

FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Kuchkarov Temirbek

Lecturer, Oriental university

ABSTRACT

The article provides information about the main directions of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, what are the foreign political strategies and the role of these strategies in the life of the society today.

Keywords: Islamic Revolution, Theory of Umm al-Qura, De-escalation, non-Muslim, Ayatullah Khomeini, Muhammad Khotami

INTRODUCTION

Currently, the state government of the Islamic Republic of Iran conducts economic and diplomatic relations with the governments of several states. According to reports, today the Islamic Republic of Iran has established trade and economic and diplomatic relations with 97 countries. After the Islamic Revolution of 1979, under the leadership of Ayatullah Khomeini, the newly formed Islamic Republic dramatically changed the foreign policy of The Last King of Iran, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, who was dependent on the United States. Since then, the country's policies have focused on eliminating Western and non-Muslim influence. The revolutionary spirit and the promotion of the Islamic revolution abroad held a strong position that helped to normalize economic development and relations.

RESULTS

Iran has defined its foreign policy strategies in 6 directions, which are:

- Exporting the Islamic Revolution;
- Theory of Umm al-Qura;
- Pattern-making of the Islamic Republic;
- De-escalation;
- Dialogue Among Civilisations;
- Look to the East.

Primarily, the main strategic theory of Iran is the “export of the Islamic Revolution”, the basis of this theory was put forward by Ayatullah Khomeini after the Islamic Revolution. The 1979 revolution focused on exporting ideas to achieve revolutionary movements in both Islamic and non-Islamic countries. Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, publicly announced the policy. The main goal

was to export revolution as a cultural, ideological intellectual and epistemological method¹.

In his work “Islamic government”, Khomeini argues that government should be governed according to traditional Islamic law (Sharia) and ruled by a leading Islamic juridical (faqih) providing political “guardianship”, and that God did not intend it. The Islamic government is not only for Iran, but also for other countries. According to him, efforts to expand Islamic governance should not be limited to proselytism or propaganda. They only follow the victorious and victorious armies of the early Muslims who set out for battle from the mosque to fear God. “Prepare as many troops and tied horses as you can against them”, following the commandment of the Quran. According to Khomeini, “if a form of government is formed that Islam wills, none of the governments that now exist in the world will be able to resist it, and all will give up”.

One of the key parts of Iran’s foreign policy strategy, the “Umm al-Qura” theory is one of the main theories in explaining Iran’s position in the Islamic world, along with the theory of Islamic nationalism and the theory of exporting revolution². Compared to the other two theories, “Umm al-Qura” emphasizes the concepts of “Islamic government” and “government expediency” in Islamic nationalism. The Islamic people of Iran are analyzed according to the geographical boundaries of the country within the framework of the modern national-state concept, and in the theory of exporting the revolution, the ideal of “the continuation of the Islamic Revolution” is important from everything else³.

Mohammad-Jawad Larijani, commenting on this doctrine, summarized its elements in the following cases: the unity of the people of the Islamic world, what is revealed, is that the geographical boundaries of the Muslim nation and the division into several nations are the result of a historical process full of oppression. Geographical boundaries, while not having real power, must be accepted because it cannot be rejected. Thus, in practice, it limits the capabilities and powers of the Islamic government to the borders of its country. But in fact, all Muslims are the only people whose interests are intertwined⁴.

The idea of a “pattern-making policy of the Islamic Republic”, taken from the 1979 revolution and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, also exists,

¹ “صدور انقلاب” جرایبی، چپستی و جگونی - پایگاه اطلاع رسانی حوزه” (in Persian). Retrieved 8 July 2021.

² “دکترین ام القری - دانشنامه پژوهی پژوهی هشده باقر العلوم” (in Persian). Retrieved 2 July 2021.

³ “روزنامه رسالت” (نگاهی بر دکترین ام القری و جایگاه آن در سیاست خارجی ایران” (in Persian). Retrieved 2 July 2021.

