Syria lies increasing pressure on Iran and Turkey. The ultimate goal of this strategy is to push Iran back into the region and engage it in internal affairs instead of a direct regional presence (MashreghNews, 2018).

Strengthening Salafi Movement: The UAE supported the Afghan Mujahideen during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, with Saudi Arabia and the United States. The common goal of

these countries with the Salafi network active in Afghanistan and Pakistan was to prevent Iran's cultural influence. In 1996, along with other countries in the southern Persian Gulf, it recognized the Taliban and supported the group until the assassination of its ambassador to Afghanistan in 2017.

Abu Dhabi has allowed the Taliban to raise funds and has pursued a policy of silence regarding the supply of weapons to Salafist groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan through UAE ports. The UAE and Saudi Arabia pursue a strategy of regional identity transformation and upsetting the balance of power to the detriment of Iran by supporting Salafist fundamentalist groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan. (France 24, 2021). In the first few weeks of the fall of Kabul alone, the UAE sent more than 250 tons of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and opened its airports to more than 5,000 Afghan refugees. Mohammad bin Zayed is concerned that the Taliban seeking action against Abu Dhabi, so he has deployed special forces alongside US forces in Afghanistan. The UAE government is concerned about the growth and consolidation of violent extremist groups in Afghanistan. It is feared that the leadership's strong opposition to the country's religious extremism will become the target of these groups. Abu Dhabi and Tel Aviv carry out their first joint missions after public relations in Afghanistan (Fontenrose, 2021).

Conclusion

Containing Iran's influence and strategic supremacy in the West Asian region has been a central focus of the Trump administration since 2016. Washington's goal is to balance Iran at the lowest possible cost, including transferring responsibility to regional actors such as the United Arab Emirates. Through its allies in the region, especially the UAE, the country has taken a series of measures to control and curb Iran's power. Despite having different maps Abu Dhabi, along with Riyadh and Tel Aviv, all constitute the executive pillars of America's telebalancing policy. At the geostrategic level, the confrontation with Iran's power from

the Bab al-Mandeb Strait to the ports of Latakia and Tartus, and the massive volume of American bases and the UAE's financial support for this project testify to the two countries' extensive efforts to exploit all levels, tools, governments and international institutions aim to curb Iran's growing power. Controlling Iran is a long-term strategy. The UAE government's renewed approach in some areas, such as Syria, should not be seen as a change in its strategy toward Iran and a review of cooperation with the United States. The normalization of Abu Dhabi's relations with the Zionist regime has also increased the scope of convergence and coordination between the two main sides of the US balance in the West Asian region.

The UAE's behind-the-scenes goal is to play a role in the US Middle East strategy, strengthen and deepen trade and economic relations with the US's increase pressure on Iran as a major regional competitor. The UAE has also taken this approach concerning Iran's regional deputies, including Hezbollah in Lebanon and Ansarullah in Yemen. In this area, other goals such as economic development are also considered by the UAE. From this perspective, acting within the framework of the global monetary system and fulfilling the demands of the United States as the leader of such a system is to attract more investment and facilitate the process of integration into the global economy. This is important given the UAE's plans to diversify its economic resources and become a regional hub in various aviation, maritime, port, banking, transportation, energy and, tourism sectors.

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American Aid to Egypt and its Impact on Egypt-Iran Relations

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Abstract

Egypt is a strategic country for the United States. On the one hand maintaining Egypt friendly to the West due to its geopolitical location and influence in Arab League, keeping Suez Canal open for economic and military interests, following market development opportunities and securing a settlement with Israel are among the reasons which make Egypt vital for U.S. policy makers on the other the Egyptian foreign policy pattern is based on geography, national interests, cold War setting and leaders of Egypt is mainly affected by U.S. policies. This study uses foreign aid political theory to discuss how the United States uses foreign aid to maintain its interests in Egypt despite the political instability caused by the Arab Spring. The archival research on the USAID and U.S. foreign policy towards Egypt demonstrates that after Nasser presidency and since the late 1970s, the United States has provided significant military and economic assistance to Egypt to pursue its interests in the Middle East. Although Arab Spring and Egyptian uprisings in 2011 and Egyptian military's coup in 2013 made Obama administration to suspend temporarily some U.S. assistance to Egypt, but after re-establishment of aids, the steady rate of U.S. military assistance to Egypt hasn't been changed. This issue shows that U.S. unceasing influence in

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Egyptian circles of power was saved by foreign aid and proves the permanence of U.S. strategic interests in the region. As a result, U.S. utilizes these aids as an influential tool to control Egypt and to pursue its goals in the Middle Eastern countries, including Iran. Due to the close partnership with the United State and Israel, Egypt doesn't have a stable relationship with Islamic Republic of Iran.

Keywords: United States, Egypt, Political Economy, USAID, Arab Spring

Introduction

U.S.-Egypt relations have a complex and multi-faceted nature. Egypt has been an essential political force for guaranteeing U.S. influence in the Middle East and a crucial U.S. ally allowing Western powers to fly over Egyptian territory to the Persian Gulf and transiting through the Suez Canal. Since the late 1970s, the United States has provided significant military and economic assistance to Egypt and U.S. policy makers have regularly justified the aid to Egypt as an investment in regional stability. Nevertheless, this aid has been primarily based on preserving long-running cooperation with the Egyptian military and sustaining the March 1979 so-called Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. In view of that, successive U.S. presidents have overtly regarded Egypt's government as a significant country in the Middle East in line with U.S. policies and interests (Sharp, 2014: 2). Accordingly, Egypt has always been considered a key partner in pursuing US interests in the region and in preserving the Arab-Israeli peace process on behalf of the United States and Israel.

The Arab Spring was provoked by the dissatisfaction of the Egyptian people especially the youth and the unions, because the Mubarak government was an important point in the history of this long-term partnership. Before Arab Spring, Egypt's foreign policy under Mubarak was characterized by a trilateral relationship with the United States and Israel; the main reason of these close relations was the Camp David agreement because of which Egypt received a large amount of aid, both civilian (from US$800 million in the 1980s to $250 million in 2011) and military (a steady flow of $1.3 billion per annum) (Droz-Vincent, 2012: 1).

However, with the onset of the Arab Spring in 2011 and shortly prior to Mubarak's overthrow, the U.S. support for Egypt was initially sustained and then reestablished. Indeed, the January 2011 Egypt uprisings and the protracted transition that followed created a milestone in Egypt's political history that shaped a new balance of power in the country. So, the U.S. policy makers started debating about the future of U.S.-Egypt relations and the then U.S. president Barack Obama felt the necessity of revising U.S .policies towards the country in order to maintain U.S . leverage not only over the Egypt, but also over Southwest Asia and North Africa. As a result, US foreign aid resumed a few months later.

One of the main instruments adopted by U.S. policy makers to manage the critical situations is foreign aid. This was also the case of Egypt involved in the political turmoil of Arab Spring. The U.S. government generally classifies foreign assistance into one of two categories: military aid and economic aid. Marvin G. Weinbaum in Egypt and the Politics of U.S. Economic Aid argues that the massive U.S. economic aid program for Egypt initiated in 1970s is mainly shaped by the interaction of political and development goals. He believes that the U.S. assistance has enabled the country to achieve a certain level of consumption and development planning but with no other alternative. Weinbaum shows that the U.S. profits is dependent on the Egyptian leaders' foreign policy approaches and the strategic threats to the Middle East and emphasizes that if U.S.-Egypt strategic partnership is to survive, the United States must display greater sensitivity to Egypt's political and economic problems (Weinbaum, 2019). Moreover, Matthew Craig Axelrod in a thesis titled Aid as Leverage? Understanding the U.S.-Egypt Military Relationship shows that the Egyptian military is no dissociated from politics and continuous U.S. military assistance to Egypt seems to have been confirmed by the long-lasting partnership between both countries and it is to say that at the moment of truth the Egyptian military supported a repressive regime rather than the people

(Axelrod, 2011). In this regard, Arab Spring was a critical point which placed U.S. economic and military aid to Egypt into the crucial testing.

It is noteworthy that, Iran's relationship with Egypt is deeply involved with tensions that in turn derive from the Arab states' foreign policy calculations mainly affected by U.S. approaches towards the Middle East. Hence, this investigation aims to compare and contrast U.S. foreign aid toward Egypt before and after Arab Spring to indicate how U.S. adopted foreign aid as an instrument to preserve its influence in the country and to pursue its goals in the Middle East without being so much affected by the political instabilities caused by Arab Spring. It is hypothesized that U.S. aid, especially military aid, was an efficient instrument in leading the uprisings towards U.S. objectives. So, the archival research methodology is used for "the locating, evaluating, and systematic interpretation and analysis of sources found in archives" (Corti & Thompson, 2004; Berg, 2001; Denzin, 1989) and consequently for extracting required evidence from original archival records. Through referring to the collected data, first Egypt foreign policy pattern and its inclination towards U.S. interests are explained and secondly, the critical points of U.S.-Egypt relations are introduced. Then the available data including official reports, statistics and statements about USAID to Egypt is examined to offer an interpretation on the role of USAID in preserving U.S. interests in Egypt before and after 2011 uprisings.

I- Egypt Foreign Policy and U.S. Interests

Over the centuries, Egypt's foreign policy has been associated with various factors that were mainly dictated by geographical situation and historical realities of the country. In other words, despite recent political transformations of the country, the Egyptian foreign policy pattern is always characterized by four essential factors, namely, geography, national interests, Cold War setting and leaders of Egypt (Tianshe, 2011) which are explained in the following paragraphs.

In terms of geography, geopolitics has inevitably shaped the nature of Egypt's foreign policy because the country occupies a strategic position as a land bridge between Asia and Africa forming a link between two principal waterways, the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. Therefore, this factor provides Egypt with a politically strategic position, as truly argued by Gamal Abdel-Nasser, constituting the center of three "circles," the African, the Arab, and the Islamic. This factor gives Egypt an important position in the Islamic world which is closely linked with its national interests.

In terms of interests, it is to mention that although protection of national interests is underpinning of Egypt's foreign relations like any other country, the national interests of Egypt have been relied on different points of emphasis at different times. However, since the beginning, the constant element of Egypt's national interest has been its Arab-Islamic character. Egypt is considered as the main part of the Arab world. It is the largest Arabic-speaking country with modern intellectual and political centers. For instance, Al Azhar University is one of the major Islamic religious institutions and its profoundly Islamic culture explains why Egypt is known as the center of Islamic civilization (Tianshe, 2011: 88; Aly, 2014). Therefore, the country's Arab-Islamic identity is also one of the main pillars of its foreign-policy decision making.

For Cold War, Egypt's foreign relations during that period of time were mainly determined by the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union and these two countries were regarded as top priority in the country's foreign relations before the 1990s (Tianshe, 2011: 92). In other words, U.S. foreign policy toward Egypt during the 1950s was based on the following goals: 1) Supporting American and western Europe access to oil in the Middle East, 2) Promoting the ideal of self-determination expressed in the Atlantic Charter by ending British colonial rule throughout the region, 3) Supporting the independence of Israel without alienating the Arab states, and 4) Containing the

expansion of communism, specially the influence of the Soviet Union in the region (Holland, 1996).Hence, the United States considered Egypt as a natural leader among the Arab countries and encouraged pro-Western elements in Egyptian society to make the country an ally of the United States. . Since those times, Egypt mainly Islamic approaches have been influenced by Western powers' interests, especially the United States. Indeed, during decades, different types of U.S. foreign aid to Egypt have been used to realize U.S. objectives in the country. The following figure shows the amount of USAID provided to Egypt from 1951 to 1990. Before 1979, the U.S. foreign assistance to Egypt was based on economic developments. However, in 1979, following the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, the U.S. foreign assistance to Egypt amounted to more than 7 billion dollars which means that after that treaty, the US foreign assistance to Egypt was mainly based on military equipments. So during the Cold War, Egypt foreign policy pattern gradually took Western characteristics. These characteristics have shaped Egypt foreign policy during many decades up until Al-Sisi ascension to power which is experiencing some shifts in its priorities (El Hadidi, 2018).
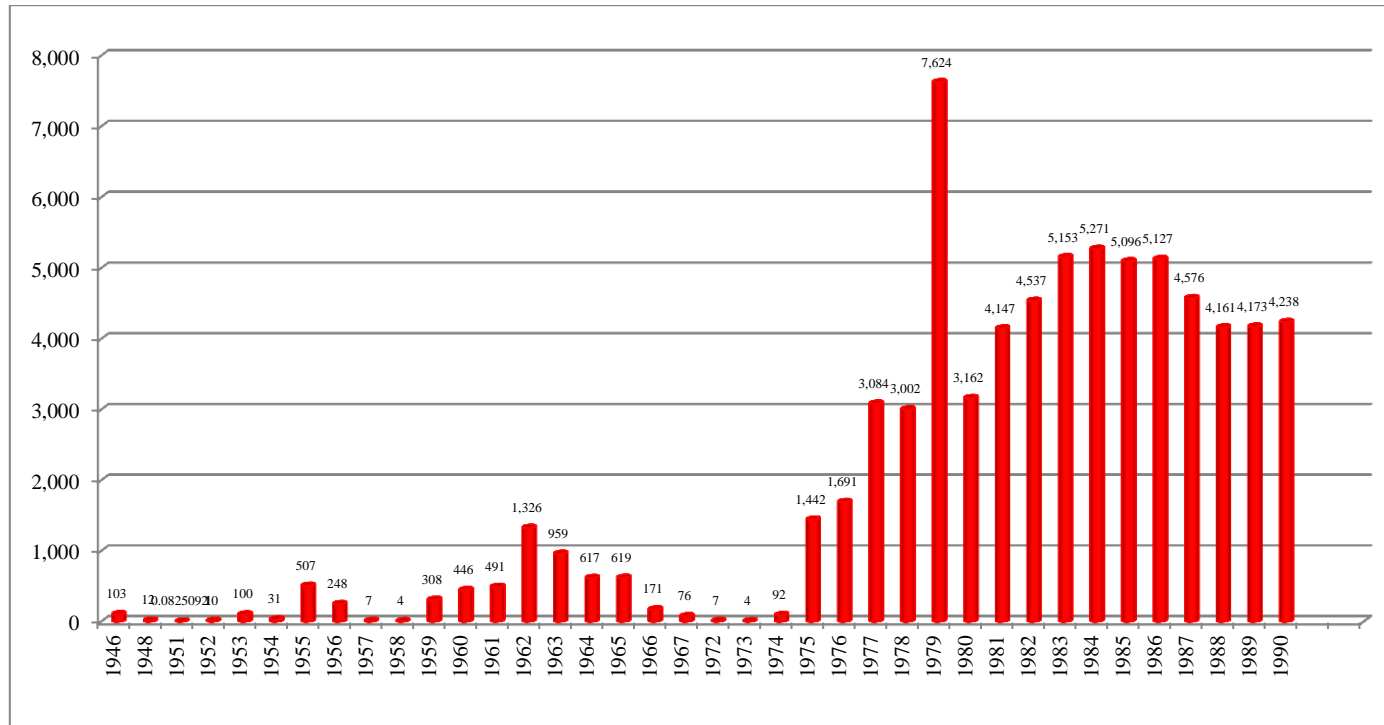
Figure 1. U.S. Foreign Assistance to Egypt During Cold War (Current Year US$ in Millions)

Source: U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Retrieved from https://explorer.usaid.gov/data.

On the other hand, Egypt's foreign policy was favoring the contrary directions such as the ideals of anti-imperialist non-alignment and the webs of dependency in which the country was increasingly involved. So the basic dilemma of Egypt's foreign policy during Cold War was its dependence on foreign assistance which was in conflict with its aspiration for national independence and its Arab-Islamic and traditionally non-aligned entity. This Arabic-Western dilemma is still present in the foreign policy decision-making process of the country.

Finally, Egypt foreign policy decision making functions under a particular political mechanism which assigns a supreme power to the leaders and players of foreign policy. Indeed, personal characteristics of Egyptian leaders feature in Egypt's relations with other countries of the world. Furthermore, Egypt is a presidential republic and according to 1956, 1958, 1964 and the permanent 1971 constitutions, president is the dominant authority in the political affairs of the country. So, Egypt president and his staff constitute a circle of power which has the absolute power in terms of foreign relations and orientations (Tianshe, 2011: 95) .It is to say that in spite of modifications in the new constitutional amendment, the conditions of the president's campaign and terms of office didn't impose many restrictions on his power and the President of Egypt is still a dominant authority in terms of foreign policy.

The absolute power assigned to the president was displayed by signing the Camp David I agreement after which Egypt foreign policy under Mubarak entered to a triangular relationship with the United States and Israel. Because of this agreement, Egypt received a large amount of aid, both civilian (from US$800 million annually in the 1980s to $250 million in 2011) and military (a steady flow of $1.3 billion annually) from United States. Therefore, USAID made Egypt a critical partner in the Arab-Israeli Peace Process, an essential political force for guaranteeing U.S. influence in the Middle East and a crucial U.S. ally allowing the Western power to fly over Egyptian territory to

the Persian Gulf and transiting through the Suez Canal (Droz-Vincent, 2012: 2). In short, USAID amplified the Western nature of Egypt foreign policy and made it more dependent on the U.S. interests. Some Egyptian political experts argued that because of Mubarak's regime foreign policy approach, Egypt suffered a significant decline in its traditional role in Arab, regional, and international affairs (Darrag, 2012: 2; Aran & Ginat, 2014). However, the history shows that the Mubarak's foreign policy approach is still continuing. In other words, in spite of January 2011 uprisings, the United States has maintained Egypt as its ally in the Arab world and the leader's Arabic-Western approach is up until now an outstanding element in Egypt foreign policy decision-making.

Another important factor in the Egypt foreign policy orientations are military leaders. In other words, the distribution of power in Egypt and its foreign policy could be better understood by considering the military as the second influential factor in Egypt foreign policy. Egyptian military is an indispensable part of the ancient government. It serves as the ultimate coercive backbone to political leaders in the case of immediate threats and maintains significant influence on the core issues in foreign policy, such as U.S.-Egypt relations and the Palestinian question; and it is a reference for the employment in political positions and the bureaucratic apparatus. It is worth mentioning that the Egyptian military has established its own vast economic complex, which comprises industrial enterprises in military production and civilian goods, major infrastructure projects, land projects and agriculture, and tourism business (Albrecht & Bishara, 2011: 15). As truly argued by Sallam, military is one of the main and wealthiest economic corporation and the owner of profitable and heavily subsidized revenue-generating enterprises in Egypt. The military's budget is not meaningfully overseen by elected civilian officials, and consequently little transparency regarding the production and allocation of military revenues and resistance against democratic standards such as transparency and

accountability are main characteristics of military leaders. In addition, military leaders control different entities such as the ministries of defense, interior, finance, and foreign affairs to impede any challenges against their interests. Strategically and politically speaking, Egypt's military leaders not only try to secure the continuous flow of military aid from the United States to Egypt through maintaining friendly ties with the United States, but also aim to keep their country out of costly wars with neighbors, mainly Israel, through protecting their defense establishment from any foreign policy initiatives that elected politicians may choose to advance (Sallam, 2012). So military leaders are keen to preserve their relationship with the United States and Israel and accordingly, enhance that Arabic-Western approach is underscored in the Egypt's foreign-policy.

Therefore, the four factors of Egypt's foreign policy namely geography, national Islamic character, the enduring dilemma between reliance on foreign assistance and traditionally non-aligned entity and dependence on the will of presidents and military leaders demonstrate that the Egypt's foreign policy pattern has gradually taken an Arabic-Western nature. The factors confirm that Egypt foreign policy pattern has gradually inclined to the U.S. interests and has become increasingly affected by U.S. policies in Southwest Asia and North Africa. Egypt's tense relationship with Iran is one example of the U.S. impact on the country's foreign policy affairsIt is clear that the geographical and strategic importance of Egypt and its predominantly Islamic nature are unchangeable factors in this pattern and any dramatic change in the Egypt's foreign policy could be realized through modification in other factors such as reliance on foreign assistance and dependence on the will of presidents and military leaders. The following parts show how the United States historically has tried to focus on these elements in order to establish its interests in the country. These interests were not even challenged in the context of Arab Spring evolutions.

II- Establishment of USAID to Egypt

Before discussing US foreign aid to Egypt before prior to the Arab Spring, it is important to look at the relationship between the United States and Egypt to see how Egypt's dependence on USAID has developed. Historically, Egypt has been considered a strategic country for the U.S. national security interests due to its geography, demography, and diplomatic posture. During the presidency of Gamal Abdel-Nasser (1952–70) who alienated the U.S. by his pro-Soviet policies and anti-Israeli approaches, the United States didn't have so much dealing with Egypt, but tried to keep the minimal ties with the country by forcing Britain and France to end their invasion in 1956 and keep anti-imperialist Abdel-Nasser in power. After the presidency of Abdel-Nasser, U.S. gradual rapprochement with the Egyptian leaders began so following the 1973 Yom Kippur, changes in Egypt's leadership from the Abdel-Nasser to moderate Anwar Sadat resulted in U.S. strong support to presidents who supported peace with Israel. In other words, figures such as Anwar Sadat (1970–81) and Hosni Mubarak (1981–2011) helped U.S.-Egypt relations became more serious and U.S. and Israel came to be the main Egypt allies.

Strictly speaking, after the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and start of the Anwar Sadat presidency, the peace process between Egypt and Israel became more important. Sadat believed that the main prerequisite for Egyptian development was the settlement of Arab-Israeli conflict. So he focused on the enhancement of U.S.-Egypt relations to advance a peace process with Israel. Finally, after seven years, normal diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on February 28, 1974 and the negotiations with Israel resulted in the historic Camp David Accord in 1979. Sadat plans such as the 1974 Open Door Policy (known as *infitah*) and the 1979 Camp David Accord reestablished Egypt-U.S. diplomatic relations and initiated what has become a substantial amount of foreign assistance. Indeed, with the Camp David Agreement, Egypt began to receive approximately $2 billion annually in USAID which was the

second largest allocation after Israel (Momani, 2003: 88; Sharp, 2020). Since that time, Egypt economic dependency on the US has been gradually established and successive U.S. administrations have regularly justified aid to Egypt as an investment in regional stability (Sharp, 2018: 19). However, this assistance was primarily based on maintaining long-term cooperation with the Egyptian army, and has since been based on maintaining the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty concluded in March 1979. In the following parts, the U.S. foreign aid to Egypt before and after Arab Spring will be explained to demonstrate how foreign aid helped the U.S. to keep its alliance with Egypt, one of the main regional powers in North Africa, Southwest Asia and the Muslim world.

Before Arab Spring: As mentioned in earlier parts, Egypt has a profound impact on the North Africa and Southwest Asia political and religious ideologies, as well as their popular culture. During and after the Cold War, pursuing an Arab-Israeli peace, fighting the so-called terrorism, and promoting economic and political reforms paved the way for good U.S.-Egypt relations and Egypt became a critical force in advancing U.S. interests in the Middle East. Consequently, large amount of U.S. military and economic aid, greater than other amounts given to any other Arab state in the Southwest Asia or North Africa were sent to Egypt (Momani, 2003). From 1979, Egypt became the second-largest recipient of U.S. foreign aids after Israel (see Table 2.) (Sharp, 2012: 6). Therefore, according to Morgenthau's political theory of foreign aids, this assistance was in the service of political goals and before Arab Spring Egypt was definitely playing an important role in advancing the United States' strategic objectives in the Middle East.

Table 1. Top Recipients of US. Foreign Aid, 2009* (Current Year US$ in Millions)

1	Israel	1,992
2	**Egypt**	**1,734**
3	Mexico	1,284
4	Pakistan	1,249
5	Columbia	1,229
6	Peru	534
7	Sudan	514
8	Ethiopia	441
9	Kenya	391
10	South Africa	361
11	Russia	332
12	Haiti	232

* Does not include military assistance.

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States (2011).

https://www.census.gov.

According to the 1964 National Policy Paper on Egypt, there are many reasons that describe the position and importance of Egypt for U.S. foreign policy. For instance, maintaining Egypt friendly to the West due to its geopolitical location and influence in Arab League, keeping Suez Canal open for economic and military interests, following market development opportunities and securing a settlement with Israel (Tauber, 2013; Taghdar et. al. 2020: 2478) are among the reasons that confirm the significance of Egypt for U.S. policy makers.

In view of that, benefits driven from United States foreign aid to Egypt are more strategic, diplomatic, and political than economic. Development experts believe that if Egypt's economic assistance had been centered on economic necessities rather than on political objectives, Egypt would have expected $100-$200 million in U.S. assistance and there is a great difference from the $100-$200 million to approximately $1 billion devoted solely to economic aid (Momani, 2003: 88).

Moreover, U.S.-Egyptian military ties are crucial in understanding the U.S. foreign policy toward Egypt. According to the Congressional Research Service, U.S. Navy access to the Suez Canal on an expedited basis allows the Navy to "deploy carrier groups swiftly to the Persian Gulf region. Without passage through the Canal, the Navy would have to deploy ships around the Cape of Good Hope-adding significant time to deployment from Norfolk, Va., to the Persian Gulf or Indian Ocean" (Sharp, 2013: 6). U.S.-Egyptian military cooperation is not limited to the U.S. Navy access to the Suez Canal. Secure transit of oil tankers through the Canal; over-flight rights; Operation Bright Star as the largest military exercise conducted by U.S. in the world; sharing intelligence information in the region, military supply, etc., demonstrate the important nature of the U.S.-Egypt military relationship (Momani, 2003: 89). The military cooperation is a strong signal of the U.S. ability to conduct military operation in the region, especially during times of war and crisis. Actually, the strategic, political and military cooperation between U.S. and Egypt confirms that U.S. Foreign policy towards Egypt before Arab Spring was based on the USAID to ensure the survival of those moderate Arab regimes that are capable of playing a mediator role for legitimizing and advancing U.S. interests in Middle Eastern affairs. Following tables show the details of USAID to Egypt before Arab Spring.

Table 2. U.S. Foreign Assistance to Egypt (Current Year US$ in Millions)

Fiscal Year Total	Economic	Military	IMET	Total
1998	815.0	1,300.0	1.0	2,116.0
1999	775.0	1,300.0	1.0	2,076.0
2000	727.3	1,300.0	1.0	2,028.3
2001	695.0	1,300.0	1.0	1,996.0
2002	655.0	1,300.0	1.0	1,956.0
2003	911.0	1,300.0	1.2	2,212.2
2004	571.6	1,292.3	1.4	1,865.3
2005	530.7	1,289.6	1.2	1,821.5

2006	490.0	1,287.0	1.2	1,778.2
2007	450.0	1,300.0	1.3	1,751.3
2008	411.6	1,289.4	1.2	1,702.2
2009	250.0	1,300.0	1.3	1,551.3
2010	250.0	1,300.0	1.9	1,551.9
2011	249.5	1,297.4	1.4	1,548.3
Total	31,320.3	41,809.2	44.54	73,174.0

Source: Sharp, 2012 CRS Report.

Table 3. U.S. Assistance to Egypt, FY2010-FY2013 Request

(Regular and Supplemental Appropriations; Current Year US$ in Millions)

Account	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013 Request
ESF	250.0	249.5	250.0	250.0
FMF	1,300.0	1,297.4	1,300.0	1,300.0
IMET	1.900	1.400	1.400	1.800
INCLE	1.000	1.000	0.250	7.900
NADR	2.800	4.600	5.600	—
Total	1,555.7	1,553.9	1,557.25	1,559.7

SOURCE: Sharp, 2012 CRS Report.

As shown in the Table 3. USAID to Egypt include funds from three primary accounts: Foreign Military Financing (FMF), Economic Support Funds (ESF), and International Military Education and Training (IMET). Additionally, Egypt occasionally receives relatively small sums from the Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR) account and the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) account (Sharp, 2012: 6). Generally, there are two channels for giving aid: a) bilateral aid agency that answers directly to the country's government, and b) multilateral agencies such as the World Bank. Multilateral aid allocation is less controllable by countries (Boone, 1996). From the 1970s to 2004, all U.S. economic assistance to Egypt was subject to a bilateral agreement, which means that each aid project was dependent on the approval by the Egyptian government. Given the lack of

transparency and equitable allocation of aid to many NGOs and CSOs by Egyptian government, in 2004 U.S. started to pay directly to these organizations, but then when Obama took office in 2009, he repaired bilateral relations with Egypt focusing on Egypt's role in renewing the Israel-Palestine peace process, and avoiding criticism of Egypt's human rights record (Tauber, 2013: 17).

In terms of economic aid, annual bilateral assistance to Egypt is usually provided in three different ways: (1) direct cash transfer to the Egyptian government; (2) part of the Commodity Import Program, through providing hard currency to the Egyptian private sector in order to purchase U.S. agricultural goods; and (3) funds for USAID programming in Egypt (Sharp, 2006: 27-28). To explain more details of economic aid, it is to say that a 10-year agreement reached in the late 1990s known as the "Glide Path Agreement" that made U.S. Congress decide to reduce economic aid both to Egypt and Israel and as a result, ESF aid to Egypt was decreased from $815 million in FY1998 to $411 million in FY2008. Later, because of Mubarak's reaction to the Bush Administration's democracy agenda, Congress cut ESF aid by half in FY2009 to $200 million. However, in 2009, President Obama increased a $50 million in economic aid to Egypt for FY2010, which was passed by Congress (Sharp, 2009: 29). Moreover, after Mubarak's resignation in February 2011, Obama Administration reprogrammed $165 million in already appropriated ESF for support to Egypt's economy ($100 million) and political transition ($65 million) (Sharp, 2012: 9). In brief, economic aid acted as the main pillar of the U.S. foreign policy to intervene in the Egyptian executive system.

In terms of military assistance, FMF aid for Egypt military is divided into three mechanisms: (1) acquisitions, (2) upgrading existing equipments, and (3) follow-on support/ maintenance contracts. Both U.S. and Egyptian defense officials acknowledge that approximately 30% of annual FMF aid to Egypt is spent on new weapons systems, because of the aim of Egypt's defense

modernization plan to gradually replace most of Egypt's older Soviet weaponry with U.S. equipment (Sharp, 2009: 5). To sum up, between 1948 and 2011, the United States provided Egypt with $73.2 billion in bilateral foreign aid, including $1.3 billion a year in military aid from 1987 to date (Sharp, 2012: 6). As it is shown in Table 2, the main proportion of USAID to Egypt is allocated to military assistance (see Table 2) which proves the pivotal role of this aid in controlling Egyptian military.

Tauber (2013) argues that many experts consider the U.S. investment in Egypt as a force over the Egyptian government to accommodate American interests in the Southwest Asia and North Africa, especially those related to Israel. Additionally, lagging political and economic reforms and poor human rights record make some experts to undermine the benefits of aid to Egypt (Tauber, 2013: 35-37). In brief, before Arab Spring U.S. foreign assistance to Egypt was served as an influential instrument in hand of U.S. foreign policy to address specific U.S. political goals and purposes in Egypt and realize its strategic and diplomatic objectives in the country.

III- US Foreign Aid to Egypt: Its Impact on Egypt-Iran Relations

The 2010-2012 Arab protests, known as the Arab Spring, refers to a series of anti-government protests, uprisings, armed rebellions and popular demonstrations calling for democracy and social rights organized by the Arab population in countries such as Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, Morocco, Iraq, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Sudan, Djibouti, Mauritania, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, etc. In Egypt, millions of people came to the streets to demonstrate against Hosni Mubarak who had been in power for 30 years (Aljazeera, 2021).

The protests in Egypt began on January 25, 2011 and as a result of violent manifestations on February 10, Mubarak ceded all presidential power to his Vice President Omar Suleiman and then to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. Immediately

afterwards, the military junta dissolved Parliament, suspended the Egyptian Constitution and declared that there would be free elections in Egypt. In the first elections in 2012, Mohamed Morsi, from the Freedom and Justice Party affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood organization, was the winner with 51.9% of the votes. Morsi announced that he would enact constitutional changes which created the hope for justice and economic prosperity in the country. In fact, these changes gradually gave unlimited powers to the military forces, including the possibility of arresting civilians by force among other authorities and consequently new popular protests and chaos started in the streets. Furthermore, Morsi represented an evident setback in matters such as secularism and religion-state separation, which increased dissatisfaction of the followers of Islamic religion and Islamic law or Sharia in public life (Korany, 2012). As a consequence of the growing government repression of the protests and a series of regressive economic policies, the president of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, Abdul Fatah al-Sisi, with the help of the Army, led a coup that overthrew Mohamed Morsi on July 3, 2013.

These instabilities show that during Arab Spring the Egyptian political situation was in ups and downs. The January 2011 uprisings and the long transition that followed marked a turning point in Egypt's political history, creating a new balance of power in the country. At the beginning, these revolts were not related to foreign policy and were unlikely to have much effect on foreign relations. But in the following months they had undeniable effect on Egyptian foreign policy. Indeed, these evolutions inevitably led to the adjustment of domestic and foreign policies in Egypt and created a context for changing Egypt's foreign policy pattern. In other words, the last two factors of Egypt foreign policy i.e., Cold War setting and leaders became prone to drastic changes.

The Arab Spring in Egypt took the form of a revolution which forced the rulers from power and provided an opportunity for fundamental reforms in the circles of power in Egypt. This

situation caused debates among U.S. policy makers .Initially, the U.S. decided to protect its ally and, in a speech, delivered at the State Department on May 19, 2011, Obama outlined a new plan for U.S. engagement with Egypt and other Arab countries undergoing political transitions. "Major components of that plan included providing up to $1 billion in bilateral debt relief to Egypt and $1 billion in U.S.-backed loan guarantees to finance Egyptian infrastructure and job creation, and creating an enterprise fund to invest in small- and medium-sized Egyptian businesses (SME)" (Sharp, 2014: 30-31).

However, after the collapse of Morsi' government by Egyptian military on July 3, 2013, the United States announced that it would suspend some U.S. assistance to Egypt. In this regard, following statements could show how foreign aid to Egypt was employed to exert U.S. control over the Egyptian evolutions.

On August 15, 2013 and a day after the brutal attack of Egyptian military against the Muslim Brotherhood, the Obama administration suspended U.S. participation in Operation Bright Star referring to the human rights violations of this coup. This operation was the largest military exercise conducted by U.S. in the world and a biannual military exercise with the Egyptian armed forces. In other words, in his remarks, Obama emphasized the deep and strategic partnership between the United States and Egypt and the United States' security interests in this country, which is located at the core of the world. Obama believed that engagement could support Egypt's transition back to a democratically elected civilian government and by referring to the massacre of civilians in the streets, stated: "this morning we notified the Egyptian government that we are canceling our biannual joint military exercise which was scheduled for the next month. Going forward I've asked my national security team to assess the implications of the actions taken by the interim government and further steps that we may take as necessary with respect to the U.S.-Egyptian relationship" (Obama, 2013a: 8).

