



The Impact of Geopolitics on the Orientation of Iran's Foreign Policy during the Second Pahlavi Era

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Abstract

Geopolitics is among the influential elements in the field of foreign policy. During the Pahlavi era, the country, influenced by geopolitical factors, faced many ups and downs in the realm of foreign policy. Countries, as actors in the power and politics arena, have aimed to centralize and exert central influence over other players. The more centralization an actor achieves, the higher the ranking, more extensive connections, and obtaining a more desirable position become. The aim of this article is to investigate the impact of geopolitics on Iran's foreign policy during the second Pahlavi era. The main question posed is: What impact has geopolitics had on shaping Iran's foreign policy during the second Pahlavi era? The hypothesis suggests that geopolitics acted as the main and influential factor in Iran's foreign policy during the second Pahlavi era, leading to an increase in the country's power. The results of the article indicate that the Middle East, during the second Pahlavi era, functioned as a geopolitical network with various sub-networks. Eleven geopolitical sub-networks can be identified, among which the most significant include the Islamic sub-network, energy, democracy, and the resistance sub-network. Iran held a central position among Middle Eastern countries in these geopolitical sub-networks during the second Pahlavi era. Iran's centrality in the Western sub-networks of security and economy allowed it to better and more extensively pursue its national interests. The research methodology employed is descriptive-analytical, based on library studies.

Keywords: Geopolitics, Foreign policy, Second Pahlavi Era, Middle East power

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Introduction

The geopolitical environment can be considered as a network where various actors and agents exist. Within this network, each actor has different roles, weights, importance, connections, and influential powers in such a way that a hierarchy of power, influence, and susceptibility can be observed. Due to its ancient civilization, abundant natural resources, vastness, and population, Iran possesses significant geopolitical centrality. The geopolitical position of countries plays a crucial role in generating their power. Iran is among the countries whose political power is greatly influenced by its geopolitical position. Numerous studies have been conducted on the geopolitical position of Iran.

Governments, from ancient times to the present, have always been in conflict to access valuable resources, control them, and impose their demands on rival governments. Each geographical region consists of several countries and actors, and there is a competition for supremacy and influencing other players among them. In other words, these players aspire to gain centrality in a geographical region. Centrality is a crucial factor in network analysis; it leads to higher rankings, more connections, and obtaining a more desirable position. The network centrality theory can be used to analyze the geopolitical positions of countries. Based on this, countries play as actors within various geopolitical networks and subnetworks. Various factors affect the role of countries within these networks, and thus their roles in these networks change over different time periods.

During the Pahlavi era, Iran's centrality was in three subnetworks: The West, security, and economy. However, the occurrence of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 marked the most significant political transformation in the recent hundred years of Iran's political history, impacting its geopolitical centrality in the region and the world. In this article, we delve into the examination of the impact of geopolitics on Iran's foreign policy during the second Pahlavi era.

The Concept of geopolitics

The conceptual definition of geopolitics, as evident from its vocabulary combination, revolves around the connection between geography and politics. Sullivan considers geopolitics as the study of the geography of relationships between governing powers, acting as legislators for nations or bodies, and formal structures. According to Wood and Dmko, the division of power and its arrangement in the world, politically and militarily, falls within the realm of political and geopolitical geography. Ezzati, in his conceptual definition of geopolitics, describes it as a complex set of conflicting and diverse forces that engage in struggles in small-scale territories. Their aim in these struggles is either to demonstrate their political differences or to eliminate political rivals from the scene. In another context, he states, "Geopolitics examines the impact of geographical phenomena on the structures and institutions of governmental and non-governmental politics and their transformations, especially in relation to their interactions with other states" (Afzali, 2017, p. 46).

Glassner, in explaining geopolitics, points out that one should not ignore the differences between political geography and geopolitics. He writes, "Geopolitics is one of the subjects of political geography, mainly focused on the examination of states in the context of global spatial distance. Geopolitics is an attempt to understand the power of the state, its nature, and the reaction and interaction between the two." Considering the various theories presented, geopolitics can be defined as the examination of the relationship between states, their power ambitions, and the stabilization of their authority in geographical regions.

Factors Influencing Geopolitics

Factors influencing geopolitics are divided into two categories: constants and variables. Constants are primarily unchanging factors, and if we do not tolerate their non-variable nature, we can at least say that their changes are gradual and imperceptible over a long period. On the other hand, variable factors are those that, although they may have a natural origin, are considered in the realm of variables due to the emphasis on quantity in this group. Therefore, it can be said that a comprehensive study of geopolitical phenomena is more inclined towards a holistic perspective and pays attention to the role of each influential factor, whether geographical factors that geopoliticians in the past focused on or human and cultural factors, which are currently the subject of debate regarding their quantity and quality. Therefore, by examining various perspectives, not only can a society gain a comprehensive understanding of the science of geopolitics, but the real position of culture in such a phenomenon is also clarified. In total, the researcher attains

a precise understanding of the issues and topics under consideration.

