

Iran In Political Power Balances of the Greater Middle East

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Abstract

Military clashes and political contradictions which can currently be faced in the Middle East and will continue for a long time are reconfiguring power relations. In this respect, the most important determinative for the success of the strategy towards the Middle East hinges on the success of the global policies towards the Iran. Iran, which is aware of its own geostrategic position, is increasing its activities in the region through the relations developed with Russia and China and, in a sense, applying balance policy successfully. Iran is an active side of Syrian civil war. Thousands of revolutionary guards are fighting against opponents together with Syrian army. Being in the same position of Iran and Egypt regarding the policies being followed towards Syria gives us a more concrete idea with respect to main future alliances. A set of changes will be applied in order to restore its economy and accelerate flow of global capital to this country. Turkey who had played intercessor role in negotiations with Iran came to the forefront relatively. Thus, development of USA-UK-Iran relations that have considered each other as 'enemies' for years much more rapidly than estimated is replacement of 'Sunni Islam' policy which have been tried regarding mapped out geopolitical strategy of the year of 2020 but not become successful so far with 'Shia Islam' policy. It is planned to make this strategy to affect regional balances comprehensively actual by positioning Iran at the heart.

Key words: Iran, Iran's geopolitical power, Middle East, War

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Introduction

Military clashes and political contradictions which can currently be faced in the Middle East and will continue for a long time are reconfiguring power relations. Gradually playing ball together of some states which appeared as enemies in the past and getting a more active position of non-state actors more than some states are the policies which are determined by relationships based on mutual interests. Whereas the strategy that global system designs operates multilaterally, changes occurring in the powers and alliances are entailing some alterations in the structures of states. In these political conditions, while Iran is coming into prominence in the Middle East power relations, Turkey is starting to lose its former strategic role. Particularly persistence in Syria and Iraqi policy and enthusiasm towards to become only regional leader or leading power one its own both isolated and excluded Turkey from the process.

Saudi Arabia that has become prominent as the leader state of Gulf region is considered important by global capital. Egypt that has teeth in the political history of Arabs comes to the forefront as a country that plays a role in determining regional power balances. As a lonely country in the region, Israel maintains its capacity to influence through the support of global powers and capital. When current given conditions are taken into consideration, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel are standing out as states to determine political balances in the Middle East power relations. In this respect, these four states in question will play a strategic role in Broader Middle East Project.

Alteration that has occurred in geopolitics of Middle East caused strategic result especially with respect to Kurds. Getting a *de facto* 'autonomous', also known as democratic autonomy, status of Rojava (Western Kurdistan) in Syria that has fallen under the influence of Iran in parallel with *de facto* becoming state of South Kurdistan altered power relations significantly. Kurdistan Workers' Party(PKK) and PYD, as non-state actors, with which Iran has political and military problems have evolved into an actor that must be taken into consideration by global powers in their strategies by necessity.

The most important chain for the success of the strategy that aims including the Middle East in global capitalist system is to include Iran in this process as well. Iran has a position that puts it to forefront due to it is a central country in Eurasia and the Middle East with respect to economy-energy deposits as well as its geographical position and political clout. In this respect, the most important determinative for the success of the strategy towards the Middle East hinges on the success of the global policies towards the Iran. Probably, Iran is the only country that has continued its existence by maintaining its strategic role in regional relations and had a certain impact on political balances entirely for thousands of years. Economic and political pressures towards the Iran were maximized and even some tangible intentions implying military intervention were revealed.

However, Iran has different characteristics which are unlike to other countries in the Middle East. Owners of the global capitalist system are aware of that their chance to become successful in the Middle East is highly low without making a design of Iran. Therefore, we can suggest that there is a certain change in the attitude of the USA that has besieged Iran internally and externally for many years. With reference to these observations, to perceive and comprehend geopolitical significance of Iran is also necessary in order to understand the strategy that global system pursues.

Within the framework provided this research analyses Iran's increasing influence in political power balances in the Middle East. The research initially examines certain underlying domestic factors contributes in Iran's power, then in the light of this and relations with the regional and international powers analysis Iran's growing influence in the Middle Eastern politics.

Several factors making Iran regional power

First Social Structure of Iran: Iran includes various social-ethnic groups with its population of 74.2 million.¹ Existing Iran state is established on occupied lands of various ethnic groups.* Therefore, it can be considered as an occupying power. Composing of only 46 % of the population by those who represent Iranians and even being in the minority in comparison with grand total of other ethnic groups sensitize internal political balances. For instances, whereas Azerbaijanis are composing an important social power, Kurds are forming a section that influences internal political balances considerably with their 10 percent population.

In this respect, carrying on and continuing their existence of ethnic groups such as Gilakis, Mazandarani, Lurs, and Balochs up to the present under strong Persian culture is directly linked to own internal political balances of Iran.