Similarly, in his address to the United Nations General

Assembly on September 24, 2013, Obama repeated his minimalist approach to Egypt with regard to the traditional security goals and affirmed U.S. constructive relationship with the interim government would be maintained due to the core interests like the Camp David Accords and counterterrorism. However, he declared that: "But we have not proceeded with the delivery of certain military systems, and our support will depend upon Egypt's progress in pursuing a more democratic path. … Nevertheless, we will not stop asserting principles that are consistent with our ideals, whether that means opposing the use of violence as a means of suppressing dissent, or supporting the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (Obama, 2013b: 47). This statement clearly shows how Obama was using foreign aid to force military leaders act in a way consistent with the U.S. interests.

In line with the policies adopted by the Obama Administration, on October 9, 2013, Jen Psaki, State Department Spokesperson explained details of U.S. assistance to Egypt. Psaki remarked that U.S. would assist to secure Egypt's borders, counter terrorism and proliferation, and ensure security in the Sinai, through providing U.S.-origin military equipment, military training and education, certain large-scale military systems [F-16s, Apache helicopters, Harpoon missiles, and M1A1 tanks] and cash assistance. But this assistance was conditioned on Egypt's "credible progress toward an inclusive, democratically elected civilian government through free and fair elections" (Psaki, 2013: 2). These details revealed the systematic approach taken by U.S. policy makers to manage the Egyptian instable situation in line with their interests. Accordingly, Secretary of State John Kerry, emphasized the need for the Egyptian interim government to enact constitutional protections and during his November 2013 visit to Cairo, remarked: "this aid is a very small issue between us, and the Government of Egypt… has handled it very thoughtfully and sensitively" (Kerry, 2013: 31). Kerry's speech confirms the importance of foreign assistance in U.S. foreign policy towards Egypt.

In brief it could be said that from the resignation of Mubarak in 2011 until 2013, U.S. economic aid to Egypt was gradually decreased because of various reasons, for instance, U.S. budgetary limitations, increasing anti-Americanism seen in Egyptian circles of power at the time, rising polarization, lack of national consensus on a constitution and finally Egypt's lack of commitment to regional peace and securing the Sinai.

In the case of the ultimate reason, it is worth mentioning that after U.S. announcements on suspension and limitation of foreign assistance to Egypt, Israeli officials expressed both publicly and privately their concern over Obama's decision. Their main concern was reduction in U.S.-Egyptian military cooperation, particularly with regard to U.S. aid to Egypt.

A review on the history of military leaders in power could provide a better understanding of the importance of this issue for U.S. and Israel. As mentioned in previous sections, the Egyptian army is the second factor in guiding Egypt's foreign policy and plays an important role in its foreign policy decisions. Since the military coup in Egypt in 1952, all Egyptian presidents, except for Mohamed Morsi, came from the army. During the presidency of Gamal Abdel-Nasser, the military's involvement in politics was evident. However, due to some reforms on Egypt's foreign and defense policies in the 1970s, and increasing partisan competition during Sadat and Mubarak, the military became an invisible and secret power operating behind the scenes in cooperation with the president (Sallam, 2012; Albrecht & Bishara, 2011; Sharp, 2018: 2). Morsi's administration created a gap between presidential power and military forces. Therefore, when Morsi was ousted from power in a military coup on July 3, 2013, Al-Sisi regained the lost power of the Egyptian army under Morsi and resumed hopes of reviving the triangular relationship between Egypt, the United States and Israel.

In this context, after Obama's decision on revision and suspension of U.S. aid to Egypt, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said: "Our interests are basically in making peace with

Egypt ... This peace was based on American aid to Egypt, and I think this is the most important thing for us, and I am sure that it was done in consultation with Washington" (Kershner, 2013: 8). So United States re-established its foreign assistance mechanism to preserve its interests in Egypt (see Figure 2).
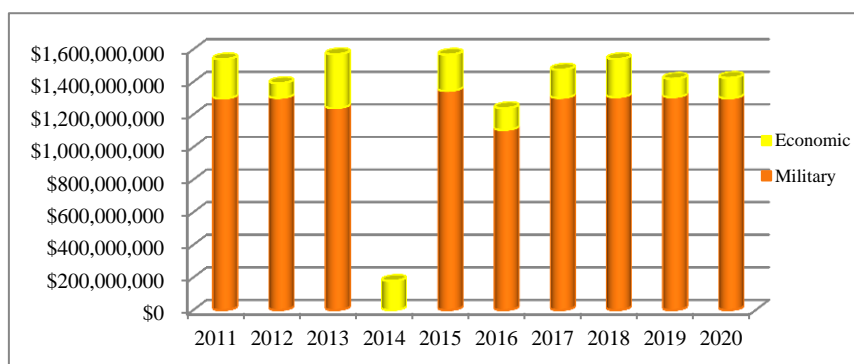
Figure 2. U.S. Foreign Assistance to Egypt (2000-2020) (Constant Amount US$)

Source: U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants, Obligations and Loan Authorizations, July 1, 1945-September 30, 2018, and Congressional Budget Justifications (FY2019-FY2020).

Currently, U.S. economic aid to Egypt is provided in two mechanisms: (1) USAID-managed programs which include public health, education, economic development, democracy and governance; and (2) the U.S.-Egyptian Enterprise Fund. These mechanisms are mostly financed through the Economic Support Fund (ESF) appropriations account. As shown in Figure 2, the main proportion of U.S. Foreign Assistance to Egypt is dedicated to the military aid. According to the Congressional Research service (CRS), for FY2021, President Biden requested a total amount of $1.4 billion in bilateral assistance for Egypt. Accordingly, the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) account is the main source of the U.S. funds for Egypt and provides Egypt with grants in order to purchase and maintain U.S.-origin military equipment (Sharp, 2020: 24).

All these data prove that the most influential instrument for the United States to gain a favorable view of the Egyptian leaders after Arab Spring has been foreign aid, especially military one. The following table shows the USAID to Egypt after Arab Spring which proves that Egypt is still among the first fourth recipients of U.S. foreign aids (see Table 4).

Table 4. Top 10 Recipients of US. Foreign Aid, 2019 (Current Year US$ in Millions)

1	Afghanistan	4,893.2
2	Israel	3,308.5
3	Jordan	1,723.1
4	**Egypt**	**1,248.0**
5	Iraq	960.2
6	Ethiopia	922.8
7	Yemen	809.8
8	Colombia	800.8
9	Nigeria	793.4
10	Democratic Republic of the Congo	781.1

Source: U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Retrieved from https://explorer.usaid.gov/data

In short, under the Obama administration, US-Egyptian relations soured, especially when al-Sisi came to power in 2013 with a military coup and Obama supported foreign aid to the Egyptian military. Under the Trump Administration, the President and other U.S. policy makers and officials ignored Egypt's poor human rights record. In fact, weakening the goals of the revolution, dissolving the Muslim Brotherhood movement, the inexperience of Egyptian politicians, and the influence of Western culture on Egyptians (Taqdar et al. 2020: 2483) provided an opportunity for Trump to rebuild relations. So, the Trump Administration like its predecessors focused on military aids and ties to foster friendly relations with the Egyptian government. In view of these

developments, the gradual defeat of the goals of the Egyptian revolution helped the United States to take over this new opportunity using an effective tool called USAID. The USAID to Egypt and its Impact on the Egypt-Iran relations

Foreign aid has always been a tool in the service of political goals, and political and strategic considerations are the most important factor in providing foreign aid. So, USAID to Egypt is not limited only to the close relationship between Egypt and the United States. As it is seen in the case of the Camp David agreement and its significance for Israel's interests in the Middle East, it also affects Egypt relations with other countries and political actors located in the Southwest Asia and North Africa. Accordingly, U.S. aids to Egypt have impact on the Egypt's interactions with its neighboring countries particularly those with anti-U.S. orientations.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as an important power in Southwest Asia, is no exception. Iran's anti-U.S. approach and policies have always been considered a challenge for U.S allies in the Middle East. Egypt's close relationship with the United States and its allies, highlighted by various instruments, including economic and military aid, is the main reason for the fluctuation in Iran-Egypt relations.

Egypt-Iran relations have wavered during centuries due to the historical, political, social and cultural evolutions of the Middle East and still remain fluctuating. After the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi fled to Egypt and was granted asylum by then-Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. As explained earlier, Sadat normalized Egypt-U.S. relations and signed the historic Camp David Accord which became a substantial source of U.S. foreign assistance to Egypt and resulted in the Egypt's economic dependency on the U.S. Since then, diplomatic ties between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Egypt severed. Although 11 years later under Hosni Mubarak, these ties were resumed at the chargé d'affaires level, tense relations between both countries continued until the so-called Arab

uprisings.

The Arab uprisings provided an opportunity for various political forces to participate in gaining power in Egypt. In addition, US policymakers sought to manage the situation by suspending economic aid and providing some form of political support for the new situation. In continuation of these developments, When Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood won the 2012 Egyptian elections, some hopes for fundamental changes in Egyptian political behavior at home and abroad emerged. Accordingly, Iran-Egypt relations were improved during the first months of Morsi's presidency, therefore mutual visits at the presidential level were resumed. Some political experts believed that Morsi's decision to travel to Tehran for a summit of the Non-Aligned Movement "reflects a major foreign policy shift for the Arab world's most populous nation, after decades of subservience to Washington" (Londoño, 2012). In fact, this was the first visit by an Egyptian leader since the severance of diplomatic relations between the two countries and Egypt's recognition of Israel in the 1980s. Furthermore, Iran's ambassador to Egypt for the first time in decades was appointed during Morsi's administration.

Later, Morsi's retreat on issues such as secularism and the separation of religion and state not only increased the dissatisfaction of followers of Islam and Islamic law in countries of the region, including Iran, but also helped the United States and Israel return to the Egypt's political scene, especially through USAID as shown earlier. Hence, relations between Egypt and Iran were neutralized because of the political chaos in the country.

With al-Sisi's presidency and Trump's interest in rebuilding Egypt-US relations, small hopes for a change in Egypt's foreign policy were dashed.

In this regard, Monshipouri and Zamary believe that Egypt under al-Sisi avoids being involved in the Sunni-Shia divide by reforming its security considerations through prioritizing stability above sectarian and ethnic identity concerns. However, the

fundamental alteration in Egypt foreign policy is unlikely in the near future mainly because of Egypt economic dependency on rich Arab countries of the Persian Gulf (Monshipouri & Zamary, 2017). This investigation showed that Egypt's economic dependency is not limited to the Arab countries which are U.S. allies, but also includes the United States itself. Therefore, Egypt is economically dependent on the US and its allies and its regional activities are highly influenced by US alliances and rivalries with the countries located in Southwest Asia and North Africa. Overall, USAID, in turn, has influenced the normalization of Egypt's relations with Iran.

Conclusion

The U.S. foreign aid to the Middle East has historically been a function of U.S. national security interests in the region. Since the late 1970s and after the March 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, the United States has provided significant military and economic assistance to Egypt. Indeed, U.S. policy makers have regularly justified the aid to Egypt as an investment in regional stability. However, this assistance was primarily based on maintaining long-term cooperation with the Egyptian army and maintaining the so-called Egypt-Israel peace treaty in March 1979. In view of that, successive U.S. administrations have overtly characterized Egypt's government as an increasingly influential element in the Middle East in line with U.S. interests. Actually, Egypt's strategic location and its history of close collaboration with the United States make it a matter of significant importance for U.S. national security interests. In this regard, US aids to Egypt has always pursued specific goals, such as keeping the Suez Canal open for economic and military interests, following market development opportunities and securing a settlement with Israel. So U.S. military aid to Egypt has historically shaped a pro-U.S. military establishment, which aims to ensure that Egypt remains associated with the United States and Israel.

The January 2011 Egyptian uprisings and the protracted

transition that followed created a milestone in Egypt's political history in the sense that shaped a new balance of power in the country and challenged forty-year military cooperation between U.S. and Egypt. So U.S. policy makers started debating about the future of U.S.-Egypt relations and the U.S. president of the time Barack Obama felt the necessity of revising U.S. policies towards the country in order to maintain U.S. leverage no only over Egypt, but also over Southwest Asia and North Africa. Obama's most effective tool was USAID, and the Arab Spring placed the U.S. economic and military aid to Egypt into crucial testing. Initially Obama continued U.S. Assistance to Egypt, but after 2013 al-Sisi coup against Morsi. he decided to suspend military aid to the country due to the human rights violations. Then the necessity of guaranteeing the security of Israel convinced Obama to re-establish military aid to the country. This issue shows that unceasing intervention and influence of the U.S. In general, the grand strategy shows that not only does Egypt need US political and economic assistance, but the United States needs Egypt to implement its Middle East strategy. So the development of Egypt-U.S. relations is a mutual. Furthermore, this relationship makes Egypt comply with international and regional treaties resulting to maintain peaceful relations with Israel.

It is clear that these relations affect Egypt's interactions with countries in Southwest Asia and North Africa. As an example, although Iran is an import actor in the political evolutions of the region, Egypt doesn't have a stable relation with the country. The fluctuating relations between both countries has its roots in Egypt's close partnership with the United State and Israel. Clearly, Egypt's military cooperation with the U.S. and its dependency on the U.S. economic and military aids constitute the foundation of this partnership that has always been used to further U.S. interests in Southwest Asia and Northern Africa.

In sum, given the continuation of U.S. presence in the military spheres of Egyptian circles of power, USAID still serves as an effective tool to safeguard U.S interest in the country.

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Sanctions and Iran`s Oil Industry

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Abstract

Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran has been affected by economic sanctions imposed by Western countries especially the U.S. From 2006 and with increasing Iranian nuclear standoff with P5+1 group, the United Nations has frequently imposed economic and financial sanctions against Iran. As a result of these international restrictions and their management by an international organization, Iran's exports have been heavily reduced. Given the sanctions on the oil industry in Iran and the lack of a comprehensive model of export performance of Iranian petroleum products in the sanctions period, this research can help improve and develop this industry in international markets. The research method is phenomenological and the statistical population includes export and marketing managers and oil industry experts. Non-probable sampling and snowball sampling method was used in this research. In this qualitative study, semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to gather information and 7 in-depth interviews on saturation law were conducted. Structural, internal, interpretive and descriptive validity were used for validation. For surveying reliability, revision while coding and surveying by another informed person were used to

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insure correct coding. This research uses a qualitative study to determine the effect of returning sanctions on the export performance model of Iranian petroleum products. After open, pivotal and selective coding and the use of Atlas quality software, the background of Iran's oil products export performance in sanctions are: market orientation, company resources, marketing mix, macro environment and items of Iranian oil products export performance in sanction includes: financial performance, customer satisfaction and customer retention in sanction situation. Most of the previous studies have focused on positivism and quantitative research methodology while we used the qualitative and mixed method in this research.

Keywords: Export Performance, Market Orientation, Company Resources, Marketing Mix, Macro Environment, Sanction

Introduction

Exporting activities enhance organizational capabilities, which, in turn, generate additional resources that boost the firm's performance. Hence, a robust understanding of exporting is much called for by researchers, managers, and policy-makers. Over the past 50 years, significant advances in export performance research have shown great progress in this area. In this study, export performance is defined as the outcome of a firm's activities in export market. (Chen, Sousa & He, 2016: 630).

Nowadays, international developments have made an inevitable link between foreign policy and the economy. Therefore, it is impossible to have a dynamic and global economy without active, interactive and effective foreign policy. Meanwhile, energy is a special issue as one of the most important variables of the global economy, especially in Iran, which is not only an important factor in politics, but is also of crucial importance for Iran as one of the world's major oil and gas producers (Rohani, 2010: 30).

Today's the developing world is improving rapidly based on a strong and intelligent economy; Thus, the interactions of fundamentalism and international relations, whether political or commercial, are largely dependent on the economic power of the countries and without it, there will be no effective foreign policy to guide foreign developments. On the other hand, achieving a strong economy based on production and exports requires an interactive foreign policy. Therefore, a country's economy and foreign policy cannot be separated and they will always converge with each other. (Rohani, 2010: 30).

One of the key economic factors in economic development is energy security, which is one of the most fundamental issues in foreign policy. Therefore, oil and gas are a special issue for many international interactions and Iran, as one of the main players in the oil economy and policy, will be affected by this role. (Rohani, 2010: 30).

The need for this research in the oil, gas and petrochemical industries is that studies in different countries on the impact of predecessors on export performance have not reached a general consensus result and there is the question that more attention to the factors affecting the performance of exports in developing countries, especially Iran, will achieve the expected results. Regarding oil industry in the 20-year vision and due to the lack of a comprehensive model of Iranian oil products export performance, this research can be a good solution for the international development of this industry.

I- Oil Products and Export limitations

Oil products are highly used materials from crude oil that are processed in an oil refinery. Oil products include gas oil (gasoline), kerosene, plane fuel (ATK), liquid gas, fuel oil, sulfur, hydrogen and carbon (petroleum coke).

Through field research and exploratory interviews, international restrictions on the export of petroleum products have been implemented due to the sanctions, some of which are listed below. Environmental factors such as war have a great impact, the more tension, the higher and the costs. Today, some ships do not enter Iran and the ships that come are not allowed to go to other countries due to their age and inadequate facilities, so we have to move twice. These unsuitable ships cost more. All of these factors, in addition to delaying time, cause more costs. In fact, we are involved in security/political factors such as interfering in environmental tensions or the sinking of a ship in Fujairah, the missile attack on an Iranian tanker in the Red Sea and so on which creates a lot of risks for insurance companies. (Kh.

Mohammadzadeh, personal interview, 2020).

Another issue is the ban on trade with other countries due to opposition from the US government. Therefore, any country that has trade relations with Iran must accept the rejection of other countries. Today, due to sanctions, we do not negotiate directly with importers and try to do it differently.

One of the most important issues in trade with Iran is payment. The export products are sold in foreign currency and this currency must be paid to the acceptable system of exchange in Iran recently launched Nima[1] system, but due to the sanctions, we have to use third companies. We get guarantees from exchange companies, but this is not a specific bank account, and unfortunately money laundering happens through this system. We are no longer able to trade with LC and customers have to pay cash by exchange companies. All these factors reduce prices compared to Qatar and Saudi Arabia (N. Pajang, personal interview, 2020).

Another issue is transportation problems, the best container lines such as Ever Green do not ship containers to Iran and the only option for transporting cargos and containers to Iran is the Islamic Republic of Iran shipping lines, which are currently unable to function properly due to the severity of international sanctions. For example, there is no central hub in Iranian factories, so there is a delay in transporting products to most destinations.

Economic war is the next problem. For example, the United States has recently gained enormous capacity from oil resources and exported petroleum products at low prices to Turkey, China, etc. thus upsetting the market balance and also causing low prices for Iran.

One of the most important problems in Iran's export performance is exchange rate instability. In general, sanctions are an influential issue in Iran's exports because they affect marketing, sales, transportation and logistical issues, etc. (K. Farokhzadi, 2020).

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1. Iran's domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA)

According to the research needs of companies exporting Iranian petroleum products to improve export performance, the strategic importance of the oil industry in Iran, globalization of companies and international export restrictions, we try to provide a comprehensive model of the export performance of Iranian petroleum products to achieve maximum utilization and minimum cost.

In this research, after setting goals and collecting materials, reviewing the literature, designing a protocol in a qualitative manner and conducting in-depth interviews, Qualitative data analysis is performed by coding as well as achieving results by providing a comprehensive model. Then, data analysis was performed using SPSS and AMOS software and also data collection was done through a questionnaire.

Sanctions on the Oil Industry: The economic sanctions of the world powers to achieve political goals and putting pressure on the Iranian economy have been pursued for many years. Iran's post-revolutionary economic sanctions can be divided into two main periods: 1) From the beginning of the Islamic revolution until 2005; 2) From June 2005 until 2012. The US trade ban in the first period was generally unilateral, with only the United States imposing a trade ban on Iran until 2006. But since 2006, trade bans have been imposed on Iran by European countries, Canada, Australia and some Asian countries. Violators of the US trade ban have also been subject to severe economic penalties since 2006. In addition, non-governmental economic actors have been sanctioned since 2006 in addition to state-owned economic actors (Nademi & Hassanvand, 2019: 154).

Following the Iran nuclear talks, the agreement on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of action (JCPOA[1]) and the date of implementation of this agreement between Iran and 5 + 1[2] countries, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) approved a plan to meet Iran's nuclear commitments, therefore

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1. 14 July 2015

2. The United States, France, the United Kingdom, China, Russia and Germany

nuclear sanctions against Iran were suspended. In January 2016, the European Union lifted its nuclear sanctions against Iran. Following the EU, the United States lifted or suspended secondary sanctions against Iran the same year.

With the implementation of JCPOA, the European Union and the United States removed many Iranian individuals and legal entities from the list, especially designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (SDN). This was particularly important for non-US companies trading with Iran, which led to numerous trade agreements and investments during the lifting or suspension of sanctions. (Post- JCPOA) (Razavi & Zeinodini, 2018: 38). With the new US administration in office in 2016, the new president (Donald Trump) announced that he was not going to ratify the nuclear deal between Iran and the P5 + 1 countries. According to the Iran Nuclear agreement Review Law, this law was adopted in May 2015 (INARA). The US president had to reaffirm Iran's commitment to the JCPOA every four months, and if not approved, the US Congress was allowed to schedule a 60-day period to re-impose US sanctions on Iran. First, on October 13, 2017, the US President announced that he would not endorse Iran's actions through its commitments to the JCPOA. Thus, nuclear agreement with Iran was not in the national interest of the United States any more. The approval set a 60-day deadline for the US Congress to pass a new law to reinstate US secondary sanctions against Iran. But in the end, the US Congress did not take any decision to return the sanctions due to the disapproval of European countries. (Razavi & Zeinodini, 2018: 39).

Therefore, returning sanctions through INARA had no effect. On May 8, 2018, Donald Trump the then president of the United States, announced its country's withdrawal from the JCPOA and re-imposed all sanctions against Iran. The US president issued a note titled "National Security Presidential Memorandum" (NSPM). He announced in the memo that the United States intends to reinstate economic sanctions and repeal these four laws: Iran Sanctions Law, Iran Security Threat Reduction Law, National Defense

Authorization Law, Iran Freedom and Anti-Proliferation Law.

In this study, the effects of sanctions on the export performance of Iranian petroleum products are examined. It is obvious that production in this industry has a vital role in the country's economy due to Iran's dependence on oil revenues. (Mofidian & Keshavarzian, 2015: 30). Based on this approach, the researcher tries to identify the variables and factors affecting the performance of Iran's petroleum products in sanctions with the help of interviewees and their lived experiences. (Mansoorian) This research has a basic purpose because we are looking for records of the export performance of Iranian petroleum products under sanctions and we do not have definitive hypotheses.

II- Data Collection Method

In this study, the study of scientific documents and in-depth interviews with experienced people has been used to determine the variables and the history of Iranian petroleum products export in sanctions. The statistical population of the study is managers, marketing experts, Iranian Petroleum Exporters Association who has been selected by improbable and purposeful sampling method. After selecting the first person and conducting the next person interview, the interviews continued at her suggestion until after 7 interviews, there were repeated answers and theoretical saturation. The information obtained is as follows: (table 1):

Table 1. Intervieews Information

column	company	name	education	work experience (years)	Interview time (min)
1	National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company	Homa. Aziz mohammadi	MA	17	75
2	Banagstar Karaneh	Khashayar. Mohammad zadeh	MA	5	45

3	Mehr petrochemical	Navid.Pajang	MA	6	60
4	Hesarmehran refinement	Mohammadali. Shahsavand	Bachelor	7	55
5	Siahfam	Negin.Rezae	MA	6	50
6	Jey Oil	Behnam. Tahernia	MA	13	45
7	Persian Gulf Apadana Petrochemical Plant	Keivan. Farokhzadi.	PhD	10	60

The next research approach is a descriptive-survey study and is in fact a conclusive research. Survey hypotheses are an ultimate research goal. (Malhotra, 2014: 7).

We have applied probable sampling and random sampling method in the second study of this project. In this study, standardized questionnaire was used which summarizes the information in the table below and a sample of questionnaire is mentioned in the appendix with 57 items. We had 548 samples of experts in order to fill questionnaires in this research.

Table 2. Questionnaire Structure of Quantitative Study

Row	Variable name	Variable role	Scale developer	Data type	Scale	Number of items
1	Market orientation: cultural market orientation (customer orientation & competitor orientation) and behavioral market orientation (information	independent	Jaworski and Kohli, 1993 Narver and Slater, 1990	Sequential	Likert	12

	generation & responsiveness)					
2	Marketing mix: product, price, distribution, marketing research	independent	Freeman, 2009	Sequential	Likert	15
3	Firm's resources: human resources, physical resources, organizational resources, location resources and financial resources.	independent	NJERU, 2013	Sequential	Likert	12
4	Macro environment: economic, legal, political and technology factors	independent	Freeman, 2009	Sequential	Likert	9
5	Export performance: financial performance, customer satisfaction, customer retention	dependent	NJERU, 2013	Sequential	Likert	9

III- Iran's Oil Industry and Secondary Sanctions

The system of sanctions imposed on Iran has been the most prominent and special one in terms of its application and lifting. The imposition of severe economic sanctions for three years, its lifting or suspension for two and a half years and the reinstatement of some of these sanctions have created a new and special legal situation for trade and investment in Iran.

Before JCPOA, imposing sanctions and limitations against Iran were just related to oil and gas industry, but secondary US sanctions were also applied to energy fields such as electronics and renewable energy.

The return of US secondary sanctions created a new situation

for Iran's petroleum products industry. The return of oil sanctions took place in the second period of these measures (Razavi & Zeinodini, 2018: 43).

Oil contracts with Iran were banned for non-US companies from November 4, 2016. According to National Defense Authority Act (NDAA). Every 180 days, the President of the United States must receive a report on the price and supply of crude oil in countries other than Iran. Due to the reduction or non-reduction of oil purchases from Iran, the buyer of the oil company, the facilitator of banking transactions and the government which import oil from Iran should be subject to sanctions and restrictive measures. Therefore, governments that buy Iranian crude must reduce their purchases from Iran by at least 20 percent every 180 days to be exempted from US sanctions.

Also, with the return of the Sisada law, the import and sale of petroleum products to Iran has been banned. Therefore, oil and gas investment sanctions have been reinstated by Sisada law. If non-US companies do not comply, they will be penalized by the US government (Razavi & Zeinodini, 2018: 48).

IV- Sanctions and Iran`s Petroleum Products

Model search in data is called qualitative data analysis. In this research, Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology model is used to analyze the data (Van Manen, 1990: 352). Phenomenological analysis is the most extensive research method according to its philosophical dimensions (Mohammad Pour, 2016). Coding is an essential step for analyzing qualitative data (Heidarzadeh & Norouzi, 2015: 152).

After each in-depth interview, the transcript of the interview was entered into the Atlas Qualitative Data Analysis software for open coding and analysis, and then the researcher proceeded to subsequent interviews. Open coding is an analysis process to identify subtopics, their features and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 2018). At this stage, the text of the interview was read several times, the main sentences were recognized and recorded as

text code, then similar concept codes were placed in some groups, 838 open codes were identified in this research.

Axial coding was the next step related to the topics. In fact, the categories were related in terms of features and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 2018). In this step, primary codes of open coding which were related to each other were put in a common axis; Continuous comparison of codes was performed to ensure the existence of different categories; Selective coding was performed by repeating this method and the main variable was identified.

According to the results of this study as shown in the table below (table 3), the records of Iranian oil products export performance in sanctions were: Market orientation, Firm's resources, Marketing mix and Macro environment which is the most important item of political issues; also, customer satisfaction, customer retention and financial performance were some of the export performance of Iranian petroleum products under sanctions.

Table 3

Category	Theme	Subtheme
Market orientation	Cultural market orientation (customer orientation & competitor orientation) and behavioral market orientation (information generation & responsiveness)	Internal completion, competitive advantage (price, product, service), Porter competitive strategies (price, differentiation, concentration), competition structure (enter & exit barriers), services (communication with customers, responsiveness), external competition, competitive environment (competition intensity, environmental uncertainty), commercial communication, destination identification
Marketing mix	Product, price, distribution, marketing research	international marketing research, export marketing strategy, pricing strategy, shipping strategy, distribution channels, product quality & quantity, relationship marketing, products standardization, product improvement & variety
Firm's	Human resources,	Management (target, experience, foreign language,

resources	physical resources, organizational resources, location resources and financial resources.	international knowledge, motivation, taking risks, understanding the export market, commitment, public relation), company competence, staff experience & commitment, technology, production capacity, resources availability
Macro environment	Economic, legal, political and technology factors	Tariffs, standard, customs & …, export limitations & barriers, technology & religious variables, security decisions, sanction, payment mechanisms, foreign currency exchange, war & tension
Export performance	Financial performance, customer satisfaction, customer retention	Strategic performance, export volume, staff & customer satisfaction, target market, export rate & sale, export sale development, export market countries, entering new markets, customer retention, effectiveness and productivity, success rate

V- Findings

After the interview and qualitative analysis, we came to 5 categories and 20 topics that you can see in the table above and the details are listed below. Export performance is the main category, the main concept of this research and its examples in interviews are as follows. "Initially, we consider financial issues to measure export efficiency, revenue from exporting the product to target markets" (National Iranian oil Refining and Distribution Company). "Measuring customer order time to shipping time (delivery time), production to sales ratio (sales efficiency), customer satisfaction that is done every 4 months, following claims and complaints through a committee to solve problems and back payment "(Mehr Petrochemical Company). When it comes to interviews and quality export performance, the topics are customer satisfaction, customer retention and financial performance. Proposition 1: The export performance of Iranian petroleum products includes customer satisfaction, customer retention, and financial performance. Market orientation is the first antecedent of export performance which includes cultural market orientation and behavioral market orientation; also, it has 4

subthemes such as, customer orientation, Competitor orientation, information generation and responsiveness. Half of informants in the interviews have mentioned this variable such as below.

"The most important export product is ship fuel. In this regard, quality, delivery time and delay were not very important, but today these issues have become more important, because we do not currently have a source of fuel oil. So, we have to be active in other issues to attract the market" (Banagstar Karaneh Company).

"One of the most important factors for success in the export market is the interaction of employees with customers to gain a competitive advantage" (Mehr Petrochemical Company).

Regarding this research forecast, the following suggestion is made. Proposition 2: Market orientation is one of the backgrounds of Iran's petroleum products export performance, which includes cultural market orientation, (Customer orientation and competitiveness) and behavioral market orientation (information generation and responsiveness).

The marketing mix is the third prerequisite and is mentioned in more than half of the interviews by informants. Some of the interviews are listed below. "All kinds of export facilities (distribution of products and their proximity to borders, road and rail transportation), as well as transportation facilities have led to costs" (National Iranian oil refining and distribution company). "We are the largest private refinery company in the Middle East in terms of product diversity. Instead of buying from different companies and paying more for shipping, the customer chooses our company with all these products" (Hesarmehran refinement company).

After conducting interviews with experts and managers, 4 topics in this research such as product, price, distribution and marketing research have been obtained. This proposition is suggested regarding this research prediction.

Third suggestion: Marketing mix is one of the antecedents of Iran's petroleum products export performance, which includes

product, price, distribution and marketing research. The next antecedent of export performance is the company's resources. Several examples are given in the interviews. "Employees' skills and experiences in the field of export, ability to negotiate and bargain, knowledge of petroleum products and its market, familiarity with pricing strategies, training on operational issues are significant issues" (National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company).

"This company has continuous resources, which is a sustainable competitive advantage and can meet the needs of countries for materials on a regular basis" (National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company). Firms' resources have 5 themes such as: human resources, physical resources, organizational resources, location resources and financial resources. Regarding this research prediction, the following proposition is suggested.

Proposition 4: Firm's resources is one of the antecedents of Iranian oil products export performance which includes human resources, physical resources, organizational resources, location resources and financial resources.

The last antecedent of export performance is macro environment in this research and it has been recognized as the most effective factor in all interviews; here are some examples of interviews.

"It is very confusing for brokers to set domestic rules and change them constantly, which creates an unstable and unpredictable situation" (Mehr Petrochemical Company).

"Lack of similar rates for foreign currency exports that mean exporting at foreign exchange rates and receiving Nima currency from the government. This exchange rate difference is very detrimental to our financial issues." (Hesarmehran Refinement Company).

"Political issues are the most influential factors such as sanctions, foreign currency exchange, exporting ban to some countries and lack of movement of foreign ships to the Persian

Gulf" (Siahpham Oil and Gas Company).

This category has 4 themes such as economic, legal, and political and technology factors. This proposition is suggested regarding this research prediction.

Proposition 5: macro environment is one of the antecedents of Iranian oil products export performance, which includes economic, legal, political and technological factors.

Using a new marketing research method and reviewing the existing literature on export performance in sanctions; also, reviewing qualitative research, opinions of managers and experts; objectives, backgrounds and performance variables of Iranian petroleum products exports and their relations in critical situations such as sanctions were recognized. (Chart 1):
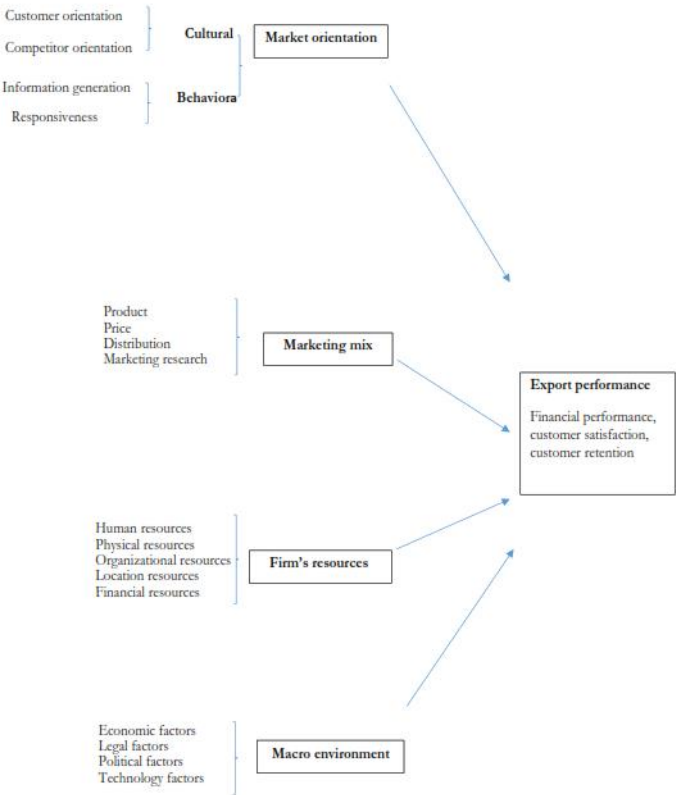
Exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling have been used to analyze quantitative data. For this purpose, two software such as AMOS and SPSS have been used. Table 4: Results of model fit indices

Table 4

abbreviation of fitness index	Suggested threshold	Proponents	Model value
GFI	≥ 0.80	Forza and Filippini (1998, p. 14)	.896
NFI	≥ 0.80	Forza and Filippini (1998, p. 14)	.891
CFI	≥ 0.90	Jun et al. (2006, p. 803)	.971
IFI	≥ 0.90	El-Adly AND Eid, (2016. P. 225)	.971
PNFI	≥ 0.50	Kaynak (2003, p. 422)	.782
PGFI	≥ 0.50	Kaynak (2003, p. 422)	.759
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	Jun et al. (2006, p. 803)	.024
X2/df	≤ 5.00	El-Adly AND Eid, (2016. P. 225)	1.325

According to the results of the structural model, all antecedents have direct and positive effect on Iranian oil products export performance. Details of test results and indicators, regarding coefficient indicators impact, co-efficiency of determination, test statistics and the level of significance are calculated and mentioned in the table below.

