

The U.S. Tremendous Strategy to Counter the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Biden Government: From de-Geopolitical Policy to de-Legitimacy

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Abstract

Iran and the United States have experienced hostile and tense relations since the occupation of the U.S. Embassy in 1358. During this time, the White House has not given up on any attempt to change the government in Tehran. The main question is ‘What is the tremendous strategy of the United States to counter the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Biden era?’ The central hypothesis is the U.S. has two new strategies confronting Iran: de-geopolitics abroad and de-legitimacy inside. The present study aimed to analyze these two strategies. The results indicated that according to the teachings of Smart War, the U.S. has two goals for these actions; first, a sinusoidal and erosional process aimed at deprivation and discrediting of the Iranian political system in internal and external levels (de-legitimacy and surrender). The depletion of Iran's strategic and geopolitical capacity in the region to remove power tools from it (weakening to surrender or change the regime).

Keywords: Geopolitics, Smart Power, de-Legitimacy, USA, Iran, Middle East.

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Introduction

Iran and the United States have experienced hostile and tense relations over the past forty-two years. Iran believes the United States has the following characteristics: unilateralism, sovereignty on the world, ignoring the rights of other countries, disregard for international morals and rights, interference in Middle East affairs, welcoming war and violence instead of dialogue and tolerance and is a prominent symbol of arrogance, colonialism and exploitation in the world. In contrast, the White House introduces Iran as a source of insecurity in the Middle East, an obstacle to Arab-Israeli peace, and a supporter of resistance groups worldwide. Washington has also consistently accused Tehran of human rights abuses, attempts to acquire nuclear weapons, and incitement to terrorism over the past four decades. The U.S. could never prove this claim.

In contrast, Iran has a list of bitter memories in its mind and is constantly reviewing it. This list starts from the coup d'état of 28 Mordad, the capitulation before the revolution and until the proof of U.S. espionage in Iran (occupation of the U.S. embassy), support and encouragement of Saddam to invade Iran, sanctions, threats, attempts to change the regime. In the last case, the assassination of a senior commander of the Quds Force of Iran martyred Sardar Soleimani after the Islamic Revolution. It is noteworthy that the wall of distrust between the two countries is intense. The U.S. frustration with the resurgence of relations and the failure of projects such as infiltration, the color revolution, foreign threats, sanctions and pressure caused Washington to resort to new tools and policies to contain Iran in the Middle East. The U.S. National Security Strategy, published in March 2021, mentions China 14 times, Russia 5 times, Iran 4 times and North Korea 3 times. It shows that confronting Iran is still on the agenda and a priority for the United States, and Iran is more important than North Korea. This document states “Regional actors such as Iran and North Korea while threatening U.S. allies and partners and challenging regional stability, seek capabilities and technologies that can change the game” (The White House, 2021: 8). Accordingly, the central question is ‘What is the grand strategy of the United States to deal with Iran, especially during the presidency of Joe Biden?’ The research hypothesis points to de-geopolitics and de-legitimacy as two wings for the U.S. strategy against Iran, likely to intensify in the coming years. A descriptive-analytical method is used, and data is collected with the library method.

1. Research Background

Research on U.S. strategies in dealing with Iran has always been a fascinating

topic for researchers; it has been addressed many times over the past forty years. Some of the most important of these works are as follows:

Darvishi, Setalani and Hemmati (2016 AD/1395 SH: 43), using the method of research future, believe U.S. policy in dealing with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the next decade is confrontationalism with limited cooperation, especially in regional issues. Barzanuni and Farhadi use the scenario writing method to consider the favorable scenario of the United States as the beginning of a new round of negotiations (Barzanuni and Farhadi, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 91). The possible scenario is to increase sanctions and maximum pressure. Mottaqi compares the type of threats posed by the United States against Iran during the Bush and Obama eras and mentions an aggressive approach to the former and a flexible approach to the latter (Mottaqi, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 7-13). Rafatnejad et al. categorise U.S. military attack scenarios against Iran into conventional global attacks and limited nuclear and missile facilities attacks (Rafatnejad et al. 2014 AD/1393 SH: 133). Rafie et al. consider new scenarios of U.S. soft power against Iran, including media psychological warfare, economic sanctions, human rights, cyber warfare, Iranophobia, and pressure on regional allies (Rafie et al. 2014 AD/1393 SH: 167). Moshirzadeh and Jafari, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 47) believe that Iran will be under constant pressure from the United States regarding its challenge to world order. Two points are the cause of difference of this research from others: First, the focus is on the de-geopolitics, de-legitimacy, which have been ignored or deservedly addressed in other works. Then, Joe Biden's presidency and U.S. strategy during that period are this paper innovation.