Secondly, Economical potential of Iran: Iranian economy is based on agricultural production and operation of energy deposits. 10.76 % of Iran GNP is allocated to agriculture, 41.51 % is industry and 47.73 % is public services.² Iran of which economy maintains miscellaneous development takes significant steps to become a regional power. One of the problems occupying the agenda of World countries in relation with the Iran is existence of energy resources in this country. Existing within the borders of Iran of nearly 8.6 % of petroleum reserves in the World, in other words 11.3 billion barrels, increases its importance a lot more.³ In the same way, it is one of the prominent states of the World with respect to natural gas reserves as well. D. Harvey, who particularly emphasizes the point we mentioned while explaining the relationship between global occupation of the Middle East and petroleum, indicates that in order to take energy deposits in hand safely, 'to get Iran under military control' is necessary.

Especially being an object of international competition of petroleum and natural gas production centers and concentration of wars in 21st century in these regions is directly connected to economic developments of global capitalist forces both internally and internationally. Iran will continue to become in the center of global capitalist system due to that characteristic. This distinctive characteristic enables to country to settle into a much stronger position in international balances and countries like China, India, Russia, Brazil and even Germany provide support to Iran in international relations. Therefore, it is protected especially in United Nations Security Council due to compulsory economic relations with global capitalist countries of the World and every draft to the detriment of Iran is faced with veto of Russia and China.

Thirdly Increasing military power of Iran: Iran comes to the forefront as the second country having the greatest numbers of soldiers after Turkey. Total number of soldiers is 870,000 (520,000 in charge and 350,000 reserves). In Iran, 35.5 of every thousand people are soldiers in general and 8 individuals are active soldiers.⁴ Iran military power is composed of four armies. There are 32 divisions, 87 brigades, 4 armored and 6 mechanized divisions on the land. Iran is one of the most prominent military powers of the Middle East with its nearly 6400 tanks, artilleries and other

¹ Stratégique the year 2012, Le Nouvel Observateur / Atlaseco Economique and World Politics, 2103

* 46 % of its population is composed of Persians, 33% is Azerbaijanis, 7 % is Kurds, 6 % is Gilakis and Mazandarani, 3 % is Arabs, 2 % is Lurs, 2 % is Balochs, 2 % is Turkmens and 1 % is Qashqai Turks and other ethnic groups.

² FİROUZAH Nahavandi, The Iran in the World, Edition L'Harmattan, Paris, 2013, p.121-122.

³ www.opec.org/opec_web/static_files_project/media/downloads/publications/WOO_2014.pdf

⁴ Yearbook of World Disarmament, www.sipri.com ve year Stratégique2012 / Analyse issues

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armored cars, warplanes and armed helicopters reaching 860, nearly 130 large-small scale warships and storm boats. It is known that Iran has potential to research and acquire nuclear weapons.⁵

Enhancing its military of Iran in parallel with its increasing economic and political power is considered as one of the most crucial problems of international relations. Military spending per capita in Iran is 89 dollars for 2005 and 135 dollars for 2010. Besides, military spending expensed per soldier is 8,333 dollars. For instances, in Iran proportion of military spending to Gross National Product (GNP) was determined as 8.6 % in the year of 2000, 8.5 % in the year of 2005, 10.3 % in the year of 2010. Average for Gulf countries is 14.3 %. Additionally, proportion of military spending of Iran to total governmental spending is about 27 %.⁶

Geostrategic importance of Iran

When the importance of a country's geostrategic position is mentioned, the first rank is undoubtedly reserved for Iran. As well as being a serious political actor in the Middle East, Central Asia and Eurasia with its historical, ethnical, cultural and social structure throughout the history, Iran has also played a key role in determination of regional relations

Iran is the 18th largest country of the World with its acreage of 1,648,000 km².⁷ Large borders of a country do not mean anything on its own. Strategic location of that country and its neighbors is also important. The distinctive characteristic of Iran is that. In this respect, Iran has a significant strategic importance with its geographical position. It is possible to concretize that in several points. First of all, Iran is neighbor to Pakistan and Afghanistan and has a serious effect on Shia population in these countries. The second thing, due to its neighborhood relation with Turkmenistan is a gate opening to the center of Eurasia; it increases strategic importance of the country. The third one, being neighbor with Azerbaijan puts Iran into a key position with respect to policies being followed towards Caucasasia. Fourth is its connection with the Caspian Sea which also has a strategic role. Caspian Sea is crucial due to both relations with Russia and other Eurasia countries and existence of large amount of petroleum and natural gas deposits in the Caspian basin.

Due to its geographical significance, Iran locates in the center of the strategies composed in a Eurasia, Caucasasia and Central Asia based manner. Iran is an important geostrategic country as meeting points of Europe-Asia and Middle East-Africa continents with its large borders with Eurasia continent. Iran, which is aware of its own geostrategic position, is increasing its activities in the region through the relations developed with Russia and China and, in a sense, applying balance policy successfully.

Iran having close relations with other countries in the region is also an important country with respect to energy deposits. As well as energy deposits such as natural gas and petroleum that Iran has, having also a border with Caspian Sea increases the location of the Iran in the Central Asia. Thus, Iran occupies an exclusive position in Central Asia policies of global actors such as USA, EU, China and Russia.⁸ The power that will be able to dominate Iran will be the determinative power in the Central Asia politics. The competition on Iran is also the strategy to be more active in Central Asia. In the background of economic and military policies being developed towards Iran especially in USA-based manner, Central Asia strategy embedded in Greater Middle East Project exists.

