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RESEARCH ARTICLE

IRAN'S GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION IN REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INTERACTIONS AND THE COUNTRY'S VISION AT 1404 HJRI (2025 AD).

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Abstract

According to Iranian Vision document in 2025 horizon, Islamic Republic of Iran (I.R Iran) should be inspiring, be active and effective in Islamic world by strengthening religious democracy, efficient development, moralistic society, new thinking and dynamism of ideas and social affairs, being effective on Islamic and regional convergence based on Imam Khomeini's thoughts and instructions.

So regional and international interactions of Iran in near future have a special importance over the next 20 year vision document which is the subject of the current paper.

Ideological and Geo-culture position in Islamic World, Geographical and Geopolitical position of Iran in International affairs and Iranian Geo-Economic position in Middle East and International Society are the main points of the discussion.

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Introduction:

Essentially providing long-term prospects has recently attracted attentions of authorities in most countries.

Fortunately, the competent authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, according to factors such as:

Urgency caused by the ideals of the constitution, international developments and the new economic governance in the world, scientific developments and new technologies, scientific theories, understanding of the possibilities and environmental limitations, taking advantage of self and others' experiences and economic, social, political and cultural realities led to setting a document for future planning and right implementation (over 20 years) Iran would be a developed country with first place in economic, science and technology in the region; combined with the preservation of Islamic identity and revolutionary inspiration in the Islamic world along with constructive and effective international relations.

Future Vision of Islamic Republic of Iran in 1404, according to primary studies of Expediency Council based on the principles and orientations of the Supreme Leader was adopted and notified and at the very beginning of 1384 became a base to the legislation of the country in Macro decision making and Governmental policies.

First speech: ideology and geo-cultural position of Iran in the Islamic World:

Islamic Revolution of Iran in Islamic World:

Due to cultural and religious issues, Iran located in the center of the Islamic world so in the future evolution of the world some countries in the region can play an important role. The extent of Iranian civilization and Persian culture, its rich heritage and the bright history of this land have deep cultural, intellectual and geographical ties with the Peripheries and made three areas of strategic importance among various ethnic groups inhabiting the Caucasus, Central Asia, southern Persian Gulf countries, Pakistan and the neighboring countries; Iraq and Turkey to the Horn

of Africa which represent the actual and potential facilities for the development of bilateral and multilateral regional and global cooperation.

Having a history of ancient civilization with Islamic culture, abundance of cultural and religious monuments in the country and the ability to issue religious and cultural goods beyond the Islamic world borders; give the Islamic Republic of Iran a special place to operate its cultural and civilizational (Iranian-Islamic) influence on the Muslim world.

Realization of the Vision Document in preservation and promotion of Iran's place in Muslim world:

Based on the Vision according to Imam Khomeini's taught, the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1404 should be inspiring, active and effective in the Muslim world, strengthening the role of religious democracy, efficient development, ethical society, intellectual and social innovation dynamism, influential on Islamic and regional integration; accordingly the Islamic Republic of Iran's leadership in patterning a government based on Islam, brought obligation and commitments for the country on issues related to the Muslim world.

In other words the Islamic Republic of Iran based on the principles and objective of Islamic Revolution and the crucial role since 1979 among Muslim countries cannot be oblivious to the problems of the Islamic world.

Strive for unity and integration among countries and support the oppressed Muslim nations and the poor particularly the Palestinian people are the goals of the Vision.

Although it is possible that by supporting the Palestinian people some tags Iran as an opponent to the New World Order and the U.S but it should be noted that the Palestinian people is one of the most important issues in the Islamic world and being against it, is equivalent to ignoring principal objectives of the Revolution; it can be considered as Iran's obligations in front of Muslim world.

Build a society in which foreign policy is based on Islamic criteria, fraternal commitment to all Muslims, unwavering support of all oppressed, rejection any dominance and submissiveness, independence and territorial integrity, non-alignment against hegemonic powers and peaceful relations between non-combatant governments are the main goals of 1404 Vision document.

Strengthening relations with the Muslim world, providing a clear picture of Islamic Revolution and explain the achievements of political, cultural and economic experiences of I.R of Iran, introducing the culture and art of Iranian civilization, religious democracy building a society in which overall policy shall be alliance of Islamic Nations in order to base a political, economic and cultural unity of the Muslim world.

It need to understand the requirements of the Islamic world, capacity and needs of the community and proper planning to use available opportunities and facing probable challenges.

Section two: geographical and geostrategic position of Iran in the region:

Geographical and Geostrategic position of Iran in the region of Southwest Asia:

The I. R of Iran geographically located in Southwest Asia which is the defined developing territory of Vision 1404, including central Asia, the Caucasus, the Middle East Persian Gulf region and the Indian subcontinent (Afghanistan and Pakistan).