⁴ “توافق و تزام منافع ملی و مصالح اسلامی” بررسی تطبیقی سیاست خارجی دولت‌های ملی و اسلامی (in Persian). Archived from [the original](#) on 9 July 2021. Retrieved 2 July 2021.

arguing that it should be “inspiring” in foreign policy and exemplify the style of governance¹.

The mission and mission of the Islamic Republic is not only to create an Islamic model society and state within Iran, but also to introduce and promote the model of a developed Islamic Justice State to other nations and countries. Because the Islamic government is just as inclusive and universal as the religion of Islam, and is not limited to a certain geography, nationality and race. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran, as an exemplary society, inspires other nations and states to build a similar society and government².

The most important value, which has Islamic control and promotes as an Islamic government, is “justice”. Justice includes other human and social values and qualities. Hence, the government that must be created as an example inside and inspire others is the Islamic justice government. The Islamic justice government is also just and justice-seeking, independent, peaceful, supportive of Muslims and mazlums, ground-building, anti-oppression, anti-arrogance and anti-rule. Thus, this exemplary government must first institutionalize these values in domestic politics and then represent them in foreign policy to inspire other nations and countries. The continuation of this order and behavior in foreign policy is both a repetition of the identity of Islamic justice of the Islamic Republic and a practical example for other nations and states in the global arena. Therefore, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran must fulfill national roles such as “Fortress of revolution”, “government of Freedom”, “Fair government”, “supporter of freedom movements”, “defender” to model and inspire³.

The policy of easing tensions began in Iranian foreign policy during the second term of the presidency of Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani and continued under the presidency of Muhammad Khatami. Hassan Rouhani (the 7th President of Iran) also cited the policy of easing tensions during his presidency as his priority⁴.

The” policy of easing tensions "should be based on Iran’s foreign relations with other countries in the context of globalization to build trust and clear past misunderstandings. The policy of easing tension is based on such principles as the adoption of politico-economic pluralism, peaceful coexistence, the avoidance of ideological conflicts, hegemony and the abandonment of hegemonic politics⁵.

According to experts on international relations, the implementation of the “policy to mitigate tensions” resulted in Iran’s increased position in OPEC.

¹ [“الگوی صدور انقلاب در سیاست خارجی دولت نهم - دانش سیاسی”](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 2 July 2021.

² [“الگوی صدور انقلاب در سیاست خارجی دولت نهم - مرکز اطلاعات علمی جهاد دانشگاهی”](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 2 July 2021.

³ [“الگوی صدور انقلاب در سیاست خارجی دولت نهم - نورمگز”](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 2 July 2021.

⁴ [“از تنش زدایی تا تعامل سازنده و موثر \(بازتاب جهانی شدن در سیاست خارجی خاتمی - نورمگز”](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 4 July 2021.

⁵ [“خاتمی خارجی سیاست در شدن جهانی بازتاب: مؤثر و سازنده تعامل تا زدایی تنش از”](#). *Rahbord Journal* (in Persian) (36): 187.

In general, the goals and methods of "de-escalation policy" can be summarized as follows¹:

De-escalation policy is not a final solution to tension, but an intermediate state containing elements of convergence and permissiveness, usually an attempt to promote cooperation and coexistence with governments and to emphasize and reduce conflicts or avoid reducing tensions in international relations. The foreign policy of de-escalation generally seeks to remove international barriers to the development of the country, to attract international resources for the development and power of the country. Sometimes de-escalation is defined as the most important principle in international relations by resorting to peaceful methods and psychological modernization at the international level and activating diplomacy through bilateral and multilateral dialogue. It aims to regulate the level of political and economic relations and achieve regional and global security.

While there is a high probability of success in foreign policy by adopting a policy of reducing the situation with different countries of the world, on the second hand, it prepares a field for improving and developing the exchange between the economic entities of the countries. The transition to a policy of lowering the situation does not mean a retreat from fundamental positions and a retreat from national interests.

The development and implementation of confidence-building measures to eliminate some common misconceptions of the international system about Iran is the most important goal of the "policy of reducing tensions of the Islamic Republic of Iran".