⁵ BARBER Benjamin, *The Empire of Fear*, Edition Fayard, Paris, 2001, p.29.

⁶ Under the direction Pascal Boniface, *The Year Strategic 2011* Edition Dalloz, Paris, 2011, p. 380.

⁷ CARROUUE Laurant, *Geography of Globalization*, Paris, 2007, Armand Colin Edition, p, 54.

⁸ Iran The face of the world, *Jeopolitique and issues*, Studyrama Perspective Edition, Paris, 2006, p, 90-92.

Concentration of global monopolies operating in energy sector especially on the regions with energy deposits is highly important with respect to regional policies. Principal monopolies dominating energy deposits all around the world have made especially Caspian basin including petroleum and natural gas deposits an important field for their competition and headed towards highly extensive investments. Two years ago, Iran expressed that there are 15 billion barrels petroleum reserve at its Caspian coastal strip and it is equal with total reserve of Algeria that is an oil producing country. Moreover, nearly 65 % of natural gas and 90 % of petroleum of Azerbaijan is drilled out from the Caspian Sea. Caspian basin has the potential to become the second biggest petroleum production field after the Middle East, in the case of Caspian petroleum is drilled out much more comprehensively in the forthcoming years.⁹

Other than the Russia who plays the leading role and reinforced its regional domination and in addition to being center of energy deposits of countries such as Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kirghizstan among the regional countries, Iran is also highly crucial strategically for realization of ‘pipeline’ projects that global companies have generated in order to carry energy resources.

Control of Caspian Sea basin actually means control of Caucasia, Central Asia and even Eastern Asia. It is possible to assess the strategy being attempted to apply over the Caspian region as a concrete form Eurasia strategy in essence. In this respect, Iran is considered as a country that is highly regarded and falls into power relations.¹⁰

While USA was occupying Afghanistan with its whole military power, actually they focused on energy deposits in the Caspian Sea at the background. The first strategic planning generated just after the occupation was about the country through which pipe lines was going to pass for the transportation of Caspian petroleum and Central Asia natural gas. The intention was to provide transportation through the Turkey from Caspian Sea, Iran or Azerbaijan on the one hand, or to transfer to the Indian Ocean through Afghanistan and Pakistan. Iran which had place in the center of both projects was coming to the forefront as a determinative power.

In addition to having rich energy repositories, it is accepted by all international military and political strategists that Iran is a country having potential to play a key role in transportation of energy resources to international fields in particular with its strategic location with respect to access these three regions. Because of that characteristic, Iran has become an important competition and conflict center in almost all eras for its whole political history with respect to colonialist sovereignty policies of international capitalist system’s actors.

Iran has maintained its strategic position for almost all times due to being still determinative of oil in capitalist economic system of the World, and its role in determination of reciprocal dependency relationships emerging in international sphere and maximization of profits of international monopolies. Thus, especially England and USA have interfered in internal political affairs of Iran for almost all times and take charge in determination of power directly. However Iran has never become like other artificial states in which ‘petrol democracy’ is applied. Due to its historical position and regional power, Iran has always had a privileged position differently from other states.

Iran with its Increasing Regional Power

⁹ www.opec.org/opec_web/static_files_project/media/downloads/publications/WOO_2014.pdf

¹⁰ NORENG Qystein, *Crude Power Politics and the Oil Market*. Ellipse publications, Istanbul, 2004, p, 117-118.

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The thing which makes Iran a regional power is directly connected with its historical position and power. There is nearly no other country to influence several regions of the World strategically and to play a role in the alterations of them. Although Iran has serious problems with USA, England, French; it is considered as an important power for regional relations. When problems occurring in an Iraq- and Syria-based manner and involving the whole region are taken into consideration in particular, it is accepted that there cannot be a solution without Iran.

Persian tradition having a deep-rooted historical culture and tradition in the Middle East, Central Asia and Eurasia geography has also a significant political clout in the region due to it is a Shia country. Nearly 60 % of Iraq, 25 % of Afghanistan, 23 % of Pakistan, 70 % of Bahrain, Kuwait and 25 % of Saudi Arabia are Shia.¹¹ Historical spiritual linkage between Iran and Shiites from these countries is an important factor influencing global policies being applied in occupied zones. For instances, demanding autonomous through invading Presidential Palace by Shia Houthi militants that compose 35 % of Yemen population and are very actively supported by Iran increases political scout of Iran in the region much more than estimated.¹²

Global powers envisage that Iran may have a much more positive effect in regional relations with its obvious influence over the population known as Shia in Central Asia, Caucasia and even near Eastern Asia.