Iran's geopolitical and geostrategic location; connecting Europe to South and South-East Asia (inhabiting more than a third of the world population) and a bridge between the three continents and access to newly independent states to open waters is possible through Iran. Intentionally or unintentionally, Iran is in the context of Global important developments; below are some aspects of Iran's geopolitical, geostrategic geo-economic role in the region. Security-political sensitivities of the region, in particular geographical proximity of the Israeli Zionist (which the U.S is committed to its security).

And also geostrategic position, quantity and quality of the land' population, supplier of energy, actual and/or potential capacity of development have put Iran in the core of great powers foreign policies to the extent that even the Iran's declaration of neutrality on regional and international issues is not satisfactory and convincing to great powers. So according to Iran's location in this sensitive area, can play an important role in the region which cannot

be ignored by the U.S strategic policies in the Middle East, America's behavior towards Iran; considering Iran as the axis of evil at one side and transmission lines of inhibiting Iran from Alborz to the extremes of Zagros and putting Iran in the U.S allies' Road Ring on the other side is very impressive and thinkable. Due to the weakness of the economic structure of the region, especially central Asia and Caucasus and the inability to go along with the process of globalization Iran's investment in the region will lead to national interest.

Unlike the cold war era in which the principals of geo-strategic was based on geographical and ideological spheres and military power, after the end of the Cold War because of many reasons including the high cost of weapons, in determining geostrategic importance, military and ideological issues lost its influence and human and economic factors was replaced. Based on the fact that economic strength in the twenty first century is the criterion of power in international level, possessing this capacity Middle East and Persian Gulf region will be important both geostrategic and geo-economic. Naturally Iran in the region will be of strategic and economic importance. However it is obvious that achieving hegemonic position and more effective role in the Persian Gulf region and the Middle East has always been one of Iran's foreign policy objectives. America as a superpower in the framework international structures and institutions is trying, through use of coercive diplomacy, to force Iran to accept the norms of hegemonic. Because of the nature of the Iranian regime, foreign policy orientation, geographical location, strategic importance and geo-strategic position in the Middle East, international conservative system- both hegemonic and multipolar- imposed severe structural constrains on Iran to achieve regional hegemonic position. This is one of the major challenges which Islamic Republic of Iran faces to realize the goals of 1404 Vision.

Special place of Iran in the Middle East and Caspian Sea:

Developed countries' dependence on oil and gas energy and global needs to existing mineral and hydrocarbon reserves on one side and Iran in the center of global strategic hydrocarbon ellipse in the Middle East and Central Asia (the main source of world's energy supply) on the other hand, in terms of access and dominate oil and gas resources and routes of transmission, I.R Iran's position is unique. Iran with more than 130 billion barrels of recoverable oil and 27 trillion cubic meters of and the value of about \$3 trillion of hydrocarbon reserves while in a wide area (8% unexplored) has great potentials. And if the country's hydrocarbon resources being properly directed and managed it can lead to all-round development of the country and Iranian Islamic civilization dream will come true for the people of the Land. In fact two-third of the major energy reserves are in the Middle East and this promoted Iran's position in region and has common geopolitical interests with most neighboring countries. The Middle East is one of the most important zones so that world powers at any level defined their interests in the region. The global economy is tied to oil and gas and energy consumers in the world, especially the United States of America are dependent on the region energy supplies. This dependence has made region as geographical and geopolitical interests of the great powers. The major powers by their further presence in the region, in addition to obtain these resources are trying to challenge the geopolitical rivals. In the meantime in the global energy market Americans are always concerned about Iran's growing tie to America's competitors. In the face of the U.S and Israel's increasing economic and military presence in the Caspian region, which undoubtedly will affect the interests of Iran's national security, the Turkish secular model, intervention in matters relating to legal status of the Mediterranean and policies of NATO expansion to the East, Iran must take steps to improve relations with the countries in the region too. Unfortunately, although covert and overt intervention of the U.S, along with sometimes Russian's hunky-dory silence, did not allow Iran's effective role. However it is imperative for Iran to give priority to the Caspian Sea, strengthening regional cooperation and emphasis on détente.

Iran challenges in the Middle East region:

Unfortunately, despite Islamic and civilized slogans Iran has not been able to fully achieve her economic and political interests which was supposed to be a major power in the Middle East. Iran's passivity in the Middle East after the Islamic Revolution despite the rhetoric of détente in the past, puts a serious question to the authorities; how can Iran become a regional hegemonic power and end to this situation.