1- Constants of Geopolitics

Constant factors are divided into six groups: 1. Geographic location, 2. Various forms of positions such as land and maritime, 3. Space and its divisions, 4. Land area, 5. Topography, meaning borders, water networks, and ruggedness, 6. Country shape. In other words, constant factors need to be identified from a morphological perspective. Further explanation helps to eliminate some ambiguities in this classification.

1. Geographic Location: In a general sense, geographic location can be defined as the placement of each point on the Earth's surface. It involves general and specific, relative, and mathematical coordinates, with an emphasis on the general coordinates in geopolitical studies. General coordinates always remind us of how distant or close a point is to other points. Thus, it indicates the geographical position of each region or country among others, demonstrating its geopolitical characteristics and, in other words, reminding us of the strategic geo-features. Ezzati, regarding the geographical location of each country in the "Fertile Crescent" region, writes: "Neglecting the understanding of geographic location will lead to the widespread expansion of geopolitical problems." It is necessary to search for the most critical example of neglecting understanding of location within the geographical domain of the Fertile Crescent. Considering the complete geographical unity of the Southwest Asia sub-peninsula (Middle East) and the mountainous location of the Fertile Crescent, which extends from the eastern Mediterranean to the end of the Persian Gulf and the Oman

Sea, affecting countries like Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, the Arabian Peninsula, and Iran, one can argue that unity among these countries, creating complete freedom of action between the eastern Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea, will result in stability and security in these lands. (Ezzati et al, 2021, pp. 156-155).

2. Various Forms of Positions: The importance of geographic location differs based on its shape, with two main shapes being maritime and terrestrial. Maritime position is defined based on the access and level of access to open waters. Maritime position plays a significant role in the political power of each country in the region, as history has shown that countries with less access to open waters have had less success in reaching power. Maritime position is divided into two forms: island and coastal. The island position is the most complete form of maritime position, and considering human characteristics, it provides different levels of power. In an island country with high human and population diversity, power and stability can only be achieved when human skills are high. Ezzati states in this regard: "All islands in the world, without exception, have a military role, and the strategic role of these countries is not irrelevant to their geopolitical goals. One of the characteristics of island positions is that it is impossible to establish land communication with them, except through water." He adds: "Over time, it has been shown that if the inhabitants of an island do not understand their geopolitical position and do not show the appropriate reaction in international politics, they will soon lose the benefits of independence and freedom of action. The island position may be a blessed land covered from the opposite coast, and it may be a temporary or continuous maritime and aerial

stop. Sometimes it may also be used as a continuous and accessible infiltration center and help with broader operations. These operations may have different military, economic, or political aspects on a large scale." (Hafez Nia, 2005, p. 138).

The coastal location that gives a quasi-island shape to the country makes the region active and permeable. In fact, it is the point of connection between two strategic land and maritime areas. In coastal maritime positions, although geopolitics and geo-strategy are coordinated, and national identity is weaker in them, having human diversity allows other characteristics to expand and spread further.

A landlocked or central position is one where the country is surrounded by two groups of other countries and does not have access to open waters. In such a position, the country will never have really political and security stability and will always play a complementary role to its neighbors. Ezzati specially describes the unique form of a landlocked position: "If a landlocked position has the necessary geographical unity and lacks much human diversity, it has facilities for security forces. To avoid playing a role in the region's insecurity, it is divided among its neighbors. Therefore, such land complements the land strategy, and because its goal is unity, it causes instability for countries that have a share in it" (Sinai, 2005, p. 29).

He concludes that as long as the world is influenced by land and sea strategies, countries with small geographical areas will have a global role geopolitically. If such countries unite to preserve their security, rival countries will also show similar operational actions, and thus, in many places like Lebanon, there will

always be centers of tension that periodically go through military and political pressures.

As mentioned, the collection of geographical positions and their shape clarifies the strategic position of any country or region, thus defining the basis of its geopolitical policies. After reaching this conclusion, Ezzati goes on to explain the theories of political geographers. "Today, political geographers, for the study of the global political situation, have considered all regional and continental dependencies and focus on four geographical positions, namely: a) the pivotal position, which is essentially the center or land position b) the marginal position, which is essentially the coastal position c) the external position, which is in line with island conditions and has the role of military bridges d) the strategic position, which has a historic role" (Cohen, 2008, p. 98).