Increasing effect of other Islamic movements such as ISIL, El Nusra and El Kaide in especially Gulf States and their power over Iraq-Syria line are seen as an important danger for strategic interests of global powers. Inclusion of Iran in political process provided an important advantage to Baghdad that had been torn between Tehran and Washington. Political power of Iran in Syria started to increase as well as its military and economic influence. It can utilize its known effect on Hezbollah in order to balance relations with Israel and may have a role in Palestine-Israel resolution process. All these political possibilities will become a current issue again and sophisticatedly.

Iran is an active side of Syrian civil war. Thousands of revolutionary guards are fighting against opponents together with Syrian army. Revolutionary guards have been intensely transferred to Syria through Iraq. Lebanon region which had been an important transition area for opponents started to be controlled by Hezbollah. Thousands of Hezbollah militants have involved in the warfare in order to support Assad regime. Apart from Iran and Hezbollah have the same ideological roots; an alteration in political equation of Syria will cause very significant military and political problems for both powers. The most important factor allowing Hezbollah to get stronger and become an actor in regional relations is the active support given by Syria.¹³ To puncture this vein is going to mean encircling Hezbollah in a sense. The case is much more strategic for Iran. Political outcomes of defeat of Assad will be much more staggering for Iran. Mullah regime is aware of that fact. In this respect, it considered Syria problem as its internal problem likewise Turkey and directly became a side with its fighting force. When affairs in Syria and Iraq are taken into consideration, the policy that has been applied by Iran unbendingly and achieved successes has been accepted gradually. Seeking new options regarding Iraq and Syria, USA has agreed with Iran upon the future of these two countries.

On the basis of new strategies that global powers started to generate, new alliances and relations to occur between Persian Iran and Egypt, the heart of Arabian world, means beginning of a new

¹¹The Institute for national Security Studies,
http://www.inss.org.il/uploadImages/systemFiles/INSS2011BalanceENGf_Military%20Balance.pdf

¹² <http://www.inss.org.il/uploadImages/SystemFiles.pdf>

¹³ Under MERVİN Sarian Directorate, Shiites and The World İran ILFA Edition, Paris, 2007, by Kanda Chabi, Lebanese Hezbollah through her pictures p.199.

process in the Middle East equation. Being in the same position of Iran and Egypt regarding the policies being followed towards Syria gives us a more concrete idea with respect to main future alliances. Based on using political scout by Iran over relatively Hamas but especially Hezbollah positively, Israel may review its relations with that country sophisticatedly.¹⁴ Normalization of relations with Iran by the US in spite of all warnings and concerns of Israel will have reflections over Israel in the future. Merger of Gulf States under a new federative state to be defined as ‘the Great Saudi Arabia’ may come to front too. For the success of all these political strategies, regional role of Iran must absolutely be estimated.

One of the countries that Iran applies both conflict and consensus strategies is Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia with its obvious influence over Gulf States comes to the forefront as one of the states that global powers mind. In this respect, competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia for leading role in regional relations is felt more specifically. Iran is trying to be efficient through influencing Shia Muslim population whereas S. Arabia is doing the same thing through influencing Sunni Muslim community. In this regard, the relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia is extremely important in determination of future and stability of Gulf Middle East in a sense.

Relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia have become obligatory in the Middle East equation in a sense. Iran knows that it has to develop close relations with Saudi Kingdom in order to enhance its regional power; on the contrary, Saudi Arabia will both try to control Shiites that are active in the Gulf and struggle against radical Salafi movements that threaten Kingdom through the relations to be established with Iran. For instances, Saudi Arabia which had played an active role in overthrow of Assad government in Syria changed its policy in time and decided to support Iraq and Syria policy of Iran that develops strategies against ISIL and El Nusra.¹⁵

Arabia-Iran convergence will function as the first step of Shia-Sunni alliance that USA adopts in the medium term in a sense. Representing Middle East in one level of Saudi Arabia in G20 summits which have turned into the center of capitalist economy all around the world enables it to become much more active in power balances developing in the region as well as establishing much closer relations with Iran will serve regional interests of both parties in the medium term.

One of the important chains of regional relations is political relations between Iran and Turkey. Although both are playing ball together in Kurdish question and there is a certain alliance between them against PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party), there is no alliance and consensus between them regarding their strategic relations and targets in Central Asia, Caucasia and Middle East. Alliances established as a result of reciprocal power balances and some interests are not strategic for both countries and based on competition historically.

Turkey’s current Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu indicates that: “The third aspect of Turkish-Iran relations influencing internal regional balances is related to Mesopotamia-Persian Gulf that composes fertile northern crescent of the Middle East region. Internal conflicts that Iraq existing a line on which Ottoman-Iran relations emerged has due to its denominational and ethnical characteristics and Iraq-centered crisis that occurred in the post-Cold War era made Turkish-Iran relations an important factor with respect to both geopolitical future of this line and political future of Iraq...”¹⁶ It is possible to evaluate foreign policy expansion of Turkey towards Iran bilaterally. As the prior way to put across its regional leadership, Turkey wanted to influence and direct a

¹⁴ PEREZ Sarah, *Iran-Israel war technology*, World Edition, Paris, 2015, p.45-46,

¹⁵ DJALLI Mohammed Reza and KELLNER Thierry, *Iran and Turkey facing the Arab Spring* Edition Grip, Paris, 2012, p. 102.