Table 5. Test the Coefficients and Factor Loads of the Relationship Between Variables in the Structural Equation Model

Components and items			Impact factor		Test statistics and detection coefficient			
component	direction	item	standard	Non-standard	Standard error	critical test	Probability of error	Coefficient of Determination
E.P	--->	TE	.109	.057	.026	2.205	.027	.985
E.P	--->	LP	.122	.078	.029	2.692	.007	
E.P	--->	EE	.091	.063	.029	2.215	.027	
E.P	--->	MR	.101	.052	.023	2.286	.022	

Components and items			Impact factor		Test statistics and detection coefficient			
component	direction	item	standard	Non-standard	Standard error	critical test	Probability of error	Coefficient of Determination
E.P	--->	DIS	.117	.067	.033	2.014	.044	
E.P	--->	PRI	.097	.055	.027	2.032	.042	
E.P	--->	PRO	.117	.074	.031	2.371	.018	
E.P	--->	FR	.113	.054	.022	2.399	.016	
E.P	--->	LR	.090	.054	.026	2.069	.039	
E.P	--->	ORR	.094	.043	.020	2.189	.029	
E.P	--->	PR	.095	.053	.027	1.990	.047	
E.P	--->	HR	.086	.043	.021	1.986	.047	
E.P	--->	R	.074	.040	.020	2.032	.042	
E.P	--->	IP	.108	.066	.028	2.350	.019	
E.P	--->	RO	.091	.059	.029	2.023	.043	
E.P	--->	CO	.111	.048	.019	2.542	.011	
CR	--->	E.P	.729	1.253	.112	11.201	***	.532
CS	--->	E.P	.746	1.323	.115	11.470	***	.557
FP	--->	E.P	.643	1.000				.413

According to the structure and measurement of research, structural equation model or SEM Technique is a suitable method for conceptual model analysis. Covariance-Based SEM technique has been used to investigate the research model of structural equation. We have 16 records in this concept model and export performance as a core concept. Therefore, there are 16 hypotheses as follows and all of them have been confirmed in this project.

H1: Market Orientation Improves the Export Performance of Iranian Petroleum Products Companies.

H1-1: Customer orientation has a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H1-2: competitor Orientation has a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H1-3: information generation has a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H1-4: responsiveness has a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H2: Firm's Resources Improve the Export Performance of Iranian Petroleum Products Companies.

H2-1: human resources have a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H2-2: physical resources have a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H2-3: organizational resources have a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H2-4: location resources have a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H2-5: financial resources have a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H3: Marketing Mix Improves the Export Performance of Iranian Petroleum Products Companies.

H3-1: product has a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H3-2: price has a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H3-3: distribution has a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H3-4: marketing research has a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H4: Macro Environment Improves the Export Performance of Iranian Petroleum Products Companies.

H4-1: economic factors have a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H4-2: legal /political factors have a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

H4-3: Technology factors have a positive effect on the export performance of Iranian **petroleum** products companies.

Table 6. The Role of Variables, Zero and Opposite Hypotheses and the Final Results of Research Hypotheses

Main hypothesis	Sub-hypothesis	Hypothesis items		zero hypotheses	opposite hypotheses	Test result
		independent	dependent	$\beta \leq 0$	$\beta > 0$	
Hypothesis 1	H 1-1	Customer orientation	export performance	✕	✔	positive & direct effect
	H 1-2	competitor Orientation	export performance	✕	✔	positive & direct effect
	H 1-3	information generation	export performance	✕	✔	positive & direct effect
	H 1-4	responsiveness	export performance	✕	✔	positive & direct effect
Hypothesis 2	H 2-1	human resources	export performance	✕	✔	positive & direct effect
	H 2-2	physical resources	export performance	✕	✔	positive & direct effect
	H 2-3	organizational resources	export performance	✕	✔	positive & direct effect
	H 2-4	location resources	export performance	✕	✔	positive & direct effect
	H 2-5	financial resources	export performance	✕	✔	positive & direct effect
Hypothesis 3	H 3-1	product	export performance	✕	✔	positive & direct effect

	H 3-2	price	export performance	✗	✔	positive & direct effect
	H 3-3	distribution	export performance	✗	✔	positive & direct effect
	H 3-4	marketing research	export performance	✗	✔	positive & direct effect
Hypothesis 4	H 4-1	economic factors	export performance	✗	✔	positive & direct effect
	H 4-2	legal /political factors	export performance	✗	✔	positive & direct effect
	H 4-3	technology factors	export performance	✗	✔	positive & direct effect

Conclusion

In this article we sought to address some of the opportunities and threats with the full implementation of secondary sanctions by the US government. Non-compliance of European countries and dealing with new economic sanctions by updating the US Sanctions Bloc Law, issuance of new instructions to guarantee financial activities in Iran by "European Investment Bank", attempting to connect Iran to Swift and establishment of independent European financial institutions, were presented as existing opportunities. Also a gradual change in the attitude of companies the importance of access to the US market due to trade disputes between the US and other trading partners, are opportunities facing the Iranian economy.

Immediate and unilateral application of all restrictive and sanctions imposed on the Iranian economy over several years, showed the situation is becoming more difficult for the Iranian oil industry, especially in financial fields. The US government's monopoly on banking and the closure of banks that were collecting and transferring funds from the sale of Iranian crude oil show a difficult situation in generating oil revenues as well as access to resources from the sale of crude oil, gas condensate, oil

and petrochemical products.

According to this study, the most important solution to deal with export barriers to sanctions is to have a strategic and comprehensive plan for exports and its implementation in any situation.

In qualitative studies, product analysis is a process of conceptualization and has an interpretive nature. The choice of each analysis method should be appropriate to the research methodology, to be done in a specified range and has some limitations too. Since qualitative research on export performance has not been conducted in Iran, less scientific analysis has been done in this field; therefore, the most important limitation of this research was the localization of literature review. The other limitation is different interpretations of this phenomenon. In fact, this interpretation is only one of the acceptable interpretations. Another limitation of the research was the political behavior of the interviewees.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

MARKOR MEASUREMENT SCALE (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993)						
Intelligence generation						
1	We are slow to detect changes in our customers' product/service preferences.	1	2	3	4	5
2	We survey end-users at least once a year to assess the quality of our product and service offerings.	1	2	3	4	5
3	We are slow to detect fundamentals shifts in our industry (e.g., competition, technology, regulation).	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness						
4	For one reason or another we tend to ignore changes in our customers' product or service needs.	1	2	3	4	5
5	We periodically review our product development efforts to ensure that they are in line with what customers want.	1	2	3	4	5
6	If a major competitor we to launch an intensive campaign targeted at our customers, we would implement a response immediately.	1	2	3	4	5
MKTOR MEASUREMENT SCALE (Narver and Slater, 1990)						
Customer Orientation						
7	We constantly monitor our level of commitment and orientation to serving customers' needs.	1	2	3	4	5
8	We give close attention to after-sale service.	1	2	3	4	5
9	We measure customer satisfaction systematically.	1	2	3	4	5
Competitor Orientation						
10	Our top managers from every function regularly visit our	1	2	3	4	5

	current and prospective customers.					
11	We rapidly respond to competitive actions that threaten us.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Top management regularly discusses competitors' strengths and strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
FIRM'S RESOURCES (Freeman, 2009)						
Location resources						
13	There is not a lot of domestic competition within our firm's immediate location.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Our firm's location is a major advantage when exporting compared to our main domestic competitors.	1	2	3	4	5
15	It is not important for our firm's export business to cooperate with other firms in the same industry in which we are operating.	1	2	3	4	5
Physical resources						
16	Our firm incorporates the latest technology in our manufacturing processes.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Our firm is recognized in our main export country for products that are technologically superior.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Our firm has sufficient manufacturing capacity to meet export orders.	1	2	3	4	5
Human resources						
19	Our key people, responsible for our main export country, have extensive knowledge of this country.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Our key people, responsible for our main export country, have extensive export experience.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Our firm is experienced in exporting.	1	2	3	4	5
Organizational resources						
22	Exporting is the key to our firm's future success.	1	2	3	4	5
23	We proactively identified and acted upon opportunities in our main export country.	1	2	3	4	5
24	We planned extensively in advance before entering our main export country.	1	2	3	4	5
Financial resources						
25	Our firm can offer competitive credit terms to overseas	1	2	3	4	5

	buyers in our main export country.					
26	Our firm has working capital to finance export business in our main export country.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Our firm can meet competitive prices of other domestic and overseas suppliers in our main export country.	1	2	3	4	5
MARKETING PRACTICES (NJERU, 2009)						
Product practices						
28	We have the ability to develop new products.	1	2	3	4	5
29	We develop new products to exploit research and development (R&D) investment.	1	2	3	4	5
30	We ensure that product development efforts are responsive to customer needs.	1	2	3	4	5
Pricing practices						
31	We use pricing skills and systems to respond quickly to market changes.	1	2	3	4	5
32	We do an effective job of pricing our products.	1	2	3	4	5
33	We monitor competitors' prices and price changes.	1	2	3	4	5
Distribution (place) practices						
34	We have a strong working relationship with our distributors.	1	2	3	4	5
35	We attract and retain the best distributors.	1	2	3	4	5
36	We provide high levels of service support to our distributors.	1	2	3	4	5
Marketing Research practices						
37	Our marketing research abilities helps us to find customers.	1	2	3	4	5
38	We use our marketing research information effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
39	Our marketing research expertise help us to develop marketing programs.	1	2	3	4	5
EXPORT MARKET ENVIRONMENT (Freeman, 2009)						
Technology Environment						
40	The technology in our main export country is different from the technology in our domestic market.	1	2	3	4	5
41	The technology in our main export country is changing rapidly.	1	2	3	4	5

42	Changes in technology in our main export country are easy to predict.	1	2	3	4	5
Political/Legal Environment						
43	The political/legal environment in our main export country is different from the political/legal environment in our domestic market.	1	2	3	4	5
44	The political/legal environment in our main export country is changing rapidly.	1	2	3	4	5
45	Changes in the political/legal environment in our main export country are easy to predict.	1	2	3	4	5
Economic Environment						
46	The economic environment in our main export country is different from the economic environment in our domestic market.	1	2	3	4	5
47	The economic environment in our main export country is changing rapidly.	1	2	3	4	5
48	Changes in the economic environment in our main export country are easy to predict.	1	2	3	4	5
EXPORT PERFORMANCE (NJERU, 2009)						
Customer Satisfaction						
49	We have more loyal customers in our firm.	1	2	3	4	5
50	We often receive complimentary phone calls/ letters/emails from our customers.	1	2	3	4	5
51	We hardly receive complaints about our service offering.	1	2	3	4	5
Customer retention						
52	We don't have repeat customers in our firm.	1	2	3	4	5
53	We promptly respond to our customer needs.	1	2	3	4	5
54	We enjoy more committed customers in our firm.	1	2	3	4	5
Financial Viability						
55	Our firm monitors finances on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5
56	Our staff are among the best paid in this industry.	1	2	3	4	5
57	We pay our suppliers on time.	1	2	3	4	5

Russia's Strategy toward Nagorno-Karabakh and Georgia (2008-2020)

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Abstract

The South Caucasus region is experiencing crises that have continued for many years. Russia's war with Georgia in 2008 and the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region after the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991) changed the security order in the South Caucasus. Russia has interests as a global player in the South Caucasus region and Kremlin considers its near abroad as its backyard and exclusive sphere of influence. This article uses a descriptive-analytical method as well as the theory of regional security of Barry Buzan to answer the question of what is Russia's security strategy towards the South Caucasus region. The main hypothesis emphasizes that Russia's strategy in the South Caucasus region is to prevent securitization of the region against its economic and political interests, as well as prevent the influence and presence of NATO, in the region. The results show that in tensions with Georgia, Russia seeks to prevent Western interference and urges them to recognize the separation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia from Georgia. On the other hand, Russia's foreign policy in the face of the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis is to maintain a balance between the two parties involved, Armenia and Azerbaijan, to cooperate with both countries, and to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by a political solution, not a military one. The purpose of this article is to examine Russia's security strategy in the South Caucasus,

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with a particular focus on Georgia and the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis from the beginning of the crisis until 2020. And then it offers specific reasons for the confrontation between Russia and the West, as well as Iran's role in regional security issues.

Keywords: Russia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia, Iran, security strategy, Copenhagen School

Introduction

The South Caucasus region was part of the territory of the Soviet Union. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the formation of three states of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, it became particularly important in post-Cold War world geopolitics and the prospect of conflict to cooperation developed between the three Caucasus countries with regional and trans-regional actors. Due to its special geopolitical, political, historical, military conditions, the South Caucasus region is one of the most important parts of the world. Perhaps for that reason the prominent Russian researcher academician Yurii Zhdanov defines it as "the solar plexus of Eurasia". The definition underscores the critical importance of the region for Russia and for the accomplishment of the Eurasian idea (Bekiarova, 2019: 1016).

The most important components of Russia's foreign policy in the South Caucasus are the exercise of greater control over the region, especially the energy transmission routes, as well as the maintenance of its monopoly on energy transfers to Europe. The existence of oil reserves in this region, on the one hand, has caused tensions between the countries of the region, and on the other, it has prepared the ground for the presence of foreign powers in this region. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia briefly turned its attention to South Caucasus issues due to its internal problems, and a power vacuum in these areas led to the activities of global actors such as NATO. The Russian leaders' definition of the South Caucasus as Near Abroad as well as the Russian Federation's political, economic and security ties with the new republics in the region have attracted serious attention.

Russia has played a more active role in foreign policy in recent years, especially in its periphery. After Putin came to power, the country's foreign policy became more active and Moscow considered these areas to be its sphere of influence.

Currently the interest in the region is mainly associated with its conflict potential, predetermined by the specific ethno-cultural and political diversity, disputed boundaries among the countries, frozen conflicts and the existing unrecognized and partially recognized states, as well as lack of constructive solutions to the conflicts. In addition, the importance and the role of the region are due to different conflicting interests and policies of the big geopolitical players, which after the beginning of the conflict in Syria have been making continuous efforts to assert their political influence on South Caucasus. The presence of ISIS in Syria and Iraq poses threats to countries such as Russia, Turkey and Iran. Due to the proximity of the three countries of the South Caucasus to these countries, the extremist influence of ISIS forces is evident and will pose threats to their national security. Around 22,000 Syrians have fled to Armenia since the war began in 2011 of which an estimated 14,000 remain (Hayrapetyan, 2020).

Some of these refugees have been resettled in Nagorno-Karabakh, which in turn has had an impact on the ethnic composition of this enclave. This could complicate conflict resolution efforts in the future by adding a new obstacle for any referendum on the political status of the Nagorno-Karabakh. Considering various aspects of the importance of this region for Russia, this article tries to address the importance of the South Caucasus and Russia's strategic and security interests in the region. It seems that due to the importance of energy resources and the existence of important ways of energy transportation, Russia wants to restore its former influence in the region, and accordingly tries to play a role in the conflicts between the countries of this region by different policies and maintain the balance between the countries of the region. As a result, it prevents the influence of the West, especially the United States, in

the region.

Regarding the nature of the research, the secondary references like books, articles, bulletins and the reports of active institutions and authors have been used. The research method in this paper is descriptive-analytical. The novelty of the article is that the author deals with the issue of Russia's security strategy in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh and Georgian crises with a different theoretical framework from other existing articles. The latest developments in Nagorno-Karabakh and Georgia in 2020 are also examined, which distinguishes it from previous research.

I- South Caucasus and Russian foreign Policy

Along with Central Asian countries, the republics in the South Caucasus region have received Moscow's most attentions. Ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union, ethnic tensions inside and outside these territories have been a source of concern for Russian leaders. In addition to this factor, the existence of energy reserves and the discussion of energy transfer have been factors in Russia's attention to this region. In fact, one of the most important components of Russia's new foreign policy in the South Caucasus is to exercise more control over the region, especially the energy transmission routes in the South Caucasus and consequently to maintain its monopoly on energy transfers to Europe.

While the Caucasus is often seen as a sub-project in Russian history, or as a gateway to Asia, the five-day war in Georgia, which flared into a major international crisis in 2008, proved that this is still a combustible region, whose inner dynamics and history deserve much more complex appreciation from the wider world (Thomas de Waal, 2010). The existence of oil reserves in this region has caused tensions between the countries of the region on the one hand, and on the other has provided the grounds for the presence of foreign powers in the region. Disagreements over the extraction of reserves have led to the adoption and implementation of policies by some countries in the region, and this has led to tensions between them. Russia has tried to prevent nationalist as

well as divergent tendencies in the West due to the existing crises (Balakishi, 2016: 1-25). The Caucasus region is important to Russia for at least five reasons:

First, Russia's weakness in the 1990s was that it could not coordinate with Western actors to prevent further tensions and instability in neighboring countries. This process shifted in the 2000s to compete against US influence, especially NATO. Eventually, the rivalry continued into Russia's 2008 war with Georgia and the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis (Fischer, 2016: 6).

Second, Conflicts in the region, the crises of Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, have the potential to escalate. The Nagorno-Karabakh crisis, for example, has been highlighted since 2014 and culminated in the April 2016 four-day war. The crisis that occurred again in July 2020 and turned into a full-scale war on September 27, 2020, in which, despite the ceasefire, it is still possible to start a conflict. Unresolved crises after the collapse of the Soviet Union guarantee Moscow's influence. This is evident in the case of Georgia. Although Russia's war with Georgia has strengthened its relations with the European Union, and NATO in particular, it has prevented it from joining the organization.

Third, as mentioned above, the important region of the South Caucasus is still perceived by Moscow as a competitive environment between Russia and the West. The three countries of the South Caucasus have different views on Russia and the West. Russia's threat to Georgia has strengthened its desire for closer ties with the West, especially NATO. Armenia has moved its economy and security closer to Russia. This means that it has a military base in Armenia and Russian forces protects from the Armenian-Turkish border. Azerbaijan is moderate and tries to communicate with both sides (Hedenskog and et.al, 2018:16).

Fourth, the proximity of the South Caucasus to the Middle East, as well as recent crises in Syria and Iraq, have a significant impact on the region. This means that Russia has been fighting extremist groups since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and since

ISIS's attention to the Caucasus region, as well as the presence of its citizens in this takfiri group, Russia's attention to the South Caucasus has increased.

Russia's foreign policy approach in the South Caucasus has been politico-security, aimed at its strategic self-sufficiency in the transition of the world from a unilateral American order. Russia's foreign policy, especially in the last decade under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, has been centered on security in relation to US unilateral actions in the world and NATO's expansion to the east, competition and strategic engagement with China, political-security-economic dominance abroad (Koolaee & Abedi, 2018: 14).

II- Russia's Strategy in the South Caucasus Conflicts

The Caucasus, with its tumultuous history after the fall of the Soviet Union, remains of strategic importance to Russia. The strategic importance of the South Caucasus for Russia can be explained based on several parameters: the Caucasus plays a key role in Russia's future and its position of communication is very important for Russia. In addition, a significant proportion of people in the Caucasus region are of Russian descent, and Russia considers itself responsible for supporting them. Therefore, the role of ethnic and racial ties makes this region important for Russia. Of course, along with these issues, the strategic importance of waterways, especially the Black Sea for Russia should not be forgotten.

The geopolitical vacuum created by the collapse of the Soviet Union created the conditions for the formation of the New Great Game in South Caucasus. In the light of European ideas, Russian Westerners, by accepting the sovereignty of all former members of the Soviet Union, put aside Russia's security sensitivities to the activities of various actors in the region.

As the influence of Eurasianists in Russia's foreign policy, which emphasizes its geopolitics, gradually increased, sensitivities about the role and influence of foreign actors in the former Soviet republics intensified. This development took place at a time when

in the United States, the strategy of preventing the return of Russian power to "outsiders" under the new conditions became its strategy. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia regarded the South Caucasus republics as a sphere of influence in which it had vital interests. Russian officials likened their presence abroad to the role and position of the United States in the Central American region, while the United States had clearly stated its policy of preventing Russia from regaining its influence in the region (Koolaee, 2010: 79-80).

The South Caucasus region was unstable in the 1990s and still has an uncertain future. Of the eight-armed conflicts in the late 1980s and early 1990s during the Soviet era, four took place in the South Caucasus. An analysis of Russia's three decades of foreign policy in the region reveals two positions that explain Russia's actions. First, it can be defined as a revisionist stance. Russia recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia between 2004 and 2008, followed by the August 2008 war with Georgia. Second, it follows the status quo and refuses to recognize the Nagorno-Karabakh region and establish contact with the region, except in cases within the scope of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. This means that Russia has a strategic alliance with Armenia and recognizes the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Markedonov and Suchkov, 2020: 8).

The Nagorno-Karabakh Crisis; Mediating Role of Russia: The Nagorno-Karabakh crisis began in 1988 and led to military conflicts in 1991-1992. This crisis has regional and international dimensions and its outlook is unclear. This crisis has been a major challenge since the collapse of the Soviet Union between the two newly independent republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia.

In fact, the dispute between the two countries has historical roots and dates back to the time of the Russian Tsars. The tsars changed the internal borders of their territory

to prevent any unity among the subjects of the empire. On June 13, 1988, the Nagorno-Karabakh parliament granted full separation of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan and accession to Armenia. This move was opposed by the Azerbaijani parliament. Subsequently, on June 15, 1988, the Armenian parliament recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as part of the Republic of Armenia (Gasanova, 2019). Since then, the two countries have had tensions in the Nagorno-Karabakh region that have led to direct clashes and the deaths of soldiers and civilians. The Nagorno-Karabakh crisis led to the loss of about 20% of the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the forced relocation of more than one million inhabitants (Amirahmadian, 2009: 94). In that time Baku officials considered the Nagorno-Karabakh region to be part of Azerbaijan. In addition, they were ready to grant it extensive autonomy if the region returned to Azerbaijan. On the other hand, the Armenian authorities believed that it is possible to return some areas of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic in stages. In this way, the independence of this republic will be recognized and it will be given a strong security guarantee.

Since the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh, the UN Security Council has issued four resolutions. However, none has been able to help resolve the crisis. These resolutions are Resolutions 822, 853, 879 and 884. UN resolutions emphasize the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the inviolability of international borders, and prohibit the use of force to seize the territory of other states. All efforts by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group to mediate the conflict have failed and thus, serves reason as to why it is termed the "frozen conflict" (Mitoyan, 2017: 1). After the G8 summit ended on July 10, 2009, a joint statement of the presidents of Russia, the USA and France was introduced, which was dedicated to the principles for resolving the Karabakh conflict. The text of this statement deals with updating the

previously recommended Madrid principles (Kulumbegova, 2020: 154-155). The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh remains relevant because of its incompleteness and the possibility of entering a dangerous stage of armed confrontation, which requires a continuous search for ways out of the situation (Kulumbegova, 2020).

Apart from its mediating efforts, Russia is also chief arms supplier to both Azerbaijan and Armenia. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Azerbaijan's defense budget for 2020 was 1854 US$, equivalent to 4.0 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Russia was the source of 80 percent of Azerbaijan's arms supply, although materiel had been procured from other countries as well, notably Israel. Yerevan's defense budget was considerably smaller, at 673 US$ in 2020 (4.9% of GDP), (SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, 2020).

Russia, one of the world's largest exporters of military weapons, sells arms to two countries. Russia's arms exports accounted for 21 percent of total arms exports in 2015-19, but 18 percent less than in 2010-14. At the regional level, Asia-Pacific accounted for 57 percent, the Middle East 19 percent, Africa 17 percent, Europe 5.7 percent and the United States 0.8 percent of Russia's arms exports in 2015-19 (D. Wezeman and others, 2019: 4). However, Armenia is a member of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization, and Azerbaijan has diversified allies such as Turkey and Israel.

According to the 2020 Azerbaijani draft budget, the defense expenses are 3 billion 853 Azerbaijani Manat (about 2 billion 267 million USD) which is more from the last year 3 billion 187 manat by 20,9%. Armenia 2019 budget envisaged 300 billion 437 million AMD (about 629, 5 million USD) and the 2020 budget envisages 301 billion 243 million (about 631 million USD) (Global security, 2020).

By brokering the ceasefire on 5 April 2016, Moscow demonstrated that it has the will to settle the conflict on its own

terms – sidestepping the other co-chairs in the Minsk Group (Hedenskog and Korkmaz, 2016). Thus, Russia could both let the conflict happen and then stop it. This sent strong messages to both parties. For Armenia, the message was that Azerbaijan is strong and could, without Russia's support to Armenia, recapture Nagorno-Karabakh. To Azerbaijan, the message was that although Azerbaijan is stronger than Armenia, Russia would not allow Azerbaijan to use its military strength against Armenia without its own consent.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, some countries of the Caucasus, especially Azerbaijan, turned to the West and the United States in order to escape Russian influence, and a weaker country like Armenia established strong ties with Russia. However, in the conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan, contrary to popular belief, Russia's policy should not be considered unconditional support on the part of countries involved in the war.

In the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the focus is on Russia's security strategy, as well as curbing Western influence in the South Caucasus. Controlling this infiltration requires preventing Russian domination of the South Caucasus, which is the main gateway to Russia's interaction with the world, and closing that gate would close Russia's economic, political, and strategic doors. Restraining Russia, therefore, requires infiltration into its privacy. From this point of view, the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis can be considered the biggest geopolitical-security problem in the privacy of the Russians, which, more than any other factor, has provided the ground for American influence in this area. In other words, the South Caucasus region can be considered the best strategic place in the United States to infiltrate the privacy of the Russians (Valigholizdeh, 2016: 103). At the same time, current events can hardly be described as coming unexpectedly. After the flare-up in July 2020, which unusually took place not at the line of contact but on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border, there was a lingering feeling that the armed standoff had simply been put on

hold. The "Karabakh pendulum" — when military escalation swings back to rounds of negotiations—seems to have become stuck this time. Unlike the four-day war in April 2016, when the pendulum returned to the field of diplomacy on the fifth day, that didn't happen in summer 2020 and October 2020.

The next Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh began on September 27, 2020. Both sides reported military and civilian casualties (Deutsche Welle, 2020). In response to the clashes, Armenia and Artsakh introduced martial law and total mobilization of their forces (Aljazeera, 2020) while Azerbaijan introduced martial law and put a curfew. (Reuters Staff, 2020a) On 28 September, partial mobilization was declared in Azerbaijan (Reuters Staff, 2020 b).

Numerous countries and the United Nations have strongly condemned the conflict and called on both sides to deescalate tensions and resume meaningful negotiations immediately, While Afghanistan, Pakistan, Israel and Turkey have expressed support for Azerbaijan. Turkey has provided military support to Azerbaijan, although the extent of its support is disputed (Kofman, 2020).

Turkey's support for Azerbaijan is thought to be an attempt to extend its sphere of influence both by increasing the standing of Azerbaijan in the conflict and by marginalizing Russia's influence over the region. By actively participating in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis within the framework of the Minsk Group, Russia seeks to ensure that the initiative is not given to the United States or its allies, thus preventing the development of a presence and influence other countries in the equations of the region.

If Azerbaijan's leadership itself chooses to turn its back on Russia and pursue a path of Euro-Atlantic solidarity, then Moscow's position will of course become far less cautious and nuanced. However, until that happens, Russia has strived to perform a balancing act between Yerevan and Baku. Moscow brokered a ceasefire in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in May

1994, and put an end to the Four-Day War in April 2016. It is believed that this time, too, it is Russia that get the two sides back to the negotiating table (Маркедонов, 2020).

On November 9, 2020, officials from Russia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia reached a ceasefire agreement on the Nagorno-Karabakh region at a trilateral meeting initiated by Vladimir Putin, in which the two sides pledged to end their military strikes. Arayik Harutyunyan, the Nagorno-Karabakh leader who agreed to end the conflict, said: "If the fighting had continued, we would have lost the whole of Artsakh within a few days, and we would have had more victims" (Losh & Roth, 2020).

Under the agreement, Azerbaijan will retain areas of Nagorno-Karabakh it occupied during the conflict, and Armenia has pledged to withdraw from several other neighboring regions. In addition, about 2,000 Russian peacekeepers have been stationed in the area for five years, which can be extended. One of their tasks is to preserve the Lachin Corridor, which connects Armenia to the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

The deal announced was "absolutely momentous" in the more than a century-long modern history of the dispute, said Laurence Broers, the Caucasus programme director at Conciliation Resources, a peace-building group. "I personally made a very hard decision for myself and all of us," Pashinyan said in a statement posted online, describing the ceasefire terms as "unbelievably painful for me and our people". In a video address, Aliyev taunted Pashinyan, saying he had signed the agreement because of his "iron fist." The deal leaves a cloud of uncertainty over parts of Nagorno-Karabakh that will continue to be administered by local ethnic Armenian authorities including the enclave's main city Stepanakert, whose main road to Armenia will be in Azerbaijani control and overseen by Russian peacekeepers. "It could end up being a strange, highly securitised area," said Broers. Putin said in a statement that he hoped the deal "will set up necessary conditions for long-lasting and full-scale settlement of the crisis over Nagorno-Karabakh" (Losh & Roth, 2020).

Nagorno-Karabakh could become a special area for Russian-Western cooperation with all its dangers. For Armenia, which is actively involved in Russian-led integration processes such as the Eurasian Economic Union and CSTO; Russian mediation could prevent a resumption of hostilities. For Azerbaijan, cooperation with Russia could allow it to distance itself from the West because of domestic criticism. Thus, Moscow can balance the process of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh war between Baku and Yerevan and serve the interests of both sides (For more information, see: Markedonov and Suchkov, 2020). The United States and the European Union view Russia's role in the conflict positively. In other words, for Moscow, one of the reasons for its effective presence in this armed war is to prevent the US and its allies from playing a role in the South Caucasus and to disrupt the status quo. However, Russia knows that in the end, it is Armenia and Azerbaijan that must end this conflict and those other regional and global actors will not make the final decision.

Russia's Full-Scale War in the Georgian Crisis: Georgia is a smaller model than the Caucasus. Except in the twelfth century, there was never a unified sovereignty in it and each part had its own structure of government and monarchy. Regarding the importance of Georgia, it should be said: this country is a gateway from the west to the east. Westerners see Georgia as the most suitable way to access the Caspian Sea and Central Asia. The region's oil and gas transmission also depend on Georgia's stability because important energy lines pass through this country. On the other hand, Georgia is Russia's backyard. For Russia, the best route to access the south and Armenia is Georgia. In addition, Georgia's border with some of Russia's separatist provinces has added to its importance to Russia. Georgia's border with Turkey, as well as Turkish-Israeli military cooperation, have increased its importance (Koohkan, 2009: 216-217).

In 1992, the first step was taken in the conflict between Russia and Georgia, and this slowly continued in the form of military sabotage operations. Separatist movements in Abkhazia

and South Ossetia further complicated the situation. The Tbilisi government has sought independence from Russia and has always sought security ties with the United States (Aliker and et.al, 2003: 67). Russia in Georgia's new security doctrine has been mentioned as the main threat for Georgia (Sazmand and Bijan, 2017).

The war in August 2008 led to the expected military defeat of Georgia in an attempt to establish control over South Ossetia. As a result, Russia recognized the independence of Abkhazia and Ossetia. Despite the fact that the world community did not support this decision, two large Russian military bases appeared in these new republics, and their own armed forces (especially in South Ossetia) gradually integrated with them. The 7th military base in Abkhazia was established based on the 131st separate motorized rifle brigade of the 58th combined army, which was the main force in August 2008 (Nersisyan, 2019).

Today, Russia-Georgia relations are economically stable. Despite deep ties between Georgia and NATO; the occurrence of conflict is somehow impossible. If we examine Georgia's military capability after its defeat in the 2008 war, we can see that there is no sign of readiness for war again.

The military budget decreased to 2% of GDP in 2017 from 8.8% and 9.1% in 2007 and 2008, respectively. Attack planes and helicopters were almost completely destroyed, while heavy equipment losses during the war were only partially restored due to severe foreign resource constraints. (Nersisyan, 2019).

Under Saakashvili's tenure, Russian-Georgian relations had reached their lowest point since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Georgia broke diplomatic relations with Russia, and the two countries lived through a five-day open military conflict in August 2008. Russia's recognition that month of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia created a precedent – the first since 1991– for revising borders between the two former Soviet republics. When President Saakashvili and his United National Movement left power, some changes occurred in the Russian-

Georgian relationship, but these were tactical and selective, and still are. The new Georgian authorities, representing the Georgian Dream party, have maintained their predecessor's strategic approaches of continuing and strengthening integration with NATO and the EU (Markedonov, 2017: 6). Russia sees the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) expansion eastward as a threat to its security. Russia also sees the Black Sea as its access point to the Mediterranean region, where Russia's role has been growing significantly in recent years (Kuimova and T. Wezeman, 2018).

Since 2014, Moscow has clearly stepped up its influence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This suits South Ossetia's desire for unification with Russia, which Moscow is currently unwilling to grant. In 2017, South Ossetia renamed itself the "Republic of South Ossetia (State of Alania)", a symbolic step towards reunification with the Russian republic North Ossetia-Alania (OC Media, 2017).