3. Space and its divisions: The concept of space is applied to lands where humans have been able to enter, occupy, settle, and it is natural that this can only be achieved with the help of technological facilities. Due to the difference in the political units, various natural phenomena are organized based on unified principles. "The political division of space into countries or groups of countries with a common political ideology is, in fact, a framework in which political influence is exerted, and its goal is to predict and obtain necessary changes at the international level. If there is a tendency towards unnecessary but seemingly beneficial changes, this will be detrimental to other countries, and the result will be the implementation of aggressive policies ultimately leading to military intervention. However, reluctance to make changes that human society needs to some extent will result in negative

and futile isolationist policies" (Nixon, 1685, p. 54).

4. Soil extent: Soil extent is one of the factors that, according to Ezzati, has lost its credibility and importance today. In his opinion, while in the past, the extent of a country's soil could contribute to the increase in its political and military power and credibility, today, all parts of every country are considered front lines due to military technological advancements and aerial access (Cohen, 2008, p. 116).

5. Topography: Topography refers to the external shape of the land in each country and mainly includes the shapes of river and riverbank borders. These shapes and their geometrical forms have a significant impact on the security of the country. For example, countries with convex borders are always vulnerable to the threat of invasion from other countries. Rivers or waterways were more important in the past than today because, in the past, due to the shape of transportation tools, rivers were considered one of the best means of communication, connecting different parts of each country. Today, the placement of rivers or waterways in each country plays a crucial role. An example is Ezzati's discussion about Germany's unity: "One of the major reasons for the political delay in Germany's unity and the various and diverse problems facing this country is the shape and direction of its rivers. In Germany, the rivers Rhine, Oder, Weser, and Elbe all flow northward and parallel to each other. The concept of this natural situation is that there is no natural region in Germany that can be a center for the interests of the German nation and the creation of German national unity."

Terrain irregularities provide suitable defense positions for each country, but on the other hand, they do not affect the country's industries and economy. Just as "the shape of irregularities affects internal population movements and facilities, creating regional inequalities and thus reinforcing separatist thoughts."

6. Country shape: The country's shape is an interpretation of its geometric shape and is mainly related to the distance of surrounding points from its center. In this way, countries can be classified based on their geometric shapes into five categories: elongated, circular, fragmented with appendages or tails. In countries with a fragmented shape, mainly a kind of archipelagic structure, the lack of land communication lines creates difficulties in defense. Countries with a tail-like or environmental shape are those that have placed all or part of another country within themselves (Karimi, 2017, pp. 152-153).

These six groups of fixed morphological factors define the geopolitical situation of a country and demonstrate the importance and credibility of natural geographical features.

Variable Geo-Political Factors

This group of factors, primarily related to humans and human life, can be divided into three categories: population, natural resources, and political and social institutions.

1. Population: The population and its qualitative and quantitative distribution are among the most crucial topics in geopolitical issues. The desirable quality of any population is determined by the level of expertise and skills of individuals. Its importance is such that it is considered the strategic backbone of any country today. Certainly, providing necessary

food supplies for the entire population is the first prerequisite for the intellectual development of any society. The quality of the population also depends on its distribution in different regions of the country, ensuring the country's long-term security. The quantity of the population relates to its relative density, which is linked to the fair distribution of economic facilities within the country. In other words, each square meter or kilometer of a country's land should have the capacity to provide facilities for the population residing in it (Cohen, 2008, p. 116).

2. Natural Resources: These resources determine the real and tangible wealth of any country. The mere presence of natural and mineral resources does not define a country's wealth; rather, the optimal and desirable utilization of these resources is essential. The lack of technology and necessary skills for the extraction and exploitation of a country's mineral and natural resources, and the activation of its production cycle, indicate weakness, incapacity, or economic and consequently political dependence on other countries. Examining countries heavily reliant on their single-product oil-based economies, Ezzati writes, "All oil-producing third world countries have these characteristics. For this reason, they lack a stable planning and foresight system. The absence of stable structures and policies makes these countries more vulnerable at any time. Such countries are among the worst types of dependency, meaning on one hand they're dependent on the export of raw materials and on the other hand on the import of food." (Soheili, 2013, p. 59)

Natural resources are mainly divided into two groups: food and mineral. The lack of food resources in crisis periods intensifies pressure

on the country. However, the importance of mineral resources always depends on their type. The economic power of third-world oil-rich countries is undoubtedly a result of the significance of this mineral in global fuel energy supply. The energy phenomenon is one of the most crucial economic issues in the world today, and its extraordinary political role cannot be denied. Political categorizations and alliances regarding the increase or decrease in oil prices and influence on the oil production line have always been among the most provocative political phenomena.