¹⁶ DAVUTOĞLU Ahmet, *Strategic Depth*, Kure Editon. Istanbul, 2008, p 435.

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strong and strategically crucial country such as Iran. It considered and perceived its relations with Iran likewise Ottoman-Persian relations in a sense and tried to establish a regional balance relation. 'Neo'-Ottomanism dreams that Turkey dreamt but not compatible with regional facts in anyway already lost their functions in the first step by hitting the Iran wall. Antipathetically to imagination of Turkey, Iran is much more experienced in regional relations and has much more political scout than estimated. Thus, it rejected such kind of tendencies of Turkey without any need for comments and headed towards establishing serious relations with global powers in spite of problems with them on the contrary to Turkey in order to become a political actor. What is more, Iran has started to gain its former position and become a force determining the equation through the changing political balances in the Middle East.

Turkey who had played intercessor role in negotiations with Iran came to the forefront relatively. Iran tended to cooperate with Turkey due to international embargo by utilizing some political frailties. However, international balances started to transform in favor of Iran the through the emergence of agreement tendency in nuclear negotiations and reset Middle East/Iraq-Syria policy of Turkey. Especially desire of Iran to comply with nuclear agreement became an important factor that enabled Iran to become a more credible power in its global relations. In parallel with that, it can be said that increasing political scout of Iran in Iraq/Syria relations caused significant changes in strategic position of Turkey. Objective basis to lose its strategic role to Iran for Turkey has emerged. There emerged obvious differences between Middle East policies of Turkey and the policy that Turkey followed actually. Miscellaneous support that Turkey provides to radical Islamist organizations such as ISIL and El Nusra came to the forefront as an important factor debilitating regional policies of USA and EU. Convergence of interests of two global powers in Iraq and Syria with Iran highly seriously affected the positions of countries wishing to become a regional power and leader. Especially Turkey felt outside of the political equation and Iran came to the forefront.

One of the other factors to be affected by Iran equation is Kurds and Kurdistan region. With an increase in political scout of Iran in the regional equation, its Kurdish policy will become much more evident. There are two main similarities between Iran and Kurdistan region for the global capital. Both have strategic energy deposits and both are located on transition center of energy deposits. In this regard, they have not only a competition between them but also an obligatory dependency relationship. Iran will reshape its relation with South Kurdistan currently and Western Kurdistan in near future.

Complying with decisions and increasing regional power of Iran will revise its own internal political relations necessarily and inevitably. It is known that to maintain current position for a long time is very hard with its existing structure. There is a serious public opposition against Mullah Regime. This power will cause a change in Iran regime necessarily and inevitably. Another very important factor is that Iran state has serious problems with Kurds, Balochs and Azerbaijanis. Although Iran enforces state system over these regions it occupied, there are not federative or autonomous structures in any of them. Unless Iran develops a resolution to this case which destabilizes its domestic policy, it cannot overcome its internal crisis. An Iran with its unsolved domestic crisis will have difficulties to mobilize its regional power therefore. In this regard, to apply some main alterations in its domestic policy and take steps regarding democratization are now inevitable for Iran.

One of the factors enhancing regional leadership position of Iran is energy resources that it has. It is one of the strategic chains of the world economy with its enormous energy resources such as petroleum and natural gas in particular. Iran having great petroleum and natural gas reserves other than its current production capacity is expected to become an important market place especially for

USA- and EU-origin companies. Moreover, the project for transportation of Central Asia natural gas to the Mediterranean through Iran-Southern Kurdistan-Rojava/Western Kurdistan has been started to be discussed seriously. Hence, rearrangement of oil-natural gas pipeline project generated so far will come to the agenda quite likely after the resolution of problems with Iran. This situation what will augment regional power of Iran much more also refers to that Iran has to find a more realistic resolution for the Kurdistan phenomenon which turned into a regional and even international question. Any regional state which cannot find real resolutions for Kurdish question cannot use its strategic power. Iran may take radical decisions in order to overcome this problem due to it acts more rationally in international and regional relations. Thus it may get one step ahead through complying with long-term intentions of USA.

Alteration in Greater Middle East Strategy of USA and Increasing Role of Iran

In a report that 16 strategic intelligence service of USA prepared together with CIA in a period when USA assumed Iran in 'enemy' category and Iran declared USA 'devil', it is emphasized that 'Iran has stopped its nuclear armament activity since 2003 and it can only be possible in the year 2015 "In October 2003, Iran sent a report to the DG providing additional detail on its nuclear program and signed an agreement with the United Kingdom, France, and Germany that included an Iranian promise to suspend all enrichment and reprocessing efforts."¹⁷