In turn, these foreign policy strategies are being implemented in practice in the internal and foreign political processes of the country in stages.

Former President Muhammad Khotami conceived the idea of "dialogue between civilizations" as an attempt by Samuel P. Huntington had presented it in response to his "Clash of Civilizations" theory².

The dialogue between civilizations first took place in Isfahan, Iran, in the Safa Khan community, founded in 1902. Safa-khane was the place where Haji Nurullah and his brother established. It was a place where Muslims and Christians spoke to each other about their religion. It was one of the first interfaith centers in the world. Later, a magazine was published in Iran, India and England based on dialogues between Muslims and Christians in Safa-khan. Khaji Aqo Nurullah, the founder of Safa-Khan,

¹ ["فرطالعی رضا - تولید جهش در آن نقش و زدایی تنش سیاست"](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 4 July 2021.

² Letter, dated 26 September 1972, to Ms. Marie-Pierre Herzog, Director of the Division of Philosophy, UNESCO, Paris. <http://www.i-p-o.org/Koechler-letter-UNESCO-26Sep1972.jpg>

was one of the leaders of the Constitution ERA in Iran. His house has become a museum known as the Isfahan Constitution House¹.

In order to achieve "dialogue between civilizations", it is necessary to radically change political ethics. There is no choice but to pay close attention to a number of aspects in order to understand the meaning of the phrase dialogue between civilizations described here. One is the relationship between a politician and an artist, and the other is the relationship between ethics and politics². Professor Anthony J, An American citizen, wrote to Dennis president, Khotami, in a letter dated August 18, 2000: "Dear President Khotami ...I welcome your call for dialogue between Islamic and Judeo-Christian civilizations, because I believe that the conflicts between these two great world civilizations are the most important foreign policy problem of the world community as we enter the twenty-first period..." was the only response letter published in the entire media following the Iranian President's call for dialogue between civilizations³. Of course this call was reflected in the later period, and in the 21st century, the struggles between Islamic-Jewish civilizations reached a new level. The head of Iran had developed its own program, taking into account the above struggles.

Another of Iran's strategies in foreign policy is the policy of Look to the East. (نگاه به شرق). The idea was proposed by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005 at the beginning of his presidency. There are at least three different views on the goals of the "Looking East" Policy and what perspective to look at this policy⁴.

The concept of the "Look to the East" policy implies three states: the first is the development of relations with the East and the restriction of relations with the West, the second is its symmetrical balance in relations with the East and West, and the third is the priority of asymmetric balance in relations with the East and West⁵. The policy of looking east seems closer to the third point. Because the policy of looking east is based on an all-round view of foreign policy with the aim of avoiding one-sided west-

¹ Subsequently, on 19 October 1972, Hans Köchler delivered a programmatic lecture at the University of Innsbruck, Austria, on "Cultural Self-comprehension and Co-existence: Preconditions for a Fundamental Dialogue". The text was first published in German: "Kulturelles Selbstverständnis und Koexistenz: Voraussetzungen für einen fundamentalen Dialog," in: "Kulturelles Selbstverständnis und Koexistenz: Voraussetzungen für einen fundamentalen Dialog," in: Philosophie und Politik. (Veröffentlichungen der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Wissenschaft und Politik an der Universität Innsbruck, Vol. IV.) Innsbruck: AWP, 1973, pp. 75-78.

² International Conference "The Cultural Self-comprehension of Nations", organized by the International Progress Organization, Innsbruck, Austria, 27-29 July 1974. For details, see the conference proceedings: Hans Köchler (ed.), Cultural Self-comprehension of Nations. (Studies in International [Cultural] Relations, Vol. 1.) Tübingen/Basel: Erdmann, 1978. ISBN 3-7711-0311-8

³ Anthony J. Dennis, Letters to Khatami: A Reply To The Iranian President's Call For A Dialogue Among Civilizations (Wyndham Hall Press, July 1, 2001, ISBN 1556053339) at page 7.