3. Political and Social Institutions: These institutions create the groundwork for political policy-making. Ezzati mentions, "Politics always tries to justify or change these factors while preserving their independence. Any social institution, even if inspired by another institution, is forced to preserve a few main lines for its survival. Therefore, the leaders of countries and policy-makers should not erase other phenomena to develop, expand, and benefit from a social phenomenon. Because in any way, any phenomenon that feels threatened takes a defensive stance, and this defensive stance may make that phenomenon stronger than before"

Ezzati sees social institutions as arising from the economic organization of the political regime, the habits, history, and beliefs of each nation. He evaluates their complete cohesion as the most significant obstacle against the material and moral abuses of foreign countries. It seems that Ezzati divides the effective laws on geopolitics into two aspects: from macro to micro, from apparent to hidden. If the geographical position is the broadest and most extensive look at the situation of each country on Earth, the habits and behaviors of

the society are the least visible and microscopic look at this issue. In general, it can be said that this classification drives the reader and researcher from the most important tangible and macroscopic aspects of the geopolitics of each country to the most specific and hidden aspects and, from another perspective, determines the research method by induction. (Ezzati et al., 2021, p. 58)

Geopolitics of Iran in the Second Pahlavi Era

Iran, as one of the countries in the Middle East, held different positions in various networks during different periods. In the Pahlavi era, Iran's centrality was mostly related to security, the West, and the economy in these networks. However, in the Islamic Republic era, its nature changed, leaning more towards ideological aspects. Before the 1979 revolution, Iran had higher centrality in three networks: The West, security, and the economy. In the West network, which opposed the communist system, all Middle Eastern countries except Syria, South Yemen, and Iraq were present. Iran attributed its higher centrality to modernism, more advanced than other countries, in the security network, formed to counteract communist influence and defend Western interests. Iran gained attention from Western powers and took responsibility for the centrality of this network. The next network was the economic network, including oil-rich countries in the region, where Iran held centrality in the energy flow in the Middle East.

The Western Geopolitical Network: This network includes the United States, European countries, and regional allies such as Israel and Saudi Arabia. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was known as the Western

capitalist system network, opposing the communist system. Almost all Middle Eastern countries, except Syria, South Yemen, and Iraq, were part of this network. This network directly reflects the West's influence on the modernization process of Middle Eastern countries. Iran and Turkey were more influenced by Western modernization compared to other Middle Eastern countries, especially due to their higher susceptibility.

The beginning of the Pahlavi era in Iran coincided with various events globally and regionally. After the end of World War I, the Middle East became the arena for Western forces, although the region was not foreign to colonization before that. France, England, Russia, and Germany entered colonial competitions in different periods, challenging the power of Islamic lands that were dominant until the 17th century. With the end of World War I, the Middle East witnessed a new form of territorialization by Western countries. The modern Middle East was forming until 1922; Britain and France established new governments in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, regardless of their multi-ethnic structures. In Lebanon, six distinct racial groups lived under French rule. Syria was under French rule, and Iraq was under British rule. In 1922, the Ottoman Caliphate was abolished by Atatürk, and in 1924, with the abolition of the Caliphate, a new constitution was adopted. The West, by emphasizing national identity factors in the Middle East, highlighted and marginalized political and geographical elements effective in the territorialization process. In this way, the concept of Islamic Ummah took the place of the nation-state, and the concept of a modern state emerged in the Middle East in accordance with Western existence.

The onset of the Pahlavi era marked various changes in Iran. Modernization efforts began in the nineteenth century, but the weakness of the Qajar government and the middle class led to its failure. Therefore, considering the absence of a bourgeois system in Iran, the advancement of the modernization process required the existence of a modern, centralized, and powerful government. The most influential impact of the Western network on Iran is modernism. In Iran, modernization efforts started in the nineteenth century. However, the weakness of the Qajar government and the middle class led to its failure and interruption. Therefore, with the absence of a bourgeois system in Iran, advancing the modernization process required the existence of a modern, centralized, and powerful government. (Afzali, 2017, pp. 253-255)

Iran and Turkey were pioneers of modernism in the region. Iran, due to its ancient history and the presence of elites familiar with European ideas, succeeded more than other Middle Eastern countries in establishing a modern state. Thus, Iran achieved modernization earlier than other Middle Eastern countries. The most significant impact of the Western network on Iran is modernism. In Iran, modernization efforts began in the nineteenth century. However, the weakness of the Qajar government and the middle class led to its failure. Therefore, considering the absence of a bourgeois system in Iran, the advancement of the modernization process required the existence of a modern, centralized, and powerful government. The Pahlavi era marked the intensification of Western modernism in Iran, and significant measures, such as laws and regulations, land reforms, capitalist economy, and the White Revolution, strengthened modernization. (Sinai, 2005, p. 66)