Moscow has also sought to cement its influence in Georgia's secessionist territories through formal agreements. In 2014, Moscow sought closer ties with Abkhazia through the Treaty of Alliance and Strategic Partnership and in 2015 with South Ossetia through the Treaty of Alliance and Integration. Taking Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's political, economic and military integration to a point just short of annexation was a symbolic response to Georgia's EU association process (Fischer, 2016: 60). The expansion of relations with the United States under Saakashvili cannot be attributed solely to the pro-Western approach of his administration. One of the main reasons for the expansion of relations with the United States is his efforts to gain US support for Georgia's membership in NATO. European countries such as Germany, France and Italy, because of their economic ties, especially with Russia, are reluctant to stand up to Russia over Georgia's membership in NATO. That is why Georgia hopes to use US influence in NATO.

By joining NATO, Saakashvili sought to ensure Georgia's

security. According to Georgian politicians, trying to join NATO will also increase strategic cooperation with the United States, which will reduce Russia's threat to Georgia. Saakashvili continued his policy toward Russia after the 2008 war and made greater efforts to join NATO. Despite the failure of Saakashvili's policy of balancing Russia and criticisms of him for losing part of Georgia's territory in the war with Russia, the policy of looking to NATO and to the West as a whole continued.

Contrary to Saakashvili's policies, Georgia's current leaders have avoided direct confrontation with Russia to join the European Union, as well as NATO, and have adopted a practical and interactive approach. To the extent that their policies led to these actions:

• Stop the confrontational rhetoric and use Russia for domestic political mobilization

• Announce readiness to cooperate with Russia in providing security during the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics

• Direct talks between the representatives of Georgia and Russia (excluding the discussion of status debates on Abkhazia and South Ossetia)

• Tendency to invest in Russia in the Georgian economy (For more information, see: Markedonov, 2017).

Russia's 2016 foreign policy document states that Russia's previous relations include helping to establish the Republic of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent democracies, strengthening their international standing, ensuring security and improving their economic conditions. Even though document sealed Moscow's increasing military-political presence in both partly recognized republics (currently the South Ossetian army is integrated into Russian armed forces) they can hardly be regarded as new milestones. At the same time, Russia consistently avoids raising the issue of changing South Ossetia's status and expanding the state by incorporating a new entity amidst intensification of discussions in South Ossetia over a referendum on "unification with Russia "throughout 2014–2017. The leader of "United

Ossetia "party Anatoly Bibilov, former chairman of the parliament was consistently pushing forward the idea of the unification of the "two Ossetias" within Russia, Moscow did not support this idea. Multiplication of the "Crimea scenario "was seen as undesirable and Bibilov himself actually had to halt the "unification project", since no support for it was forthcoming from the Russian leadership (For more information, see: Markedonov and Suchkov, 2020).

Because the security stakes for Russia are high, a successful initiative by one state is viewed as a defeat and a challenge for the other. Some European countries (Lithuania, Romania), the European Parliament, and NATO Parliament Assembly also recognized Russian occupation of Georgian territories. However, the Western countries are not united around the issue of Georgia's membership in the North Atlantic Alliance. At the same time, the "locomotives" of European Integration Germany and France do not consider accession of a new member reasonable at least until the conflicts are resolved and all disputes between Tbilisi and Moscow are settled. In this context, the regional visit of German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel in August 2018 was illuminating. During this visit, Berlin sent an unambiguous signal: Georgia cannot count on Germany's support to join NATO. Meanwhile, Tbilisi's accession into the Alliance is very unacceptable for Russia. For Moscow, such a move means the development of an extremely unfavorable strategic situation, especially in conflict zones (For more information, see: Markedonov and Suchkov, 2020: 11).

Therefore, the most important foreign variable affecting Georgia's non-membership in NATO is Russia's policy towards Georgia. Russia opposes Georgia joining NATO, because of Georgia's presence in Russia's backyard, which was once under Soviet control, and Georgia's desire to seize power in the region, Georgia sees the country as a threat. If Georgia becomes a member of NATO, Tbilisi, citing Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, considers NATO as its ally to defend Georgia in many

cases when Russia decides to attack the border areas, and therefore NATO cooperation with Georgia and in the case of Georgia's overall accession to NATO within the Atlantic Alliance is very important for the Russian foreign policy apparatus.

III- Iran and South Caucasus

Iran is another player in the South Caucasus besides the West and Russia. Of the three countries in the South Caucasus region, Iran shares borders with Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan. For this reason, the presence of other actors, especially Russia, the West and Israel in the Nagorno-Karabakh and Georgian crises, is crucial to Iran's national security.

As a major player in the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis during the three decades of war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Iran has sought to lead the two sides to peace. That is why it has made some peace proposals that have not been successful so far. What has made the Karabakh war important for Iran is the security concern over the presence of Israel and Turkey along its borders. Therefore, Iran has tried to prevent other actors from interfering in the region along with Russia. On the other hand, the weakness in the diplomatic process between Iran and the countries of Azerbaijan and Armenia should be sought in the relations between Tehran and Moscow. For this reason, Iran must first clarify its foreign policy interests and positions vis-à-vis the South Caucasus countries with Russia.

The independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, with its support for Georgia's territorial integrity, is rather paradoxical from that of Nagorno-Karabakh. While Russia and the West demonstrate a willingness to cooperate, Iran is critical of the implementation of the updated "Madrid Principles." Tehran is uncomfortable with the resolution of the conflict in Karabakh, which would involve the deployment of international peacekeeping forces into the region (It does not matter under whose flag these forces are stationed). Representatives of Tehran have always stated that there should be no external players in the

region. Iran's position regarding the "basic principles" of the conflict settlement does not coincide with the Russian approaches, although, like Russia, the Islamic Republic unequivocally opposes a military solution. In a paradoxical way, it brings Iran's position closer to the opinion of the two "Western" co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group. (Markedonov, 2018: 40) Therefore, the shift in Georgia's foreign policy dates back to exactly the time of the 2008 crisis. The change in the foreign policy of Georgia and Iran is related to the change in the priorities of Russia's foreign policy goals and the adoption of a new strategy in foreign policy issues, especially in relation to the United States and NATO, which is a sign of expanding relations these two countries have followed.

Within the framework of Russia's security policies in these two crises and paying attention to the security complex of the region, Kremlin is trying to prevent Iran's maximum role in these conflicts and it does not allow Iran to intervene in the face of Russia's security strategy in the face of the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis and the level of relations with Georgia.

Conclusions

Our studies show that Russia defines the South Caucasus regional security complex in its security policies. Maintaining military security alongside the economic-political spheres in the face of the Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh crises has been part of the Kremlin's security strategy since 2008. Russia defines the South Caucasus region as its backyard and considers the presence of foreign actors, including the West, a threat to its security and national interests. Russia believes that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict took place in a region within the Kremlin's sphere of influence in the structure of a multipolar international system; because of this crisis, there is an opportunity for Russia to allow the Kremlin to have a serious presence in the region. The Nagorno-Karabakh crisis could lead to insecurity and a decline in the credibility of the

Southern Energy Corridor, which seeks to transfer energy from the Caspian Sea and Central Asia to world markets by excluding Russia. It also paves the way for the continuation of Russia's hegemony over European gas markets and supply routes. On the other hand, the conflict serves as a tool to use Russian influence and pursue its geopolitical goals not only in the South Caucasus but also in wider geographical areas.

Russia has, in the past, made efforts to play the role of a regional cooperative hegemon. In Nagorno-Karabakh crisis and tensions with Georgia, Russian attempts to implement cooperative hegemony were grounded in resources under Moscow's control that it wished to convert into concrete policy advantages. In Georgia, this resource was Abashidze's heavy dependence on Russia; in Azerbaijan, it was the Qabala station that Putin proposed transforming into a joint military venture; and for Armenia Russia's resource was its role as the country's key security provider in a situation of continual confrontation with Azerbaijan. Russia defines relations with Armenia in a dual framework of East-West confrontation; A dichotomy that allows Moscow to play a role in protecting its allies from pro-Western forces. In the case of the Republic of Azerbaijan, it is also trying to prevent Baku from moving away from Moscow due to Yerevan's accession to the Eurasian Economic Union. Today, conflicts in the South Caucasus are influenced by external factors to a much greater degree. As a result, the issues in the South Caucasus become embedded in broader contexts and their regional format is increasingly complemented by geopolitical considerations, which reduces the possibilities for reaching compromises in the face of growing dominance of "zero-sum game "logics.

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Science Diplomacy of Iran in Eastern Europe:
The Case of Medical Science of the University of Tehran

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Abstract

Foreign policy is implemented in the international environment with special and various tools; one of those tools with a prominent role is diplomacy. However, along with traditional diplomacy, with the emergence of new actors after the Cold War and the entry into the age of communication and technology, diplomacy took new forms. One type of diplomacy that has received more attention in recent years is science diplomacy. So far, scientific diplomacy in the world and especially in Iran has not been fully and sufficiently studied and the interest in this issue is more related to the development in recent years. Additionally, due to its less attractive scientific aspect in the world compared to many other countries, Iran should strengthen its international scientific cooperation networks. So, this article focuses on this issue and the main question is how the Islamic Republic of Iran performed in the application of science diplomacy in the field of medical sciences with Eastern Europe between 1991 and 2018. The hypothesis of this research is: The performance of the Islamic Republic of Iran in various

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dimensions of science diplomacy including memorandums of understanding and agreements, collaboration desks, international meetings and visits, summer schools, international seminars and congresses, visiting professors, and joint articles towards the Eastern European region from 1991 to 2018 has been increasing. The present study is applied research with the experimental scientific method and hypothesis- deductive research strategy and the review of these activities based on the indicators of science diplomacy shows that during the years 1991 to 2018, these activities have increased significantly in most of the proposed indicators.

Keywords: Iran, Eastern Europe, science diplomacy, Tehran University of Medical science

Introduction

The actions that the government takes as the main player in the anarchic international arena and decisions that it makes should support the advancement of the national interests and the nation based on which the foreign policy of a country is defined and implemented. Foreign policy is implemented in the international environment with special and various tools; one of which with a prominent role is diplomacy. Diplomacy is the art of using negotiations in international relations and includes activities and ways other than the use of force and coercion employed by the government to secure its interests in its relations with other countries (Ruffini, 2015). Diplomacy has taken many forms throughout history. Traditional diplomacy is the oldest type of diplomacy in which the main actors are governments. However, along with traditional diplomacy, with the emergence of new actors after the Cold War and the entry into the age of communication and technology, diplomacy took new forms. One type of diplomacy that has received more attention in recent years is science diplomacy. Today, science diplomacy is a tool in foreign policy to advance a country's diplomatic agenda and an international effort to establish relations with countries with which other forms of diplomacy are no longer possible due to poor political relations (Montville, 1991).

Statement of the Problem

Today, many of the challenges facing the international community are related to science and technology, and no country alone can face them individually, so the globalization of science and the

modernization of diplomatic activities are essential. Addressing these issues and finding solutions to them, in addition to international cooperation, due to their nature requires the knowledge of scientists and researchers. For this reason, there is a need to define a new role for science in international policy makings and diplomacy. The term "scientific diplomacy" has appeared in the new millennium and interest in it has been seen in recent years. So far, scientific diplomacy in the world and especially in Iran has not been fully and sufficiently studied and the interest in this issue is more related to its developments in recent years. Additionally, due to its less attractive scientific aspect in the world compared to many other countries, Iran should strengthen its international scientific cooperation networks. Given the political constraints imposed on Iran in the form of sanctions, scientific diplomacy can influence the development of international cooperation by realizing national scientific capacities. Science can help gain credibility and create a positive image in the international arena. For this reason, in this study, we examined the science diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the impact of universities in particular Tehran University of Medical Sciences on it. Academic exchange as an effective factor in science diplomacy is a tool for the promotion of culture and national identity that can also strengthen political and economic relations between governments, especially when other forms of dialogue are blocked (Iranian Diplomacy, 2013). Scientific exchanges provide an opportunity for the two governments to work together and benefit each other in non-sensitive areas.

On the other hand, of the various regions of the world, Eastern Europe can be important to the Islamic Republic of Iran for a number of reasons. According to the UN division in 2019, Eastern Europe includes 10 countries including Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Belarus, Slovakia, and Ukraine (New World Encyclopedia, 2019). Given that many of these countries are not scientifically far from us, this will allow the possibility of scientific and academic

exchanges. Moreover, these countries are geographically part of Europe which is closer to Iran than other parts of Europe that makes them politically and security-wise important to Iran. Therefore, the need to study science diplomacy of Iran in this region and discovering ways to expand scientific cooperation with them is felt.

Finally, the focus of evaluating science diplomacy in this study is the activities of Tehran University of Medical Sciences in Eastern Europe.

Methodology of the Research

The present study is applied research with the experimental scientific method and hypothesis- deductive research strategy.

In order to conduct this research, first, it was necessary to do a thorough library study to provide an acceptable definition of science diplomacy and its various aspects. Then, based on the available documents, an overview of science diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is presented. Finally, science diplomacy in the field of medical sciences in the Eastern European region is studied. This is done by referring to the office of international affairs of Tehran University of Medical Sciences and obtaining information about the past and in-progress international activities of different colleges of the university as well as asking questions from some officials.

Conceptual Framework

When we talk about science diplomacy, as it is mentioned, we use a term that has not been used until the present century. But in fact, this phrase consists of two familiar words "science" and "diplomacy". Science is the purposeful organization of knowledge that is testable and can make predictions about the mechanism of the world (Nabavian, 2003). In today's world, the global perspective of science is changing, the weight of research and development in the global economy is increasing, more financial resources are being dedicated to science and the number of

articles published in reputed international journals has also significantly increased. Science production has been dramatically increased in Asia, especially China, compared to America and Europe (Ruffini, 2015). Many of the challenges facing the international community are related to science and technology, such as security or environmental concerns that could affect the future of mankind and which no single country can tackle. Therefore, the need for globalization of science and modernization of diplomatic activities is felt more than ever. Diplomacy, on the other hand, is a tool for foreign policy (Dehghani Firoozabadi, 2014). In international relations, diplomacy is the art of negotiating, building alliances, discussing treaties, and reaching agreements. Due to the developments in the international system, countries use activities and ways other than force and coercion to secure their interests in their relations with other countries and have turned more to dialogue and negotiation in international relations. The promotion of bilateral scientific relations is also clearly stated in the tasks of the diplomatic missions of the countries (United Nations, 1961). We are now looking at the relationship between science and diplomacy from three perspectives:

Diplomacy for Science: In 1985, Gorbachev and Reagan first met on the subject of disarmament. The Soviet Union offered its American counterpart to work together on a topic that Russian scientists had been researching for years: the scientific and technological possibility of nuclear fusion as an energy source (Ruffini, 2015). A few years later, the United States, the European Union, and Japan joined the Soviet Union / Russia to implement the program, creating the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER). Currently, 35 countries are working together to build the largest magnetic fusion device designed to create a carbon-free energy source in the same way that the sun and other stars create energy (ITER, 2019). The creation of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor is a clear example of diplomacy for science and shows how diplomacy

supports science.

Science for Diplomacy: Barack Obama's speech in Cairo addressed another dimension of scientific diplomacy. Obama's speech on June 4, 2009, at the Cairo University Grand Hall, marked a major shift in US policy toward Arab-Muslim community (Habibolahi, Emam Jomezadeh, Masoodnia, 2018). One of the important points of this lecture was the development of scientific and technological cooperation with the Islamic world. When tensions between countries do not allow the use of traditional diplomacy, scientific ties can be used to re-establish relations. In such cases, science is used as a facilitator of diplomacy and is called science for diplomacy. Obama's goal was to emphasize the role of science in correcting the negative image of the United States after the Iraq war in this part of the world while pursuing the goal of national security in the long run.

Science in Diplomacy: In the third view, science in diplomacy is discussed. The way science can make diplomatic decisions. In September 2013, representatives of more than 116 countries and UN climate experts met at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Officials of different countries, along with scientists, prepared a 30-page report together for policymakers on the current climate situation, the origins of climate change irregularities, and its future outlook, entitled "Climate Change 2013 – The Physical Science Basis" (Alexander et al., 2013). The final report was submitted to politicians, reflecting the role of science in legitimate diplomatic decisions.

Among the three roles portrayed for the relationship between science and politics, the role of science in defending diplomacy (science for diplomacy) is more important than its other roles. The United States has also attached great importance to this function of scientific diplomacy and reflected it well in its foreign policy (Dehshiri, Taheri, 2016). Science can paint a positive image of a country in international arena and can also help increase its credibility. Today, science diplomacy is a tool in foreign policy to advance the diplomatic agenda of a country and an international

effort to establish relations with countries that are no longer possible due to poor political relations. Additionally, its other function is to be at the center of multilateral diplomacy to solve global problems. To wrap it up, the following definition for science diplomacy is presented:

"A country's science diplomacy refers to all actions in which the activities of researchers and diplomats mutually influence each other. These actions should directly serve the interests of the government, whether when diplomats facilitate communication between scientists around the world, or when international scientific communication improves political relations, or when scientists use their skills to help diplomats to become more knowledgeable in international negotiations. These interactions strengthen the country's role in the global arena and ultimately pursue their national and security interests."

Indicators of Science Diplomacy: Based on research conducted by Mohseni Sohi regarding the effect of science diplomacy on increasing the soft power of the Islamic Republic of Iran, indicators of science diplomacy are as follows:

- Concluding and implementing scientific, educational, and technical contracts and memoranda
- Attracting foreign students
- Sending students abroad (scholarship)
- Attracting foreign faculty members
- Holding joint international conferences
- Holding joint international courses and workshops
- Active membership and participation in international scientific organizations and associations
- Establishment of joint international universities
- Sending scientific and cultural ambassadors
- Sending scientific advisors
- Joint research projects with international universities
- Establishment of international scientific research and development centers
- Establishment of virtual universities and international

distance education/learning

- Benefit from the financial support of international organizations
- Exchange and scientific and research interactions through virtual databases
- Academics' mastery of important foreign languages
- Sending faculty members to teach at other universities abroad as visiting professors
- Granting student facilities for visas, residency, work permits, etc.
- Awarding joint international scientific prizes

Later on, based on the research strategy as well as the indicators presented in this section, the research hypothesis will be evaluated (Mohseni Sohi, 2015).

I- Science, Technology and Diplomacy

Nowadays, science and technology have become international commodities and their production and distribution are of great importance to governments. Currently, the distribution of knowledge and science in different countries is variable, and this has become the main source of power that can be used to control other countries. The use of guided weapons with Global Positioning Systems (GPS), drones, satellites, etc. has led to the emergence of modern armies that are only available to some governments. Such technological developments have affected the security of many countries and have posed new challenges to them. That is why the production of science and technology today has become the priority of political leaders to prevent conflicts and emergence of crises, to maintain national security and the only way out of the threats of other governments. Therefore, many governments are trying to maintain their scientific superiority in various ways and monopolize many sciences and technologies by preventing the progress of other countries, some of these methods include Large investments for advancing in science and technology, maintaining scientific distance and increasing it with

other countries, and thus, secure the market and creating a permanent dependence along with colonization of resources and capital of other less developed countries, imposition of sanctions in various fields to prevent the transfer and access of technology to other countries and ultimately to create military conflicts to keep countries busy, resulting in backwardness of scientific progress and destruction of their infrastructure. (Saedi, 2017).

The Islamic Republic of Iran, in order to avoid scientific isolation and maintain territorial independence, must make scientific and technological progress at the international level. To this end, the Islamic Republic of Iran is required to use new scientific achievements in its diplomatic relations with other countries to create deterrence against foreign threats, both regionally and internationally. Science diplomacy has a prominent place in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic. Although in its history of the last 150 years, Iran, unfortunately, fell behind the scientific advancement of the world, and when Western countries were rapidly acquiring knowledge, Iran was held back, in the years after the end of the Eight-Year War, especially in the last 20 years, it has been able to make a significant leap in the acquisition of science and technology. Statistics show that in 2013, Iran was able to rank as the fastest scientific growth in the world and hope to establish itself as the most advanced country in terms of science in Western Asia.

This is more pronounced in advanced technologies such as nuclear technology, biotechnology, nanotechnology, and the like, which are technologies with priority, and in all of them, Iran is among the top ten countries in the world (Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, 2019).

II- Scientific Potentials of Iran

Nuclear Technology: Acquiring nuclear technology, aside from providing security, has leveled up Iran's international and regional prestige. However, the main motivation for achieving this energy and uranium enrichment is its peaceful applications in various

industries such as electricity generation, mining, agriculture and food industries, its application in the medical sector and so on. And so, despite the restrictions imposed on Iran by the international community, access to and advancing peaceful nuclear technology has never been removed from Iran's agenda. (Porseman Daneshgahian, 2000).

Aerospace: Aerospace is another area in which the Islamic Republic of Iran has made significant progress. Iran's geographical location in the Middle East, which is under constant turmoil as well as unrest on some borders, has made aerospace development very important. (Arghavani Pirsalami & Pirankhoo, 2017). Therefore, in the comprehensive scientific map of the country, capability in the field of aerospace is one of the goals of the science and technology section (Comprehensive document on the development of the Iran's aerospace, 2012).

Nanotechnology: Advancement in nanotechnology has been on the agenda of the Islamic Republic of Iran since 1989 due to its importance and its role in various sciences. This technology has found its way to all scientific trends and is being developed all over the world. Iran also ranked fourth in the world in 2017 for publishing related articles and producing 40 percent of nanoscience.It has had the largest share of science production among Islamic countries. For exports, Iran has been able to offer its nanotechnology products in international markets. The use of nanotechnology in the health care system, medicine, and pharmacology, as well as defense and ammunition industries, are means of achieving deterrence, neutralizing foreign threats, and increasing Iran's competitiveness in the international system (Saniejlal & Hoseini Moghadam, 2020).

Science Production in Iran: Scientometrics is a field of study that measures and analyzes the scientific literature and is one of the most common methods of evaluating scientific activities. After the introduction of this concept in science, scientific articles were used as the most important indicator to measure and compare the amount of science production of

countries. Accordingly, there are two general indicators for measuring the production of science, one is the number of articles published in international journals and the other is its citations or in other words the effectiveness of the article, each of which is important in measuring scientific data (Mousavi, 2004). Taking to account these indicators and based on the statistical data extracted from the Saimago ranking system, when all fields of study among all countries are considered, the United States with 683003, China with 599386 and the United Kingdom with 211710 documents have obtained the first to third ranks in 2018, respectively. On the same list, Iran is ranked 16th in the world (Scimago journal and country rank, 2019). Iran with 60268 documents, 54915 citations, and also with H-Index of 292 is placed after Brazil and the Netherlands which are countries with high scientific productions. Aside from the Islamic Republic of Iran's place in this ranking, the pace of science production in comparison with other countries should also be considered. In recent years, the trend of science production in Iran is not comparable to many countries.; according to Science Matrix, the growth rate of science production in the Islamic Republic of Iran is 11 times the growth rate of science production in the world, and in some years, such as 2010, this rate has reached to 14 times, which is the fastest growth rate in science in the world (Moradi Moghaddam, 2018:18).

Studying the growth of science production in the Saimago ranking system since 1996 shows the same trend. For example, in 1996, Iran was ranked 53rd in the world in terms of science production, in 2010, Iran leveled up to 21st, and as mentioned, in 2018, it acquired sixteenth place. (Scimago journal and country rank, 2019) The pattern of this progress and its growth rate from 1996 to 2018 is shown in Figure 1.
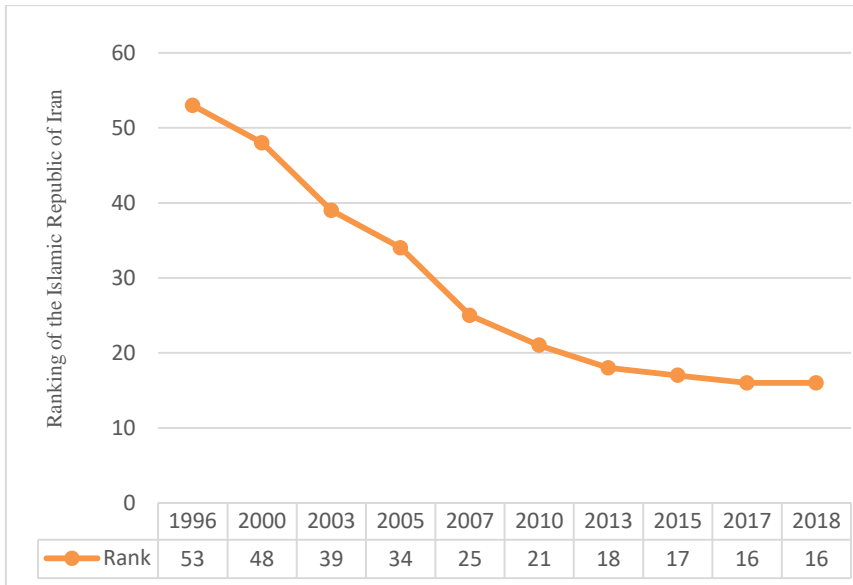
Figure 1. The Rank of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Terms of Science
Production Based on the Saimago Ranking System

The decrease in the slope of the ranking of Iran's science production since 2010 compared to earlier years can be attributed to more intense competition among the countries at the top of the ranking list. Iran's ranking in various medical sciences is also noteworthy: for example, according to the same ranking system in 2018, Iran ranked eighth in the field of pharmacy, tenth in the field of dentistry, fifteenth in the field of nursing, and sixteenth in the field of medicine. Additionally, similar evaluations in the Middle East show interesting results. According to the SCR index from 1996 to 2018, in terms of the share of science production, considering all areas, Iran is in the second place in the Middle East with a slight difference with Turkey, which took the first place, and Israel is in the third place. However, in 2018, Iran ranked first in the Middle East in terms of the number of documents considering all areas, as well as in the field of medicine, in particular, followed by Turkey and Saudi Arabia in the second and third place, respectively. Details are as follows:

Table 1. Number and Rank of Iran's Medical Scientific Productions in the
Middle East and the World from 1996 to 2018

Variable	Number	Rank in the Middle East	Rank in the World
Document	130198	2	23
Citable documents	121946	2	22
Citation	1049190	3	37
Self-Citation	352730	2	23
H-index	191	3	44

In the following, the scientific interactions between Iran and
Eastern Europe will be dealt with; however, it is necessary to first
mention the importance of this region to the Islamic Republic of
Iran.

III- Geostrategic Importance of Eastern European Countries for Iran

Eastern European countries are geographically part of Europe that
is closer to Iran compared to the rest of Europe, so they can be
politically and security-wise important to the Islamic Republic of
Iran.

This region, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, to some
extent has come under the US influence, Moscow's long absence
from the international arena has prompted the United States to use
NATO as a tool to gain control of much of eastern Europe and
move closer to Russia's borders (Haghshenas & Bavir, 2011). The
United States also has plans to increase the presence of its troops
in the region. This is especially true for Romania, Poland, and the
Baltic states. The purpose of such activities is to demonstrate
NATO's strength and presence in the region, to strengthen military
and technical cooperation between allied countries, and, most
importantly, to improve the quality of interaction between US
forces and their Western and Eastern European allies. This all has
made the region a major source of tension between Russia and the
US government.

Given the geographical proximity of this region to Iran,

monitoring the issues of Eastern Europe and the Balkans is of great importance for the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in terms of security.

An important part of science diplomacy is based on higher education and academic communications, therefore, in the next session; the scientific interactions between Iran and Eastern Europe are discussed.

IV- Scientific Interactions of Tehran University of Medical Sciences with Universities in Eastern Europe

Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS), due to its mission for internationalization of higher education, started its international academic activities in various fields since 1988 and since then has become a leader among other medical universities in the country. This leadership has made TUMS the center of this research and its collaborations with Universities in Eastern Europe are thoroughly discussed. These collaborations are mostly in the form of international memorandums and agreements, leading houses, international meetings and visits, collaboration desks, international projects, International visiting professors, student leaves, participation in international conferences, admission of international students, summer schools, publishing of joint articles, etc (Office of vice chancellor for global strategies and international affairs, 2018). In this section, we will discuss the activities of Tehran University of Medical Sciences with top-ranking universities of medical sciences and international institutions in Eastern Europe.

Memorandums of Understandings and Contracts: A Memorandum of Understanding is an agreement between the parties that documents their common goals. It is usually less complex and detailed than a contract and is not legally binding. At Tehran University of Medical Sciences, these provisions are usually mentioned in the memoranda: joint educational programs, student exchange, exchange of faculty members, exchange of educational and scientific materials, exchange of information,

special projects, holding educational workshops, and faculty visits. Also, the budget, plans, effective date and end date, and representatives of the partnership are included in the memoranda and finally, it is signed by the parties. Tehran University of Medical Sciences currently has bilateral cooperation agreements with more than 40 universities in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, and the United States (Office of vice chancellor for global strategies and international affairs, 2021). The table below includes international universities and institutions in Eastern Europe that are cooperating with Tehran University of Medical Sciences:

Country	University or an International Institute	Schools, hospitals, and research centers of Tehran University of Medical Sciences	Year
Belarus	Belarusian Medical Academy of Post-Graduate Education	Tehran University of Medical Sciences	2009
	Institute of Bio-organic Chemistry of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus	Endocrinology and Metabolism Research Institute	2009
	Belarusian National Research Center for Pediatric Oncology, Hematology and Immunology	Children's Medical Center and its research centers	2014
	Belarusian State Medical University	School of Medicine	2015
Bulgaria	Medical University of Plovdiv	School of Dentistry	2016
Hungary	Institute of Pathophysiology, Semmelweis University, Faculty of Medicine and Seroscience LTD	Immunology, Asthma, and Allergy Research Center	2012
	Semmelweis University	Tehran University of Medical Sciences	2018
	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary	Tehran University of Medical Sciences	2016

Poland	The children's Memorial Health Institute, Warsaw	Children's Medical Center and its research centers	2012
	Faculty of biology and environmental protection, Nicolaus Copernicus University	School of Public Health	2014
Russia	Faculty of Internal medicine, Daghestan State Medical Academy	School of Medicine	2007
	Saint Petersburg University	Tehran University of Medical Sciences	2019
Slovakia	Comenius University, Faculty of Medicine	Schools of Medicine and Dentistry	2014
Ukraine	Kharkiv National Medical University	Tehran University of Medical Sciences	2016
	Kharkiv National Medical University	Children's Medical Center and USERN (Global Network for Education and Scientific Research)	2016

Collaboration Desks: The international office of Tehran University of Medical Sciences has launched collaboration desks to orient its educational and research activities with credible and reputed international universities and institutes. All the activities of Tehran University of Medical Sciences with foreign universities and educational centers are facilitated with the help of these collaboration desks and ultimately lead to better and more effective communication. For Eastern Europe, TUMS currently has two collaboration desks, one devoted to universities and higher education institutions in Hungary and the other for Universities in Russia and Caucasus. Each of these desks has one person in charge and an advisory board including experts familiar with that specific region. These individuals are faculty members or senior officers of international relations who regularly monitor events and activities related to selected universities in the target areas and discuss them with other members during regular

meetings held for this purpose. Memoranda of Understanding and other scientific activities that have been implemented with universities and institutes of these countries have been facilitated through these collaboration desks (Office of vice chancellor for global strategies and international affairs, 2019).

International Visits: Many of the MOUs have been discussed and concluded after international meetings and visits, and on the other hand, many different visits have been made as a result of the MOUs. In the case of Tehran University of Medical Sciences these visits have been paid to or from some countries in Eastern Europe including Hungary, Slovakia, Belarus, Russia, Poland, and Ukraine. Targeted centers were mostly Semmelweis University of Hungary, Comenius University of Slovakia, Belarusian State Medical University and Belarusian National Research Center for Pediatric Oncology, Hematology and Immunology of Belarus, Saint Petersburg University of Russia, Nicolaus Copernicus University of Poland, and Kharkiv National Medical University of Ukraine. Concluding MOUs, conducting joint projects as well as plans for establishing a branch of TUMS in Hungary and Russia were some of the notable results (Office of vice chancellor for global strategies and international affairs, 2017).

International university trips and visits aside from being an indicator of practicing science diplomacy are one of the effective ways to introduce the scientific potential of the university to the international community in order to start international cooperation. The international visits of Tehran University of Medical Sciences, which often lead to MOUs and subsequent academic activities, can be set and written as a model and used in other institutes.

Summer Schools: Summer schools are a good opportunity to recognize the university's capacity internationally for reasons such as the short duration of the course, easier admissions, and early graduation.

The initial idea of holding summer schools in Tehran

University of Medical Sciences was raised after conducting studies on similar international instances in the international affairs and development department of the International Office of the Vice Chancellor for international affairs. Since then, TUMS has held many summer schools, and some of them have been with Eastern European universities. The most interaction in this regard was between the school of Medicine and Dentistry with the Kharkiv University of Ukraine. For the first time, in July 2016, the School of Medicine, in collaboration with the Departments of Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, General Surgery, Obstetrics, and Urology, held a summer school for one month. The participants were 13 students from Ukraine, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. In July of the same year, the summer school of the School of Dentistry was held for the first time, following the visit of the President and Vice-Chancellor for international affairs of Kharkiv University, Ukraine, to schools of dentistry and medicine of TUMS and signing MOU. Participants studied general dentistry at Kharkiv University and during the summer school, they had the opportunity to attend periodontics, endodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, oral health, dentures, dental materials, and oral and maxillofacial pathology sections from the School of Dentistry. This cooperation led to a proposal from Ukrainians to hold a similar program at Kharkiv University as well as inviting faculty members to teach. These schools were held for the second and third time in the following years. (Office of vice chancellor for global strategies and international affairs, 2017).

International Congresses and Seminars: Holding international seminars and conferences is another activity of Tehran University of Medical Sciences in order to achieve the mission of internationalization of the university by demonstrating the capabilities and scientific progress of the country and also to use the capabilities of researchers and scientists of other countries. TUMS has held many different seminars including a conference on "Internationalization of Higher Education" with the main topic

of university exchanges. Out of 17 speakers of this conference three were from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, and Ukraine (Office of vice chancellor for global strategies and international affairs, 2017).

Holding the USERN Congress is another activity of Tehran University of Medical Sciences. USERN which is a global network of scientific education and research is aimed at implementing international, interdisciplinary science projects and creating a platform for better communication between young researchers and experienced scientists around the world. More than 60 scientific centers in Iran and around the world support the USERN Award which more than ten of them are from Hungary, Belarus, Ukraine, and Slovenia (Universal Scientific Education and Research Network-USERN, 2020). This congress has so far been held in Iran, Ukraine, Italy, and Hungary.

Visiting Professors: Collaboration with international visiting professors is one of the programs that the office of Vice Chancellor for International Affairs of TUMS has been pursuing since 2014. So far, it has led to the development of programs such as conducting joint research projects, publishing joint papers, conducting two supervisors' joint programs, and so on. Visiting professors of TUMS are from different countries and universities of the world, including Germany, Spain, England, America, etc., of which 3 professors from Eastern European universities cooperate with Tehran University of Medical Sciences. Two of these professors are from the University of Ljubljana from Slovenia and the other one is from the Medical University of Lublin from Poland (Office of vice chancellor for global strategies and international affairs, 2020).