2. Theoretical Framework: Smart Power

Suzanne Nossel added the concept of "Smart Power" to political ideas in international relations in 2004. In an article published in the April 2004 Foreign Affairs issue, he challenged and proposed the adequacy of Joseph Nye's term "Soft Power" confronting the severe threats to American interests (Nassel, 2004: 1). Nye called soft power "the Ability to Shape the Priorities, and Others Preferences through Attraction and Persuasion without the use of Coercion." (Nay, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 43) His proposal of soft power was different from influence because influence can include hard power (threat) or reward. In contrast, soft power is more than just persuasion or the ability to move people through reasoning.

Nassel believes that must align America's military, economic, cultural, and ideological capabilities in one direction to guarantee the U.S. continuity of superiority. Shortly afterwards, the Center for American Progress coined

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the term "Integrated Power," and in contrast formed the phrase " Stupid Power," meaning the misuse or irrational use of hard and soft power (Bagheri Dolatabadi and Beigi, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 16). Ernest J. Wilson in a critique of U.S. foreign policy in 2008, wrote: "The use of smart power has become a national security necessity. The need to trace its roots to the long-term international structural changes and short-term failures of the current government." He considered smart power a combination of hard and soft power that effectively and efficiently pursues the actor's goals (Wilson, 2008: 110).

The plot of these wide-ranging debates led Joseph Nye to re-explain the concept of smart power. He writes: "It is a concept I proposed in 2003 to curb the misunderstandings that have arisen over the fact that soft power alone can make an effective foreign policy." Power is the power of influence on others behavior to get what you want. There are three ways to achieve this goal: Coercion, payment, and attractiveness. Hard power is the use of force and cost. If one government can set the agenda of other governments or shape their priorities, this can lead to a saving of carrot-and-stick policy; but can rarely substitute the two. Therefore, we need smart strategies that combine soft and hard power tools (Nye, 2009: 160).

These scientific debates soon found their place in U.S. practical policy, and Hillary Clinton, the U.S. Secretary of State in the Obama administration, said: "The United States alone cannot solve the current problems, and the world cannot do that without the participation of the United States. The best way to advance America's interests in reducing global threats and seizing international opportunities is to design and implement global solutions. We must use smart power, a range of diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal, and cultural tools. Use the appropriate tools or a combination of tools depending on the situation with the smart power of intelligence; diplomacy will be at the forefront of our foreign policy" (Clinton, 2009: 1). Thus, U.S. foreign policy shifted away from a mere public diplomacy approach and emphasized soft power and desire for smart power. Since then, the treatment towards Iran changed U.S. foreign policy, and we have seen a new round of crippling sanctions and military threats. Although this policy has shifted more toward "Hard Power" under the Trump administration, smart power has been revived with the return of Democrats to the White House. The concept of hard power, equivalent to economic and military power, is mainly unambiguous. In the following, we explain soft power that is closely linked to soft warfare.

The term soft warfare is a new term for an old concept. Soft warfare is any soft, psychological action and media propaganda aimed at the target

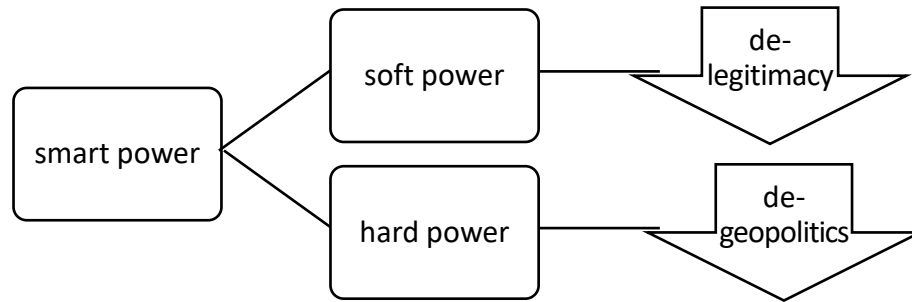
community and defeat without conflict or using force or coercion. Psychological war, white war, media war, psychological operations, soft overthrow, soft revolution, velvet revolution, color revolution, etc., are forms of soft war (Charami et al., 2018 AD/1397 SH: 89).