⁴ "انسانی علوم جامع پرتال - ها فرصت و ها زمینه، ها دیدگاه ایران اسلامی جمهوری خارجی سیاست در شرق به نگاه راهبرد" (in Persian). Retrieved 5 July 2021.

⁵ "دانشگاهی جهاد علمی اطلاعات مرکز - ها فرصت و ها زمینه، ها دیدگاه ایران اسلامی جمهوری خارجی سیاست در شرق به نگاه راهبرد" (in Persian). Retrieved 5 July 2021.

oriented relations in foreign policy and taking advantage of opportunities and creating opportunities. Therefore, it differs from the first meaning and, at the same time, has subtle differences with the second meaning. Because the policy of Look to the East is based on trying to communicate simultaneously with East and West, putting East first for geopolitical, cultural, economic and even political reasons. But, this approach does not imply denial and indifference towards the West. In fact, the emphasis here on the East is not to deny the West. In this regard, it should be said that the “look at the East” policy is a real strategy, which, above all, seeks to take advantage of the opportunities to communicate with different countries. In this regard, Ali Akbar Velayati, describing the politics of Look to the East, states: “where our interests, desires and strategies are better and more realized, it is natural that we prioritize there”¹.

In its early years, the Islamic Republic of Iran adopted the slogan “Neither East, nor West” as its motto and attempted to take an independent step in its foreign policy. Iran’s absolute approach to the slogan until the end of the Cold War prevented Iran from finding strategic allies. The “Look to the East” policy emerged at a time when Iran’s negotiations with European and Western powers over the Iranian nuclear program were in trouble and could not serve the National Interest well. At the same time, the changes that have occurred in Asia in recent years have created new conditions².

One of the most important issues related to foreign policy after the arrival of the ninth government was the policy of looking east and causing Iran to expand its relations with Asian states. In fact, the continued animosity between Iran and the United States caused the failure to meet the goals envisioned in relations with Western powers, especially the issue of expanding Iran’s ties with the East on the nuclear issue, to be considered and highlighted once again. A number of international movements and political positions in practice has so far accompanied this policy.

The policy of Look to the East was considered in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran at different times with its strengths and weaknesses. However, in recent years, more and more attention has been paid to this strategy, as noted by the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ali Khomeini. “In foreign policy, it is one of our priorities today to put the East above the West, to prefer the neighbor to other states, and, far away, to prefer Nations and countries that have something in common with us to others” (Tabriz, 2018, 18 february). In this regard, Ali Akbar Velayati, the international adviser to the Supreme Leader of Iran, also sees the “Look East” policy as a strategic necessity to promote the economic, political and defensive interests of the Islamic

¹ [In Search of New Horizons in Iranian Foreign Policy: The Look to the East Policy] (in Persian). ۵ پژوهش. 1: ۵. [مرکز تحقیقات استراتژیک](#): 1. ۵ پژوهش. ناصر، عامری ثقی (January 2007). “شرق به نگاه سیاست: ایران خارجی سیاست در جدید های افق و جوی جست در”.

² “سید قائم موسوی - جویشگر علمی فارسی علم نت” (in Persian). Retrieved 5 July 2021.

Republic. The policy of looking east has so far been seen as an escape rather than an opportunity to address the West in troubled times. To put it better, it can be said that the Islamic Republic of Iran's strategy of "Look to the East" in foreign policy has been more influenced by the call to the West as a codified policy¹.

CONCLUSION

After the revolution, political strategies that were prioritized in foreign policy were phased in. To date, the above six main strategies in Iran have been taken as a priority not only in domestic life, but also in foreign relations. These political strategies have also been used as foreign political weapons. Just as each state of course has its own solid position, so Iran's strategic approaches are defining its political orientation.