The fact that this report was prepared long time ago and the White House and Pentagon knew has been revealed to the public. However, this was started to be expressed to the public in the last phases of Bush period. Statements made by prominent international relations specialists of the USA and Pentagon advisors simultaneously after the outbreak of the report that intelligence and research services of USA prepared so as to indicate 'Iran has stopped its nuclear weapon researches' have a mutually complementary characteristics. Iran has been coming to the forefront increasingly while USA is reshaping the balances in the Middle East politics. Therefore, the possibility to become the center of political strategy for Iran is high. With this alteration, utilization of military forces have been turning into a waning possibility gradually, international diplomacy has started to come to forefront with priority. Zbigniew Brzezinski and Scowcroft who are two prominent strategists of ABD and have consulted US Presidents make this assessment on Iran: "There are two ways to solve this problem. If we want them to cease their bids to become a nuclear power as the condition to participate in negotiations, we need to give them something in the exchange of that... Either prerequisites must be given up for both parties or a mutual agreement must be concluded so as to take off the embargo for termination of armament."¹⁸

These amendments will concretize depending upon how the qualification of relations between USA and Iran will take shape. This policy that USA enforced is a strategy that will be applied in medium and long term rather. The first outcomes of that have emerged concretely. Turning into an interview between ministers of foreign affairs of negotiations that started between foreign affairs committees regarding Iraq question shows that USA has applied an obvious change in its Iran policy.

While emphasizing there is a need for alterations in 'Iran policy' of USA in order to be successful in the Middle East, Thomas Barnett, one of the most important military strategist of Pentagon, indicates that: "Iran must give a long-term support USA for two-state solution in Palestine and a stabilized Iraq under the control of Shiite majority, terminate the support that it is

¹⁷ https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/archived-reports-1/july_dec2003.htm, Unclassified Report to Congress, July - December 2003

¹⁸ BRZEZINSKI Zbigniew –SCOWCROFT Brent, America and the world, Profile publications Ist. 2008, p.77.

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providing to terrorist groups in the region, cooperate in applying pressure to Syria to cease its sovereignty over Lebanon and rather symbolically diplomatic recognition process of Israel and official declaration of rights to exist of this state. Unless such steps are taken, we cannot imagine future peace of Middle East...”¹⁹ While USA and EU are trying to pull Iran in global system in order to become more active in regional policies, they utter at every turn that they are open to make reciprocal concession. When Obama indicates that Iran has the right to use nuclear energy for energy production, he also targets internal political balances of Iran. Obama power which has been applying a liberalized form of policies that Bush had followed regarding Iran’s internal public opinion is seeking ways to change internal balances in favor of USA through supporting a wing inside the system instead of overtly fighting against Mullah Regime. Scowfort explains it with these sentences: “To intervene domestic affairs of Iran becomes a mistake. We should encourage liberalization of tendencies within the Iran... We should start to take steps for sprouting of more liberal tendencies in Iran and wait for realization of this evolution by extreme opinions.”²⁰

USA strategists that took lessons from the last experiences make an extra emphasize on being much more sensitive and careful in order to steer domestic affairs of Iran. With the statements of Brzezinski; “USA government should focus their discourses and policies on supporting a political change to encourage Iran to establish stronger institutions inside the country and develop diplomatic and economic relations abroad.”²¹

It should be noted that ‘new’ periodical policies that Obama team introduced quite rapidly started to take effect in Iran as well as Islamic world. Washington government started to pursue a policy taking providing change through alliances reactionary regimes of the region as a basis. Appointment of Iranian Veli Nasr, who is known as one of the important Middle East and especially Iran specialist and writer of the book of “Shia Revival”, by Obama as one of his “Iran consultants” gives clues about the Iran policy that USA will pursue.

Any change that may occur in political strategy of USA is directly proportional to policy of Iran regarding to become a regional power. Naturally, positioning Iran in regional power relations will enable adaptation of Iran into global system integrally at the same time. Joseph Nye Jr who is one of the former deputy defense ministers making the evolution of “If America wants Iran to act responsibly, it has to give responsibility to Iran in the region”²² makes an important emphasizes on some alterations that may occur in USA policies with respect to becoming a regional power of Iran. This is the very thing that Iran wishes. Moreover, in the article of Henry Kissinger, former Foreign Affairs Minister of USA, published in Washington Post newspaper just after the published report of CIA, those are indicated regarding rearrangement of relations between Iran and USA: “A coherent strategy toward Iran is not a partisan issue, for it will have to be implemented well after the present administration has left office... What is required is a specific vision linking assurances for Iran's security and respect for its identity with an Iranian foreign policy compatible with the existing order in the Middle East.”²³ Such evaluations give us an idea about possible ‘new’ developments in power relations of Middle East. Global powers donate one nuclear weapon to Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt too when necessary according to their regional interests. There should be no doubt on this issue. The determinative thing is whether they serve regional strategic interests or not.

¹⁹ BARNETT Thomas AM, *The Pentagon's New Map, A Future Worth Creating*, New York, Paperback –2004, p. 121.

²⁰ *America and the World: Conversations on the Future of American Foreign Policy*, New York, 2008, p. 68.