Soft war dates back to the birth of human history, like hard war, but its shape has also changed with the development of science, technology, and communication in this field. The modern form of soft warfare dates back to the 1970s. The establishment of a "Current Danger Committee" at the height of the Cold War to counter the Soviets is a clear example of this type of war. During Gorbachev's reforms (Prostorika and Glasnost), the committee ruled out a hard war (military-economic) against the Soviet Union and a soft war to overthrow the Soviet Union with three strategies: Control doctrine, media battle and civil obedience (Basiri, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 152). The critical question regarding the historical experience is 'What perception does the United States now have of its position in the world, and is it seeking to re-use the same strategies against Iran?' Based on the geopolitical concept, this question illuminates the ideological and operational lines of the country's foreign policy as one of the main actors in international politics. The United States has a geopolitical conception of a unipolar world, according to David Calou, a senior professor of international relations at Johns Hopkins University, and it is ingrained in the minds of U.S. officials (Sajjadpour, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 1). In America's geopolitical view of the world, overcoming enemies is one of the most critical challenges to achieving a unipolar world. Iran is one of the countries that has been consistently introduced as an enemy by U.S. national security leaders (United States Department of Defense, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 2; the White House. 2021: 8).

A part of the strategy against Iran to neutralize its power, considering the popular basis of the Iranian revolution and its influence in the region and the world based on soft power indicators, is based on psychological warfare. Countries like Iran, which are in a delayed atmosphere in link to modern instrumental power, have a comprehensive need to provide software indicators of national power. The use of these software indicators in confronting the sinister forces during the imposed war was seen by Iran, and after the war, Iran sought to expand it. Software indicators of national power confronting threats are national will, national spirit, type of political system and government structure. Each of these indicators affects the style and process of threats. Therefore, the goal is the context of power-building and security-building by these indicators for the Islamic Republic. According to this strategy, crisis-making and de-legitimacy of the political

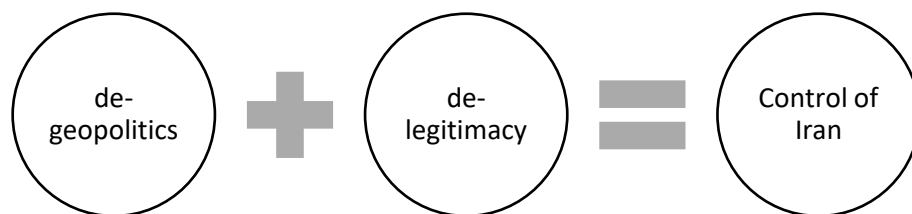
system and security components of the system will be on the agenda (Nawabakhsh and Sajjadi, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 9).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



3. The Dual Dimensions of the U.S. Smart War against Iran

Joe Biden's approach to confronting Iran is based on smart warfare. In the hard dimension, try to limit Iran's military and defensive capabilities, from missile programs to conventional military power, through the imposition of economic sanctions, political pressure, etc., to force Iran like JCPOA, to stop developing its military plans (Wright, 2021: 32). On the other hand, emphasize de-geopolitics to deprive Iran of its geopolitical advantages. Regarding the limitation of writing, the present study explains the recent aspect of the hard dimension of American politics. Also, among the various policies in the soft power dimension, the main focus will be on de-legitimacy.



3.1. Hard Power: De-Geopolitics Policy

The concept of "de-Geopolitics" is derived from the term "Geopolitics." While in geopolitics, all attention and policies are focused on using geography to increase the power of a country; but de-geopolitics takes a different path and vice versa. The de-geopolitics policy is a set of acts that destroy the country role and geographical importance, which is directly related to the global power of that country in various ways. These include aligning neighboring countries against it, launching a war, and unsecured its borders (Qalibaf and Pooyandeh, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 104). This policy aimed to disable and ineffective the influential power factor in the

geographical dimension. Redirecting the transit of goods, oil pipelines, reducing the role of straits and waterways in regional and international shipping by bypassing channels and moving pipes behind the straits are clear examples of geopolitical de-geopolitics.

This concept and geopolitical isolation have differences. Geopolitical isolation, known as perceptual isolation or a sense of siege, arises based on the extent of the neighbors' feelings of being threatened. As a result, the threatened country tries to change the shadow of this geopolitical isolation in its favor by creating a positive balance of power with the help of foreign powers (Karimipour et al., 2017 AD/1396 SH: 215). In other words, geopolitical isolation is "Political Isolation." It means the political, economic, social, communication and cultural relations of the political unit with its environment reduced (Mottaqi and Qarabeigi, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 140).

Iran's geopolitical and strategic position has particular importance to the United States. According to the U.S. strategic rationality, Iran's geopolitical characteristics have security importance to the United States. Many American strategists believe that the political structure of Iran is one of the most complex and ambiguous political systems in the Middle East today. They emphasize that U.S. goals towards Iran should have similar characteristics (Yuldasheva, 2017: 45). The Americans regard the expansion of Iran's strategic and ideological capabilities as a threat to their national interests and security, so they use more aggressive literature and measures confronting the Islamic Republic. Based on this perception, the U.S. view of Iran, the Islamic Revolution, the Islamic Republic and its political leaders is entirely pessimistic (Ross, 2021: 1). U.S. rulers know any attempt by the Islamic Republic to identify-seeking and gain balance of power in the region as a threat. This perception is the foundation of many U.S. security policies and approaches in dealing with Iran. In other words, the Americans believe any identify-seeking of Iran is an attempt to change the balance of regional power and challenge internationally (Mottaqi, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 14).

The Americans' unfavorable perception of Iran's political structure changes their approach to Iran's geopolitical position in the Middle East. With the American military invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, Iran's cultural, political, and geopolitical situation became more critical. Therefore, Iran's geopolitical position in the Middle East reflects unique indicators about its foreign policy (Barzegar, 2009: 55). The geopolitical characteristics of Iran are in the political literature of many Americans, including Graham Fuller. According to Fuller, in addition to the unique Iranian cultural features, this country has special geopolitical features that

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increase its position in the region. Based on such an approach, the possibility of interaction with Iran in the tense atmosphere of international politics will be necessary and inevitable (Fuller, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 278).

The political developments in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf over the past four decades have expanded in a process that has enhanced the possibility of Iran's geopolitical role. It means that no security formation will occur in the region unless there is a basis for Iran's participation and cooperation. Iran's role in the developments in Southwest Asia shows that any regional cooperation in Iran will create more stability and interaction for regional security and U.S. strategic goals (Mottaqi, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 16).

The Middle East has always been dangerous and threatening for American presidents. Jo Biden's approach to Iran's Middle East policy, like Bush, Obama, and Trump, is aggressive (The Guardian, 2021: 1). Many U.S. strategists believe that Iran's Middle East approach is risky for U.S. security interests. Biden's policy, like his predecessors, is to limit Iran's behavior patterns in the Middle East. Many American strategists still condemn Iran's Middle East policy. First, they believe that Iran supports radical and extremist groups in the Middle East. Another is trying to overthrow U.S. allies in the Middle East. Third, it opposes creating peace between the Arabs and Israel and implementing the Middle East peace agreement. The mentioned above show that Biden's Middle East view has not changed much from previous U.S. presidents. Like Trump and Obama, Biden enumerates many Iranian policies contrary to U.S. goals and interests. Hence, Biden, like other American strategists and rulers, attributes many of his security problems to Iran's Middle East policy (Biden, 2020: 121).

The dominant aspect of Biden's policy in dealing with Iran has dual nature. On the one hand, the Americans seek to persuade and encourage Iran to participate in U.S. security goals. On the other, seek an opportunity to counter Iran's policy of power. The Americans are reluctant to enhance Iran's strategic capability, so as stated in their 2021 National Security Strategy document, they will continue to restrain Iran and counter its actions. "We will adjust our military presence in the Middle East as needed to disrupt international terrorist networks, deter Iranian aggression, and protect vital U.S. interests." (The White House, 2021: 15)

The policy of containment and deterrence against Iran is not aimed at overthrowing and changing its regime. However, it happy U.S. officials, but know that achieving this will cost the country dearly. Therefore, they prefer to accomplish this goal in other ways (Biden, 2020: 121). In other words, the containment policy has a limited cost to the United States and,

on the other hand, reduces Iran's economic and strategic power in the long run. Such a process is considered an indirect confrontation. The ultimate goal of this model, in the long run, is to create the ground for the erosion of Iran's strategic power and put Iran under economic and geopolitical siege. In line with this goal, it tried to prevent the passage of oil and gas pipelines through Iran to Europe or the Persian Gulf.

The passage of oil and gas pipelines from east to west (Nabaco), north to south (Tapi) and west to east (Emirates-Oman pipeline) were all done in this direction (Goodarzi, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 12). They wanted to overthrow the energy transfer of Iran to the Mediterranean Sea by overthrowing the government of Bashar al-Assad (Darg and Bagheri Dolatabadi, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 60-61).

Some actions were done to de-geopolitics from Iran during the Trump era. These are destroying the image of the Iranian regime in the region nations (Iranophobia), preventing political, economic and cultural cooperation between the countries of the region and Iran and reducing the importance and position of Iranian oil in world markets (DiChristopher, 2019: 45). Washington tried to thwart a military alliance in the Persian Gulf against Iran by the "Hormoz Peace Initiative" ineffectiveness to regional countries. The intensification of military confrontations between the two countries in the Persian Gulf directly resulted from such a strategy.

The U.S. policy fundamental basis in the region has been to deprive Iran of its energy markets and its routes to the West and East. Undoubtedly, if the United States can implement Iran's policy of isolation, it will be able to make huge profits by developing the region's oil and gas fields. Doing so will diversify the energy supply of the United States and other industrialized nations and even strengthen their energy security.