Joint Publishing of International Articles: Among the international scientific achievements in building relationships, the joint publication of international articles is of paramount importance, . It shows the scientific cooperation of Iranian and foreign scientists as well as the capacities and capabilities of national researchers. The following is the number of international

articles of Tehran University of Medical Sciences with the cooperation of professors and researchers of Eastern European universities by 2019:

Table 2. Number of Published Articles of Tehran University of Medical Sciences in Collaboration with Researchers from Eastern European Universities from 1999 to 2019

Country	Co-Author Affiliations
Bulgaria	50
Czech Republic	62
Hungary	62
Poland	214
Russian Federation	189
Belarus	12
Slovakia	77
Ukraine	66
Romania	92
Moldavia	6

The data represented in the above table which is extracted from the scientometric database of Tehran University of Medical Sciences, (Scientometrics system of medical universities, 2019) shows that by 2019, 830 articles with affiliation of foreign faculty members from Eastern European universities have been published in credible foreign and national journals (indexed in the Scopus database) by Tehran University of Medical Sciences. This number is a significant number and indicates close scientific cooperation of TUMS with the scientific centers of this part of Europe.

Conclusion

Science diplomacy is a term that includes both aspects of the role of science in scientific cooperation as well as international cooperation. The study of scientific activities in international cooperation falls under the category of science for diplomacy. In such circumstances, science is used as a facilitator of diplomacy

by tying the interests of the two countries together. The present study shows that various scientific activities of Tehran University of Medical Sciences in different directions have created a suitable platform for securing the interests of Iran and the countries with which it interacts scientifically. These activities have established relations between Iran and some of Eastern European countries through scientific activities in a bottom-up manner, which given the conditions prevailing in the world today and the heavy sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, was not possible in any other way. To evaluate the hypothesis based on hypothesis-deductive research strategy in previous section the activities of Tehran University of Medical Sciences with Eastern European universities were reviewed. The review of these activities based on the indicators of science diplomacy shows that during the years 1991 to 2018, these activities have increased significantly in most of the proposed indicators. These activities include but not limited to: concluding and implementing MOUs and agreements, attracting foreign students (in short-term courses and summer schools), having foreign faculty members as visiting professors, holding joint international conferences, active membership and participation in international scientific organizations and associations, initial activities to establish an international university branch in some Eastern European countries, joint research projects with international universities, granting student visa and residence, etc. Due to the increasing activities of TUMS in mentioned cases, the research hypothesis is confirmed.

However, it seems that despite the proper foundation that has been made, there is still a lot of potential that has not been yet realized. Many activities are still in their infancy, and achieving them could mark the beginning of a new chapter in Iran's relations with this region of Europe. Such as the opening of a branch of Tehran University of Medical Sciences which some of the initial talks have been done so far, or cooperation in various hospital departments that would serve the interests of the country. The field of patient recruitment is one of the less addressed issues that

is suggested to be considered among the priorities of the university agenda due to the high potential and specialization of the medical staff. Considering all the activities carried out in recent years, especially from 2010 onwards, it is clear that in this short period of time, the scientific activities of Tehran University of Medical Sciences have led to effective steps in the interaction between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Eastern European countries in medical sciences. If these activities continue, many steps can be taken on the already provided platform for international cooperation.

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Iran Securitization of Terrorist ISIS

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Abstract

This article seeks to identify and explain the process of securitizing ISIS by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The most important question of this article is: How did the Iranian government manage to portray ISIS as an existential threat to its citizens and how to involve them in their foreign and military policies against this terrorist group? This article uses the securitization theory to explain the Iranian war with ISIS in Syria and Iraq. It aims to consider the process and dynamics of securitization of ISIS in Iranian society which led them to support the military combat with ISIS. The research hypothesis is that the focus on securitization theory prepares the constant framework for understanding how the Copenhagen notion of security helps the Iranian government to justify the enemy narrative of ISIS through the trend of exclusion, exceptionalities, and use of physical force. Iranian government actively uses the securitization process to make required changes and adjustments for confronting ISIS to gain support and legitimacy from ordinary people. This article considers the role of the audience in the process of decision-making and how rulers use this opportunity to mobilize and organize armed forces. The Iranian government in the process of securitizing ISIS has shown that it can involve the people in the process of decision-making and the implementation of its foreign and military policies.

Keywords: securitization, audience, speech act, Iran, ISIS

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Introduction

Security is one of the most important concerns of governments and a controversial concept in the politics of countries. With the rise of ISIS and its rapid spread in Syria and Iraq, the Iranian government became worried about its security and interests. Threats to the border and the dangers of Iran's territorial integrity by ISIS determined the Iranian government to take military action against this terrorist group. Iran simultaneously supported its non-state actors in the region to counter the ISIS, as well as sending military advisers to support the Syrian and Iraqi governments. In this situation, the most important challenge for the Iranian government was to persuade public opinion and mobilize citizens for military action against ISIS. The main question of this article is how the Iranian government was able to mobilize public opinion and introduce the ISIS terrorist group as a security threat that needs military action to counter it?

Believing that the ISIS is a security threat to Iranian citizens and supporting the government in countering with terrorist groups outside Iran is one of the most important events in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Iranian government needs the approval and support of its citizens to successfully securitize ISIS as an existential threat and use military forces against it effectively. The center of gravity of Iran's national security relies on the reactions of the nation-state. For geographical and identity reasons, Iran has had limited strategic relations with major powers, and these relations have been more limited to specific issues. They have found that the most important and effective strategic alliance to safeguard the national interests

is the relationship between the government and the people. In other words, the only historical ally of the government has been the Iranian nation. In this regard, one of the important elements of maintaining the national security and territorial integrity of the country is to strengthen the relationship between the government and the nation in Iran.

This article uses the concept of Copenhagen security to understand how the Iranian government justifies its enemy's narrative about ISIS through the process of deprivation, exceptions, and the use of physical force. This article examines securitization theory to explain how the Iranian Government mobilized its forces, justified its cause, convinced the audience, and framed this security issue as an existential threat. Iranian government actively uses the securitization process to make required changes and adjustments for confronting ISIS to gain support and legitimacy from ordinary people. The article considers the role of the audience in the process of decision-making and how rulers use this opportunity to mobilize and organize armed forces.

Theoretical Framework

National security is the most important principle in a country's political stability and independence. This is important because the survival of any state, its territorial integrity, and the stability and continuity of its government depend on its national security. One of the schools of international relations that have studied the issue of security at the regional level is the Copenhagen School. Since the article focuses on the threats to Iran's national security in the political, military and social dimensions of the region, this theory can help explain the subject of this research.

Security theory seeks to undermine the traditional notion of security, which emphasized war and military might. These scholars explain that the military power is not the only factor for considering the concept of security, while there are many factors linked to it and have an essential effect on it (Stritzel, 2014). The

scholars in Copenhagen School try to shift from the traditional definition of security which emphasized the role of the state and war condition to the other factors and sectors. They define security as an inter-subjective establishment formed between actor and the audience about an existential threat. If the process of securitization is successful, the government gains legitimacy to use physical force and striking tools against the threat (Wæver, 1995: 55).

The scholars in Copenhagen School try to redefine the concept of securitization which expands the notion through the collective units and principles. They emphasize that when the specific object to be securitized, it should be identified as an existential threat that required emergency action. In this situation, the state needs the acceptance of the audience for using physical force against the object (Buzan et al., 1998). Political actors who want to present the object as an existential threat must turn to public persuasion beyond elite circles and executive agencies. For reaching this goal, they need to socially and politically justify a danger as an existential threat in the public realm (Taureck, 2006). The political actors need to raise security for extraordinary measures and share a sense of threat to the nation as a sense of threat to all members of society. Unlike the realists, whose focus is on governments, Buzan focuses his discussion on the people and tries to segment the concept of security to consider the role of the people. According to him, the sectorization helps researchers to study the different aspects of the state (Buzan et al., 1998). For him, it is unfortunate that almost all branches of realism concentrate on military/political sectors and they do not have enough attention to economic, societal, and environmental ones (Buzan, 1996: 4).

The Copenhagen Concept of Securitization

For the Copenhagen School, the concept of security is more important than all other issues, because if they "do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant" (Buzan et al., 1998,

24). However, Buzan asks two essential questions of securitization which help scholars to construct the notion of securitization:

• "Who can 'do' or 'speak' security successfully, on what issues, under what conditions, and with what effects?"

• "When does an argument with this particular rhetorical and semiotic structure achieve sufficient effect to make an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise have to be obeyed?" (Buzan et al., 1998, 25).

For answering these questions, Copenhagen School tries to transform a traditional understanding of realists into an intersubjective notion of security which takes shape among speakers and audience. Political actors use this situation for the implementation of potentially far-reaching security measures. When the securitization process moves successfully and people recognize the importance of threat, political actors can label the object as an existential threat and use violence against it. According to Copenhagen School, states try to dramatize the issue to a valued referent object for legitimately using force and extraordinary measures against the object (Buzan et al., 1998, 24-29). In this situation, the political actor could claim the special right to control the issue by using extraordinary means. In this condition, the concept of speech act and the relationship between actor and audience become important. To achieve this goal, they remove the issue from normal politics to an emergency condition. In this respect, the securitization situation contains a securitizing actor whose aim is to persuade an audience that an issue sets an existential threat to a referent object (Balzacq, 2011). Consequently, Buzan explains that "by labeling it as security, an agent claims a need for and a right to treat it by extraordinary means" (Buzan et al, 1998: 26, 32-33).

To advance this goal, scholars have suggested that political actors pursue a process of securitization as a practice (Hansen, 2000; Bigo, 2002; Williams, 2007; Vuori, 2008). These ideas have been further elaborated in Balzacq's sociological view of

securitization, which emphasizes the importance of practices, context, and power relations. As he explains, "security practices are enacted, primarily, through policy tools." He emphasizes that these practices contribute to the emergence of a security context, creates background knowledge regarding the threat, the way the threat should be addressed, and its "taken-for-granted-ness" (Balzacq, 2011: 15-16).

I- Iran's Relation with Syria and Iraq

Iran has had close relations with Syria since the Islamic Revolution and had good relations with Syria during the war with Iraq. At the same time, Iran has a historical relationship with Iraq. The two countries became strategic allies of Iran, and this strategic relationship has continued to this day. During the Syrian civil war, Iran supported Assad's government and provided logistical, technical and financial supports for its ally. For the Iranian government, the stability of the Syrian government is the main interest and they prepare security and intelligence services as well as military support for preserving Assad's government in power.

On the other hand, Iraq is an essential actor in the region. There is a long historical, cultural, and social relationship between Iran and Iraq. Iraq is an important place for Iranians because of its holy shrines and seminaries that are important for Iranian religious traditions and strategies. It has the second largest Shia population in the world and around 55%-60% of Iraqis are Shiites (Miller, 2009). In general, these two countries are important allies for Iran in the region, and the Iranian Government is committed to support them. Moreover, Iraq and Syria are important for Shia because of the holy cities of Karbala, Najaf, and Damascus. These cities are vital to Iranians because of their religious significance and the narrative they play for Iranian society and politics.

Iranian Decision to Support Syria and Iraq: With the rise of ISIS, Iran faced security problems on its border with Iraq. . Iraq and Iran have 910 miles border which is poorly defended by Iraq

and it caused a potential threat from ISIS (Esfandiary & Tabatabai, 2015). When ISIS took control of large parts of Iraq, Iranian leaders sent a message to their Iraqi counterparts that they would defend the country's territorial integrity. They guaranteed to share their experiences with Iraqi leaders in controlling terrorist activities with technical support.

Iranian leaders used technological and military support to help their allies against these threats. They sent technical and financial supports to help Assad's government for coordinating attacks, training militias, and establishing a system to monitor rebel communications under the leadership of Quds force General Soleimani. For legitimizing their direct action in the region, Iranian leaders tried to explain to their citizens why they should fight ISIS terrorists in the region. They used the concept of securitization to legitimize their moves in the region. Iranians have been victims of terrorist attacks by extremist groups since the beginning of the revolution. The concept of securitization is a powerful tool for Iranians to identify these armed dissidents as a terrorist group. It helps the structure of power to delegitimize these groups as an enemy and push them from gray areas of political contestation to the existential threat (Nadarajah & Sriskandarajah, 2005: 91). The Iranian government's policies in Iraq and Syria are based on a combination of hard power and soft power. Iran has used both powers to increase its influence and dominance in the region (Arif, 2019). Political actors use public media to cover the main narrative of a conflict to gain the broadest acceptance from citizens. In Iranian society, the effects of media are very important because the audience is highly dependent on the official news from the state which helps to consider the effect of the securitization paradigm in society (Stritzel & Chang, 2015).

II- Actor and Audience in Securitization Theory

As Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde (1998: 31) explain, "Securitization is not decided by the securitizer but by the audience" and the speech act is an essential tool for guiding this decision. They

define the security speech act as "negotiated between securitizer and audience". According to them, the role of the audience is essential which they grant the securitizer "permission to override the rules that would otherwise is binding" (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998: 26).

In this situation, ordinary people need to be convinced about the real threat but these peoples' roles are "various according to the political system and the nature of the issue" (Wæver, 2003: 12). Balzacq explains that the audience could support the process of securitization in moral and formal ways. He emphasizes that the general and official moral support of the parliament is very important for political actors. According to him, securitizing agents always try to maintain their relationships with the target community because they are vital to public persuasion (Balzacq, 2005).

The Process of Convincing Citizens by Political Actors in Iran: Iranian political and military leaders from 2011 tried to convince people that not only ISIS is a real threat to Iranian national and religious unity, but also at same time they explain why the Iranian government needs to counter the threat with military force. Through the explanation of the threat from ISIS, the Iranian government tried to identify ISIS as an existential threat and moves the security issues to the stage of identification in securitization theory. Moreover, after they justified their claim about the threat of ISIS, they claimed that if Iranian militaries do not fight with them in Syria and Iraq, they must fight with them inside Iranian territories (Tasnimnews, 2015).

Since the beginning of the uprising in Syria in 2011, Iran's supreme leader strongly supported the Syrian government. The supreme leader and president are the primary political figure for protecting the ideology of the Islamic revolution and performing foreign policy formation. While parliament does not have a strong role in foreign and security policy, but it is important for giving a formal acceptance to the government for using force against an existential threat. Larijani, as the speaker of the parliament during

this period, said in a press conference: "If Iran had not helped Iraq, the ISIS would have invaded countries in the region too," (Fars News, 2015). However, political actors need to be aware of the risk that sometimes-gaining formal support comes at the cost of losing social ties and losing credibility in the eyes of the audience (Balzacq, 2005). The above explanation shows why political actors seek public persuasion and audience support to secure the subject while gaining formal consent.

The rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq, especially after the group expanded and moved towards the Iranian borders, became a major security threat to Iran. Their brutal behavior like brutally murdering people, massacring, mass executions, and rape of Shia civilians led to the formation of anti-ISIS waves in Iranian society. The terrorist group's brutal behavior gradually convinced the Iranian audience that the Iranian government should use military force against ISIS to defend them. The Iranian government took the opportunity and decided to use all means to defeat ISIS. Iran used all its facilities, including airstrikes, support for local forces, and expansion of the counter-terrorism plan to prevent future attacks.

For Iran, ISIS represents an existential threat that is different from other Sunni radical groups who threaten Iranian borders in the southeast and northeast of Iranian provinces. Most of these groups have a minimal threat to Iran because they just kidnap Iranian civilians, suicidal operations, and bombings the borders, while ISIS directly threatened Iran's identity and territorial integrity. They became a potential threat to Iran due to their short-lived occupation, mobilization of forces, and the recruitment of large numbers of fighters from around the world. These expansions and moves surprised the Iranian government and push them to resist them. On the other hand, ISIS had separatist and sectarian ideologies and tried to defeat the Shiites and establish an Islamic state based on Sunni extremist ideas and Sharia law.

At first, the Iranian government did not enough attention to the threat of ISIS but after their progress in the region, Iran

became more worried about the threat and involved fighting against them. Iranian leaders took the risk of ISIS approaching Iran's borders seriously, and this concern affected their strategy. They decided to remove this potential threat from their borders by fighting ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

Most of the Iranians accepted that ISIS is a potential threat to the Iranian nation and religion which showed the Iranian state succeeded in verbally securitizing ISIS as an identification step. While the people accepted the security threat of ISIS, there was disagreement over military action in Syria and Iraq. Some believed it's better for Iranian security to fight against ISIS outside Iran and the best way is to send troops and equipment to Syria and Iraq to defeat them. Others pointed we could not invade another country in the name of our protection and security which increased suffers and pain for the Syrian people. This situation created a paradoxical condition that could make problems for the government.

According to the Copenhagen school, political actors should not raise demand and put pressure on people to accept the emergency measure. They just have to discuss the existential threat in order to resonate enough and create a platform for people to make this decision freely and accept legitimate emergency measures. Political actors are well aware that if the discourse is not formed as an existential threat, it cannot be accepted by citizens (Buzan et al., 1998, 25). In other words, the actual employment of emergency measures is not in fact needed to define a successful securitization.

The Iranian state portrayed ISIS as an existential threat and resonated this discourse in Iranian society. While much of Iranian supported participation in Iraq to prevent the spread of ISIS, some of the oppositions criticized Iran's involvement in Syria. These Iranians have some critics about some of the political and economic issues but ultimately, they supported Iran's presence in the region to control extremist groups and decrease the threat and risk of war in Iranian territories. Most of the Iranian populations

feel ISIS is a serious threat to them and they believe ISIS belongs to the extremist Sunni idea that is extremely hostile to Shiite thinkings. They referred to the news of how ISIS executed Shiites after imprisoning them in the cities of Syria and Iraq. These events reminded them of the Iran-Iraq war and they were worried about another "imposed war" on their country. Under these circumstances, the Iranian people accepted the idea that the Iranian government should fight with them in Syria and Iraq before ISIS enters Iran and prevent them from fighting inside Iran.

III- The Role of Speech Act

One of the most important factors in the process of securitization is related to a speech act and how political actors convinced citizens that the issue is a legitimate security threat. For receiving acceptance from the audience, political actors try to convince the majority of citizens and find a way to persuade particular audiences (O'Reilly, 2008).

For reaching this goal, the political actors first try to explain the differentiation between us versus others as an enemy. In this situation, the Iranian government tries to show how ISIS is different from us as a nation and how this group threatens the whole country. The securitization theory explains societal identity as a bridge between the individual and state security which helps them to find a sense of cultural understanding of a threat. According to scholars, "identity is the defining point regarding existential threats for a society because it defines whether 'we' are still us" (Buzan and Wæver, 1997: 242). In this situation, the concept of security is shaped by the discursive practices among the elites, the media, and academia (Aras & Polat, 2008).

Identification of ISIS as an Existential Threat: The leaders of Iran stated that this is our duty to defend Shia populations in the region. For explaining the government's arguments about the enmity of ISIS against Shia they release some documents that showed how ISIS thinks about Shiites and what they want to do with them. These documents explained how ISIS behaves with

Shiite people and how they tortured and killed them. The media reported that ISIS holding more than 3500 slaves in Iraq mostly women and children. On the other hand, ISIS directly threatened Iran's interests in the region, and these behaviors gradually led to the Iranian citizen's concern about ISIS. The ISIS terrorist group, for example, claimed in its threats that it intended to destroy the holy shrines in Iraq. On Twitter, they wrote to all Shiites: Let the Shiites know that our goal is to destroy the polytheistic symbol in Najaf, Karbala, and Samarra. They know that after the destruction of these symbols in Iraq, we will come to Iran and destroy Mashhad. The ISIS called on all Muslims to mobilize to eliminate the Shiites so that genuine Islam can spread in the world as soon as possible (Irinn, 2014).

In this situation, the majority of people identified ISIS as a real danger for their nationality and religion and were concerned ISIS as a dangerous group against human rights. On the other hand, the Iranian government tries to get formal acceptance from executive and legislative branches to announced war against ISIS. This step helps the state to increase political consensus and agreement with using media about the security issue (O'Reilly, 2008). Whit this propaganda some of the oppositions convinced that the only way to protect Shia people and their symbols is military action.

Mobilization of People Against ISIS: As I mentioned above, political actors in Iran need the support of ordinary citizens and for reaching this goal they apply the securitization process on two different levels. First, at the identification level, political actors try to define ISIS as a security issue by emphasizing rhetorical securitization, and then they move to mobilization level and active securitization which they want to use forces and significant efforts against the threat (Roe, 2008).

The importance of the threat from ISIS could offer an opportunity for Iranian leaders to take action against ISIS. They used the opportunity to improve their relationships with other Shia groups and expand their role in the region. This situation helps

Iranian officials to restore the Iranian government among ordinary people as the main defender of the nation and religious belief. Social media introduced the Quds Force Commander, General Soleimani, as the main figure of resistance against the brutal behaviors of ISIS. The mainstream media spread his photos in Syria and Iraq with various groups and leaders to show the authority of the Iranian government in the region and their efforts to control and manage the threat against the Shia community in the region.

On the one hand, Iranian formal media tried to depict the brutality of ISIS as a terrorist group and explain their potential threat to Iranians, and on the other hand, they tried to show how Iranian forces control and limit the success of ISIS and their progress in the region. Under such circumstances, Iranian leaders reported in the media that the Iraqi and Syrian armies with the help of Iranians had pushed back ISIS and defeated them in various battle fields. They gave promising news of the withdrawal of ISIS and their confinement to a small area in Syria and Iraq. For instance, Deputy Foreign Minister Amir Abdullahian stressed that ISIS no longer "poses a threat to Iran's geographical borders" (O'Reilly, 2008).

On the other hand, rumors about ISIS had a major impact on Iranian citizens and made them very worried. They caused fear among the people by seeing the horrible images of kidnapping and killing of people by ISIS. There were conspiracies among Iranian populations that ISIS had reached Iranian borders. Abdolreza Mesgarian, the commander of the Ramadan base, pointed out that ISIS had reached 30 kilometers from the borders of Kermanshah province and that Major General Soleimani deployed his forces in the Khanaqin Heights to stop the ISIS advancements (Tasnimnews, 2019). This condition caused a deep sense of insecurity among Iranians and reminded them of the memories of the invasion of Iraq to Iran. These conditions led the people to trust the government and wanted to respond to these threats.

V- Active Securitization

Iranian officials began accusing major powers of meddling in regional affairs and destabilizing the region to achieve their goals. Iranian officials accused foreign countries of supporting extremist groups and terrorists in the region to further their interests (Khamenei, 2014). The Iranian rulers interpreted the intervention of the United States and its allies as a new stage in the Syrian crisis. They believed that the United States and its allies were beginning an interventionist policy to change the government in Damascus (Ahmadian and Mohseni, 2019). National news agencies, like Mehr News, stated to report ISIS progress and blamed foreign countries who supported them and tried to increase sectarian conflict in the region. Iranian leaders claimed that the creation and expansion of ISIS is the fruit of Western policies in the region. According to Zarif the "ISIS is the product of two things; first is the US invasion of Iraq and the foreign presence that creates a dynamic of resistance. The second is the sense of imbalance that has prevailed in some countries in the region since the fall of Saddam. They are trying to change the status quo" (New York, 2014).

As Buzan and others explain, labeling helps political actors to raise the issue to the security level. Labeling security allows the agent to deal with it in an extraordinary means. In this situation, political actors enjoy the support and acceptance of the people for emergency measures against the threat (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998: 26). In their speeches, Iranian leaders emphasized ISIS as a terrorist group and how dangerous it is for our national securityespecially in the age of terrorism in the world. The Iranian leaders understood the importance of moral support of the people as a fundamental step to mobilize the people. With these rhetoric and speech acts, the government was able to satisfy the people and influence public opinion to support the use of military force. In another words, moral support completes the stages of successful securitization of ISIS inside Iran which allowed Iranian leaders to use military action against them.

Iran stated that the fall of the holy cities of Karbala, Najaf and Damascus will be Tehran's red lines and will lead to Iran's direct intervention in Iraq. General Soleimani's message to ISIS was: "if your feet reach to the holy grave of Imam Hossain in Karbala, with the permission of Imam Khamenei we will make another Karbala Battle" (McNally, 2015: 181). Iran's official declaration about the importance of these cities and its policy toward the protection of them showed Iranian leaders' seriousness that their response would be crucial and drastic. According to General Bagheri, Chief of General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, "Baghdad, the holy shrines and the shrine of the Shiite Imams are certainly all of the red lines of the Islamic Republic. The Islamic Republic will take direct action [if they are attacked]" (World Net Daily, 2014).

The Role of Social Media on Public Opinion: In Buzan's thought, the media has an essential role in convincing the audiences as the reference subject. Media has an essential role and functional ability that helps the Iranian government in the process of securitization of ISIS by showing effective news against this security threat. In this situation, security services provide intelligence information for media to guide public opinion and affect their decision (O'Reilly, 2008).

Iranian leaders use the speech act as an important tool to present the threat to the audiences. In this situation, the role of journals and other media are very important regarding how they framed and present the issue to audiences. The Iranian government used media in convincing the Iranian people based on the concept of perception, framing, and understanding of the power of the media to affect public opinion (O'Reilly, 2008).

In the beginning, Iran's strategy was to have minimum interference and an invisible role on the ground andfor this reason, Iran provided logistical and military support to these countries and provided them security advice. In such circumstances, Iranian leaders denied any direct involvement in these countries. President Rouhani announced that "Iran has never dispatched any forces to Iraq or Syria and it is very unlikely it will ever happen." When

ISIS progress accelerated, Iran became worried about its expansion and changed its policy from "leading from behind" to involve directly fighting against the ISIS. Iran decided to send security advisers to Iraq and Syria and helped their governments and armies with intelligence under the leadership of General Soleimani.The IRGC Commander-in-Chief Jafari stressed: "We have already announced that we have special forces to transfer experience and training in Syria who work as advisers, and this is a public issue" (Gulmohamad, 2104, 5) which formally shows that the Iranian government directly involves to the war in the region. In 2012 Iran decided to send aids to Syria and Iraq to provide more supports for the governments of these countries (Esfandiary, & Tabatabai, 2015, 8). Major General Soleimani, with the help of significant elites close to Iran, such as Hadi al-Amiri, al-Khazali, al-Mohandis, and other militant leaders, took the lead in equipping Iraqi forces against ISIS. Following the fatwa of Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani who called for the creation of people's army to defeat ISIS, the Hashd al-shaabi (Popular Mobilization Forces), a cohesive militant organization, was established (Ostovar, 2019). Under these circumstances, the cooperation of the Iraqi and Syrian elites with Iran and the effective fatwa of Shiite authority (the Marjaiat) led to the mobilization of the people to fight ISIS.

The Relation between Actors and Audiences: To protect Iraq and Syria's territorial integrity, Iran decided to support non-state actors and deliver political, military, economic, and humanitarian aid to these countries. Iranian leaders supported Hezbollah fighters who directly sided with Damascus in combat in 2012 and provided significant support for Assad which helped him to make advances on the opposition side (Aljazeera, 2014). General Ali Fadavi, the deputy commander-in-chief of the Revolutionary Guards, said that according to an official report from the Planning and Budget Organization, Iran spent about $ 19.6 billion during the eight years of the Iran-Iraq war. While from the beginning of Iran's involvement in the Syrian-Iraqi conflict with ISIS until today, the cost has been much lower than

the Iran-Iraq war (Tasnimnews, 2020). Moreover, Shahidi the director of the Foundation of Martyrs said to Iranian media that at least 2100 Iranian fighters were martyred in Syria and Iraq (Mehrnews, 2016). Amir Abdollahian, Iranian deputy foreign minister in 2014 explained the causes of Iranian support: "We are not seeking to have Assad remain president for life,but we do not accept the idea of using extremist forces and terrorism to topple Assad and the Syrian government" (The Daily Star, 2014). Iranian government sends technological and financial supports to Syria to help Assad for controlling civil war, fight against ISIS, and resist the US and Israel's role in the region. Iranian leaders explained that ISIS was founded by some organizations that were supported by Arab countries and Israel in their fight against Iran (McNally, 2015). Iran's move to protect its borders was a direct fight against ISIS outside its borders. Ayatollah Khamenei said about the fight against ISIS, "If they had not fought terrorism and Takfirism in Syria, we would have fought them here in Tehran" (Tasnimnews, 2015). On the one hand, this strategy of Iran caused the war against ISIS outside the borders to reduce the cost of confronting them inside. On the other hand, it shows the ability and power of Iran throughout the Middle East. In fact, by keeping its security safe from terrorist attacks, Iran demonstrated its effective terrorism policy and its deterrent power against threats. At the same time, Iran, by using its soft power at home began to mobilize forces to confront ISIS (Malakoutikhah, 2020). For instance, Mashreq News, a site closes to Iranian conservatives, reported the story on anti-Iranian and anti-Shiite tweets from ISIS: "Let it be known to the heretics that our goal is the total destruction of the tainted Shia shrines in Najaf, Karbala, and Samarra." The ISIS threatened Iranians that "after we leveled these sites, our next target is Iran, where we will flatten Mashhad cleanly to the ground." A reporter from Press TV in 2014 specified that Saudi Arabia and Qatar were sending weapons to ISIS and other extremist militants to fights against the Syrian government. With these successful uses of media to mobilize the people against ISIS,

many Iranian wanted to join to Iranian military to fight against ISIS. For example, there were websites for registering volunteers to be sent to Iraq and Syria (Mashregh News, 2013).

As you see there is an important link between public opinion and policymakers. The audience's reactions to the securitization issue affect the political policy of the country. The war against ISIS required moral support of the citizens, and the media could help create this moral agreement (O'Reilly, 2008) and the audience could use their experiences to calculate the validity and importance of the claims, and these experiences were usually shared by other members of the public sphere.

Securitization Results on Public Opinion: In this situation, they mobilized the people for a counter-attack and sent them to Syria and Iraq to fight against ISIS which is related to another step-in securitization theory. From 2011 Iranian leaders sought to persuade their audiences that ISIS is a real threat and military action against them is mandatory. The Center for Iranian and Security Studies at the University of Maryland is investigating how Iranian think about ISIS and the Iranian government's response to this terrorist group in the region. Most Iranians accept state's narrative to involve in Syria and Iraq and they support fighting ISIS directly and stabilizing Iran's influence in the region.

Moreover, most Iranians approve of supporting Shiite and Kurdish militia groups and Iran's allies to fight ISIS in the region. According to this poll, 98% of Iranian have a very unfavorable opinion of ISIS and they follow (79%) news about the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. 80% of people accept the direct role of the Iranian military in Syria and Iraq and they (63%) support sending military troops to help the governments in their fighting with ISIS to protect Iranian security and interests in the region. 88% support Iran for helping Kurdish groups to fight against ISIS and 72% support Iran to help Hezbollah, 66% approve of helping Bashar Assad to fight against ISIS. According to the poll, 89% support the idea of protecting Shiite cities and 87% support Iran to fight against ISIS. Moreover, 84% support Iran's decision because it

led to a decrease in Saudi's influence in the region and 77% approve because it decreases the US and Israeli policies in the region (Mohseni et al., 2016).

Iranians have a positive view of their country's allies and 75% have a favorable view of Syria, 74% have a favorable opinion of Hezbollah. On the other hand, people have a negative view of Saudi Arabia (79%) and 58% have a negative opinion of Turkey (Mohseni et al., 2016). These polls showed how public opinion thought about the nature of the ISIS danger and how audiences were concerned with ISIS as an existential threat. This evidence reflected the public opinion and the trend of securitization inside Iran. To put it Concisely, the Islamic Republic of Iran was certainly successful in securitizing ISIS through convincing the Iranian audience. It was a major achievement in the middle of all regional and international pressure against Revolutionary Iran.

Conclusion

Iran is geographically the only Shiite state confined with an Arab and Sunni regions. This confinement has made the governments in Iran more sensitive to the issue of security and protection of national interests. Throughout history, Iranians have realized that they cannot rely on their neighbors, as well as great powers for protecting their security and national interests. For this reason, the defense of national security and territorial integrity has been the most important concern of the governments in Iran. Iranian leaders have concluded that one way to maintain national security and interests is to use defense strategies outside Iran's borders.

For this reason, the Islamic Republic of Iran, by adopting a defense policy outside its territorial borders, has been able to control regional and international threats. The Iranian government has been able to control and manage regional crises and territorial threats through non-state actors. However, the problem was how the government could communicate the seriousness of this danger to its people and how it would mobilize them to defend the country. The government needed the approval and support of its

citizens for a military presence in Syria and Iraq and the war against ISIS.

In this paper, I utilized the securitization theory to explain how the Iranian government succeeded in securitizing ISIS. I analyzed some of the Iranian leaders' speeches since the words deployed therein constitute a "speech act". However, the securitizer's discourse about the existential threat is not enough if not accompanied by the audience's acceptance of this threat. A careful study of the securitization comments made by the Iranian government explains the arrangements of identification and its relations with Iran policy. In this paper, I focused on the public argument conveyed by the supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei and the state's political leaders directly to the public through the media. My intention here is to concentrate on the trend of securitization of ISIS in Iranian society and how the government pushes this potential threat to the realm of existential threat. I considered the level of identification during the process of securitization and how it led to mobilizing citizens for supporting the government to use effective violence against their enemy.

The rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq and their claim for establishing the Islamic government in the region produced a level of insecurity among people and at the same time, it intensified the sense of patriotism, sensitivity, and public outrage in Iranian society. In this situation, the media has an essential role in directing the audience to accept the government's arguments for military action in Iraq and Syria against ISIS. Highlighting the religious and nationalist threat allows the government to easily secure national security issues. The Iranian state used media successfully in contributing to this situation for perceiving an existential threat by citizens and creates successful securitization. In this case, Iranian leaders largely succeed in its securitization in most audiences, Many Iranians supported the intervention as a necessary measure because ISIS was an existential threat. In short, the Iranian government was thus successful in securitizing Syrian opposition in its discourse and speeches among its citizens.

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Diplomacy and Economy in Afghanistan:
A Post-Taliban Analysis

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Abstract

Economic diplomacy, in terms of the importance of economic relations in foreign relations, is one of the important tools to advance the long-term goals of economic growth and development and even increase the security of countries. Recently, Afghanistan, India and Iran have reached an agreement called the Chabahar Agreement. Due to its location, this port has the appropriate geopolitical, geo-economic and geostrategic potentials in comparison with the ports of the countries in the region and has a very high security margin; in addition, the port at the intersection of the North-South and East-West corridors can serve as a gateway for transportation, in other words, a central trade link between Central Asia, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia and Europe. In this research we want to answer this question: What impact can economic diplomacy have on post-Taliban developments in Afghanistan? And what is the position of Chabahar port in that country's economic diplomacy?