During the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, Western modernism took an even more extremist form. Significant measures strengthening modernism included laws and regulations, land reforms, capitalist economy, and the White Revolution. (Afzali, 2017, p. 190)

In the late 1970s, social reforms led to changes in the structure of the capital and the growth of the urban middle class, resulting in increased apartment living and the transformation of Tehran's appearance to a European-style city. Cities became the main showcase of Western modernism in Iran, enhancing Iran's geopolitical centrality among Middle Eastern countries. Hilton hotels in Tehran, McDonald's restaurant chains, the screening of Western films in Iranian cinemas, cabarets, and cafes all presented glimpses of Western cities in Iran.

Iran's presence in the Western geopolitical network began during the reign of Reza Shah, accompanying the country's industrial growth. This presence intensified during Mohammad Reza Shah's era. In the second Pahlavi era, Iran held a significant position globally in terms of modernization. The substantial income from oil allowed the government to push society towards Westernization strongly. However, while economic and social spheres saw development, the political realm faced challenges. The inability to modernize the political structure eroded the link between the government and social structures, closing communication channels between the people and the political system. This, in turn, increased the gap between ruling groups and modern social forces, especially the market and religious authorities, ultimately undermining the connections that once existed. In

1977, the socio-economic gap widened to the extent that it posed a serious threat to the entire regime. The Islamic Revolution of Iran occurred not due to excessive development or underdevelopment but because of uneven development (Abrahamian, 1998, p. 525). While Westernization had its drawbacks for Iranian society, placing Iran in the center of the Western geopolitical network played a crucial role in its foreign interactions. The Pahlavi government used Iran's Westernized image to its advantage, elevating its political standing through increased engagements with powerful Western countries. Iran symbolized Western modernization in the Middle East, influencing the level and extent of interaction with other nations.

The Security Geopolitical Subnetwork: This subnetwork refers to the alliance of Western countries and the United States in the Middle East, including Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and countries in the Persian Gulf region. These countries were allied with the United States during the Cold War, contrasting with the Warsaw Pact nations allied with the Soviet Union.

After World War II and the onset of the Cold War, Iran gained Western attention, particularly from the United States. Following the August 1953 coup in Iran, the U.S. gradually became the main player in Middle Eastern politics. With the withdrawal of British forces from East of Suez and the relinquishment of their security responsibilities in the Persian Gulf, a power vacuum emerged that America had to fill.

Subsequently, Nixon formulated the following four-point policy for the Persian Gulf region: 1) Close cooperation with Iran and Saudi

Arabia as pillars of regional stability, 2) Limited military presence of the U.S. Navy, with about three ships from the Middle East command, 3) Increased diplomatic activities in the region and technological aid to those countries, 4) Diverting the attention of small regional countries from England towards meeting their security needs (Hafez Nia, 1992, p. 117).

Initially, the U.S. proposed a large defense alliance comprising Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Persian Gulf countries. However, Egypt, Iraq, and Syria opposed this plan vehemently and engaged in intensive propaganda against it. Turkey, Pakistan, and Kuwait showed little enthusiasm for joining. The U.S. abandoned the pursuit of this plan and adopted an alternative approach called the "twin-pillar policy" or "twin-track policy." Under this policy, Iran and Saudi Arabia became the primary pillars responsible for safeguarding and filling the power vacuum in the Persian Gulf region. Iran, being the first choice, received more attention in terms of financial support for security programs, while Saudi Arabia, due to its small population and industrial backwardness, was mainly viewed as a financial supporter (Chamankar, 2006, p. 44). The combination of oil in the south and Soviet communism in the north constituted the fundamental and explicit strategic importance of Iran. Iran, among the Arab countries in the region, was the only country with complete control over the Persian Gulf. If this responsibility were delegated to the southern peripheral governments, Washington would have had to coordinate with six countries for the advancement of its strategy in the region. Moreover, geographically, Iran was situated on the southern border of the Soviet Union, making

it highly significant for U.S. interests (Rubin, 1984, p. 44).

During the 1960s-1970s, Iran's intervention beyond its geographical borders increased. In the internal conflicts in Yemen between royalists and republicans with Marxist tendencies, Iran supported the royalist faction inclined toward the West by sending weapons and military training during the years 1962-1970. Pakistan, during the 1971 war with India and the struggle against Baluchistan separatists, benefited from Iran's material and moral support. Iran assisted Mola Mostafa Barzani, the Kurdish leader, in the battle against the Iraqi government.