3.2. Soft Power: De-Legitimacy Policy

From the Charter compiler at the beginning and its approval, continuing legitimacy had importance. Chapter 18 envisions U.N. reform says reform is a way to increase the quality of exercising authority or solutions to challenges. Apart from the minimal amendments of the Charter from the adoption beginning, "Reforms in the United Nations" was considered shortly after establishing the Organization. It has been on the agenda of the Secretaries General in various ways this day. Text and hypertext analysis of these programs indicates an effort to improve performance and increase or maintain legitimacy. This legitimacy examines in three areas:

3.2.1. International Legitimacy

1) Legitimacy and efficiency focus on the output and results of international organisations activities in achieving economic welfare, human rights

standards and arms control;

2) The legitimacy of processes caused decision-making and gaining authority. It is inspired by adequate and fair access to the rules implementation, transparency, equal participation opportunities and the like;

3) The structure legitimacy and organization identity determine the ability to gain public trust, good work performance, capacity to identify issues and threats, and ability to attract resources and expertise.

In the United Nations, the first category of legitimacy focuses on the objectives enshrined in the Charter. The second category focuses on the decision-making system in the pillars (including primary, subsidiary and agencies) and issues such as the Security Council or the distribution of positions between men and women, or geographies. The identical legitimacy and structure related to the established norms and beliefs, trust in executive mechanisms and their efficiency and agility, correct understanding of global realities and the quality of cooperation in issues such as the collective security system are considered.

3.2.2. Internal Legitimacy

Legitimacy is a form of social control that causes an actor to believe in obeying a rule or institution. This belief creates an inner motivation in the actor to follow the rules and regulations. Without explicitly enforcing the laws or offering material incentives, it establishes social order (Griffiths, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 910). Legitimacy has four essential components: Legality, morality, efficiency, social acceptability. Believing that the illegal system, immoral and inefficient, will cause dissatisfaction and social acceptability. Theorists have always emphasized that one must engage in a credit struggle before a military confrontation to confront political units. It indicates an organized effort obscures the actors' credibility, desirability, and position (Mottaqi, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 39). According to Clausewitz, the essential issue of the authority of political units in the soft war is in the form of legitimacy-making (Torabi, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 54).

Since Barack Obama, the United States has tried to de-legitimacy the Iranian political system by adopting public diplomacy (Mottaqi, 2010 AD/1289 SH: 22). Public diplomacy is one of the soft power tactics in political and strategic behavior. Over the years, public diplomacy has become part of the realities of international politics and foreign policy. Units that use public diplomacy can pursue their goals indirectly, step-by-step, covertly, and insensitively. The media is the primary tool of public diplomacy because it can convey political literature, films, music and emotional concepts (Mottaqi, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 11).

Both political spectrums within the United States have put this kind of

confrontation with the Islamic Republic on their agenda. The historical evidence shows that Democrats are more inclined to take advantage of social components in soft warfare. They always pursue security based on social and discourse indicators and signs and semantic-conceptual formats (Gates, 2009: 14).

The soft war must create conditions for the society and the political elites of a country to have a differentiated perception of their political structure. Under these circumstances, they lose their inner motivation and desire to fight and resist. "Wolf," in this regard says: "If some of the country's leaders are considered noisy groups of ignorant, deceitful, and deceitful people, or use literature that shows signs of inferiority and disinterest in the country and the political structure, in that circumstances, there is no ground for the production of national power. Such symptoms create manifestations of structural distrust, apathy, and a lack of self-confidence in society. Political hope disappears, and the future faces ambiguity for citizens" (Basiri, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 85). As Seth G. Jones, project manager for transnational threats at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), explains: "The best attack on Iran and its political system may not be just the use of systemic, financial or diplomatic tools - but soft power" (Jones, 2019: 28). So, he offers a range of options to the U.S. government finds in other strategic reports within the United States. These options include:

A) Facilitate Growing Contacts between Iranians and Americans

According to the strategy proposed by Barbara Slavin, director of the "Iran Future Initiative" project at the Atlantic Council think tank, the U.S. government should follow the same path as the Soviet Union, which led to its collapse without war. He writes: "It was American engagement policy that resulted in a successful push for Soviet influence. In this policy, while negotiating with their leaders, promoted peaceful internal changes through the ties of the two countries' peoples and other means of power" (Slavin, 2020: 63).

According to this strategy, as soon as reduction of the current obstacles in Iran, the U.S. government should seriously fund programs to facilitate contacts, especially educational exchanges and other exchanges between Iranians and Americans. The United States, in necessity, should change its current schedule so that Iranians can participate in it, even in the absence of diplomatic relations. According to the advocates' reasons view, if the Iranian government forbids its citizens from participating in these programs, Iranians will blame the government for preventing such participation. One of the first steps taken by Joe Biden in the United States

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was to remove the restrictions that Trump had imposed on Iranians to travel to this country (Biden, 2021: 35). It caused some Iranian media to consider it a sign of Biden's goodwill to return to JCPOA and spoke of the need for Iran to take a nuclear countermeasure.