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The findings of this descriptive-analytical library research show that: Economic diplomacy in the post-Taliban era by adopting programs such as; attracting foreign investment and expanding relations with the countries of the region and constructive interaction with them, has been able to have positive effects on development in Afghanistan; And the port of Chabahar, as a field for attracting foreign investment on the one hand and its role in xpanding Afghanistan's relations with countries in the region on the other, has found a special place in the country's foreign policy.

Keywords: Afghanistan ,Economic   Diplomacy,   Chabahar Agreement ,Development

Introduction

Afghanistan, as a country that has historically faced security challenges and has been grappling with underdevelopment for decades, has made economic diplomacy one of the new tools in its foreign policy to maximize its benefits. In the 21st century, the country is a transportation route between the north and south, starting from the port of Karachi in the Indian Ocean and ending in the countries of Central Asia. Afghanistan is a hotspot for Central Asia and its location on the Silk Road has multiplied its economic importance.

The study of upstream documents, the government's strategic and operational plans, as well as policies announced by Afghan officials at national and international summits, emphasizes the use of economic diplomacy as an effective tool for achieving the country's economic development and prosperity. The issue that needs to be addressed is that given the realities of Afghanistan (geopolitics, geo-community and geo-culture) on the one hand and the problems of the region, including terrorism, extremism, narcotics, organized crime, illegal immigration, smuggling of goods, injustice and corruption, the point is that how Afghanistan can successfully develop and flourish its path? After years of war and foreign aggression, this country needs peace in order to be able to ensure its security and development, as well as to interact rationally with the outside world. In fact, using tools like economic diplomacy in the Afghan foreign policy apparatus can be considered as a great help for Afghan politicians and decision-makers in the development path.

It's worth nothing that based on Afghanistan national peace

and development framework which has been published by Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Finance recently, Afghanistan has made significant progress in security and political fields. Afghanistan seems to be making similar efforts in the economic field; in addition to two major energy projects, (TAPI)[1] and (CASA-1000)[2], the country has also invested in infrastructure projects in transportation sector. Chabahar port is one of them (Karimi, 2018, p. 19).

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of economic diplomacy on development in post-Taliban Afghanistan with a case study of Chabahar port. The question arises here is that what effect can economic diplomacy have on post-Taliban development in Afghanistan? and what is the position of Chabahar port in the economic diplomacy of that country? The findings of this library research, which was formed by descriptive-analytical method, show that:

Economic diplomacy in the post-Taliban era by adopting programs such as; attracting foreign investment and expanding relations with the countries of the region and constructive interaction with them, has been able to have positive effects on development in Afghanistan; and the port of Chabahar, as a field for attracting foreign investment on the one hand and its role in expanding Afghanistan's relations with countries in the region on the other, has found a special place in the country's foreign policy.

Theoretical Framework

Economic diplomacy emerged in the post-Cold War era and the expansion of globalization, and today plays a role in the international arena as one of the new, efficient and powerful tools.

The basis of economic diplomacy is based on the

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1. Through the TAPI project, Turkmenistan gas will reach the markets of Pakistan and India.

2. The Casa 1000 Transmission Project Agreement provides the basis for the transmission of electricity from Central Asian countries through Afghanistan to Pakistan.

shortcomings of traditional diplomacy to achieve policy goals and ensure the interests of governmental and non-governmental actors in the international arena in the framework of increasing and multifaceted interactions of the global economy (Mousavi Shafahi, 2018:152).

In this section, first the definitions of economic diplomacy, the expression of the goals and priorities of economic diplomacy and finally the application of this framework on the subject under discussion are used to create the ground for entering the main discussion of the research.

Definitions of Economic Diplomacy: After 1990, with the collapse of the bipolar system, diplomacy regained its general form and underwent changes that were more open and clearer due to the release of thoughts and activities from specific security concerns during the cold war and under the influence of technological advances. Thus, the use of diplomacy changed and took on different dimensions:

Economic diplomacy, trade diplomacy, political diplomacy, human rights diplomacy, sports diplomacy, energy diplomacy, parliamentary diplomacy, etc., all serve the foreign policy of a country to ensure its national interests and security.

In general, the term economic diplomacy means the use of a wide range of economic tools by governments outside borders and in the national interest, with the participation of other actors (civil society, public and private sectors, public and private), in the field of Natural resources (water, climate change, energy), trade, growth, aid, investment and development (Mohammadi, 2016: 24).

Economic diplomacy deals with macroeconomic policy issues and seeks to achieve the country's development goals and interests. Issues such as economic stability, food security, housing, poverty alleviation, environmental protection, public health, education, job creation, investment, industrial policy, competition law and regionalism are among the topics that are considered in economic diplomacy (Fathi and Pakdaman, 2011: 206).

The theoretical underpinnings of the concept of economic diplomacy suggest that economy takes precedence over politics. Second, achieving economic strength and development depends on an extroverted approach and interaction with the global economy.

Naturally, the concept of economic diplomacy mostly covers the concerns and approaches of countries that want to achieve their development goals by interacting with the global economic system and taking advantage of transnational capacities and trends along with national facilities and resources.

This type of diplomacy may be used at different levels. Whether it is unilateral, bilateral, regional, and multilateral.

Finally, it should be noted that economic diplomacy is a set of measures (both in terms of methods and international decision-making processes) that are related to foreign economic activities, governmental and non-governmental actors in the real world. These economic activities include investment, exports, imports, and so on.

The characteristic of the present age is in fact the intensity of multilateral relations between governments and people around the world. This feature creates great business opportunities in emerging markets, and economic capacity is the reason why scientists and policymakers pay more attention to economic diplomacy (Arab Salehi Nasrabadi, 2016: 63).

Goals and Priorities of Economic Diplomacy: The main goal of economic diplomacy is to help develop the national economy and its main task is to pursue economic goals with diplomatic standards; whether with economic or non-economic tools (ploace, 2010). Therefore, it should be noted that a successful economic diplomacy without national development priorities seems unlikely. However, economic diplomacy can work in various fields to play an important role in the economic development of the country with regard to the needs and requirements of the country on the one hand and rapid growth and development on the other. In addition, the countries of the world

must first take seriously and prioritize actions that can be more effective than other countries.

Therefore, considering the importance of issues related to economic diplomacy, the following issues can be pursued first to provide the grounds for further action and access to all cases as much as possible.

However, the most important priorities and goals of economic diplomacy, especially for developing countries, include facilitating the business environment, attracting foreign investment, tourism, improving the country's image and access to technology and science (Mousavi Shafahi and Emani, 2018: 153).

I- Introduction of Chabahar Port
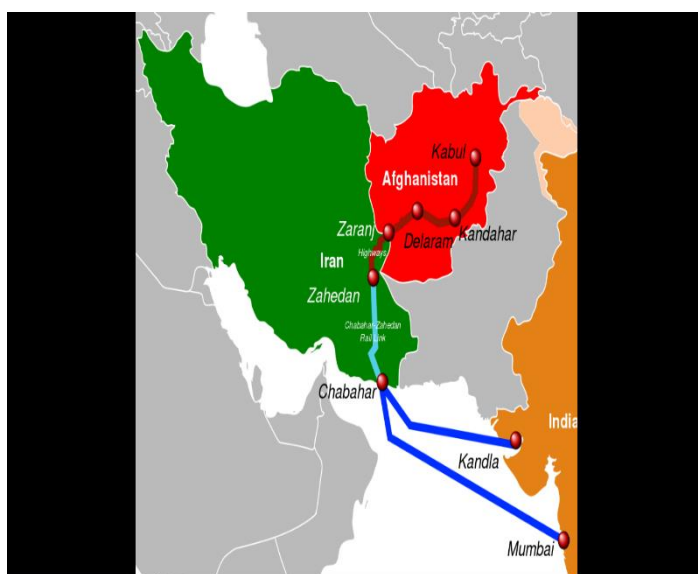
Chabahar Port, located off the Gulf of Oman in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan, is the lifeline Afghanistan needs to reinvigorate its trade potential. The Chabahar port and corresponding Chabahar city are in Sistan-Baluchistan, a province that spans both Iran and Afghanistan. The two countries seek to complete a multimodal system that will

more efficiently connect Kabul to the port and in turn reduce Afghanistan reliance on Pakistan. This will significantly boost trade capacity because, as it stands, Pakistan does not allow India overland transit access, a major obstacle for critical trade between Afghanistan and India (CSIS, 2021: 4).

Without Chabahar, Afghanistan must depend on Iran's other major shipping port, Bandar-e Abbas, which manages 70 percent of the country's seaborne traffic. Located in the Persian Gulf, Bandar-e Abbas does not have direct access to the Indian Ocean. Trade must first pass-through ports in the United Arab Emirates to be unloaded onto smaller ships. Heightened tensions between Iran and its neighboring Gulf states make this a delicate arrangement. Furthermore, the Strait of Hormuz, the 21-mile strip of water connecting the Persian Gulf to the Indian ocean, is a chokepoint vulnerable to a variety of potential security and environmental disruptions (CSIS, 2021: 4).

As a result, Chabahar port is a vital project for Afghanistan in this area, enabling the transfer of goods produced in Afghanistan to the Middle East and Europe and facilitates import of goods to Afghanistan. Economically, the project will lead to significant trade growth and investment in the necessary infrastructure in the country.

Chabahar is a good alternative for Afghanistan's trade and transit and a good opportunity for Afghan traders to access the sea through Iran and India. Iran and India will use this agreement to provide investment and export opportunities.

Afghanistan and Chabahar: Afghanistan has a long history of trade with Iran and India. It is also the most important trade and economic partner of Chabahar Free trade Zone. This country has been deprived of access to world markets in the past. Roads are tightly controlled and Pakistan's presence has always been a serious obstacle to this trade. Estimates show that Afghanistan has $ 3 trillion in untapped wealth that can be used to increase government revenues. Chabahar port is a vital project for Afghanistan in this regard, enabling the transfer of Afghan goods

to the Middle East and Europe and importing goods provides vitality to Afghanistan. Economically, the project will lead to significant trade growth and investment in the necessary infrastructure in the country. Afghanistan has a long history of trade with both Iran and India; but in recent years trade with India has been difficult; the main reason of this difficulty is Pakistan. Pakistan uses its position to limit India's access to Afghan products; conversely, with the implementation of this project, Chabahar port will connect all western ports of India and provide an important trade route between the three countries. This is an important step towards bypassing Pakistan (Shahnawazi, 2015: 75).

However, Afghanistan is a country that does not have the infrastructure to connect and extract its vast oil, gas and mineral resources and is considered a poor country; but it has rich mineral resources.

Findings from the US Geological Survey confirm previous Soviet estimates. Afghanistan has 60 million tons of copper, 22 billion tons of iron and 2 million tons of other trace elements such as lanthanum, cerium, neodymium, as well as aluminum, gold, silver, tin, and lithium. The value of scarce reserves in Helmand province alone amounts to $89 billion (Tonzai, 2020: 151).

The US Geological Survey estimates the total value of Afghanistan's natural resources at between $ 1 trillion and $ 3 trillion. Among other factors, these natural resources remain untouched due to Afghanistan's lack of connection to the international economy. These barriers will be resolved through the port of Chabahar, which connects Afghanistan to India. A successful corridor will also strengthen Afghanistan's position as a transit route for oil and natural gas exports from Central Asia to the Arabian Sea.

Chabahar is a good alternative for trade and transit of goods to Afghanistan and a good opportunity for Afghan traders to access the sea through Iran and India. Iran and India will use this agreement to provide investment and export opportunities. Under

the agreement, Iran has allocated 50 hectares of land to Afghanistan in the Chabahar Free Trade-Industrial Zone and 150 Afghan companies have already registered (Tonzai, 2020: 152). Chabahar provides significant strategic opportunities and good trade options for Afghanistan. From a logistical point of view, Chabahar port is the closest port to Afghanistan. This port is 700 km closer to Bandar Abbas and a thousand kilometer closer to the port of Karachi in Pakistan (Ramezani Bunesh, 2013: 3). This port is a turning point in the strategic game in the region. Stakeholders hope that Chabahar project will turn Afghanistan into an economic hub in the region.

## II- The Importance of Chabahar for Afghanistan

Connecting Road to Central Asia: Chabahar port connects the Iranian road network to Zaranj, Afghanistan, which is about 883 km away from this port. The Zaranj-Dalaram road, built by India in 2009, is connected to the Afghan ring road. In this way, Iran can also access Afghanistan's four major cities (Herat, Kandahar, Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif) which are located near the Uzbekistan border and as a result, Afghanistan has greater and easier access to Central Asia through this infrastructure.

Establishing a Stable Relationship with India: The Atrium (Chabahar-Zahedan-Zaranj) is a potential capacity to change the game in connecting regions, allowing Afghanistan to access India by sea as an alternative route. This connection will naturally increase the development of economic interactions between the two countries. Its worth mentioning that last year amid the pandemic, India used the Chabahar port to send 75,000 tonnes of wheat as humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and 25 tonnes of the pesticide malathion to Iran to deal with a locust invasion. Chabahar Port has emerged as the connecting point for the region to deliver humanitarian assistance during the COVID 19 pandemic," Mandaviya said. India also plans to set up around 600 km railway line from Chabahar port to Zahedan, the provincial capital of Sistan-Baluchestan in Iran close to the Afghan border, at

a cost of \$1.6 billion to facilitate the movement of goods to Afghanistan (Reuters, 2021).

Independence from Pakistan: Afghanistan currently depends on Pakistani ports to connect to the sea; but due to political tensions between the two countries, Pakistan has always obstructed along the Durand Line. Chabahar has the potential to reduce Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistan. To connect regions, countries need to interact with each other; but for many years now, Afghanistan is a landlocked country that cannot use the water borders of other countries. As an alternative route, Chabahar reduces dependence on the port of Karachi. India has also set up a port on Iran's southeastern coast along the Gulf of Oman to provide a gateway for goods to Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asian countries while preventing its rival, Pakistan, from entering Afghanistan, this goal can bring the three countries closer together. (Reuters, 2021).

Export Development: As shown in the graph n 1, Afghanistan has a good position to expand its exports to international markets, especially to countries in the region. The country's agricultural products are traditionally well-known in the regional market and there is a positive view of the quality of Afghan products compared to most other countries. One of the most important factors that increased Afghanistan's exports is the increase in the use of Chabahar port.
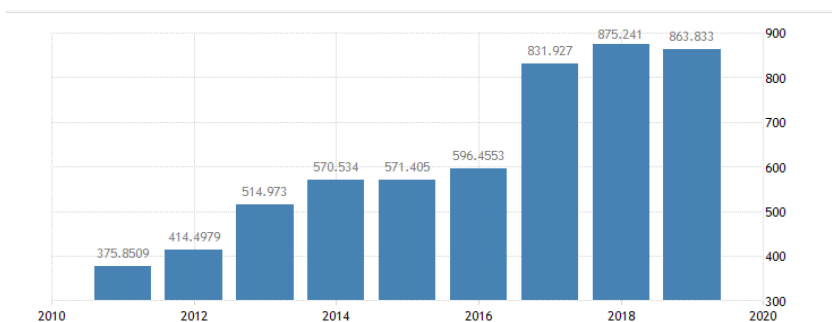
Graph N.1(Afghanistan Exports 2010-2020)

(Trading Economics, 2021)

Ensuring Peace and Security: To take advantage of its strategic position as a land bridge between Central and South Asia, Afghanistan's markets must be connected to the global economy, especially the regional economy in order for the country to achieve its national economic goals. Afghanistan's connection to global and regional markets not only increases competition in the domestic economic industry it also adds to the attractiveness of Afghanistan for investors.

Overall, Afghanistan can play an important role in this growing economy in the region. Recently, Afghanistan has made significant progress in security and political reform. Afghanistan seems to be making similar efforts in the economic field; in addition to two major energy projects, (TAPI) and (CASA-1000), Afghanistan has also invested in infrastructure projects in the transportation sector. Chabahar port is one of them (Karimi, 2018: 19). Ultimately, Afghanistan seeks to tie the economic interests of countries to ensure its peace and security on the one hand and the development of the country on the other.

Attracting Foreign Investment: The war in Afghanistan, political and security instability and recent droughts have severely affected the country's economy in recent decades. Although the country has experienced relatively favorable economic growth in recent years, its sharp fluctuations indicate the existence of structural problems in the country. Among these problems is the lack of capital needed for investment and production. Foreign investment is a conventional solution to this problem. Attracting foreign investment is considered as one of the indicators of economic diplomacy of countries, which can be followed in the Chabahar port project (between three countries of Afghanistan, Iran and India).

Today, the importance of ports and their role in the development of economic diplomacy of countries is undeniable and it is necessary to pay attention to it. The interests of neighboring countries with ports are directly related to their needs, capabilities and culture and in fact their foreign policy is based on

these characteristics. Chabahar provides significant strategic opportunities and good trade options for Afghanistan. From a logistical point of view, Chabahar port is the closest port to Afghanistan. This port is the key to changing the strategic game in the region. Stakeholders hope that Chabahar project will turn Afghanistan into an economic hub in the region (MOCI, 2020).

Potential Investment in Afghanistan

Agriculture: The agricultural sector in Afghanistan has played an important role in economic growth. Chabahar provides opportunities for foreign direct investment in the agricultural sector for Indian and Iranian traders. Economic development in the decade of transformation (2015-2025) is very important for the long-term security of the Afghan people. Afghanistan has come to the conclusion that the development of agriculture is the key to the growth of economic inclusion in this country (Mutafi et al., 2019: 18).

Afghanistan Mines: The development of societies shows that human beings have been able to achieve great and significant achievements through the use of natural resources and refining minerals, as a result of which they have provided a lot of wealth for their societies.

At present, natural resources are increasingly important due to their high consumption rate and their pivotal role in economic growth and improving social welfare. Afghanistan is among the richest countries with its untapped natural resources. By providing an efficient environment and better coordination in the mining sector, practical efforts can be made to develop social and economic infrastructure and reduce poverty through the effective extraction and exploitation of minerals. This will lead to the prosperity and development of the country. This situation can represent a bright and prosperous future for the country.

In the long term, exports and revenues from the mining sector will be the primary driver of growth for Afghanistan. The High Economic Council approved the Mining Roadmap in January 2017. A new mining sector law and comprehensive regulations

were also approved by the Cabinet in 2018 and 2019, respectively. In the short term, the mining sector will continue to implement reforms to improve transparency and sustainable extraction. The current reform strategy aims to ensure Afghanistan's natural resources are sustainably developed, compliant with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), and public revenues are fully collected. The program aims to ensure that the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum can fulfill its core duties and responsibilities and guide growth going forward, ensuring improved management in the sector. The Mining Sector NPP focuses on five key areas in order to improve the performance of Afghanistan's minerals and hydrocarbons sectors:

(1) Institutional Reform and Development,

(2) Geological Data Acquisition and Management,

(3) Contract Management and Compliance,

(4) Transparent and Accountable Governance, and

(5) Growth and Enabling Environment (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Finance,2021).

Industry: As mentioned above, Afghanistan has vast mineral deposits, including coal, copper and iron ore, talc, lithium and uranium, as well as gold, precious stones, oil and gas. Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the sector has been seen as the potential backbone of a post-war economy and still is, but due to the aftermath of three decades of war, mining laboratories, northern oil and gas facilities, masonry plants, and forest factories have suffered huge losses, indicating that this sector also has the capacity to investment. (Foreignpolicy, 2021).

Exploitation of all mentioned cases requires the development of industries, which can be used to import the equipment of industries and factories from existing ports. One of the factors that will play a significant role in the development of industries is the port of Chabahar and the proper use of this port.

Energy: The government's strategic vision for the energy sector is that the energy sector should be able to provide Afghan citizens and economic growth agents with access to reliable

energy sources. It can also provide a long-term government-controlled economy based on private sector investment and a free market system (ANDS, 2020).

The overall goals of the energy sector are to revitalize and expand the public electricity grid and to attract private investment. Economic growth needs to increase energy consumption; therefore, there is a direct relationship between national per capita production and per capita energy consumption. Afghanistan's per capita energy consumption in 1980 was higher than in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. At that time, Afghanistan was one of the exporters of natural gas to Russia. But now it needs significant imports of energy for domestic consumption. Most hydropower plants in Afghanistan are based on hydropower (generating more than 54% of the total (and the rest are heat sources), mainly through the use of coal and natural gas (currently Afghanistan produces only 600 million watts of hydropower). It also has the potential to generate 23,000 million watts of electricity. Electricity demand is steadily rising and it is estimated that Afghanistan will be able to generate 3,000 MW of electricity in the next few years. In that case, in addition to its needs, this country can also export electricity to its neighbors and countries in the region (AISA, 2020). Therefore, this sector also has the capacity to invest.

Infrastructure Development: Afghanistan has a strong history of trade at the Heart of Asia. Afghanistan has worked hard during the past few years so that the building blocks for a strong trading nation are reestablished. This includes the establishment of Air Corridors to increase air freight exports, the creation of four rail links to increase rail exports, the establishment of the Lapis Lazuli route to increase road exports and moving forward with the Chabahar Port to diversify potential exports by sea. But it is not enough to simply export. The government will also focus on small-scale labor-intensive industrialization, improving and supporting rural enterprises, and creating domestic markets that will have a large capacity to localize certain products in which Afghanistan has competitive and productive advantage, thereby

reducing the deficit in trade, creating employment, and ultimately reducing poverty. Based on this strategy, Afghanistan is taking a three phased framework approach:

(1) Primary goods development,

(2) light industrial development, and

(3) heavy industrial development.

First, Afghanistan is trying to invest more in developing primary goods — namely, agricultural and mineral resources — within the country before export. This first stage would also have the benefit of reducing imports of commodities, which comprise the majority of the country's import bill. The second stage of reforms would include the development of light industries, thus generating higher levels of employment and reducing poverty. The third stage of reforms would be the development of heavy industries. Afghanistan is already working on both light and heavy industrial development. However, the framework will assist in prioritizing interventions and the allocation of resources during each stage. International support for the development of our industrial base could include support for policy development, as well as support for the development of physical infrastructures such as industrial parks, power generation and transmission for industries, skills development for manufacturing and industry, and simplification of the land allocation process (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Finance, 2021).

National and International Railway Projects: The first part of what is considered to be the national railway network was connected to Mazar-e-Sharif to Hairatan by rail and through it to the railway networks of Central Asia and Europe. Construction work has also begun on a railway linking Afghanistan to Turkmenistan's neighbor. The cost of the railway, estimated at $ 800 million, will be funded by the Asian Development Bank. The following are some of the national and international railway projects in which investment capacity is available.

• Herat-Port Turgundi Railway (150 km)

• Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan Railways (645 km)

- Jalalabad-Torkham-Landi Kotel Railway (98 km)
- Chaman-Kandahar Railway
- Silk Road Railway from China to Iran via Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan
- Gorani Railway (Iran) (Herat Panj (Matfi et al., 2019: 21.)

Iran also sees these railways as a way to counter US sanctions and improve economic ties with its neighbors. Iran already has rail links with Turkmenistan, Pakistan, and Turkey and is expected to complete six more railway projects by the end of 2021. Ongoing projects will connect the railway network to Astra in Azerbaijan and Basra in southern Iraq. Finally, it should be said that the major sectors that had the capacity to invest in Chabahar were described in the above section, each of which has the potential to flourish and grow due to the investment of countries in this project. While the first railroad in Afghanistan was constructed in 1907, decades of war and insecurity have resulted in serious underdevelopment of the country's railway system in addition to roads and bridges. This has been a major obstacle to transportation. Thus, the recently launched railway—the first with standard size track in Afghanistan marks a major breakthrough for the entire region (Atlantic Council, 2021).

III- Expanding Relations with the Region

Afghanistan, after years of turmoil and war needs peace so that it can build a system that relies on its diverse internal forces to ensure both internal security and rational interaction with the world. Interaction with China, India the United States and Europe in parallel with maintaining bilateral and multilateral relations with Muslim countries will guide Afghanistan's rational foreign policy (Tonzai, 2014: 2).

Afghanistan's foreign policy from 2001 to 2014 was largely based on its security issues and needs; but during the National Unity Government (2014-2019) the security-oriented view has given way to the economic-oriented view in Afghanistan's foreign policy. In other words, actions in foreign policy are taken in order

to achieve economic benefits and development policies of Afghanistan. Under President Karzai, development was viewed from a security perspective, and economic and development issues were secondary ones; however, in Mr. Ghani's time, the Afghan government wants to be developed through economic means and secondary security issues are taken into account. What is clear is that Afghans are looking for their own economic development and prosperity.

Achieving economic prosperity and self-sufficiency is impossible without cooperation and constructive interaction with the outside world, especially the countries of the region. In this regard, it can be clearly seen that the country's foreign policy system has a significant and valuable role in achieving this goal and the government should prioritize economic welfare, self-sufficiency and achieving security as one of the goals of the country's foreign policy. Therefore, the Government of National Unity, in its early work, presented the plan of economic self-reliance and ways to achieve a dynamic economy, as well as comprehensive models that are effective in economic growth, strengthening and development of the country in the meeting of senior officials of donor countries (Danish, 2016: 2). Another dimension is the government's adoption of economically active diplomacy at the regional level. In this regard, extensive goals, plans and efforts have been made over the past few years which have also led to brilliant results. In regional diplomacy, the government's goal has been to "transform Afghanistan from a crossroads to a junction." The government is trying to make Afghanistan an exporting country and is therefore pursuing a policy of economic integration in the region.

Regional integration policy is a fundamental principle in the foreign policy of the government and this principle can turn the geography of Afghanistan into an economic-political geography, according to which our country can be the connecting point of East Asia, Central Asia, South Asia and West Asia and move quickly towards economic growth and prosperity (Danish, 2016: 4).

Iran and Chabahar: The development of Chabahar port as the only Iranian port connected to the sea, provides the possibility of diversification in the country's imports. The use of Chabahar port will accelerate the transit of goods to Afghanistan and Central Asia, reduce the net costs of goods in regional markets and using this port will further boost the transit of goods. Development of Chabahar port and construction of Chabahar-Zahedan-Mashhad railway will have positive and valuable consequences in the development of the eastern region of Iran and create production opportunities in industry, mining, construction create many job opportunities for local, regional, national and international labor. This ultimately effectively fills the existing population gap and reduces illicit trade, such as drug trafficking. These measures will transform the current geographical position into a geopolitical region and will improve Iran's position in the region (Khalili, 2009: 12).

After the development of Chabahar port and the completion of the southeast-northeast transit corridor from Chabahar to Sarakhs, ships choose Chabahar port to load and unload cargo to reduce fuel consumption and save time. Therefore, this is a great opportunity for Iran to increase its revenues. The port of Chabahar is promising in the future for the development of the eastern regions and the improvement of Iran's foreign trade. The development and operation of this port can be useful to reduce additional load on the country's communication roads; because Iran is forced to import, export and distribute goods in its eastern half through its ports in the Persian Gulf. At the same time, the use of Chabahar port will bring many economic benefits to the eastern regions of this country both commercially and in terms of transit development and the region's economy (Rahmati, 2007: 16).

Meanwhile, Iran maintains a great deal of influence over Afghan socio-economic dynamics, having housed millions of refugees for decades, hundreds of thousands of whom have returned in recent years due to Iranian government's pressure,

lack of economic opportunities, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The borderlands remain a zone of population exchange and narcotics flows, as well as licit economic activity. Iran-Afghan trade has grown to an estimated $2.8 billion annually, and Iran offers Afghanistan an outlet to global markets. Iran's new port at Chabahar, a joint venture with India, opens up a new trade route that provides an alternative to Karachi and Pakistan's new port at Gwadar. For all of its limitations, this supply line and the prospect of greater Afghan economic dependence on Iran form a nontrivial element of Iran's Afghanistan strategy. Its success could also support the U.S. goal of lessening Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistan (United State Indtitute of Peace, 2021: 5).

India and Chabahar: For New Delhi, the Chabahar Port Agreement and the transformation of Chabahar Port into one of India's centers of economic activity in Eurasia and the Indian Ocean was a strategic decision. In the future, if India has any plans to compete with China on the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, the port of Chabahar, with its North-South International Transport Corridor, will be the mainstay of this strategy. Some American researchers claim that the Chabahar port project lacks a "clear economic rationale" and that it is a "dangerous deviation from other important projects" for India. For India, however, this report calls into question the strategic value of Chabahar. However, the Chabahar project, along with the North-South Corridor, not only has the potential to develop economic relations with Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan; it will also transform the trade of the Indian continents (Amiri, 2018: 80).

India has made a strategic decision by investing in Chabahar. This project has important strategic and economic implications for India's growing position in Asia. Although India had long recognized the importance of this project but the government has recently allocated resources to invest in the project. The timely implementation of this project will test the position of India's independent foreign policy as well as its institutional capacity. In particular, China's position in the region is growing with the "One

Belt, One Road Initiative". New India-Iran-Afghanistan relations provide New Delhi with more options to play a greater role in the Eurasian region. Despite some obstacles at the beginning the implementation of the project is now going well.

The fact is that the time for Afghanistan to be passive in the region has come to an end and the country needs to improve its relations with foreign countries in the field of foreign policy (Example of development of Chabahar port).

The Khaf-Herat railway was part of a bigger agreement among Iran, India and Afghanistan to develop Iran's southeastern port of Chabahar. India is jointly developing Chabahar as a reliable access route to Central Asia and a counter to the Gwadar Port in Pakistan which is being developed by India's rival, China.

Conclusion

Economic diplomacy is one of the most important tools for advancing the goals of countries. The development of Chabahar port is one of the examples of the expansion of economic diplomacy. Export development and foreign direct investment are considered the most important elements of attracting capital, reducing poverty and increasing employment in developing countries and even establishing security and peace in those countries. At the same time, Chabahar port project is important not only for Afghanistan but also for India and Iran and this will be a new beginning in Afghanistan-India-Iran relations. Tehran intends to use Chabahar for transportation to Afghanistan and Central Asia. India will also have access to Central Asia's rich gas and oil resources and will connect Delhi to Iran's rail network. As for Pakistan, the implementation of this project has put pressure on Pakistan to reconsider its policy towards Afghanistan and India.

In the case of Afghanistan, although it is a landlocked country; however, due to its strategic geographical location, it has the potential to become a "connection point" in this region, in order to ultimately seek its development by tying the economic

interests of countries.

Finally, it should be said that: The purpose of this study was to present a plan to show that: Economic diplomacy in post-Taliban era by adopting programs such as; attracting foreign investment and expanding relations with the countries of the region and constructive interaction with them has been able to have positive effects on development in Afghanistan; and the port of Chabahar, as a field for attracting foreign investment on the one hand and its role in expanding Afghanistan's relations with countries in the region on the other has found a special place in the country's foreign policy.

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Iranian-Indian Relations: Transportation Factor

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Abstract

The emergence of future powers is one of the most important features of the contemporary international system. The collapse of the Soviet Union and a new wave of globalization of the economy and the movement of Russia and China towards a market economy in the early 1990s forced governments around the world to reconsider their foreign policies. At this time, India was experiencing the worst economy of its time. The demonstration of the inefficiency of state socialism made New Delhi to think for change. In the present study, by using explanatory-analytical method, we seek to answer the question "How and with what methods and tools does India pursue its strategy towards becoming a world power?" The proposed hypothesis for the question is that "India seeks to achieve the position of a global superpower by special emphasis on domestic strategies and relying on a pragmatic foreign policy." Therefore, due to the increasing importance of emerging powers during the transition of the international system, the analysis and examination of characteristics, perspectives and global effects of their empowerment can deepen our understanding of the evolving international system.

Keywords: India, superpower, realism, foreign policy, pragmatism

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Introduction

The growth and expansion of communication devices and the acceleration of the globalization process have led to significant changes in power exchanges in the international environment. The process that should have begun was the end of the Cold War, which shaped the new idea in the international arena in such a way that with the increasing global bodies and the end of the bipolar atmosphere and the dual rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States, we have witnessed the formation of new powers in the context of an unsafe international environment in order to gain the greatest power and interests (Arghavani Pirsalami and Pirankho, 2018: 66).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, India abandoned the trend of the socialist economy and turned into the dominant current of the Cold War. With this tool, it sought to change past attitudes and trends resulting from Nehru's thoughts. After the Cold War, Indian politics changed from a Neo-Realist to a Neo-liberal nature and associated itself with the mainstream to renounce its interests (Bajpai, 2010). India's efforts in the era of neoliberal foreign policy to gain foreign investment, entry into world economic interactions, privatizing parts of its economic activities and weakening anti-Western attitudes are highlighted here. In Nehru era and at the international level, this country sought to become an international power. This was stated in Nehru's remarks and its symbol is the NAM (Non-Aligned Movement). India's foreign policy during this period had two factors: independence and non-alignment or neutrality, each of which has its own value .Nehru considered the term "positive

policy for world peace" to be an appropriate term for Indian foreign policy (Adhikari, 2008: 17).

It is politically one of the countries that has been officially accepted as a member of regional and international organizations and has achieved a position that even in recent years has sought to gain a permanent seat on the Security Council. Nuclear tests and intercontinental ballistic missiles have given India a role as an emerging superpower in international geopolitics (Joseph, 2011: 109). In this article, we assume that India is trying to become a world power and also want to examine how and with what tools India is pursuing this strategy?

Theoretical Framework

Emerging Powers after the end of the Cold War, the US-led unipolar system and the American world order despite its relative decline, are still international issues which are present in world politics. Emerging countries are countries that have had high economic growth rates over the past two decades and have become new economic hubs in the world. (IKenberry, 2014: 6). Therefore, one of the main features of the international system in transition is the emergence of new powers that rely on their economic and military power and will redefine the distribution of their role, influence, and power in the various spheres of the international system, and will likely cause a relative shift of power between traditional and emerging powers. Despite numerous internal challenges and regional oppositions and global resistances, the emerging powers are trying to play an active role in the world economy and politics, in addition to avoiding challenges and fundamental disruptions in the basic norms of the international system, by defining themselves as a revisionist non-Western power belonging to the developing world and will make serious changes in the arrangement of world politics and power (Xing, 2016).

Regarding the indicators for measuring and identifying emerging powers, various factors should be mentioned : industrial and technological development, economic growth rate, GDP, per

capita income rate, having a share of the index in the market of production of goods and services and playing a role in regional and global trade, which are mainly economic indicators. Along with indicators such as improving governance, upgrading and increasing the capacity of government and state to meet the needs of the people, increasing and accelerating access to health services and education, are the characteristics of emerging powers. In general, the term "emerging powers" refers to countries that have a significant advantage over their neighbors in their region and with a growing economy and high military and political balance and close relations with traditional world powers, seeks to improve their international level. Meanwhile, the role of Asian powers, especially India, is more prominent than other emerging powers due to its economic growth, military power and large population, as it seeks to emerge as à first-class power among the world's great powers (Cohen, 2004: 33).

