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Balkans' Trinity

To all the people who have great plans for the world!

And also the Eternals~



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The Role of the United States in the Relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Balkan Countries

Preface

The Balkans, also known as the Balkan peninsula are a geographic area in southeastern Europe. It is bordered by the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea in the east, the Adriatic Sea and the Greek Sea in the west, the Mediterranean Sea in the south, and by the Dinaric Alps and Transylvanian Alps in the north. The Balkans comprise the areas of Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Republic of Northern Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania, Turkey (the European part). Its total area is 728,000 km² and the population is about 60, 00,000. The region takes its name from the Balkan Mountains that are extended from central Bulgaria to the eastern region of Serbia.

The great importance of this region in terms of geopolitical, geo-economic, and geostrategic issues has resulted in the regional and supra-regional great powers being interested in this part of Europe and they are making efforts to make an influence in the region in a way that enjoy the interests of this area.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, due to the history of relations with the Balkans, is trying to make an influence in the region and establish a position for itself. The United States (US) as its traditional rival, however, has made efforts to apply its influence in the countries located in the region and prevent the establishment of relations between the Balkan countries and the Islamic Republic

of Iran. At the same time, the US is making use of its prominent foreign policy tool (i.e. sanctions) to avert the Islamic Republic of Iran's influence in the Balkans as well as preventing the cooperation between the Balkans with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Thereby, in this book, we discuss the economic, political, and cultural relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the Balkan countries, in addition, we address the effects of U.S. sanctions on the economic, political, and cultural relations of the countries located in this region with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Abstract

Relations between Iran and the Balkans have always had many ups and downs, and these ups and downs are often influenced by US sanctions against Iran, this prevents countries from better understanding the potential of Iran for a lasting economic relationship. The question that arises in this study is what effect does the confrontation between Iran and the United States have on relations of Iran with the Balkan countries? The research hypothesis indicates that before the heavy US sanctions against Iran, the volume of economic relations between Iran and the Balkan countries amounted to several billion dollars, but with the imposition of sanctions, this volume of relations was reduced to a very low level. In this study, we first describe the theoretical framework of foreign policy from the perspective of James Rosena, and then discuss the potential of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Balkan countries and the impact of US sanctions on economic relations between them.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Cold War, Iran, Balkans, USA

Introduction

The outbreak of the Islamic Revolution in Iran posed a major challenge to US foreign policy and had a far-reaching impact on the world, especially in areas under US influence. From the point of view of the world capitalist system (led by the United States of America), Iran is a rough and disruptive member of the international system, and its Islamic ideology always insists on a constant struggle with the liberal values that govern the world system and seeks to disrupt current situation and makes disorder in the current world system. This factor has been one of the serious and basic procedures of the US foreign policy decision-makers after the Islamic Revolution of Iran until now. They used diplomacy, deterrence, blockade, intensification of sanctions and military aggression. Among these, sanctions are of special importance and are one of the international coercive tools of governments to change the behavior and overthrow other governments. The Islamic Republic of Iran has been subject to unilateral sanctions by the United States and Western countries since its realization, and during the last four decades, it has gradually entered the gradual process of the most severe sanctions of the international system. These sanctions have also affected relations of Iran with other countries and have made other countries fearful and hesitant in establishing relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this study, we examine the role of the United States in the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Balkan countries, in the meantime, we examine the impact of US sanctions on the relations of these countries with Iran.

Theoretical Framework

Foreign policy

The beginning of foreign policy field was usually sparked by three main sources: James Rosena's article "Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy", Richard Snyder et al. book "Pre-Decision as an Approach to the Study of International Politics" and Harold and Margaret Sprout's book "Human Suitable Hypotheses _ Environment within the international arena". If we want to give a general definition that includes foreign policy in general and in particular, we explain that: Foreign policy, which includes the regulation, implementation, as well as the product and result of decisions, is a guide for actions that a the government acts beyond its borders to advance its goals considering governmental actors. Although, in principle, the patterns of behavior and interactions in international politics should be evaluated in the context of the foreign policy of various actors, but neglect and inattention to this field of study has led to a lack of sufficient and comprehensive explanations of foreign policy. (Qawam, 2013: 231) Therefore, the main and primary task of a policymaker is to fully explain foreign policy in the first place and determine the hierarchy of goals, interests and then evaluate the reaction of other governments to these priorities in the second place. Therefore, in the policy-making process, in addition to explaining it, goals, interests and strategies should be considered, as well as the hierarchy that others attribute to their goals, interests and strategies. Given the above explanations, it is necessary to have a model for studying foreign policy, because by using a specific model, policymakers will be able to view, understand and interpret the behavior of others. For

this reason, we have considered the model for the study of foreign policy as the Rosena model, using the components of this model such as: individual component, role component, society component, government system component and international (systemic) system component, an analysis of Iran foreign policy in the Balkans after the Cold War can be done.