B) Increase Efforts to Engage in Public Diplomacy, Especially with Ethnic Minority Groups

According to the recommendation of the "Transnational Threat Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies," (Jones, 2019: 28) the U.S. government should make a concerted effort to convey American views through Iranian-targeted channels and media. It includes the BBC World Service and other satellite channels. The United States and other government partners, news agencies, and even the private sector need to increase their coverage of the political and economic challenges of the Iranian political system. To cover the protests more and even to help the protesters (Henry, 2014: 124). The authors of this project, who hope to repeat the same political demonstrations in Dey 1396 and Aban 1398, write in this regard: "Iran's internal rifts are the point of vulnerability of the system. Between 2017 and 2019, there were thousands of protests across Iran, rising over the anger of government's economic policies, opposition to the political system, and concerns about corruption, environmental degradation, and the oppression of women. These protests have included trade unions, truck drivers, teachers, students and others, although they have not yet united in a single protest movement" (Jones, 2019: 42). They advise the U.S. government to take advantage of these protests and intensify them; Washington should increase its funding for public diplomacy and other intelligence efforts (Jones, 2019: 70).

The same recommendation has been made to the U.S. government by another project. Jonathan Ruhe, the senior analyst at the Foreign Policy Project at the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC), writes:

"The United States needs to pursue a policy of changing the regime. We do not mean regime change in the same way as the U.S. ground invasion of Iraq in 2003, but continuous and comprehensive pressure beyond economic sanctions to escalate Iran's internal tensions so that the regime eventually collapses from within" (Ruhe, 2020: 95).

In 1399, we observed examples of this tactic in the discussion of activating protest capacities among the Baluch people of Iran. The Western media and their internal support arms tried to pretend that the Islamic Republic of Iran is indifferent to the livelihood of its citizens, especially the border tribes, by proposing "Fuel Extraction" and equating it with "Kulbari." They tried to use the tactic of "Killing" many times and provoke

the people's feelings and emotions in the region and throughout Iran. Following the above line thought of Eric Edelman and Ray Takeyh, a member of the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations, in an article entitled "The Next Revolution in Iran" point out the reasons for the need for regime change in Tehran for U.S. officials and state: "Serious support for regime change does not mean supporting a military attack on Iran but is the United States using whatever means at its disposal including covert aid to the regime's opponents. The United States cannot overthrow the Islamic Republic, but it can help create the conditions for its overthrow" (Edelman and Takeyh, 2020: 12).

4. Strategies to Confronting Iran

Confronting the strategy of de-geopolitics and de-legitimacy requires two approaches in the Islamic Republic of Iran system. The first is to turn to coalition-making abroad, and the other is tolerance and management inside. We examine these two solutions in this section.

4.1. Coalition-making: Geopolitics Necessity

According to the theories of international relations, the main reason for forming alliances between states is the fight against a common external threat. Stephen Walt, one of the leading theorists of the alliance theory, believes that states unite for two reasons. Balance power to eliminate a source of threat in the security environment and eliminate a significant external threat (Walt, 1987: 26). He considers these external threats depending on four variables: geographical proximity, distribution of facilities, offensive ability, and understanding of the aggression intent. All threats will not lead to unity in the international arena, but those that seriously overshadow the interests of governments are effective in forming agreement (Moshirzadeh and Ebrahimi, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 98-101).

According to the realist approach, the best way to escape the threats of de-geopolitics is to turn to alliance strategy and away from geopolitical isolation. In this view, the main goal of increasing Iran's presence in political-security issues in the region is to expand Iran's security circles, connect Iran's security to regional security, increase chaffer power and, finally, eliminate security threats in the immediate environment of Iran's security (Alipour, Bakhtiarpour and Darkhor, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 88).

Over the years, the main challenge has been the extent of presence in the region and how to balance using geopolitical and ideological elements in foreign policy orientation, which depended on reducing or increasing the capacity of external threat. With increasing alien threat (direct U.S. presence in the region), the ideological element and security approach has

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increased with more presence in the area (Barzegar, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 123).

Therefore, in foreign policy, Iran's most significant political and geopolitical preoccupation should be in the geopolitical field of the Persian Gulf, Central Asia and the Caucasus. It is regarding the irreplaceable importance of this area and Iran's geopolitical interests in this region, especially its intersection and geographical proximity to it. The creation of any crisis in this area and the governing political atmosphere will affect the country's national security and territorial integrity. Regarding the conditions of these areas and confronting problems and geopolitical challenges, and geopolitical obstruction that has arisen to influence Iran in this subsystem and other subsystems in the Middle East, Iran, to expand its geopolitical aims in the Middle East must seek a tactical ally in another subsystem of the Middle East (Alipour, Bakhtiarpour and Darkhor, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 100).