I- Indian Geo-strategy

The wide diversity of ethnicities in India created many political units, each competing for power. At the same time, cultural homogeneity created a strategic understanding in which the Indian subcontinent was a large world for each of the small political units. During the 16th and 17th centuries, it was a major economic power on a global scale. In fact, at that time, India had become an important hub of the global economic distribution system (Refer to Tables 1, 2 and 3).

Table1. Relative Shares of World Manufacturing Output (%) 1750-1900

Country	1750	1800	1830	1860	1880	1900
Europre as a whole	23.2	28.1	34.2	53.2	61.3	62.0
Third world	73.0	67.7	60.5	36.6	20.9	11.0
China	32.8	33.3	29.8	19.7	12.5	6.2
India	24.5	19.7	17.6	8.6	2.8	1.7
UK	1.9	4.3	9.5	19.9	22.9	18.5
Habsburg Empire	2.9	3.2	3.2	4.2	4.4	4.7
France	4.0	4.2	5.2	7.9	7.8	6.8
German States/Germany	2.9	3.5	3.5	4.9	8.5	13.2
Italian States/Italy	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.5
Russia	5.0	5.6	5.6	7.0	7.6	7.8
USA	0.1	0.8	2.4	7.2	14.7	23.6
Japan	3.8	3.5	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.4

Table 2. Per capita Levels of Industrialisation – 1750-1900

Country	1750	1800	1830	1850	1880	1900
Europe	8	8	11	16	24	35
UK	10	16	25	64	87	100
Russia	6	6	7	8	10	15
USA	4	9	14	21	38	69
Japan	7	7	7	7	9	12
China	8	6	6	4	4	3
India	7	6	6	3	2	1

Source: Kennedy, 1987: 149

Table 3. Distribution of World Income 1700-1995 (%)

Country	1700	1820	1890	1952	1978	1995
China	23.1	32.4	13.2	5.2	5.0	10.9
India	22.6	15.7	11.0	3.8	3.4	4.6
Japan	4.5	3.0	2.5	3.4	7.7	8.4
Europe	23.3	26.6	40.3	29.7	27.9	23.8
USA	-	1.8	13.8	21.8	21.8	20.9
Russia	3.2	4.8	6.3	9.3	9.2	2.2

Source: (Madisson, 1998)

In the eighteenth century, production methods in India grew significantly compared to societies in other parts of the world. By this time, India had become a highly developed country, exporting its products to Europe and other countries. India, on the other hand, had an advanced banking system that was efficient and orderly throughout the country, and Indian merchants and trading systems around the world worked well with it. In fact, India was considered an advanced industrial society before the Industrial Revolution (Tanham, 1993: 15).

India's vast wealth attracted various powers over the centuries due to its stable economic management and very successful business activities. Numerous states in the anarchic subcontinent forced governments to come up with ways to ensure their survival on the subcontinent. The evolution of India's strategic orientation has been shaped by a number of factors. The sense of security that came from the geography of the Indian subcontinent was part of this strategic defense orientation (Tanham, 1993: 2-5).

Many states in the anarchic subcontinent have forced governments to come up with ways to ensure their survival on the subcontinent. Thus, the conquest of other governments in the region and the establishment of hegemony in the subcontinent were underway. This was largely responsible for the internal strategic orientation of the independent states in India. The evolution of India's strategic orientation has been shaped by a number of factors. It is clear that India has played an important strategic role in the region in the past (Singh, 1999: 4).

II- India and Emerging powers

In the early 1990s, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and a new wave of globalization, the economy was severely affected by political order and the global economy, forcing governments around the world, especially India, to reconsider their foreign policies (Dubey, 2013: 3). Esteghlal was inspired by the ideas and views of the leaders of the Esteghlal movement, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sabahsh Chandra Bose, and several others, who were mainly responsible for presenting India's ideas, strategies, and foreign policies. It goes beyond pursuing an ideal policy. Ms. Indra Gandhi, as the central power, put aside institutional constraints and relied more on common factors with neighbors to manage the country's foreign relations. As India's economic and defense capabilities increased, India began to recognize world politics and power (Genguly, 2015: 2). In the new political framework, India became more interested in international institutions that could enhance India's great power situation. A positive approach by India was to expand relations with the United States and, most importantly, to be self-sufficient in nuclear matters. In the meantime, several factors led to Delhi's new interaction with the West (Mohan, 2015: 132).

Meanwhile, domestic factors such as India's economic reform programmes in 1993, which led to the formation of a new environment for trade with the West, and international factors such as the fall of the Soviet Union forced India to compete with

other emerging markets around the world, so India sought foreign direct investment and access to developed world markets. Although the reforms were slow, economic stability provided economic growth that became the basis for the transformation of India's relationship with major powers. India's economic growth reached a stage after the 1990s that could progress through international engagement. At this juncture, New Delhi sent an important message to the international community with its remarkable economic growth that one can no longer ignore a country with high economic potential. There was a fundamental shift in India's quest to lead the Third World, under which India realized that it could essentially realize its potential as a great power to itself. During India's Cold War, many saw international and regional security issues through the Third World and its anti-imperialist worldview. While today India's foreign policy orientation is increasingly focused on promoting its national interests and international power, India's foreign policy in the years following the Cold War has, in a remarkable way, made India a global power (Genguly, 2015: 4).

Following this, New Delhi's domestic economy moved away from the conservative model of short-stature economic development, and by concluding free trade agreements and raising defense spending and strengthening the Indian navy, it became effective in reaching the top maritime power in the region, and significant changes were made on the fronts of Indian foreign policy and domestic policy (Genguly, 2015: 5).

Geo-Strategic Importance of India

Free elections and the growth of India's political parties have clearly shown that India has the largest and most vibrant democracy in the world. Some southern Indian states are on the verge of achieving sustainable levels and replacing population growth in the near future. Extensive educational facilities and media, which have penetrated into every corner of Indian villages, have rapidly increased awareness, knowledge and literacy among the people. Along with its continental size and strategic location,

India's large population can become a huge asset and human capital with efficient and powerful governance. The rise of India as a major power and its geographical and strategic connections are important points for the growth of its economic, military and technological capabilities. The following are some of India's most important achievements in positioning it as an emerging world power.

Economic and Technological Power: Economic strength and control or mastery over core technologies is critical requirements of a major power. Nehru, well aware of history and international relations, was acutely conscious of India's need to catch up with the missed industrial revolution so as to not only improve the well-being of the people, but to translate India into a world power, industrially and technologically. With great foresight, he established what he called the temples of modern India, heavy industries in all core sectors. The initial state-controlled activities in core sectors, including defense manufactures, were designed to create the industrial and technological capabilities required to sustain both defense and development goals with minimum external assistance. Particular attention was paid to high technology, atomic energy and space sectors, which were 'salient for the purposes of power politics (Ashley, 1995: 285).

India has world-class technology institutes. These are institutions that produce new technology. In addition to information technology, they produce technical branches of engineering, and on the other hand, these institutes have produced top scientists with high ranks. Indeed, India has three vital elements of the global economy in the 21st century: information technology, biotechnology and space (Perkovich, 2009: 45). India's technology growth has been impressive over the past decade. India's power in software not only allowed it to conquer the global market, but also provided an opportunity to achieve certain milestones for rapid progress. India, for example, has seen rapid growth in the development of advanced computers. on the other hand, India has built significant capabilities in strategic

areas such as avionics, communications, satellites, and so on. By using these facilities, India can not only be successful in shaping the thoughts of others about itself as well as presenting a desirable image of itself, but it can also look at this factor as a source of income (Gupta, 2009: 16).

According to the Global McKinsey Institute of India, due to its technical manpower and large middle class and expanded market to become one of the three global economic powers, while requiring democracy and strong participation to increase its employment growth rate and create 90 million non-farm jobs from 2023 to 2030, it needs to provide GDP growth of 8 to 8.5 percent for this country and this emerging power can be empowered in the economic field) It's been narrated in Ibef: 2021: 1).

The Nuclear Capability: With the end of World War II, the need for great powers necessarily arose in nuclear states, so India declared itself a nuclear state in 1998 after poker experiments., and added to india's statutory and positions, sending the world the signal that India's nuclear status is an irreversible reality. "India's experience of security over the last five decades, including an ultimatum from China, and the U.S. nuclear entry with powered carrier to the Bay of Bengal during the India-Pakistan War of 1971, necessitated the exercise of the nuclear weapons option" (Adhikari, 2008: 17).

Military Power: India's military strength and position can be assessed and analyzed in several indicators. with a large population and 3773,300 armed forces, it ranks first in the world in the armed forces index. The country has 14,140 active forces and 1,089,700 militias in the active forces index. Its proximity to the Indian Ocean and its access to open waters have improved its naval and air power index and made it the sixth most powerful sea and air power. (Boland Akhtar, 2009: 49).

Table 4. Defense Spending as a Percentage of GDP and Total Central
Government Spending (2010-11 to 2020-21) (in Rs Crore)
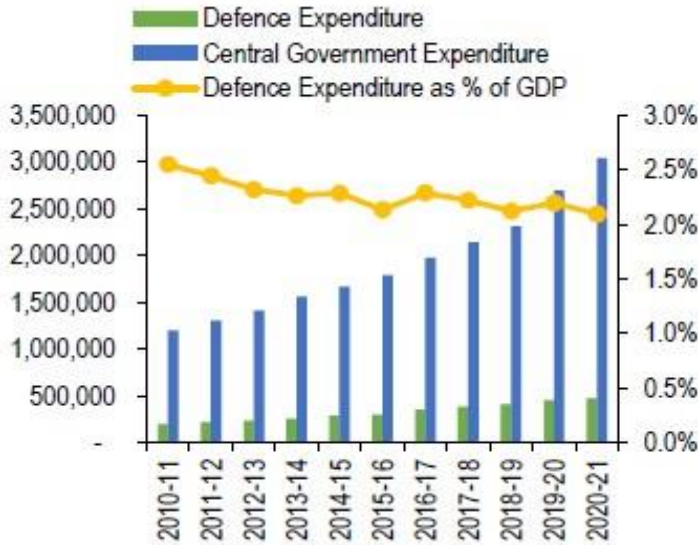
Source: Union Budget 2010-20, Central Statistics Office; PRS. Note: Figures
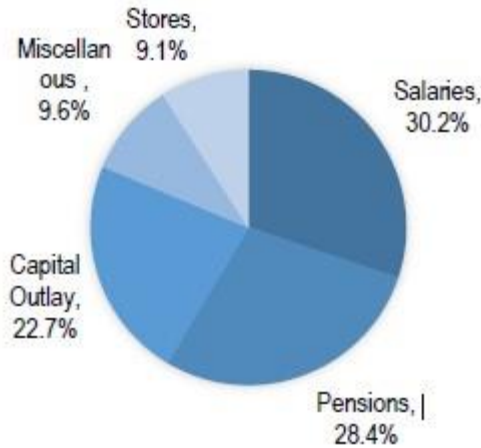for 2020-21 are Budget Estimates and for 2019-20 are Revised Estimates.

Figure 1. Combined Ministry of Defense Spending for 21-2020 (in %)
Sources: Expenditure Budget, Union Budget 2020-21; PRS.

The importance of mastering strategic technologies has not diminished for the Indian leadership. India's scientist President Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam has emphatically argued India's need to establish firm control over certain core technologies, so as to ensure India's security and strategic flexibility (Abdul kalam, 1998: 187) .India has already built and is continuing significant R & D capabilities in core areas such as electronics, space, nuclear science, and the material sciences. As Steven Cohen puts it: "Although India is the weakest country among great powers at the moment and is still unable to do great things, it is able to surprise. India will have one foot in the 'developing' world and one in the world of advanced economic and military powers for the indefinite future (Cohen, 2004: 35).

GeoPolitical Importance: India's Geo-strategic location in the Indian Ocean would be of great significance in the world of the 21st century, where Asian balance of power would be of critical relevance. India sits astride some of the most crucial sea-lanes of the world. Indian ocean is Home to Nearly 70% of the maritime traffic of the world. India's own maritime interests are enormous. Historically, India doesn't lie in the middle of the trade routes involving China and the West, or China and the East, or Europe and West Asia, Japan and Asia. But India itself was the source of extensive economic resources and trade in the past. India's maritime trade with China, west Asia, Africa, Europe and Southeast Asia was extensive. Because India itself was the center of most trade activity in the past, it's geo-strategic importance, both for Indian Ocean region and Asia as a whole was significant.

One of India's most important advantages is the use of islands and coastal areas, which has doubled the importance of classifying the country, such as the Suez Canal. The Straits of Hormuz and Malacca are among the most important and sensitive points in the global oil trade and supplying that are shipped around the world through the Indian Ocean, hence the volume of exchanges will increase and the position of the Indian star will increase day by day (Pishgahi Fard and Khaniha, 2011: 164).

India's geo-strategic relevance assumes great importance when various parameters of its national power are taken into account. India is currently the world's third-largest economy, a major energy consumer, one of the fastest growing and largest markets, a large manufacturing and commercial nation and a major military power. All of these extends India's strategic borders well beyond its geographical boundaries. so, India's strategic borders extend from the Gulf to the Straits of Malacca, covering the entire Indian Ocean, and to the north, well into the East and Central Asia.

III- India's Efforts to Become a World Power

The process of transfer or relocation of power is one of the most important features of world politics and one of the determining factors in the relationship between traditional powers and emerging powers. India is one of the emerging powers that has taken great strides in various fields, which has led to its emergence in the last decade as an emerging power in South Asia.

Strengthening a Democratic Political System: India is one of the most important examples of democratic integration in a post-colonial region. The Indians consider themselves the greatest democracy in the world, and this idea has been endorsed by other actors in the international arena. On the importance of democracy, Singh says, "Democracy is a human heritage and does not consider it the opposite of development, and states that India's fifty-year history of democracy has shown how democracy can overcome the problems of underdevelopment" (Mohan, 2007: 103). And in this way, he has tried to achieve superior power.

Federalism: The word federalism comes from the Latin word "Foed us" which means treaty or agreement. According to Finner, "a federal government in a country where part of the power is in the local area, while the other part is devoted to a central body composed mainly of the local association." Therefore, it can be said that large countries with large populations, free and multicultural are facing many problems in

establishing a center of democratic government. Thus, these types of states begin their journey with a federal democratic system to maintain their unity. As a result, like the United States, Switzerland, and Canada, India opts for federalism. Many scholars have argued that federalism is essential to the success of democracy. In this way, federalism always helps India to successfully solve the problems of multiculturalism, multilingualism and different religions and to strengthen Indian democracy (Manzurul Karim, 2013: 3).

Selective Behavior: The Constitution of India, which is the supreme law of the country, guarantees the right of the Indian people to vote. In addition, Indian governments and leaders always hold elections after taking office. In this approach, people always have the opportunity to use their power or choose their favorite candidate. This not only means that the government or leaders of India always have a firm respect for the election verdict, but it also means that the leaders of India always accept the choice or view of the people (The Constitution of India, Original 324).

Table 5. Guide to General Elections and Electoral Reform, New Delhi, 2000

Acceptable Percentage	Eligible Voters	Electoral Districts	Election Year
45.5%	173213635	489	1952
47.7%	193652069	494	1957
55.4%	216372215	494	1962
61.3%	249003334	520	1967
55.3%	274094493	518	1971
60.5%	321174327	542	1977
57.0%	355590700	542	1980
64.1%	399816294	542	1984
62.0%	498906429	543	1989
56.7%	514126380	543	1991
57.9%	592572288	543	1996
57.9%	602340288	543	1998
60.0%	620400000	543	1999
58.07%	671487930	543	2004

58.8%	7166985101	545	2009
66.40%	834101479	545	2014
67.40%	910512091	543	2019

Source: (Ahuja, 2000: 281)

Thus, from the table above it can be easily said that after its independence in 1947, over the last few decades, the number of elections and the turnout in the Lak Shaba elections has increased by about 60٪. This enrichment of the political participation of the people pushes India towards democracy.

E-Government and Reducing Internal Problems: One of the characteristics of India's current society is the existence of secular attitudes in this society. India's constitution affirms india's secular nature. Secular attitudes in India can be a tool to prevent conflict in India's diverse religious community on the one hand and a factor in removing some Hinduism dogma from the development process. Since the shadow of Hindu principles, such as avoiding the castes of originating and some of the methods and superstitions arising from these principles, still dominates Hindu society, secular reading of Indian society can be considered a political act according to the Indian constitution. Because using this tool they can get rid of the potential concerns and conflicts of Indian society and pursue the goal of Indian society towards development (Sheikh Attar, 2009: 13).

India's large population is a problem for Indian democracy. "India wants to use e-government to achieve national cohesion and convergence. E-government means providing services to the people through the internet. Using e-government to provide better services, local people use the Internet for easy access to government services. To strengthen local languages, there is transparency in government policies and the like, which will change the relationship between the people and the people in general, in other words, it reflects the responsibility of the government. On the other hand, it shows the needs of the people. The e-government plan has special programs for the villagers and its purpose is to provide more

services to the villagers, gain their satisfaction and trust, monitor government plans, register land, property and assets, receive information about the number of products, registration and taxes and record changes (Kumar, 2010: 41).

Economic Growth: The 1990s are considered a turning point in India. Trade liberalization, privatization of state-owned industries and factories, annual growth experience of about 7%, direct democratization of the economy in the form of quick and short-term plans and even the implementation of large-scale projects from this time began with the presence of "Indian Economy Architect" Manmohan Singh, India's 13th prime minister. It should be noted that the average annual growth of the Indian economy from 1990 to 2007 was 8.3% per year, which means doubling per capita income and reducing poverty in the country. India's GDP growth of 2.1 percent annually between 1950 and 1970 reached 9.8 percent in 2006, making it the second largest economy in the world. (world bank.com, 2013).

On the other hand, according to the World Bank, India's economic growth in 2016 was 7% and in the first quarter of 2017, it had the fastest economic growth in the world. India's economic growth rate during the period 2018-2019 was 6.8 percent, which was lower than 7.2 percent in previous year. It was while India wanted to become a $ 5 trillion economy by 2024 in terms of GDP. But despite the slowdown in global economic growth, India's economic growth rate in 2020 reached 7.5 percent (Kapila, 2016: 12).

International Environment: India's foreign policy towards the outside world has changed dramatically over the past decade and a half. This shift in perspective and economic priority in foreign policy has brought India closer to the major powers and even its regional rivals, including Pakistan and China. Another change in India's foreign policy is the move away from the idea of Third World leadership and the realization that it has the potential to emerge as a major power in the international system. Therefore, India intends to expand its influence in different regions of Asia

and Oceania by membership and participation in various regional and international meetings and investments (Zhao, 2007: 50).

South East Asian Nations: The policy of looking east was implemented in the early 1990s in conjunction with India's economic reforms. Politically, the view of the East was taken at the right time. This policy sought to restore India's traditional ties with its Eastern community - which had been shattered by its policy of non-alignment and cooperation with the Soviet Union. Economically, the promotion of economic cooperation has been the most important core policy of looking to the East policy. When the policy of looking to the east began, India economically outnumbered many ASEAN members. It was backward and India's access to this part of the world was considered essential. In the economic and military spheres, the policy of looking east seeks to realize India's strategy of becoming a world power. Indian officials and scientific circles do not limit India's interests to a specific region such as the Indian Ocean, the Pacific or Asia, but they know that they should defend the interests of India wherever is possible. (Zhao, 2007: 50).

Pakistan: In addition to the claims made by the two countries over the Jammu and Kashmir regions, India's foreign policy has led to a two-pronged approach to the issue and a rejection of the globalization plan in order to draw global powers to the issue and take advantage of the inequality between themselves and Pakistan., however, this procedure was implemented in 1990 in accordance with changes. The upcoming developments led India to have a friendly and peaceful relationship with its neighbor and avoid any conflicts, so while holding bilateral meetings to strengthen stability and establish a four-way peace process from 2004 to 2007 in order to strengthen economic ties, in 2008, with the abolition of visas between the two countries and in 2011, following a joint meeting of mutual cooperation between them, a new horizon was opened in the two countries bilateral relations. (Taheri and Bayat, 2019: 197).

Afghanistan: India is one of the developing and influential

countries in the South Asian region. In its strategic plans, it has made South Asia one of its top priorities. India considers Afghanistan a part of South Asia and that is why Afghanistan is of special importance in India's foreign policy. India's grand foreign policy doctrine divides countries into three concentric circles, the first of which includes its immediate neighbors, including Afghanistan. In the environment of this circle, India seeks to gain a hegemonic position through which it can confront the presence of other powers in the region (Shafiee et al., 2012: 126). Afghanistan is a mediator in the periphery of India to confront other powers, including Pakistan. In addition, it is a platform for Indian influence in Central Asia. India's participation in bombing Taliban positions through the Northern Alliance, using Tajik air bases, is a clear example of India's desire to deepen its strategic influence in Afghanistan and gain access to Central Asia (Khatzman, 2007: 47).

IV- The Importance of Chabahar

The Chabahar port is a key issue for India due to its stratifying position in terms of economic exchanges. China and Pakistan have led the country to use Chabahar port as a rival band with Gwadar port in Pakistan's Balochistan province, which has freezed India's access to Afghanistan by sea, thus providing a balance for regulating the political-security relations of the two nuclear rivals India and Pakistan. India's access to chabahar port not only enables New Delhi to thwart Pakistan's military presence in the Oman Sea and the Northern Indian Ocean and break the strategic blockade of its two rivals, China and Pakistan, but also by bypassing pakistani soil, it pens a safer route through Iran to Afghanistan. Given India's membership in the North-South International Corridor, the route will allow New Delhi access to markets in Central Asian countries such as Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and their energy reserves, as well as Turkey, Russia and ultimately northern Europe (Tahmoursi, 2021: 2).

The Strategic Importance of Chabahar Port:Chabahar, as

the only international port of the Islamic Republic of Iran, has a unique political and economic status. Pristine agricultural beaches in different seasons and its proximity to Pakistan have increased the importance of this port city. The presence and activities of India and Afghanistan directly and interested countries like Russia, Japan, China and Central Asia on the one hand and gaining benefits from Chabahar port for economically active countries is one of the grounds for establishing an international regime in Chabahar. The Chabahar Agreement is a very important strategic decision that will help India move transit routes to Afghanistan and the Central Asian region and beyond. With India's membership in the Shanghai Organization and welcoming of other countries, including Russia, Chabahar port is an opportunity to increase their contacts and cooperation within the Shanghai Organization. In fact, it is the closest access to the open waters of central Asia's landlocked countries (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan), thus highlighting the transit and exchange capabilities of Chabahar and its port. Direct access to open waters and being out of the Persian Gulf and not being vulnerable in times of crisis, have made Chabahar port a safe and affordable international communication gateway for countries such as Afghanistan, India as well as other Central Asian countries (Shukla, 2017: 21).

Based on its security, strategic and political interests, the Indian government is working to prevent the growth of instability in the country and Pakistan's growing influence in Afghanistan with minimal military presence, while largely affecting the situation in Afghanistan. Indians, on the other hand, do not want the Taliban's dictatorship to be repeated based on their political interests in Afghanistan. Indian analysts urged Indian authorities to open friendshipchannels with tribal leaders in southern Afghanistan in 2011, among which the Afghan Taliban have greatly reduced their influence and paved the way for the elimination of militant groups such as the Haqqani Network by carrying out development projects in areas controlled by pashton

tribes (Shiri kerfti, 2011: 21).

It seems that fundamental changes are needed, such as pursuing regional policy and prioritizing classified provinces such as Kabul and Kandahar. The presence of moderate Taliban commanders in the provinces and attention to small projects are necessary to meet the needs of local Afghans in India's political strategy. In addition to these three changes, India can adopt new policies toward regional powers such as Iran, Pakistan, Russia, and Central Asian governments. The most important new policies that Indian regional experts say will work to advance New Delhi's goals in Afghanistan include proposing close cooperations with multilateral bodies (including NATO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization) and reducing tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan. (Especially on the Durand Line).

India is well aware that Chabahar is a port that plays a key role in Iran's communication position in the region, especially in the North-South corridor, as well as the "Katai" Corridor, which connects Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Expanding and improving the capacity of Chabahar port is of fundamental interest to India; this can be in the interests of both Iran and India. India's relationship with Iran will also help New Delhi gain access to the consumer goods and energy markets of Central Asia and Afghanistan (Bhattacherjee, 2017).

India's Cooperation with Iran: In September 1958, when the North-South Corridor Agreement was signed in St. Petersburg between the Transport Ministers of Iran, India and Russia, Chabahar was introduced as a strategic port in this corridor and its land routes to the Turkmen border which were the shortest ones. The Kuala Lumpur transport route was introduced in the Eastern Corridor and the feeding route of Central Asian countries. The port of Chabahar is India's outlet for the Indian Ocean in the Greater North-South International Transit Corridor, providing New Delhi with access to Central Asia, Russia, and eventually European markets, and allowing India to trade with Central Asian countries. There will be no need to transport their goods through

Pakistan (Dehghan, 2017).

The development of Chabahar port due to its stratification location and direct and indirect location in the path of several important international highways has made it one of the most stratifying transit places, the location of Chabahar in the North and South World Corridor and the appropriateness of its communication route to enter emerging areas such as CentralAsia and Afghanistan and the Caspian Countries has led to India's increasing dependence on Ian. This means that the structure of the Oman Sea and the structure of the Indian Ocean can be connected to three continents of Africa, Asia and Oceania (Mohammadi and Ahmadi, 2018: 54-55).

Therefore, India pursues its economic goals in the Persian Gulf region and central Asia and balances them with its regional rivals, China and Pakistan, from investment in Chabahar city in such a way that the Central Asian market is a large market with a large population that can be a very good market for foreign goods. Also, the country's goods can be exported to different parts of the world, which will be a significant volume of trade. It builds relations between these countries that can be politically-security-beneficial for both sides and expand the influence of China and Pakistan in these areas, which will increase the political-security weight of these countries. Given the importance of this issue and its effects, Iran should put more pressure on Indians to reap the benefits by investing more and fulfilling their obligations on time.

One of India's strategic plans in recent years has been to invest economically in Afghanistan to influence regional security equations and make a profit through the port of Chabahar. The Indian government issued a statement stressing that Indian companies would implement the Chabahar port development project. India's main goals of presence and investment in Iran can be considered as follows: to meet its own domestic needs, compete with China, expand its presence in Central Asia and accelerate the process of becoming a strategic navy (Azami & et al., 2016: 4).

Conclusion

The end of the bipolar world and the U.S.-Soviet double competition in international scene provided a platform for revising the foreign policy of many countries, while India, as a case study of this article, was able to take advantage of the benefits such as political stability and a relatively stable democratic environment. Extensive geography and abundant human resources must be gradually emerging with power. The country enjoys more than 8 percent economic growth and has been successful in implementing macroeconomic policies and has lifted millions out of poverty alongside strengthenedthe armed forces and is displaying military power throughout the Indian Ocean. Its growing development of bilateral relations with major powers and peripheral regions, along with active presence in international organizations and new institutions, will be indicators of this strength.

In response to the role of Chabahar port in India's emerging power, the upcoming article examines India-Iran relations and the role of this international port. The results of this paper showed that the geopolitical position of Iran and the Chabahar visa for entry to this international port just for Indian engineers and its presence in central Asian countries in order to benefit from the markets of these countries to sell its goods has benefited the country a lot, in addition, India has used this international port in order to supply the required energy for its growing industry and has been able to use this international port to influence other countries. The total aim of theses steps is expanding its trade and making profit for its economy. Therefore, Chabahar should be considered a geographical location with considerable geopolitical value and weight, which can be important for India from three economic, political and security perspectives.

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The Nuclear Issue and Iran-US Relations: Perspectives and Different Natures

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Abstract

Since two decades ago, the Iranian nuclear issue became a full-scale international conflict. Iran's main preference is to guarantee its national security. In fact, the lack of a strategic ally for Iran and the channels of intense conflict around it, the scarcity of conflict management strategies and mechanisms, are forcing Iran to pursue a nuclear program. Furthermore, some severe institutional and structural confinements and limitations on Iran and the immediate need to recover its vulnerable economy have forced Iran to subsidize its fortified attitudes and behave as a rational actor in the international atmosphere. But the United States' preference is to stabilize the regional equation with regard to support of its strategic resources and allies in the Middle East. The lack of similar understandings and different levels of calculation between Tehran and Washington over nuclear politics led to long-lasting conflict. While Iran justifies its political logic with normative paradigm and consistency with international regimes, Washington's political calculations are standing for security, threat and deterrence approaches. Moreover, whereas Iran explains its nuclear activities at the regional and trans-regional levels, the US analyzes it at the international level disordering the global status quo. In this paper, the game theory models will be used to understand the past and current relationship between US-Iran. Furthermore, the possibility of equilibrium movement regarding the Iranian nuclear problem will

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be discussed. This analysis will focus on the preferences and interests of each state, which mainly determine the foreign policy-making process.

Introduction

Iran's nuclear policy has long been considered as one of the most complex issues at the international level especially after the Iran-Iraq war. Since the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, Iran's adherence to the principles of anti-Americanism and the development of weapons has caused a number of international controversies. After Hassan Rouhani was elected as the seventh president of Iran in 2013, the conflict seems to have settled down. Nevertheless, given the disordered situation in the Middle East such as unstable Saudi Arabia-US relations or chaos caused by ISIS, the orientation of the Iranian nuclear issue is still important for regional situations and is worth a lot of research.

Looking back, the nuclear program in the Islamic Republic of Iran first began in the 1950s with a US initiative called Atom for Peace. In its early stage, Iran's plan on building nuclear plants was mostly linked to the US and some western European countries (Bahgat, 2006: 308-309). Afterward, Iran signed Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968 and ratified it in 1970, and the nuclear program was the goose hangs high. However, Iran's nuclear program was halted with the overthrow of the Shah of Iran. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini abandoned the nuclear program, which had lasted for more than 20 years, because he considered nuclear weapons to be forbidden (sinful). (Melman, 2008: 89-90). In addition, during the Iran-Iraq war, the nuclear program was physically disrupted when two Bushehr nuclear reactors were severely destroyed by an Iraqi air force attack.

Iran's nuclear program, which has been on hold for more than a decade, was reactivated when Iran and Russia agreed in 1995 to

cooperate on Iran's nuclear development, including the reconstruction of Bushehr nuclear power plants. In 2002, the National Council of Resistance of Iran, an opposition group to the Iranian government, revealed the existence of nuclear facilities in Natanz and Arak, and then the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) began its investigation in February 2003. In October, Iran and the European Union (France, Germany and the United Kingdom) agreed to halt Iran's enrichment process, and in December, Iran signed the Additional Protocol to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In June 2005, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected as Iran's new president and his nuclear policy triggered the full-scale dispute over Iran's nuclear program. In April of 2006, he officially announced that 'Iran has joined the list of countries with nuclear technology' (the CNN Wire Staff, 2012), which brought about the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution and subsequent sanctions on Iran. Since then, a series of clashes have continued and the rift between Iran and the international community has widened. The international community forced itself to continue negotiations, but most of the bargaining process ended in failure. (Perwita and Razak, 2020).

Finally, though the nuclear negotiation between Iran and the international community once even seemed to be never-ending, following the election of Hassan Rouhani as the new president and plans to strengthen relations with the international community and agree on a joint action plan, the negotiation process is showing signs of improvement.

The nuclear program, as Iran's most complex international political issue after eight years of war against Iraq, provoked mixed reactions from various actors. The lack of similar understandings and different levels of calculation between Tehran and Washington over nuclear issues led to long-lasting conflict. While Iran justifies its political logic with normative paradigm and consistency with international regimes at the theoretical level, it legitimizes the program with security paradigm and regional unconventional geopolitics at a practical level. On the other hand,

Washington's political calculations are standing for security, threat and deterrence approaches at the theoretical level and normative pattern and maximal restrictions for Iran and preventing the emergence of new nuclear actors at the practical level. In addition, while Iran describes its nuclear activities at the regional and trans-regional levels and creates deterrence, the United States analyzes it internationally with the irregularity of the global situation.

Historically, the nuclear behavior of Iran and Western countries, especially the United States, has shown different periods.

I- Historical Trend

First, Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979 Until 2002: The spread of Islamic values during the Islamic Revolution, on the one hand, and the treatment of nuclear activities as Western technology, on the other, led to the suspension of nuclear activities in Tehran. But the geopolitical developments, international and regional security, the long-lasting war between Iran and Iraq, the attack on Iranian nuclear installations by Iraq's military forces, and then the attack on Baghdad's nuclear facilities by Tel-Aviv and the passivity of the international community changed the Iranian feelings on security threats. Thereafter, Iran signed a new contract with France over nuclear fuels facilities in Isfahan in 1985 (IAEA, 2007). Moreover, several agreements between Iran and Russia have been signed to complete the Bushehr nuclear installation (Koch and Wolf, 1998: 2). But the new contraction of 123 between the United States and China (Kan, 2011: 9-21) has affected the nuclear cooperation between Iran and a handful of other countries.

Second, the Revelation of Nuclear Activities of Tehran and E-3 Negotiations (2002-2006): Disclosure of Iran's covert nuclear activities led to a behavioral incompatibility between European countries and the United States. While the U.S insisted on sending Iranian nuclear file to the Security Council, Western Countries

emphasized the diplomatic mechanisms in dealing with Tehran's mysterious activities. Finally, Iran signed the protocol in 2003 due to the pressures of international institutions and Regimes which in turn permitted the inspections of IAEA on its nuclear activities and voluntarily canceled the enrichment of Uranium. Thereafter, the enactment of the Paris Agreement in 2004 encouraged Washington to join the European consensus in 2005 (Reardon, 2012: 15). But the European countries' emphasis on the thorough cancelation of Iran's nuclear activities on the one hand and Iran's resistance and assertion on peaceful activity led to rising behavioral tensions between both sides and then the new government in Iran in 2005 restored the nuclear activities.

Third, 5+1 and UN's Sanctions (2006-2008): Behavioral conflicts and lack of consensus between both sides over Tehran's nuclear activities led to the enactment of 1696, 1737, 1747 resolutions against Iran in 2006. Despite the attempts of the international community to control and managing the Iranian nuclear activities, Tehran declared her accession to 3.5 percent enriched Uranium in April 2007. In fact, the failure of the strategy of "containment vs. containment" and the intense objection of Washington enacted the 1803 resolution against Tehran in March 2008. Due to the rising oil revenues, this resolution did not affect Iran's economy so much (Jansen Calamita, 2009: 1420-1433; Khalaf, 2020: 2-3). During this period, the new suggestion of 5+1 powers to Tehran to continue not to expand its nuclear activities faced Tehran's intense reaction.