Level of Coherence analysis

The Researcher of Coherence Approach Index; James Rosena believes that the process of change in world politics and domestic politics originates from several fields. In his view, in tracing the roots of these dynamics to the nature of change and the capacity of human systems, three important points should be considered: the first is related to change, the second is the position of causality in human affairs and the central question of, "Do these dynamics come about through agents or structures?". The third point focuses on the role of individuals and their vulnerabilities in changing their willingness to participate in collective action and their capacity to adapt to new circumstances (Rosenau, 2006: 7).

Unlike George Modelsky, James Rosena distinguishes three concepts of foreign policy. In his view, a foreign policy concept is a set of commitments and plans for action that include explicit strategies, real decisions, and visible policies that are manifested when communicating with the outside world. He also defines the concept of foreign policy as an orientation in which he believes that foreign policy is the result of attitudes, perceptions and values that are the result of historical experiences, traditions in a society, culture and strategic circumstances. Finally, he defines another level of foreign policy as behavior and believes that foreign policy is the same behavior of governments in the international environment that is the result of the previous two levels. (Abedi Ardakani, 2019: 439) Analysts at this level of analysis use both micro and macro levels of analysis to analyze foreign policy. Comparative approach to foreign policy was introduced by behaviorists into political science. In general,

the purpose of this work was to provide systematic theories and explain foreign policy. (Zakarian, 2015: 393)

In other words, James Rosenau's pattern of Coherence is a combination of two levels of micro and macro analysis, and theorists which fall into this level of analysis use both levels of analysis to analyze the foreign policy of countries and governments, and seeks a bridge between the two approaches. Rosenau's innovation is that, contrary to the levels of micro and macro analysis, which each gave objectivity to one of the two environments (domestic and international) and reduced the role of the other category, Rosenau has dealt with the objectivity and mutual consolidation of these two categories in the field of foreign policy. In other words, James Rosenau's theoretical model, by avoiding objectifying each of these two categories, believes in the connection of two levels of analysis in the study of foreign policy and adds to these factors the variables of the international system, which is important at the macro level. (Rosenau, 1971: 98)

Also, in his book entitled "Studying World Politics: James Rosenau described the theoretical and methodological challenges considering his theory as influencing five factors in shaping foreign policy. According to him, five variables should be analyzed: 1: Individual variable 2: Role variable 3: Government variables 4: Society variables 5: Environmental variables (systematic) In fact, the purpose is to evaluate the relative strength of each of these variables and then their impact on foreign policy. (Bagheri, 2016: 146)

Individual variable

One of the variables that James Rosena examines at the microanalysis level is the Individual decision-maker variable. The individual variable is the unique characteristics of decision-makers that include all aspects of decision-making. The unique characteristics of decision makers and elites are important factors influencing how foreign policy is shaped and directed by countries in the international environment. This variable includes all aspects of decision makers, ie their values, talents and past experiences; aspects that differentiate foreign policy options or its behavior from other decision makers. (Mahmoud Aghli, 2014: 214)

In the individual variable, the decision-making personality pays attention to issues such as characteristics, moods, thoughts and ideas, psychological characteristics, genius and charismatic abilities, and so on. According to this variable, the decisions made by one person are different from the decisions of another person in the same situation due to the different characteristics and abilities of that person. Rosena argues that the characteristics of the decision-maker are stated more in underdeveloped, newly independent and small countries that lack organized roles and bureaucratic institutions, and in general, in societies where leaders are less influenced by public opinion and influential groups. Of course, Rosena considers these variables to be different according to the type of ruling political system (open and closed system). (Mohammadi, 2005: 23) In other words, the individual variable is the same political and economic characteristics who lead large groups and play a leading role in foreign and domestic decisions. (Rosena, 2005: 172)

Role variable

This variable means that government officials, regardless of the individual and monopoly characteristics mentioned in the individual variable, react to an issue based on their position in the government. The position of the individual in the governing structure, duties, responsibilities and loyalties that are expected from him based on this position, affect the individual's perception of the world and his decisions in the field of foreign policy (Rosenau, 1971: 108) In other words, the second set of variables related to external behavior derives from the role played by the decision maker; Of course, the effect of this factor is referred without considering the personality traits of the occupiers of the role. (Rasouli Thaniabadi, 2012: 99) This variable refers to the external behavior of officials, which is due to the position they hold and regardless of the personal characteristics of the person who has held that position. (Bagheri, 2016: 146) Role-dependent variables are the influence of position and responsibility on the behavior of officials and governments, which is defined by the description of jobs and responsibilities or expected behavioral rules. Role-related variables affect foreign policy in two ways. First, these variables create behavioral constraints for decision makers and reduce their options, and second, the formation of specific and continuous group and organizational behaviors and tendencies by creating fixed and continuous procedures. (Dehghani Firoozabadi, 2010: 76)