The following are properly reflect the challenges in the region:

Large number of neighbors, sources of ethnic, territorial, cultural, racial and sectarian tensions and threats on one hand and the growing influence of America in these countries; creating and supporting biased governments in order to strengthening the U.S foreign interests on the other hand, have put restrictions on establishing a regional development for the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The existence of the Zionist regime and the efforts to expand its influence in neighboring countries and region by explicit and direct support of the U.S, to face this country with Iran, NATO's wide military cooperation in the region and Americanization of the neighboring countries brought serious challenges to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Due to massive false propaganda against the I.R Iran at regional and international level, showing distorted and improper picture of the Islamic revolution and its objectives beyond the regional border, Islamic Iran has not yet been able to bring the real aspirations and humanitarian justice messages of the revolution to the attention of people in neighboring countries. So unfortunately it is seen that during the rule of Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Iran's influence in comparison to other countries in the region such as Pakistan and Turkey had greater potential benefits but was not able to use the possibilities and abilities in the occupied countries and act as an influential actor.

Goals of the Vision in preservation and promotion in the region of the Southwest Asia:

Due to the Vision of 1404 Iran should achieve the first place in economy, science and technology in the region of Southeast Asia (Including Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Middle East and neighboring countries) with emphasis on software movement, production of knowledge, rapid and continues economic growth, relative increase in per capita income and achieving full employment is the objective of the Vision. Accordingly the concept of regionalism-phenomenon which over the past decade affected the trends on the global situation and even as a model for analysis of global issues- has become an international consideration. Iran through the process of regionalism is capable of entering the larger world and put it into practice and testing. Note that the regional macroeconomic projects, expansion of intra-regional trade, strengthening technical, communication and regional economic policies regarding international issues are features of regionalism. So for developing countries the idea of regionalism is an approach to globalization and this can be a good opportunity for the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this context Iran; a large area of southwest Asia; raises in 1404 Vision as the geostrategic, geopolitical, geoeconomics (Oil, gas and energy in general markets and business, international connections and revive the silk road), this area perhaps is the only region in which all aspects of regional powerful Iran can grow. Due to the large capacity of regional and peripheral connections, the Islamic republic of Iran as an economic and military power in Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean region, can enhance the consolidation of regional relations in Persian Gulf Council. However, if Iran wants to achieve its goals of regional and foreign policy and become a regional hegemon the following considerations should be taken into consideration:

For the progressive realization of Vision 1404, Iran must correctly identify all subsystems in the region and then decide after Sept 11, with which one of the countries; Turkey, Caucasus, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Pakistan and ... according to the priority establish security, political and economic alliances. It seems that maybe Iran because of political and economic issues couldn't be able to ally with all at same time. But of course Iran should consider regional blocks; understand and quantify the benefits of integration to select important priorities. To identification and determination of interest it needs to calculate exactly how to deal with powerful countries in the region. Iran try to pay the necessary price on behalf of its obligations and responsibilities to maintain regional security like the US obligations and risks in the region. Accordingly the Islamic Republic of Iran in the political regional equations must maintain its active participation in foreign policy that does not allow the neighboring countries to target its vital interests and values.

Iran's Geopolitical and Geostrategic position in the International Community:

Recognition of the international community:

To be successful in international level, the actors should identify their location and status and then to maintain the influence in international relations must have long term plans. Iran can determine the shape and type of the game only when-in Vision 1404- be able to optimize the conditions within political, cultural interactions;

Engagement with the international community:

The international community and the international system (especially after the deepening of globalization process) experience a complex interdependence. Accordingly, any country due to its position should experience mutual or multilateral benefit in the world interactions. Certainly in this process, based on international law principle; peaceful coexistence and relative income measure rather than absolute income; has become a logical international engagement. General principles of international law prevent consolidate the interests of one part unilaterally on the other side. The emphasis on the concept of mutual cooperation, peaceful co-existence and exercise of comparative advantage is not necessarily mean lack of competition in international system. The fact is that governments are constantly looking to increase their powers and sometimes on the path, damage the structures of international

community and principle of sovereign equality and easily in their unilateral actions, they violate the general principles of international law.

Goals of Vision in preservation and promotion of I.R Iran in international community:

According to Vision 1404, Iran will have a constructive and effective interaction with the world based on constitution and upholding the principles of dignity, arbitration, interest and authority in foreign relations. Since the process of globalization and the change in the world order, model transformation process of interaction between the countries, environment and the frame of interaction has been more remarkable over the past. And also due to the globalization of the New World Order in international relations and emerging new form of ruling fading national government and territorial sovereignty and the emergence of powerful non-governmental or transnational organizations is a phenomenon that sooner or later will come to Iran. So based on the following issues it must be considered and controlled: Any attempt to planning and economic growth at national level inevitably finds meaning when interacting larger systems (international and regional). So the country's short and long term plans must be comprehensible which encompass both domestic and international levels and answer the needs of the country's requirements. Due to the expansion of regional alliance and partnership, Iran may reasonably avoid the negative consequences of globalization. Since sovereignty and national security is one of the important factors which challenged fundamentally by globalization, and on the other hand national security will be measured in terms of economic power and dynamism; in globalization context military challenges will be replaced by economic ones and nations to promote national security will rely on economic measures rather than military actions. So for developing countries like Iran, it is vital to have specific policies in these regards to protect sovereignty and national security.