Fourth, the Incumbency of Democrats in the United States of America in 2008: The behavior of both sides did not change much with the coming to power of the new Obama administration and the change in Washington. Declaration of Iran to full access of the nuclear fuel in April 2009, the revelation of nuclear installations in Fordow, the failure of the fuel exchange with Russia, and Iran's accession to 20 percent enriched Uranium in February 2010 led to the enactment of 1929 resolution against Tehran.

Thereafter, despite the continuity of negotiations in 2010 and 2011, realistic politics was the dominant approach of both sides in negotiations.

Fifth, the Period of Pragmatic Negotiations (2013-2015): This period coincided with the incumbency of the administration of President Rouhani in Iran and the new communicative approach between Iran and the West. Since the incumbency of the new administration in Tehran, diplomatic management of nuclear policy became the main behavior of the Islamic Republic of Iran in which the ratio of the tensions between both sides has been decreased to some extent. The gradual reduction of tensions between both sides led to a comprehensive agreement in July 2015. Generally speaking, the Islamic Republic of Iran has tried several strategies for nuclear activities from 1987 until 2015.
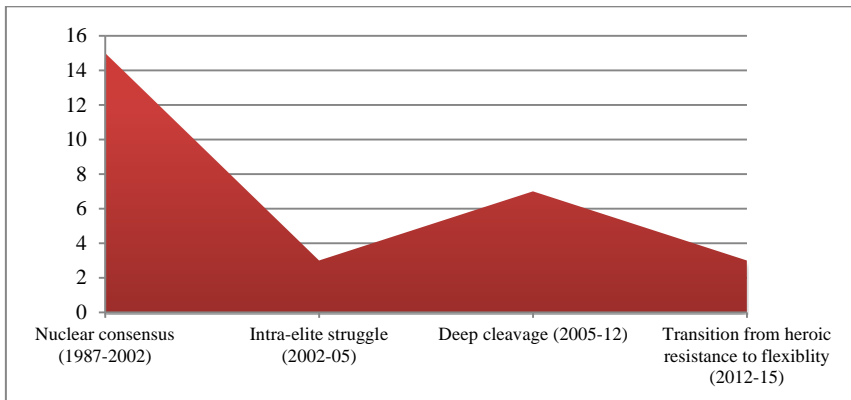

Figure 1. Tehran's Nuclear Behavior Strategy, 1987-2015

I- Tehran and The Logic of its Nuclear Policy

Basically, understanding Tehran's behavioral logic in a nuclear activity should be divided into three levels: micro, medium and macro. At the micro-level, the role of political elites and politicians is very important. According to this level, Iranian leaders have frequently declared that Tehran is not searching for nuclear weapons (Solingen, 2007: 164). Thus, nuclear decisions are the main function of national security from decision-makers'

perspectives. At the intermediate level, public opinion, popular demands, internal tensions, the cost and benefits of nuclear weapons, and technical and scientific factors are key elements that help to understand the motivations for nuclear proliferation policy. According to some researchers, public opinion was not the impetus or constraint on Iran's nuclear program until 2002, but has become a national issue since 2003. (Chubin, 2008: 57). On the other hand, searching for the nuclear policy was a source of legitimacy. In fact, nuclear policy was preferred as a political struggle for power and legitimacy (Cronin, 2008: 8).

In addition, Iran's nuclearization has no security but a political dimension (Chubin, 2006). At the macro-level, gaining prestige at regional and international arenas, bargaining with main powers, and trying to produce security are the main reasons for nuclear proliferation. In fact, the national consensus on Iran's nuclear program stems from being labeled as national pride and resistance to foreign intervention. Traditionally, Iran was a main power in the Middle East and Iranian political leaders and elites opined that its ancient history and culture has played a very important role in the region. But the post-revolutionary Iran and rising new political system forced the political leaders to find an alternative for regional and international prestige. So, having nuclear ability and capability will play an important and influential role for Iran at different levels (Byman, 2001: 8-9). Whereas other researchers believe that the search for nuclear politics and proliferation is due to the Iranian attempt to have better bargaining with the west. According to this module, the United States will take nuclear Iran more seriously than non-nuclear one. Therefore, the analysis of the political behavior of the Islamic Republic of Iran at various levels emphasizes Tehran's legitimate and constitutional right to access nuclear energy, historical experience and national security, Islamic values, and Washington's political behavior toward Iran. But the contradiction between the idea of the United States and the Cold War thinking has exacerbated the security dilemma (Katzman et al., 2020: 7-9). In fact, the failure of recognizing and

managing the sources of conflict led to the persistence of mutual distrust. In this situation, the Iranian authorities believe that the suspension of enrichment will not bring about long-lasting concessions.

II- Western Countries and Iran`s Nuclear Policy

The proposals of the Western countries have not only not been met with the demands and expectations of Iran, but have also been seen as an imbalance between the two sides. So, Iranian emphasis on nuclear enrichment and programs has led to the emergence of different behaviors in western countries. Historically, despite active containment of the United States against Iran from 1995 onward, European Union has emphasized diplomacy and negotiation with Iran. But the Berlin crisis and the killing of the Kurdish opposition on April 10 1997, and the voting of the German court against Tehran suspended mutual negotiations. But the détente and negotiation between civilizations in the foreign policy of Tehran restored the mutual negotiations. Different perceptions of Iran and the West on security and threat led to rising power politics in 2005 (Meier, 2013: 1-2). But the Bush and Obama administrations tried to gain tactical advantages and opportunities on the one hand, and sanctions and coercive diplomacy against Tehran on the other.

The United States imposed unprecedented sanctions on Iran from 1979 to 2012. In fact, Washington tried to persuade Tehran to change its behavior by shifting diplomacy to economic warfare. In fact, Washington tried to persuade Tehran to change its behavior by shifting diplomacy to economic warfare, whereas neither side used the pragmatic approach. But the incumbency of the new administration in Iran in 2013 and prioritizing the foreign policy in general and nuclear policy, in particular, encouraged both sides to reach a comprehensive agreement in 2015. Generally speaking, the behaviors of western countries over Tehran's nuclear activity have transitioned from different stages.
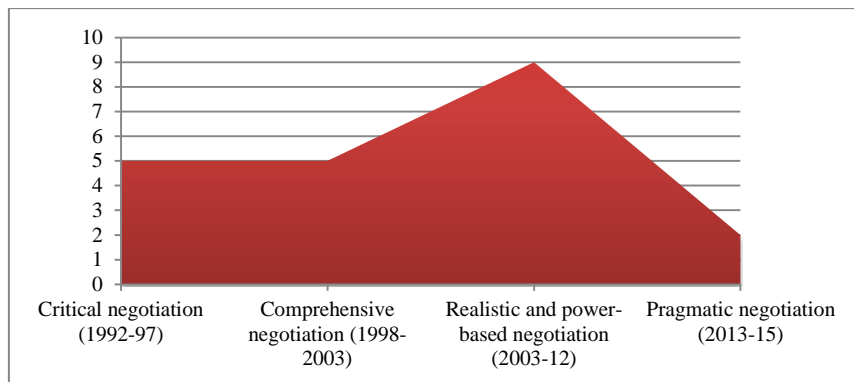
Figure 2. Logic of Western Countries' Nuclear Behavior, 1992- 2015

While the European Union has encouraged Iran to change its nuclear behavior by suggesting Iran the membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and economic cooperation, The United States has called EU policy old-fashioned diplomacy and mistakenly linked the WTO and economic cooperation to nuclear policy. (Kaussler, 2014: 22; Singh, 2020: 145-152). The Bush administration has called increasing Russian-Chinese support for Tehran a threat to US-Russian-Chinese relations. In addition, there has been a great deal of innovation between Tehran and Washington in the Bonn talks on post-Taliban rule in Afghanistan, including Tehran attending an international conference in support of the Karzai government in Tokyo And Iran's financial support over the past five years (Rajai, 2004: 166) has not only failed to develop a reciprocal agreement, but the signing of the protocol by Iran has not created a mutual consensus and western actors called Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as insufficient regime to monitor Tehran nuclear activities. In fact, the nuclear talks between Iran and the West were based on a realistic and power-oriented policy. As a result, protracted conflict and coercive diplomacy were the main behaviors of both sides. So, by encouraging both sides to sign a new deal, pursuing the pragmatic negotiations since 2013 finally led to a comprehensive agreement.

Thus, while the Islamic Republic of Iran considers its conduct as its fundamental right under international law and the regimes of

international organizations, and despite the pessimistic approaches of Western countries, considers its nuclear activities to be peaceful and civil. Such attitudes stem from different interpretations of the two sides on geopolitical developments and international regimes at the regional and international levels. In addition, the United States has based its approach on a variety of reasons.

First, proliferation politics will lead to nuclear proliferation. In fact, if the Islamic Republic of Iran reaches nuclear energy, it will lead to nuclear demands and race in the region. Second, with a possible accession to nuclear weapons, Tehran will be more likely to attack its opponents. Third, those countries that take a neutral stance toward Iran will feel threatened if Tehran gains nuclear power. Then they join the Tehran coalition, and as a result, regional and international threats increase (Sherill, 2012: 35-42). Fourth, it will change Iran's nuclear power as an offensive player. This concern reflects the paradox of stability and instability. While nuclear weapons will bring nuclear deterrence but it will increase the asymmetrical risks. Fifth, if Iran accesses nuclear weapons, it may help other countries to do so. Sixth, if Iran reaches the nuclear weapon, it may lose its control over the other weapons and military technologies. Seventh, Iran's access to nuclear weapons will pose a threat to US allies in the region (Reardon, 2012: 3-6).

So, despite the Iranian interpretation of nuclear activities as its legal right and as national sovereignty, the United States calls it a political issue. Thus, the conflict of interpretation over nuclear activities led to different approaches and behaviors on both sides. While the West used hard, soft, and semi-hard strategies to limit Iran's activities, Iran sought to use formal and informal, institutional, and negotiation mechanisms to achieve its nuclear rights.

II- Game Theory and Iran`s Nuclear Policy

In everyday life, we often confront problems where our interests and those of others are conflicted. In such situations, we have to

consider others' possible actions and expect the following outcomes, and adjust our future actions. Game theory is the study of this kind of interaction and defined as, according to Myerson, the study of mathematical models of conflict and cooperation between intelligent rational decision-makers (Myerson, 1991: vii-xi). We begin by proving the equilibrium of John van Neumann's mixed-strategy in relation to the two-player zero-sum game theory which was proposed almost 70 years ago, modern game theory has been applied to a wide range of academic fields including political science, economics and business, biology, and psychology. Although game theory has recently been challenged by the discovery of a winning strategy for the prisoner dilemma, game theory is a very effective tool for analyzing various issues in the political sciences.

Single Matrix form Games: Theoretically, the game theory consists of the following three components: the actors, their strategies, and the payoffs related to the combination of each player's choice (Gates and Humes, 1997: 23-24). Based on the simplest form of the game, there appear two actors with two strategies, which make four different sets of payoffs. This is usually represented in a matrix, as we can see in table 1.

Table 1. The Case of Kidnapping by Gangsters

		Police Agency	
		Negotiation	Suppression
Gangsters	Negotiation	m-p+l (80), -m+h-t(40)	-m-p-l (-180), m-h+t(-40)
	Gundown &Resistance	m+p+l (180), –m-h--160)	-m+p-l (-80), m-h+t -40)

Detailed in Table 1 is a case of kidnapping by gangsters. There exist two actors: gangsters and the police agency. The prior preference of gangsters is to extort money from this hostage-taking and, in addition, they expect to improve their presence in the international society by the terrorism. On the other hand, the police agency's most preferred priority is to rescue the hostages

successfully. In this situation, each player has two possible options. Gangsters can choose their action between negotiation with the police authorities or shooting the hostages down and resisting the police force, while the police agency is going to either negotiate with the gangsters or suppress the disturbance by force. In each cell of Table 1, the four payoffs depending on the combination of different strategies are suggested. Here, each alphabet stands for the following: money(m), presence improvement of gangsters(p), the life of gangsters (1), the life of hostages(h), risk of additional terrorism caused by police agency's soft strategy (negotiation)(t).

If we give different weight to each factor (let's assume m=50, p=50, l=80, h=100, t=10), we can figure out numerical payoffs that the two actors confront. Given that the third cell (Gundown & Resistance, Negotiation) is a nonsensical strategy combination, which occasionally appears due to the incapability of the matrix to rule out a certain result, the first cell (both Negotiation) is the Nash equilibrium. Nash equilibrium is defined as an equilibrium if no actor has an incentive to change her strategy unilaterally once each player has chosen her component of Nash equilibrium (Gates and Humes, 1997: 35). Of course, if the given weightings are changed, Nash equilibrium can move to another combination of strategies.

Extensive form Games: Now we are going to examine the game of another form, which is called an extensive form game. In this approach, we can design a series of sequential decisions of actors, whereas only a single and simultaneous combination of strategies can be established from the single matrix form game.
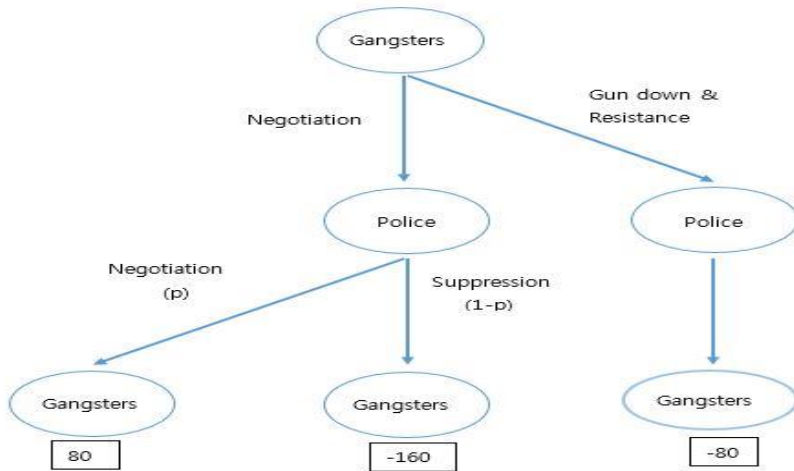
Figure 3. Step One Extensive form Game with Probabilities

In the above figure, three components of the game (actors, strategies, and payoffs) are clearly demonstrated so that we can easily grasp the sequence of the game. Furthermore, in this model, we can analyze the subsequent combinations of strategies that take place after the first stage. An additional and important advantage of this model is that possibilities of other actors' actions can be taken into account. As we cannot fully predict other actors' future actions, it is of great help to speculate the actions with possibilities. When gangsters choose to negotiate with authorities, they are going to expect that the police agency will agree to negotiate with the possibility of p or suppress them with the possibility of (1-p). Then the expected value of gangsters' payoff when they negotiate is

$E(\text{Negotiate}) = p \times 80 + (1 - p) \times (-160) = 80p - 160.$

When they choose the option of gun down and resistance, the expected value is $E(\text{Gun down \& Resistance}) = -80.$

As the gangsters will choose the strategy with a higher expected payoff,

if $80p - 160 > -80,$ i.e. $p > 1,$

They will negotiate with the authorities. However, the possibility cannot exceed 1, we can presume that gangsters will

choose the strategy of Gun down & Resistance in this case.

IV- Iran-US Dispute over Nuclear Program

Actors, Preferences and Strategies: As mentioned above, several different countries have participated in the dispute over Iran's nuclear program. Not to mention the United States, Russia, and EU3, many other Middle Eastern countries (e.g. Israel, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and etc.), and international institutions (e.g. International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations) are deeply related to this issue. However, in this paper, we are going to focus on the relation between Iran and the United States, as they are considered the two main players in this game.

Before we deal with their strategies, the state preferences of Iran and the US should be discussed. As Andrew Moravcsik argued, taking state preference into account is very important to analyze state behaviors and subsequent aspects of conflicts (or cooperation) between states (Moravcsik, 1997: 516). First, let's take a look at Iran's state preference. The most preferred goal of Iran, even though it sounds obvious, is to guarantee its national security. Surrounded by pro-American states such as Israel, Saudi Arabia –though the relationship between the US and Saudi Arabia is crumbling (Haykel, 2013)–, Iraq and Afghanistan are under the US control, post-revolution Iran has always been concerned about its national security. In that sense, it seems to be a natural consequence that Iran continues its nuclear program, given that Israel is reported to possess between 90 to 200 nuclear warheads (Arms Control Association, 2020) and even Saudi Arabia is developing nuclear weapons (Urban, 2013). Another important preference of Iran is to remain as the most powerful revisionist country in the region. Iran has always proclaimed that it will 'export revolution', challenging the US and Israeli hegemony (Mahdavi, 2014: 166-167) in the region. To abandon its nuclear program can be possibly seen as bowing to US. Pressure, which will cause Iran's status as a revisionist power to be damaged.

Former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's remark that "America cannot do a wrong us" (Clawson, 2013) exemplifies Iran's will not to submit to the hard-line foreign policy of the US.

On the other hand, Iran's preference to improve its economy implies the possibility of negotiations and cooperation with the international community. Due to a series of Western sanctions against Iran, Iran has recently faced serious economic crises, its inflation rate in 2013 exceeded 40%. (The CIA World Factbook, 2014). Even worse, the plunging oil price has aggravated the situation, given that Iran needs at least $ 130 per barrel of oil to be able to meet the national budget milestone (Herszenhorn, 2014). In this context, one of Hassan Rouhani's options is probably to arrange a significant level of dealings with the international community. (Nasseri, 2015). When it comes to the preferences of the US, we can point out its traditional preferences in the Middle East after the Cold War: advocating Israel's interest; deterring the proliferation of nuclear weapons as well as radical Islam in the region; enhancing neoliberal globalization; and calling for liberal Western versions of human rights and democracy. In order to uphold the above-mentioned preferences, Washington would take tough strategies against Iran such as sanctions, because Israel regards Iran's possession of a nuclear weapon as one of the greatest threats to its national security; Iran is in fact one of the potential nuclear and Islamic countries, and its human rights and democracy status does not meet the standards of Western societies.

In addition, the US preference for stabilizing the regional situation in the Middle East and the current turbulent situation in the region could be the driving force that will appease Tehran. Now that the Iraqi government is proved to be incompetent to secure regional stability and Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is dominating in broad areas, Iran can be the US partner to stabilize the Middle East, considering that full-scale deployment of ground troops is a heavy choice for the Obama administration. When it comes to repelling ISIS in the region, both countries share common interests (Labott and Sciutto, 2014). However,

military cooperation is unlikely to happen, as it would cause strong backlashes of Israel and Saudi Arabia. In addition, the more stable the circumstance in the Middle East becomes, the more capabilities the US can use on its 'Pivot to Asia' strategy.

Single Matrix Modelling of the US-Iran Relation: Based on each actor's preference examined above, we can form a single matrix model to analyze the relationship between both countries. The strategies that the United States can develop are a policy of appeasement and a strict policy, while Iran's option is to suspend or adhere to its nuclear program. Also, the interests of the two governments can be identified as follows: for Iran, national security (ns), position as a revisionist power (rp) and economic status (ec); Also, the interests of the two states can be marked as follows: for Iran, national security (ns), the position as a revisionist power (rp), and economic status (ec); For the United States, traditional alliances with Israel and Saudi Arabia (to), non-proliferation in the region (np) and regional stability in the Middle East (rs).

Table 1. Single Matrix form Analysis on the US-Iran Conflict Over the Nuclear Program

		U. S	
		Appeasement Policy	Hardline Policy
Iran	Freezing Nuclear Development	-ns-rp+ec(b_i),-ta+np+rs(b_u) <1>	-ns-rp-ec(d_i), +ta+np-rs(d_u)<2>
	Adherence to Nuclear Development	ns+rp+ec(a_i), -ta-np+rs(a_u)<3>	ns+rp-ec(c_i), ta-np-rs(c_u) <4>

Now let's take a look at each cell. In the case of cell <1>, Iran would improve its economy at the expense of its national security and the status as a revisionist power. The United States can stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons and, in coordination with Iran, can easily secure the region, but they must take into account

the great concerns of their allies. The cell <2> is a hardly selectable option, as Iran loses everything in this case. Also, it is not plausible that the US takes hardline policy when Iran ceases its nuclear development. Cell <3> is an impossible situation, because the interests of the United States are very small compared to what Iran is gaining. In the case of Cell <4>, Iran can provide security and continue to "export the revolution" of its own free will, but it will suffer from the economic crisis caused by the sanctions of the international community. In the case of Cell <4>, Iran can provide security and continue to "export the revolution" of its own free will, but it will suffer from the economic crisis caused by the sanctions of the international community.

The equilibrium that has taken place so far in the real world is closer to the case of cell <4>. As mentioned, after the Iranian revolution, relations between the two governments were always in a state of conflict, although tensions occasionally eased. In general, extremists in Iran have always pursued their nuclear development, formally or covertly, and in response, the United States has imposed economic or diplomatic sanctions on Iran. This kind of ongoing conflict can occur because Iran has not paid much attention to the economic situation in the field of foreign policy. because Iran has a lot of oil that enables it to develop its economy at a steady growth rate. On the other hand, the United States does not need to support Iran in terms of regional security, because it has strong ties with several Middle Eastern governments and has deployed a large military force in the Middle East at the same time. However, changing political and the diplomatic situation in the region implies the possibility of the movement of equilibrium from <4> to<1>. This can be explained as follows: Continued economic sanctions against Iran and the free fall of oil prices, forced Iran to consider the economic factor as much more important during diplomatic negotiations. Also, unlike Ahmadinejad and conservatives who see national security as an absolute value that can never be accepted, , the new president, Rouhani, may consider security as part of the negotiation process. The United States also

had to find other conditions for the region to regain control of the ISIS-held area. Similarly, the balance can change depending on the weight that the actors place on each factor or the circumstances surrounding the actors.

Extensive form Modelling of the US-Iran Relation: Now we are going to apply the case to the extensive form model, based on what we examined in the previous part. The extensive form has the advantage that we can apprehend the sequential choices of actors, which is more plausible in real-world politics because the relationship between countries is the result of continuous interaction between them. In the case of the US-Iran, the interaction has lasted more than several decades.
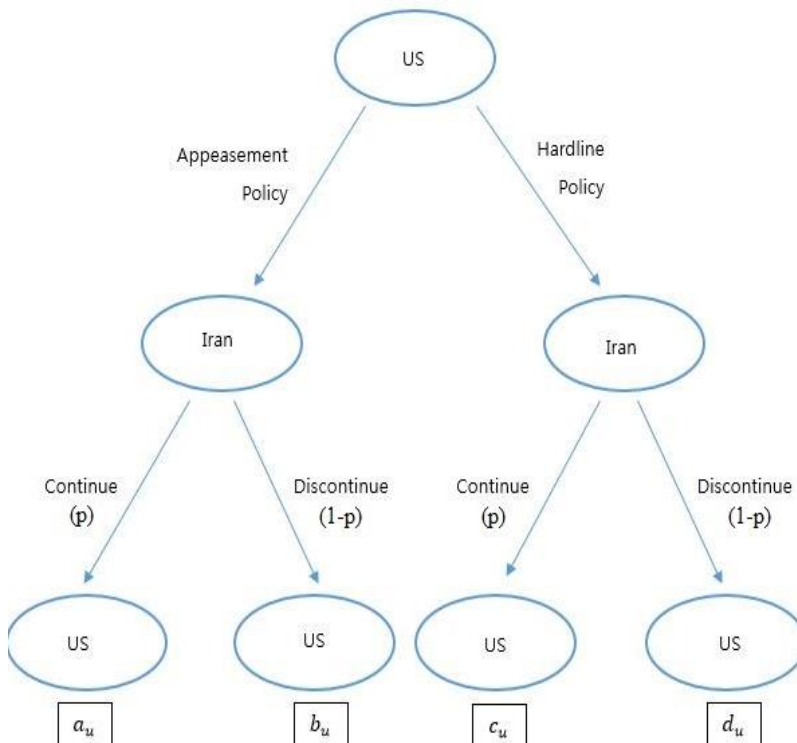
Figure 4. Extensive form Analysis on the US-Iran Conflict from the Perspective of the US

This extensive form model is constructed slightly differently from the single matrix form model. In the single matrix form model, the combination of America's hardline policy and Iran's freezing nuclear development was considered as a non-sensical option, but this option is possible in this model because the cessation of the nuclear program could be done as a result of Iran's response to the strict US policy. Likewise, the easing of tensions between the United States and Iran in the continuation of the nuclear program also appears in this model, because in real politics the possibility of deception is very high. Initially, the United States has two options to choose from: In the initial stage, the US has two options to choose: the appeasement policy or the hardline policy. In turn, Iran's response to any is to continue or suspend its nuclear program. From the US point of view, the probability of Iran's future action is uncertain, so the probabilities of each response are listed as (p) and (1-p). Also, America's possible rewards from the four different situations are marked at the bottom of the figure: a_u,b_u,c_u, and d_u, and each reward is composed of interest factors (such as non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region(np), and regional stability(rs)) which we examined in the single matrix form. In this model, we can calculate the expected rewards for each action. For the case of the appeasement policy, the expected value Exp (Appeasement) is calculated as

$$\text{Exp}(A) = a_u(p) + b_u(1 - p).$$

Also, for the case of the hardline policy, the expected value Exp(Hardline) is calculated as

$$\text{Exp}(H) = c_u(p) + d_u(1 - p).$$

Consequently, the US will choose the option with the higher expected value. In other words, we can compare those two expected values like the following inequality:

$$\text{Exp}(A) = a_u(p) + b_u(1 - p) > \text{Exp}(H) = c_u(p) + d_u(1 - p)$$
$$a_u(p) + b_u(1 - p) > c_u(p) + d_u(1 - p)$$
$$p > \frac{d_u - b_u}{a_u - b_u - c_u + d_u}$$

Hence, we can presume that if the left-hand-side (LHS) of the inequality is smaller than the right-hand-side (RHS), the US will

take the hardline policy over the Iranian nuclear issue. In reality, the fact that the US has applied hardline policy toward Iran for over 30 years implies that the value of the LHS was smaller than the value of the RHS. Furthermore, if the component of each reward is possibly changed, for example, the US evaluates the importance of 'rs' (regional stability) more than before, the inequality can be varied. In that case, the US would choose another option: the appeasement policy, just like we can observe from the current situation of the Middle East.
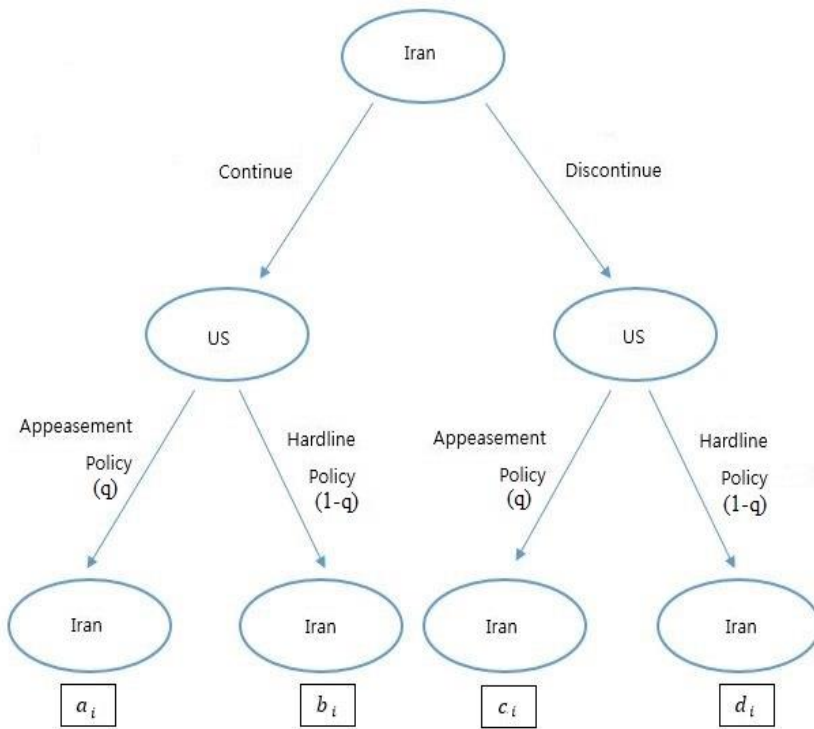

Figure 5. Extensive form Analysis on the US-Iran Conflict from the Perspective of Iran

Now let's turn Washington's view into Tehran's. . The same logic and analytic structure are applied here. In the initial stage, Iran chooses either to continue or discontinue its nuclear program, and

then the US takes subsequent action: the appeasement policy or hardline policy. The possibilities given to two different actions are q and (1-q). Also, the payoffs that Iran can expect are denoted as a_i, b_i, c_i and d_i. These payoffs are composed of the above-mentioned state interests of Iran: ns (=national security), rp (=the position as a revisionist power), and ec (=economic status).

From this payoffs and possibilities, we can again compare the expected value of continuing the nuclear program Exp(Continue)= $a_i (q)+b_i (1-q)$ with that of discontinuing the development of a nuclear weapon Exp (Discontinue)= $c_i (q)+d_i (1-q)$.

Exp(C)= $a_i (q)+b_i (1-q)$ > Exp(D)= $c_i (q)+d_i (1-q)$

$q > (d_i-b_i)/(a_i-b_i-c_i+d_i)$

In the same logic as we applied to the analysis on the perspective of the US, if the value of the LHS is bigger than that of the RHS, Iran would presumably continue its nuclear development. Iran's long-lasted nuclear program could be explained as the result of Iran's judgment that the expected value of continuing the nuclear program is bigger than the other.

Additionally, given that the Iranian government recently showed its willingness to negotiate with the international community, one can assume that the new Rouhani government has a different view of Iran's national interests than the previous government. That is to say, this government put much more importance on its economic status (denoted as 'ec' in the single matrix form analysis) and the expected value of freezing its nuclear facilities came to be significantly higher than before. As mentioned above, the equilibrium will be automatically changed when players alter their priority of policy-making. This implies, at the same time, the friendly atmosphere recently created by the two nations is not a final stage. When regional stability is achieved, the US will presumably concentrate on the traditional alliance and non-proliferation what they have traditionally regarded as the most important. Meanwhile, when Iran recovers from its economic crisis and the oil price gets back, we can assume that there is somewhat a high possibility of Iran's changed action.

Moreover, in the extensive form of the game, most of the games are not finished in just one or two stages. The game is repeated over and over and this type of game is referred to as 'Repeated Game.' In the repeated game, the credibility of each actor is very important, as to how much one actor (the US) trusts the other (Iran) significantly affects the negotiation process. Since losing credibility in the international society is definitely a huge cost, the Iranian government cannot easily take deceptive actions. Knowing this, the American government can narrow down Iran's possible future actions. One of the most important signs of the 'repeated game' has been shown during the presidency of Donald Trump.

Despite the liberal internationalism in Obama's administration that emphasized multilateralism, international diplomacy, preferring international goals, and struggling to be a multilateral hegemonic actor, unilateralism and pragmatic neo-isolationism became Trump's doctrine of foreign policy. In fact, by focusing on the doctrines of 'America First' and 'Make America Great Again', the one-term presidency of Donald Trump has met with the nationalistic interpretation of the foreign policy. Such an approach, however, was not necessarily principled isolationism, but a selective internationalism. Trump, by criticizing Obama's internationalism, has declared that this behavior weakened the global status of the United States and provided a competitive opportunity for competitors. (Macinnon, 2020: 1-2). In other words, such an inappropriate approach, according to Trump, has risen the politics of free-riding. However, by employing a costless alliance, Trump has attempted to share the costs of protecting regional security. According to this interpretation, by considering the JCPOA as a strategic mistake, Trump abandoned it in May 2018. He has been trying to justify his behavior with double-edged and selective standards. In other words, by overlooking the reports of IAEA and insisting on the non-compliance of Iran, applying maximum pressure on Iran (Barzegar, 2020: 2-3), triggering regional tensions and diplomatic-economic sanctions,

Trump did his best to persuade Iran to renegotiate. In fact, by employing the doctrine of withdrawal and politics of 'weak Iran', Trump has pursued to make a great deal. Moreover, his trip to the countries of the region and the sale of advanced military technologies on the one hand and the promotion of the policy of "Iranophobia" on the other has deepened the mutual distrust. Trump's foreign policy has not only met with maximum resistance from Iran, but has also increased regional tensions and Iran's proxy behavior in the Middle East. Finally, the mutual distrust between Washington and Tehran during Donald Trump's presidency culminated in blaming Iran's disorderly and revisionist behavior and emphasizing US disobedience.

Conclusion

This paper took the advantage of the game theory to analyze Tehran-Washington's decision-making process over Iranian nuclear activities. According to the single matrix form of game theory that considers the long-lasting conflict between the two countries as the equilibrium made by two actors' foreign policy choices, contradictory interpretations between Iran and U.S. over the nuclear activity have turned Iranian nuclear activities into an international issue. While Iran considers its activities as legal behavior based on the non-proliferation treaty and as a national right, the U.S. regards it as a political activity covered by legal coverage. Based on the extensive form of game theory, however, the changed value of preferences of Iran and the United States has provided Tehran and Washington with different interpretations and mechanisms to grasp the continuous decision-making process about nuclear activity. Such paradoxical interpretations about the Iranian nuclear activity encouraged Tehran and Washington to apply different policies.

In fact, the ceaseless mutual discord is an equilibrium of the two countries' policy choices. Accordingly, the US has used hard, soft, and semi-hard mechanisms to limit Iran's nuclear activities. However, Iran tried to achieve its nuclear right based on formal,

informal, institutional, and negotiable mechanisms. Since the ongoing talks between Iran and the United States have not yielded satisfactory results for several years, Iran considered it as national security. However, the United States has pressed Iran with multidimensional sanctions, calling Iran's nuclear activities a potential threat to regional and global security. Although during the presidency of Obama and Rouhani, a new deal was signed, Trump abandoned this deal in order to persuade Iran to renegotiate. This policy has deepened mutual distrust. According to the findings of this article, by distinguishing between Iran and the United States in interests or preferences, their policy options and their foreign policy behaviors towards nuclear activities can be changed.

Finally, a thoroughly prepared analysis of US-Iranian nuclear relations must be carefully considered to see how long the bittersweet relationship can last, when it will end. Finally, a well-prepared analysis of the Iran-US relations over the nuclear activity needs to be considered carefully how far the bittersweet relationship can proceed, when it will come to the end, and what will be the future of the relations between the two countries?

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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.

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 developements 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 Ukrainan crisis, andthe 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 programms. 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 groupsnamely 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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