²¹ BRZEZINSKI Zbigniew and GATES Robert M., *Iran: Time for a New Approach* Report of an Independent Task Force Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations, Council on Foreign Relations Press Release, 2004

²² NYE JR. Joseph, *The Paradox of American Power*, Oxford University Press publications, New York, 2002, p.96,

²³ <http://www.henryakissinger.com/articles/wp121307.html>

The fact that global capitalist powers accepted 5 % enriched uranium that Iran requires for nuclear energy and agreed upon that should not exceed over 20 % in negotiations made with Iran is also related to the task that will be given to Iran. In a sense, it is a balance policy based on lot of give-and-take. USA wants Russia and China that provide nuclear technology to Iran to use their influence on Mullah Regime.²⁴ It is obvious that progressions in nuclear bids of Iran will develop under the initiative of Russia and China. The two countries in question are at a sufficient level to balance Iran. It can be said that overcome of stalemates and deadlocks in Middle East policy of the US through the policies developed by Russia naturally enabled an initiative shift to Putin. Hence it can be suggested that Russia that has been following an efficient policy in Syria has persuaded Iran too.

Global capitalist system powers are also aware of that regional power of Iran which is defined as axis country of Eurasia strategy should not be underestimated. Brzezinski indicates that regarding China-Russia and additionally Iran alliance: “The most dangerous scenario is potentially great coalition of China, Russia and maybe Iran... Although such a probability is low, in order to prevent such a coalition USA will need to employ its geostrategic skills in the western, eastern and southern regions of Eurasia simultaneously.”²⁵ Complicated relations are on the carpet between the three countries in question in order to cut USA off at its pass regarding especially policies towards Eurasia. I think it is not an exaggerated determination that the alliance which emerged between these three countries deactivated regional Eurasia strategy of USA through dealing big blow. USA has to develop a new strategy with Iran and then generate a cooperation strategy with Russia in order to make its Central Asia and Eurasia policy which is in a collapsing status functioning again.

Iran is aware of its role within the regional equation and trying to drive the bargain hard especially in its relations with USA. The problem is that how will higgling such a bargain with Iran affect regional strategies? Why did global central powers make such an agreement with Iran? Answers of these questions will determine resolution strategies regarding future of complicated political problems of the Middle East in particular.

This agreement resting on long bargains not only will change the political balances based on Iran but also regional strategies will take a new format as a consequence. Significant alterations will occur in regional power balances and relations. It seems that each step that Iran Mullah Regime is going to take within the frame of concluded agreement will increase its strategic importance.

Iran may turn into one of the important chains of global economy in near future. A set of changes will be applied in order to restore its economy and accelerate flow of global capital to this country. Iran claims that its loss arising from the placed embargo is 120 billion dollar. After the enforcement of the agreement, a cash flow towards Iran in the amount of 15-20 billion dollar will realize.²⁶ Such decisions which are very crucial with respect to restoration of Iran economy also will play an active role in flow of the global company to Iran. Iran will take an important role as a new member of G20s within the next 3-4 years.

Political chaos that emerged in Iraq made USA and Iran much closer than estimated. Being driven of Iraq into a war-based political crisis again is in contradiction with regional interests of USA and EU. Especially turning into a permanent power of a radical Islamist movement in particular through controlling a small part of Iraq will cause serious problems for Israel also.

Responding positively to proposal of ‘resolving’ military and political crisis emerged in Iraq ‘concertedly’ of Iran by USA is not a coincidence and is considered important as a pre-step of

²⁴ Revue Politique Etrangère, Où Va Iran? Edition Ifri, Nancy, 2012, p. 533.

²⁵ BRZEZINSKI, The Grand Chessboard Edition Hachette Literature, 1997 p. 82-83.

²⁶ by Indira Lakshmanan Iran to Reap \$7 Billion in Sanctions Relief Under Accord, November 24, 2013, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-11-24/iran-to-reap-7-billion-in-sanctions-relief-under-accord>,

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future relations. Emphasize of US Foreign Affairs Minister John Kerry who expressed that “is not ruling out potential U.S.-Iranian military cooperation in stemming the advance of Sunni extremists” in the way that “He would not rule out anything that would be constructive but any contacts with Iran would move step-by-step” gives an idea regarding the future of relations of USA with Iran. Moreover US gave the message of that they will not send a troop to Iraq again for a land operation through the assessment of “... a contingent up to 300 ‘military advisers’ will be sent” by Obama.²⁷ Obama, who indicated that Iran ‘may play a constructive role’, expressed that US can make a military alliance directly or indirectly. In parallel with effective air operation of the US, participation of Iran soldiers being claimed to be in Iraq in a land operation may come to the front. Obama also restricted the borders of a possible operation through the warning of “Iran should avoid entering the conflict as ‘solely as an armed force on behalf of the Shia’. We have indicated to them it is important for them to avoid steps that might encourage the kind of sectarian slips that might lead to civil war.”