Society's understanding of the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy depends on analyzing the variable within and outside the system. Among within system variables; geopolitical and geostrategic indicators of social structures and characteristics of political system and globalization can be named. Focusing on topics such as; national interests, strategy, policy design, implementation and verification and purpose evaluation; is of particular importance to link between these variables.

Section 4:-

Geoeconomic position of Iran in the region and international community:

Economic globalization:

As noted earlier in the process of globalization, international economy has major effect. Over the last two decades of continuous expansion of trade and increasing international investments played an important role in the global interdependence.

Liberalization of financial markets along with IT on one hand and international economic fusion on the other have provided opportunities for specialization of activities which in turn increase global trade and investment dependence.

Economic globalization and regional or international fusion are the result of factors such as business development and development of financial markets, formation of trusts, cartels and transnational companies

The formation of a new system of industrial organization like globalization of financial markets, trade liberalization and the creation of competitive environment; to trade, exchange and free and rapid flow of investment, technical know-how and technology progress particularly the revolution in information technology. The new shaped space in global economy will cause decreasing tariff and non-tariff barriers, reforming foreign exchange system, freeing foreign investment, forming international trade unions, developing regional business, growing private sector and significant technological developments occur and finally great communication technologies revolution emerge.

Interaction with regional and international economy:

The world in the 21st century is a world full of competition, market developments, emergence and spread of high technology and open trade. And Iran's successful approach in interaction with global economy should be based on "economic development", "sovereignty" and "Islamic identity"

Socio-economic development process with a strategic approach to the new conditions of international recognition of changes in the composition of political relations and regional economics and also with a view to the problems and

difficulties of the national economy to track the structural changes to the requirements of growth and sustainable development, pave a stable economy.

Relations and economic factors are effective on the stability and convergence in the region.

The more this relationship based on sustainable development the less there will be tension.

Undoubtedly involvement of foreign elements and great power ambitions in an area will increase degree of tensions and cause divergence. Although domestic economists have different opinions on Iran's membership in WTO but it seems that Iran's not membership in WTO will challenge regional and international economic cooperation in different levels.

Undoubtedly the lack of membership in WTO despite regional and international treaties will challenge Iran's 1404 Vision and face it with uncertainty.

The economic challenges of the region and the international community:

While being neighbor with 14 countries and owning economic resources and adequate capacity, Iran has not been able to use its capabilities to penetrate into emerging markets like Iraq and Afghanistan so that goods of countries such as Korea, China and Turkey have filled their markets.

Vision of I.R. Iran at 1404 was developed in a position that challenges of Iran's economy in the region and international level has constraints such as:

- Iran's reliance on natural resources export means that the economy is exogenous so the domestic influence from global economy is extremely high
- Iran's economy is a centralized governmental closed system and massive bureaucracy of the State control it

Although high oil prices in global markets led to increase nation's capital but it should be noted that the mere increase in GDP, regardless of how and the long term impact on the economic structure cannot guarantee economic development or sustainable growth. Iran's management is far from world's standard system

Lack of rule of meritocracy in the appointment of qualified managers and experts on one hand and the lack of institutional economic theory production on the other causing waste of resources and lack of optimization.

Achieve the objectives of Vision Iran's standing in the international community to maintain promotion:

To gain the objectives contained in the Vision the average annual growth over the next 20 years should exceed 6.8% and the inflation rate must decline to 5%. Accordingly the inflation rate in 1394 (H) must decline to 7 %. With respect to country's resources, Iran in the next 20 years should become an effective and pioneer country in the region and for the purpose of a comprehensive outlook on the economic dimension, at regional and international level, the following measures in short term and long term planning is necessary:

Foreign trade expansion based on non-oil exports, improving balance of trade, increasing export incomes and world trade share. Institutionalization of economic relations with countries in the region and the international community and taking advantage of the political relations.

Conclusion:

Iran having different positions such as manpower, social potential and its dynamism, unique place in the region of southwest Asia, owning huge oil and gas reserves in the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea, special and influential place in the Muslim world can achieve the documented goals in the perspective of I.R Iran's Vision 1404.

It is necessary that serious opportunities and challenges which Iran will face in the next 20 years, must in regional and international cooperation, accurately and scientifically be evaluated applied by government officials, politicians and scholars; and strategies should be planned by scientific measures in appropriate conditions.

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