In this manner, the West established a network of allied countries in the region, including Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. Within this network, Iran played a central and pivotal role in geopolitics based on economic, military, and communicative potentials, according to the Nixon Doctrine. Iran's operational scope sometimes extended beyond the region, as mentioned above.

Geopolitical Economic sub-network: This sub-network includes major players such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Qatar as energy producers. Additionally, smaller players like Yemen, Syria, Oman, and Egypt are involved. Furthermore, significant energy importers from outside the region, such as the United States, the European Union, and China, are present in this sub-network. However, Iran and Saudi Arabia are key players in this sub-network (Mirzadeh Koohshahi, 2013, p. 193).

The Middle East, due to its substantial energy reserves, is one of the most important regions globally. This region possesses almost two-

thirds of the world's proven oil reserves and one-third of natural gas reserves, mainly under the control of Persian Gulf countries. If the proven reserves in the Caspian Sea are added to these figures, the relative percentage of these reserves for oil might reach around 70% and over 40% for natural gas. Therefore, the energy ellipse from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea represents one of the most significant geostrategic realities of our time. This factor has led to the formation of an economic and energy resources sub-network in the Middle East.

Energy diplomacy of each country contributes to creating international interaction opportunities to maximize geopolitical and geo-economic interests. It aims to use energy tools to take steps towards reducing global threats (Ezzati et al., 2021, p. 28). Iran's superior economic position during the Pahlavi era brought about geopolitical centrality in this geopolitical sub-network. Iran, besides possessing rich oil and gas resources, actively participated in the global economic cycle due to its alignment with the West's policies, turning it into a vital economic pole globally. Iran's geopolitical centrality in this sub-network not only enhanced its prestige regionally but also globally. For instance, during the economic crisis in Italy, Iran, as the only Asian country, provided a loan to Italy. In other global economic crises, Iran actively participated during this period. Iran's geopolitical centrality in the economic sub-network allowed it to effectively manage and resolve all economic crises in the Middle East by directing its economic policies and implementing the opinions of its policymakers. This centrality enabled Iran to make the best use of its geographical position between the Eastern and Western blocs.

The foreign policy of Iran during the Second Pahlavi era and the impact of geopolitics on it:

Between the years 1941 to 1953, significant events and developments took place in the political scene of Iran. Each of these events reflects aspects of the anti-colonial struggles of our people and a part of the history full of ups and downs in Iranian diplomacy.

The major events of this period in Iran's foreign policy include the occupation of the country by the Allies (just eleven days after the publication of the "Atlantic Charter"), the Soviets' abstention from evacuating Iran, the Azerbaijan and Kurdistan crises (which the Soviets used as a lever against Iran to gain northern oil concessions), the anti-colonial movement of nationalizing oil, and the coup in August 1953. The main characteristic that distinguishes the foreign policy direction of the country during this period, clearly and explicitly, is the formulation of the "negative balance policy." This article serves as the main framework for the political phenomena of this period and guides the domestic and foreign policy of Iran with special significance.

Iran's foreign policy in the years 1941 to 1950 witnessed the invasion of Nazi Germany into the former Soviet Union in July 1941, marking the beginning of new developments that affected the fate of many countries for a relatively long time. Iran, too, did not remain immune to the direct and indirect consequences of these events.

Various factors led the Soviet Union and Britain to temporarily set aside their enmities and political and ideological differences to find a suitable way to prevent Hitler's army from overthrowing the Soviet Union. Following

this decision, Britain sought ways to send military and medical aid to the Soviet Union.

With the occupation of Iran by the Allied forces, vital aspects of the country's internal affairs and security fell into foreign hands. Reza Shah was forced to leave the political scene as the political sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country faced serious damage and danger. Simultaneously with the transfer of power from Reza Shah to his son, Mohammad Reza, Iran experienced one of the most tumultuous periods in its political life.

The issue of Iran's oil was one of the crucial and fundamental topics that became the primary focus of the colonial activities of England, the Soviet Union, and the United States in Iran for some time. The United States and the Soviet Union sought to somehow share in Iran's oil concessions, and the British government aimed to strengthen its delayed control through the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

The dormant oil crisis awakened when the Soviet government learned from the negotiations between the American and Iranian delegations about the oil concessions in the southeastern regions of Iran in Tehran. They dispatched a delegation led by Sergey Kavtaradze, the Deputy Foreign Minister, to request the northern oil concessions of Iran. This request, coupled with Soviet threats, indicated a return to the traditional policies of the Tsars regarding Iran, meaning that any concession given to England or any other country in Iran should be similarly ceded to the Russians.

With the approval of the "Ban on Negotiations for Oil Concession" plan in the National Consultative Assembly and the withdrawal of the Russian delegation from Iran, Iran-Soviet relations entered a new phase, casting a shadow

of the Cold War on the relations between the two countries.