De-legitimacy is the U.S. strategy to empty the container of capacity that occurs more in the surrounding areas where there are crises of more significant influence and distribution. Despite numerous claims to leave the region, American forces on both sides of Iran's borders are a kind of security breach for Tehran. The physical presence on both sides of the edge helps Iran's enemies transfer their infiltrating elements into Iran or control border movements more easily. The Americans still believe that instigation of ethnic groups inside Iran is possible and available. The U.S. has tried to do this in several areas, including southeastern Iran, Baluchistan, the northernmost tip of the Persian Gulf between the Arabs of Khuzestan, and in the west and northwest of Iran (Kurds and Azeris). Iran's response to these threats has several dimensions (Mottaqi, Qarabeigi, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 150).

1) Maintaining a Robust and Deterrent Security Capability to Counter These Movements

Iran should double its effort in controlling its borders, and any aggression in the East or West must immediately be responded. This response begins with seizing a ship encroaching on Iranian waters in the Persian Gulf and the Arvand River and continues until the UAV enters eastern Iran from inside Afghanistan. In this regard, attention to the southwestern regions will be more critical than the eastern. Because these areas are both more vulnerable and have the largest oil reserves in Iran and petrochemical facilities, and are the lifeblood of Iran's economic life. In this regard, intelligence and security monitoring of sabotage groups and their foreign communications and control of intellectual-political currents in the region will be necessary.

2)Tolerance and Management

Increasing tolerance capacities and avoiding emotional actions are part of the need to control soft threats. The tension and conflict capacity of the nature of the marginal and border environments is high regarding economic deprivation. Religious and ethnic divisions in these parts of Iran is increasing factor of sensitivities and vulnerabilities. Therefore, dealing with unrest in these areas should be based on persuasion, orbit and management strategies rather than physical and force-based strategies. Rapid and harsh responses will only activate the hidden energies in the lower strata of society. This management must be done before crises occur by guiding public opinion. The role of local and national media in ideas management should be well considered. Proper reflection of the progress and achievements of the system in these areas and giving hope to the youth for the future and the presence of managers among the people can increase the coefficient of social solidarity in these geographical areas and increase social cohesion (Mottaqi, Qarabeigi, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 165).

Conclusion

Change in the world system with the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the expansion of collective and individual competition between governments at the global and regional levels, and the expansion of convergence and divergence in the governments' behavior has changed the realm and analytical dimensions of geopolitical interactions. In this new space, our country is also in one of the most sensitive geopolitical situations in the world.

Our country is in the most sensitive geopolitical situation globally; active geopolitical regions with extensive and numerous functions surround it, making it the center of attraction for regional and global diplomacy. This situation affects the peripheral areas and the problems of Iran. Iran's position in the world and regional system and its interaction with world power poles and geopolitical regions always creates new problems that provide a perfect ground for studying dynamic and evolving political and scientific factors influencing Iran's global and regional developments. Instead, it emphasizes geographical realities to explain foreign policy.

In answer to the main question, we should say, according to the logic of geographical requirements and necessities, the first geographical necessity is to maintain internal cohesion for most countries. For Iran, keeping borders secure and then securing the country internally has great importance. Without secure borders, Iran would be vulnerable to foreign powers constantly trying to manipulate their internal dynamics. Iran must first define the container and then control its contents. The alliance strategy

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helps to minimize any threat to the country's territorial integrity. (Container Protection) the second step is defense measures in border protection. These measures include natural barriers (Zagros and Alborz mountains, border rivers) and unnatural (gravel, border equipment, checkpoints, etc.).

In answering the sub-question, they should consider controlling the container content and managing religious and ethnic divergent components. Once during the Qajar period, Iran lost parts of its territory by the influence of foreign elements in the government apparatus and external pressure. At the beginning of the second Pahlavi government, efforts done to separate Azerbaijan and Kurdistan from Iran. History will always repeat itself. Therefore, neglecting the container content can make the political system vulnerable. The U.S. use a de-legitimacy strategy to container empty the capacity. More than anywhere else in the surrounding areas will occur, where more significant influence and distribution crises may manifest. Despite numerous claims to leave the region, American forces on both sides of Iran's borders is a security breach for Tehran. The physical presence on both sides of the edge helps Iran's enemies transfer their infiltrating elements into Iran or control border movements more easily.