REFERENCES:

1. ["حوزه رسانی اطلاع پایگاه - چگونگی و چیرستی، چرایی "انقلاب صدور"](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 8 July 2021.
2. ["باقرالعلوم پژوهشکده پژوه دانشنامه - القری ام دکترین"](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 2 July 2021.
3. ["ایران خارجی سیاست در آن جایگاه و القری ام دکترین بر نگاهی \(08 02 1386\) رسالت روزنامه"](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 2 July 2021.
4. ["اسلامی و ملی های دولت خارجی سیاست تطبیقی بررسی" اسلامی مصالح و ملی منافع تراحم و توافق](#) (in Persian). Archived from [the original](#) on 9 July 2021. Retrieved 2 July 2021.
5. ["سیاسی دانش - نهم دولت خارجی سیاست در انقلاب صدور الگوی"](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 2 July 2021.
6. ["دانشگاهی جهاد علمی اطلاعات مرکز - نهم دولت خارجی سیاست در انقلاب صدور الگوی"](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 2 July 2021.
7. ["نورمگز - نهم دولت خارجی سیاست در انقلاب صدور الگوی"](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 2 July 2021.
8. ["نورمگز - خاتمی خارجی سیاست در شدن جهانی بازتاب \(مؤثر و سازنده تعامل تا زدایی تنش از\)"](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 4 July 2021.
9. خارجی سیاست در شدن جهانی بازتاب: مؤثر و سازنده تعامل تا زدایی تنش از". (2005) جواد، سوری. Rahbord Journal (in Persian) (36): 187.
10. ["فر طالعی رضا - تولید جهش در آن نقش و زدایی تنش سیاست"](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 4 July 2021.
11. Letter, dated 26 September 1972, to Ms. Marie-Pierre Herzog, Director of the Division of Philosophy, UNESCO, Paris. <http://www.i-p-o.org/Koehler-letter-UNESCO-26Sep1972.jpg>
12. Subsequently, on 19 October 1972, Hans Köchler delivered a programmatic lecture at the University of Innsbruck, Austria, on "Cultural Self-comprehension and Co-

¹ ["بررسی نگاه ایران به شرق و روابط با چین و روسیه"](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 5 July 2021.

existence: Preconditions for a Fundamental Dialogue”. The text was first published in German: “Kulturelles Selbstverständnis und Koexistenz: Voraussetzungen für einen fundamentalen Dialog,” in: “Kulturelles Selbstverständnis und Koexistenz: Voraussetzungen für einen fundamentalen Dialog,” in: Philosophie und Politik. (Veröffentlichungen der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Wissenschaft und Politik an der Universität Innsbruck, Vol. IV.) Innsbruck: AWP, 1973, pp. 75-78.

13. International Conference “The Cultural Self-comprehension of Nations”, organized by the International Progress Organization, Innsbruck, Austria, 27–29 July 1974. For details, see the conference proceedings: Hans Köchler (ed.), Cultural Self-comprehension of Nations. (Studies in International [Cultural] Relations, Vol. 1.) Tübingen/Basel: Erdmann, 1978. ISBN 3-7711-0311-8

14. Anthony J. Dennis, Letters to Khatami: A Reply To the Iranian President’s Call For A Dialogue Among Civilizations (Wyndham Hall Press, July 1, 2001, ISBN 1556053339) at page 7.

15. [ها فرصت و ها زمینه، ها دیدگاه ایران اسلامی جمهوری خارجی سیاست در شرق به نگاه راهبرد](#) - [انسانی علوم جامع پرتال](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 5 July 2021.

16. [مرکز - ها فرصت و ها زمینه، ها دیدگاه ایران اسلامی جمهوری خارجی سیاست در شرق به نگاه راهبرد](#) - [دانشگاهی جهاد علمی اطلاعات](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 5 July 2021.

17. سیاست: ایران خارجی سیاست در جدید های افق وجوی جست در. ناصر، عامری ثقفی. (January 2007). “شرق به نگاه [In Search of New Horizons in Iranian Foreign Policy: The Look to the East Policy] (in Persian). [مرکز تحقیقات استراتژیک](#): 1. ۵. پژوهش.

18. [سید قائم موسوی - جویشگر علمی فارسی علم نت](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 5 July 2021.

19. [بررسی نگاه ایران به شرق و روابط با چین و روسیه](#) (in Persian). Retrieved 5 July 2021.