The Soviet government, as a motivating factor, strengthened the forces seeking autonomy in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan of Iran and activated the Tudeh Party as a lever of pressure against Iran to obtain northern oil concessions.

When Ghavam ol-saltaneh took power, simultaneous with the filing of a complaint against the former Soviet Union regarding the continuation of the occupation of Iran, the country's diplomatic apparatus, with the support of international assistance, initiated new efforts to end the crises in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan and evacuate Iran from the Red Army.

Iran's successful diplomacy, with national and international support, effectively achieved the main goal of the country's foreign policy in this period: the removal of Soviet forces from the country. The signing of the "Ghavam Sadchikov Agreement," establishing a joint Iranian-Soviet oil company, resulted in the last units of the Red Army leaving the country. In 1946, with the resolution of the Azerbaijan and Kurdistan crises, the threat of Iran's disintegration was eliminated. However, in 1947, with the introduction of the Ghavam Sadchikov treaty in the National Consultative Assembly, Iran-Soviet relations became severely crisis-ridden. The Soviet government threatened Iran with a reoccupation, trade relations between the two countries were minimized, and, in addition to the closure of the Baku-Anzali shipping line, a propaganda war against Iran by the Soviet government began. The darkness of Iran-Soviet relations gradually went beyond the Cold War stage and led to several military clashes and Soviet invasions of Iran's borders.

With the emergence of General Razm ara and his assumption of government leadership, serious efforts were made to normalize relations between the two countries. The signing of a trade agreement in 1950 marked the end of the crisis in Iran-Soviet relations.

Iran's foreign policy between the years 1941 to 1953 experienced numerous incidents and events, mainly including the occupation of the country by the Allied forces, the Soviets' abstention from evacuating Iran, the creation of crises in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan by the Soviets and their use as a lever of pressure against Iran to gain northern oil concessions, the nationalization of Iran's oil, and the crisis in Iran-UK relations over the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the coup in August 1953, with the participation of the United States and the United Kingdom.

With the renewed activities of England and the Soviet Union in the political scene of Iran, the anti-colonial waves in Iran shook the foundations of the dominance of these two actors and ultimately led to the rejection of the Ghavam Sadchikov agreement and the supplemental bill of GSS-Golshayan in the parliament, abolishing colonial privileges such as fishing in the Caspian Sea and the Iran-England oil company.

Iran's foreign policy during the occupation was influenced by the consensus, but in subsequent periods, victories and notable achievements, such as the evacuation of Iran from the Russian occupation, opposition to the transfer of northern oil concessions to the Russians, rejection of the supplemental bill of GSS-Golshayan, victory in The Hague court, and nationalization of oil, were achieved. With the occurrence of the coup in August

1953, and the overthrow of Mossadegh's government, a new era in the history of Iran's foreign policy began.

Since the early 1940s, when the British government established its control in Iran, parallel to the gradual withdrawal and, at the same time, the accelerated competition between Britain and the Soviet Union over Iran, the United States took an active and influential role in preserving and strengthening the foundations of the Pahlavi regime, placing it in the central nucleus of Iran's foreign policy.

During the years 1963-1978, although Iran had relations with various political entities, the two major global players, the United States and the Soviet Union, had a determining and significant role in Iran's foreign policy.

A. United States of America: Since World War II, the United States has been a major player in Iran's foreign policy. Especially after the 1950s, the direction of the country's foreign policy revolved around American interests. On the other hand, Iran's foreign policy towards the United States during the years 1963-1978 continued the policy of alliance and commitment, which, however, was influenced by internal pressures resulting from the nature of British control over the Iranian regime, international conditions, and ultimately, the interests and economic and political benefits of the United States. What was lacking in this regard was Iran's national interests.

The course of Iran-U.S. relations during these years, though consistent in nature, experienced fluctuations in practice. These ups and downs regularly occurred with the transfer of power between republicans and democrats. This article itself indicates the intensity of

Iran's foreign policy dependence on Washington.

The Pahlavi regime came under pressure during Kennedy's presidency in 1961, and to prevent the imminent overthrow predicted for the Shah's regime, the United States systematically implemented what was termed "reforms."

With the transfer of power to Johnson in 1963, Iran-U.S. relations regained momentum. The Shah, to attract Johnson's attention, supported America's policies in the Vietnam War, which was globally unpopular. The Vietnam War was a major distraction that, during his five years of rule, gave him the opportunity to control the Shah's actions in the White House. In this regard, the Shah had the opportunity to take the initial steps to make Iran the largest regional power. In pursuit of this policy, a flood of American military and economic aid poured into Iran, reaching three hundred million dollars in the years 1964-1967.