The Americans still believe that manipulation of ethnic groups inside Iran is possible and available. The United States has repeated this strategy in several areas, including southeastern Iran, Baluchistan, the northernmost tip of the Persian Gulf between the Arabs of Khuzestan, and in the west and northwest of Iran (Kurds and Azeris). Iran's response to these threats has several dimensions (Mottqhi and Qarabeigi, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 150).

The Islamic Revolution made Iran, one of the U.S. global geopolitical system components in the Middle East, the country's most potent geopolitical enemy. The ideas and concepts derived from the revolution are the most influential factor in Iran's geopolitical development and the basis of Iran's geopolitical interactions and actions with the regional and global geopolitical structure. In other words, Iran's geopolitics depends on the principles of the Islamic Revolution, which has led to the expansion of Iran's geopolitical space and subsequently increased the country's national power. Therefore, part of the U.S. counter-strategy against Iran is based on neutralizing this capacity and de-geopolitics Tehran. Although measuring the effectiveness of the above two strategies, especially de-legitimacy, requires independent research in de-geopolitics, U.S. policies seem to have succeeded in the region.

Further cooperation of these countries with the United States can drastically reduce Iran's national power factor. A recent example of this cooperation is in the policies of the Azerbaijani government in restricting Iran's access to Armenia and its markets after the recapture of the Nagorno-

Karabakh region. For about two decades, Iran used its geopolitical advantage as a political-economic lever against Azerbaijan. The country pursued a political friendship with Iran to access Nakhichevan and Turkish markets and vice versa. But now, Iran lost this opportunity and must witness the loss of its land access to Georgia and Armenia.

Undoubtedly, preserving our national and security interests in the region and the world depends on the country's trans-wing mid-mind, trans-theoretical, trans-historical and transgenerational intellectual and instrumental elites (elites of power and wealth) ward off this danger. While the United States seeks to de-geopolitics Iran. Tehran must focus on coalition-making and unity. The weight and role of the foreign policy apparatus in this regard will be very significant. Iranian diplomacy must increase its diplomatic tools as a shock absorber. Energy diplomacy can strengthen ties with neighbors and use geopolitical capacities for power-making. Media diplomacy can manage public opinion in the region and the world. Public diplomacy can influence elites and influential groups within Europe and the United States and use them as leverage to put pressure on their leaders. With economic diplomacy, Iran's economy can be involved in the nested and complex layers of the global economy to neutralize the sanctions tactic.

All of the above actions simultaneously with the immunity of the political system must be done. The four aspects of legitimacy, morality, efficiency, acceptability and social satisfaction as the foundations of the system's legitimacy-making must be strengthened. Adherence to the law by managers and citizens respect rights as the primary owners of power and system, should be the headline of all decision-making and actions. Emphasis on the "The law Itself" and the need to "Avoid Exceptionalism" guarantee the social health of the system for a long time and prevent any deviations and violations. The Islamic Republic is not military-based but instead based on the relationship between religion and politics; therefore, ethics must be current. The acceptability of any political system also depends on its efficiency. Failure in this dimension can discourage people from linking the two concepts of religion and politics in the future. These quadrilaterals must be strengthened more than anywhere else in Iran's quadrilateral border strips. Because the centrifugal capacities are more significant in these areas, and the social gaps are more profound. Ignoring these areas will cause the enemy to draw their attention to it. Tolerance, management, and strengthening legitimacy will be the game's core to neutralize U.S. threats in these areas.

In this regard, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, despite relatively significant changes in recent years, still faces several significant

challenges:

1) Dominance of the atmosphere of bilateral and reciprocal hostility between Iran and the United States and its impact on the increase of foreign threats, including the possibility of combining it with more stable sources of conflict between Iran and its neighbors, which transforms Iran's geopolitical functions from security to threats and insecurity;

2) Dominance of doubtful atmosphere in Iran's relations with trans-regional powers (under the influence of the first relationship);

3) The complete existence of Israel by Iran, the lack of effective participation in the Middle East peace measures, and the domination of the maximum atmosphere of confrontation and conflict with an illegitimate and non-neighboring regime;

4) Doubts in relations with Turkey and the growing trend of ambiguity and destructive competition in bilateral relations;

5) Lack of mutual trust in Iran-Afghanistan relations under the control and shadow of the United States;

6) Deep differences between Iran and Pakistan in regional relations;

7) The existence of potential contexts for the unresolved issues of the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq and the dominance of an atmosphere of mistrust and doubt in bilateral relations due to the significant U.S. presence in Iraq;

8) The growing trend of distrust and distance between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan;

9) Continuation of significant differences between Iran and the United Arab Emirates;

10) The survival of some border disputes and their unresolved issues, especially in the Persian Gulf basin, has increased political costs.

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