While evaluating potential USA-Iran discussions, Russian oriental scientist Vyacheslav Matuzov suggests that: “Direct negotiations with Iran has been the thing that Russia invited USA to actualize for the last several years. In the present case Iraq crisis may be the pretext for the moderation being expected for a long time in relations with Iran. Cooperation of Iran and America in Iraq will be another reason for the lift of all political and economic sanctions over Tehran.”²⁸

The alteration in Iran strategy of USA will mean rearrangement of all alliance balances that to be made with Mullah Regime in the Middle East. Overthrow of Maliki power in Baghdad is the most important chain of USA-Iran alliance. Without the approval of Iran, overthrow of Nouri al-Maliki could not have been possible. When bargains higgled over Iraq and roles provided to regional countries are taken into consideration, it is seen that Iran comes to the forefront as the central country. Being the country probably having the highest geostrategic significance in the Middle East and Central Asia of Iran will determine new power and alliance relations. Existence of Iran revolutionary guards in Iraq against ISIL requires approval of USA, on the other hand, overthrowing Maliki and appointment of El Abadi who is more accommodationist and has been in USA for a long time as prime minister requires the approval of Iran. In Iraq- and Syria-centered plots of USA, Iran comes to the forefront with priority. To become operative in these two countries is difficult without Iran. Hence, while USA positions Iran at the heart of Middle East relations gradually and determines a joint strategy, countries like Turkey opt out the equation at the same time. Whereas Turkey cannot take any step regarding hostages taken by ISIL, USA has headed towards solving Iraq-based questions together with Iran.

Moreover, start of a rapid change in Iran policy of UK in parallel with USA is not a coincidence and is related to rearrangement of Iraq-centric power relations in the Middle East. UK Prime Minister David Cameron suggesting “The estimates are now that this [ISIL] is a greater threat to the UK than the return of foreign jihadists or fighters from the Afghanistan or Pakistan region”²⁹ drew attention to Iran factor for resolution of the problem. Besides, explanation of ‘UK is getting prepared to re-open their Embassy in Iran’ made by UK Foreign Affairs Minister William Hague just after the emergence of Iraq crisis reveals that process will operate much more rapidly. Thus, development of USA-UK-Iran relations that have considered each other as ‘enemies’ for years much more rapidly than estimated is replacement of ‘Sunni Islam’ policy which have been tried

²⁷ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/19/obama-100-special-forces-iraq>

²⁸ http://turkish.ruvr.ru/2014_07_08/ISHID-lideri-CIA-ajani/

²⁹ <http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display>

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regarding mapped out geopolitical strategy of the year of 2020 but not become successful so far with 'Shia Islam' policy. It is planned to make this strategy to affect regional balances comprehensively actual by positioning Iran at the heart.

Concluding remarks

Iran wants to play leading role beyond having a voice as a regional power in the scope of strategies applied by powers of global system. It employs both its geographical and existing geo-economic and geopolitical position ambidextrously in order to utilize regional balances in favor of it.

Although it is known that bids of Iran for nuclear weapons are not at the expected level, it is an obvious fact that this issue has been justified for attacks. While, on the one hand, miscellaneous offences were going on, international basis to turn Iran into a target was tried to be formed on the other hand.

Prerequisite for the success of 'Greater Middle East' strategy planned by global powers is to provide inclusion of Iran in regional relations and playing an active role of it. Political stability of Central Asia, Caucasia and the Middle East rests upon being a regional power of Iran in a sense. Bringing Iran to the forefront as a regional actor has become necessary and mandatory with respect to interests of global world system with priority. Iran that was considered in the category of 'rogue state' in the past is being brought to the forefront as an active power for the regional stability today. Hereafter, Iran will determine the balances of the Middle East.

Being effective in determination of economic, social, political and military power relations in Asia, Caucasia and Middle East, Iran maintains its strategic significance. Iran, that is efficient in determination of economic-political balances of the Middle East and Central Asia especially since 20th century has positioned at the core of the global system with its energy resources.

Inclusion of Iran in global system is to completely control Shiite population being effective in the region and determining power relations in almost all states. Thus, it has been seen in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria affairs that Middle East cannot be included in global system without Iran. Therefore, international powers notably USA have started to change their policies towards Iran ambidextrously. Particularly Obama administration has headed toward a very obvious alteration in USA policies and the strategy of bringing Iran to the forefront as a regional leader country has been adopted for the last several years. USA intending to apply 'Sunni Islam' strategy has seen that the affairs was going to turn into a much more conflicting and complicated situation and started to gradually head toward Iran-centered 'Shiite Islam' policy.

There is very significant data pointing out that the wind will probably change towards Iran regarding the Sunni-Shiite balance during the process. It is understood that Iran-centric Islam regime will be preferred as a model in a sense so as to make Middle East regimes sustainable through reforms. Another representation of that is to bring Sunni Islam into conformity with Shiite Islam gradually in formation of political regimes. That may enable Iran to be much more active as the regional leader. For the execution of all these political strategies and plans, Iran must initially attune to policies of global powers notably USA. Conflicts and wars in the Middle East will still be continued for a while for reciprocal prove and implementation of these political strategies. Iran will constantly be at the forefront in generation of all these balances as the central country.

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