With Nixon coming into power in 1968, Iran-U.S. relations unprecedentedly flourished, and the trend of Shah's arms purchases from the U.S. sharply increased. During this period, Iran, as an exceptional ally of America and as the regional superpower, served as the basis representing the interests of the Western world in the absence of Britain.

When Jimmy Carter took office in November 1976, the Pahlavi regime came under pressure to reduce arms purchases while aligning its governance with the democratic values desired by the United States. The limitation of arms sales to Iran during Carter's period was not favorable for the owners of American military industries. Because the economic interests derived from arms exports to Iran were so

substantial that they could not be ignored, and American arms-selling companies competed intensely, resorting to covert activities and direct contacts with Iranian authorities, as well as bribery, to win new orders.

During the 25 years of Iran-U.S. relations, from 1953 to 1978, the Pahlavi regime was one of the largest importers of American goods, a major customer for American manufacturers, and a significant supplier of a considerable portion of Iran's oil needs. The Shah, to maintain his government, was dependent on the United States, and during these years, as a major part of his rule over Iran, he surrendered to the colonial rule of the Americans in his country.

B. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: Iran-Soviet relations from 1963 to 1978 underwent a relatively stable period and significantly improved. International developments and the shift in East-West relations from the "Cold War" to the "detente" phase were effective in the stability and improvement of Iran-Soviet relations.

The Pahlavi regime sought to limit its relations with its northern neighbor in the areas of technical cooperation, trade, and transit and prevent its political and ideological influence in the country. The major axes of Soviet foreign policy towards Iran were: isolating the Shah's regime from the West, cutting Iran's ties with Western oil companies, and, ultimately, technical and economic cooperation.

The proximity of Iran to the United States caused concern for the Russians. For instance, following Iran's participation in joint maneuvers with the United States, titled "Maneuver to the Brave," in the year 1964, or Iran's membership in the Regional Cooperation for

Development (R.C.D), Soviet reactions turned negative. In order to isolate Iran from the Western bloc, the Soviet Union, in 1967 (equivalent to 110 million dollars), sent light weaponry to Iran and received natural gas in return.

The closeness of Iranian markets to the Soviet Union, along with the inexpensive maritime transportation, was one of the attractions for Iran and a factor in the Soviet interest in establishing economic relations with Iran. Therefore, commercial and transit cooperation between the Soviet Union and Iran increased significantly during this period. During his second visit to Moscow which took place after the coup in August 1965, the Shah negotiated technical and construction cooperation with the Russians. In the framework of economic relations, various projects such as dam construction, implementation of hydroelectric plans, irrigation, the establishment of the Arak machinery factory, Isfahan iron melting plant, and others were executed by the Russians. Additionally, agreements were signed between the two countries in the fields of commerce and transit.

Conclusion:

With the conclusion of World War I, the Middle East witnesses a new form of territorial reorganization by Western countries. The New Middle East, until 1922, was taking shape as Britain and France established new governments beyond Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, regardless of their multi-ethnic structures. In Lebanon, six distinct racial groups lived under French rule. Syria was also under French rule, and the government of Iraq came under British control. In 1922, the Ottoman

Caliphate was abolished by Atatürk, and in 1924, with the abolition of the Caliphate, a new constitution was approved. In Iran, Reza Shah, with the efforts of his educated advisors, managed to institutionalize modern governance in Iranian politics through modernism and national identity. During the Pahlavi era, this modernism was pursued more vigorously. The White Revolution and agrarian reforms were signs of this modernism. In this way, Iran found itself under the Western framework and became geopolitically central. Another Western sub-network in the region is the security sub-network. With the Eastern Front opening, the Nazi German army advancing into the Soviet Union, and the threat of its occupation, Iran, due to its strategic position and role, despite declaring neutrality, came under the invasion of the Allies. It was Iran's strategic position and role in the Middle East that drew the attention of the West and the United States during the Cold War. According to the Nixon Doctrine, Iran was the most important country in the Middle East that could execute Western policies in the region. In the economic sub-network, Iran did not have much centrality during the first Pahlavi era. After events such as the coup in August in the second Pahlavi era, Iran's superior economic position brought geopolitical centrality in this geopolitical network. During this period, among the countries in the region, Iran was economically superior. In addition to possessing rich energy resources such as oil and gas, Iran actively participated in the global economic cycle by implementing policies aligned with the West, turning it into one of the key economic poles in the world. This power led Iran to reconsider its previous oil contracts with members of the oil consortium in the late second Pahlavi era, demanding more rights and privileges from them. Iran

also invested in other countries, gaining a special geopolitical centrality in the Middle East.

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