Government variable

This variable refers to those aspects of government structure that limit or increase foreign policy options. The influence of the relationship between the executive and parliament in foreign policy is an example of the variability of government (Rosenau, 1971: 109), in other words, aspects of government structure that limit or increase the decision-making options of foreign policy makers. (Bagheri, 2016: 146) The mentioned variable refers to those aspects of government structure that limit or increase foreign policy options. The complex structure of a government, the relationships of intergovernmental organizations, and, ultimately, the experts within an organization, determine and provide the guidelines for foreign policy decision-making, and no decision-maker can make a decision regardless of these considerations. The effect of the relationship between the executive power and the legislature in foreign policy is an example of the operation of a variable government. (Mahmoud Aghli, 2014: 215)

Community variable

This variable emphasizes those non-governmental aspects of society that affect foreign behavior. The main value orientations of a society are the degree of national unity, industrialization, groups, associations and non-governmental organizations which participate in determining the content of a country foreign ideals and policies (Rosenau, 1971: 109). According to James Rezona, the social variable includes essentially all the non-governmental aspects of a society that are involved in the foreign policy decision-making process, including the values and ideologies that govern a national society, influential and pressure groups, and so on. (Mahmoud Aghli, 2014: 215)

A country foreign policy is a function of the nature of power and the structure and social layers of thought and wealth in a country. Hence, in the classical texts of foreign policy, it is constantly said that foreign policy is a continuation of domestic policy and the foreign policy of countries should be sought in their intellectual and critical divisions. If we want to deal with this in more detail, a country foreign policy is a reflection of the relationship between thought and power in its government. Therefore, understanding the foreign policy of any country is, first of all, knowing the society of that country, and the perception of political sociology are the prelude to the perception of foreign policy, an order established in a society has both internal and external consequences. The direct inference of the above discussion shows the inseparability of foreign policy from domestic policy. Therefore, external, internal continuation and growth level function are also internal. The foreign policy of any

country determines the internal situation and especially the level of thought and concentration of the public growth of its people. (Sari al-Qalam, 2009: 27-24)

International system variable (systemic)

This variable means non-human aspects of the external environment of the community or any action that takes place outside the environment and affects the choice of decision makers, so this variable depends on the characteristics of the international system and the behavior of governmental and non-governmental actors. According to Rosena, these factors are intermediate variables and a function of fundamental factors.

They include the political, economic and social structure of countries and their type of policy, which are:

- 1) Political power, which includes large and small countries.
- 2) Economic power that divides countries into advanced and backward categories.
- 3) The nature of the open or closed social structure that indicates the presence or absence of automatic change of elites.
- 4) Cultural permeability or impenetrability (answer to the flow of information: an open society and vice versa is a closed society) so moving from right to left means moving from a great power (advanced economy, open society and penetrating culture) towards small power (small economy, closed society and impenetrable culture). This means reducing the generalist role of institutions and increasing environmental determinism and individual dictatorships (Bagheri, 2016: 146) In other words, it can be said that this variable includes environmental and international events, constraints and

possibilities that occur outside a Society and government and limit or condition the foreign policy choices of governments and their decision-makers. (Rasooli Thaniabadi, 2012: 99)

In other words, the role of the United States in the relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Balkan countries is often affected by this variable because the high economic and political power of the United States and its influence among the Balkan countries prevent these countries from having a lasting economic relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran and creating a shadow of fear over these countries that are subject to widespread sanctions and also prevents them from establishing a relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

US sanctions against Iran

Today, economic sanctions, which have a lesser effect than war, are used as a tool by world powers to put pressure and also adjust the policies and behavior of some countries or to ensure the implementation of international rules and regulations. (Maghami, 2020: 73)

US sanctions against Iran include two series;

A. Sanctions imposed by the executive branch of the US government. The sanctions fall within the framework of the US President's legal authority under the International Economic Law and the National Emergency Law, on the pretext that Iran policies pose an extraordinary threat to national security and foreign and economic policy. Sanctions were imposed to counter this threat and the state of emergency, and were later intensified by Executive Order number 13059 of August 19, 1997.

B. Sanctions against Iran and Libya dated 1996, known as the Damato Act (Iran Sanction Act).

The US government and the creators of the Damato law cite the following reasons to justify their sanctions:

Iran disrupts Middle East peace process by aiding extremist groups.

Iran supports terrorist operations against US interests.

Iran seeks nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. (Hassani, 2000: 33)

In general, US sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran can be divided into six main periods, each with its own characteristics: