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Hegemony and border tensions

The mystery of the Persian Gulf



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**We bring our acknowledgment at the
first place!**

We owe great attitudes to:

our parents! The guardians of the souls !

*My dear Professor, who taught me to write, Ali
Adami !*

*Our dear martyrs, specially my uncle, who fought
like a knight during the 8 year war between Iran and
Iraq.*

*Dear Dr. Johannes Schmitt for it was him who put
his faith in me when no one else did!*

*And also to my newly met Friend in UAE , Neda,
for she has one lovely pure soul!*

Semper Fidelis!

Part I

Hegemony and border tensions

It can be said that there is an interrelationship between hegemony and border tensions in the way that the establishment of hegemony for the regional and universal powers rests on overcoming environmental obstacles and border tensions. On the other hand, once a country's hegemony is established, border tensions will be minimized in its region. The Islamic Republic of Iran is a potential power with the highest probability of achieving hegemony in the region as it owns the material requirements in western Asia. The border tensions between neighboring countries as well as the rivalry have increased the incessant tensions. In contrast to the previous decades, Iran has been able to successfully drive all the border tensions out of its border, which can result in the establishment of Iran's hegemony, along with cultural influence and material possessions. However, there are some hurdles to this achievement, one of which is the alliance of Arab countries. This book also examines the aspects of disagreement and tension among Arab countries along the Persian Gulf. According to Mearsheimer, Iran is naturally working towards establishing a regional hegemony and the United States of America will clearly counteract. To this end, the USA has devised various measures such as bucket-passing and balancing policies, war, creating hostility, political decoy, and stimulation in the last four decades to escalate border tensions and impede the hegemony. Governments have always sought to maximize their power in the international

system and in order to do so they have been competing with other actors. The Persian Gulf has been considered by many thinkers and policy makers in the field of international politics and its connection with the interests of the great powers. The main question of this book is: What is the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran among other powers and compared to other countries in the Persian Gulf; and whether this country can be considered as the hegemon of the Persian Gulf region in terms of aggressive realism? To advance the present study, the descriptive-analytical method of interest based on statistical data has been used. According to the results and researches from the perspective of aggressive realism, at present, the top government which is the hegemon of the Persian Gulf is considered the Islamic Republic of Iran, which in addition to geopolitical advantages has appropriate economic and military advantages.

Keywords: Potential power, regional hegemony, aggressive realism, Persian Gulf, Islamic Republic of Iran, Persian Gulf Council, and Border disputes, Persian Gulf peace, Sustainable security of the region.

Introduction

Persian Gulf is located and bordered by Iran to the northeast, Oman to the east and the Arabian Peninsula to the south. Its length from the mouth of the Arvand River to the Strait of Hormuz is equal to 1259 km, and its width from the mouth to the coast Oman varies approximately between 180 and 250 km and in the Strait of Hormuz is approximately 85 km. Iran, with occupying 1375 percentage of total coasts of the Persian Gulf as the longest coastline and Iraq with 45.3 kilometers from Bandar Abbas to the mouth of Faw, includes 18.5% of all beaches and have the shortest coastline connected with open waters. This blue line is one of the strategic and geopolitical regions of the world, it is still the center of regional and international power possessing 65.5% of the world's oil resources, 30% of the world's natural gas and having a Rimland position, it is the new heartland of the world. The mentioned geopolitical position paves the way for the presence and role of the colonial states and many fundamental changes have taken place in the political units around the political geography (Weiss, 2007:28). In addition, among the subsystems of the Middle East region, the Persian Gulf as an independent and distinct region in terms of geopolitics includes Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain (Haji Yousefi, 2008: 53). The Persian Gulf, with its abundant energy resources, has always been in conflict with world and regional powers. Over the years the United States has been involving itself through various means, such as the Iran-Iraq war, supporting Saudi Arabia, and direct intervention to prevented the formation of a dominant regional

power over the Persian Gulf. In fact, the absence of intervening powers is in line with the goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the lack of formation of a dominant power in the Persian Gulf is in line with the goals of world powers, especially where the United States is defined. Recognizing the capabilities of each of the Persian Gulf countries in the present study, the authors examine the capabilities of countries within the region and their competition, especially in some cases (economic and military) and they finally rank the countries in the region in the pyramid of regional power which has come to the data of 2018. The main question of this article is: What is the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran among other powers and compared to other countries in the Persian Gulf; and whether this country can be considered as the hegemon of the Persian Gulf region in terms of aggressive realism? To advance the present study, the descriptive-analytical method of interest has been used based on statistical data. Our main goal is to provide capabilities of the Persian Gulf countries which are playing regional and global role in international interactions, which is presented through the presentation of 2018 statistics. To this end, the author first shows the nature of power from the perspective of aggressive realism in the first part of the article, these capabilities objectively and operationally are in the form of 7 tables under the title of the potential and actual capabilities of the Persian Gulf countries which are identified in the second section; finally in the conclusion section the final analysis of the data is done.

Theoretical framework:

Aggressive realism:

The place of classical realism in the post-war social sciences is vibrant and increasingly appeared influential in research. The formation of the field of international relations has been the dominant theory of world politics; because it provides a very effective explanation of the state of war, which is the dominant condition in the international system. Despite the differences between the different types of realism, a common core of the three elements that all realists believe in are self-help, governmentality and survival respectively (Bliss and Smith, 2009: 320-319). In the 1970s, the school of neorealism replaced the realist approach. While Neo-realists emphasizes the lack of authority, the level of analysis was considered the international system. Researchers in security studies offer two conceptions of neo-realism: aggressive realism and defensive realism. Aggressive realists believe that relative power is more important to governments and that defensive realists wage war on forces they know the irrationality of a society (Sazmand and Ghanbari, 2012: 4). The question of whether the main goal of governments is to create security or to increase power has led to the formation of two realist groups which are defensive realists and offensive realists. Defensive realists like Kenneth Waltz and Joseph Greco believe that security is the primary goal and therefore seek the amount of power that will ensure their survival. According to this view, governments are defense ac-

tors and do not seek to maximize their power. Especially when it means endangering their security. In contrast, the theory of aggressive realism by John Mersheimer states that the ultimate goal of all governments is to achieve a hegemonic position in the international system. According to this view, governments are always looking for more power and if the conditions are right they want it to change the distribution of power (Bliss and Smith, 2009: 345-344). According to John Mersheimer, governments live in a world full of threats and are units that they tend to maximize their power so that they can survive. The main goal of any government is to maximize its share of world power, which means gaining power by means of others. Moreover, we have seen de-escalation in the history of international relations, but these are all attempts to create opportunities and it has been used in a better situation. Shimmer states that the main reasons of the governments' desire for power must be in three things.

1. *The anarchic structure of the international system;*
2. *The offensive capabilities of all governments;*
3. *Uncertainty about the intentions and intentions of the enemy.*

Most of what is needed to explain international relations is structural factors such as anarchy and distribution of power (Moshirzadeh, 2005: 132). John Mersheimer is the main author and inventor of aggressive realism. Mersheimer's theory of aggressive

realism is based on the assumption which emphasizes that international politics are essentially an attempt to increase relative power, and governments until conversion they have not hegemonic power and will not give up this effort. According to Mersheimer, this behavior is a fear of the situation.

The anarchy of the international system originates and necessitates the desire for survival and leads to the pursuit of aggressive behavior (Salimi, 2005: 25); Mersheimer is based on this fundamental assumption where the theory of aggressive realism has been built. When the assumptions of "aggressive realism" (survival, rationality of actors, distrust, offensive capability and anarchy when linked together, strong motivations for governments to behave and think aggressively towards each other)

They create three patterns of behavior in governments: fear, self-help, and maximizing power. (Mearsheimer, 2009: 36).

Fear

Governments are afraid of each other; they are suspicious of each other and war is always imminent in a world where governments have the ability to attack each other and may have the motivation and intention to do so. Any government that wants to survive should at least be suspicious of other governments and avoid trusting them. Something that creates far stronger incentives in governments to fear each other is the international system. There is no central authority that a threatened government can help when faced with danger. The likelihood of being the victim of aggression underscores the importance of fear as a driving force, something which the world of politics makes it clear to us. (Mersheimer, 2009: 36-37).

Self-help

Because governments see each other as potential threats and also because no authority is the superior center in the international system that when they face difficulties and threats to save themselves so those asylum-seeking governments cannot depend on others to maintain their security. Both governments are defenseless and therefore try to be prepared to ensure their survival. Governments act in the national interest and never subordinate their national interests to the national interests of other governments or they do not put the interests of the so-called international community; the reason is very simple: in a world that the rule of behavior is the principle of self-help it must be selfish. This rule applies both in the long run and in the short run because if a government loses in the short term, it may not be able to make up for its loss in the long run (Mersheimer, 2009: 37-38).

Maximizing Power

Mersheimer, like Waltz, believes that all governments seek survival, but the argument on the structure of the system of states leads to aggressive thinking and action, because in practice a state cannot know how much power is needed to feel safe and it is impossible to know how much of power will be needed to feel secure in the future, consequently a characteristic of any chronic anonymity and fear system is the same. Since survival is the most important goal of governments, Mersheimer concludes that rational actors who act in anarchy they are involved in the constant desire for power (Shariatinia, 2010: 190), governments that are the ultimate intentions of other governments are no longer afraid and know that they are operating in a self-help system, they soon realize that the best way to survival is to be guaranteed considering being the most powerful government in the system. Whatever the government is the stronger, the less likely it is that any of its rivals will attack it or threaten its survival. The Governments weak avoid fighting stronger governments because they are more likely to fail militarily. In fact, the greater the power gap between the two governments, the less likely it is that the weaker government will attack the stronger one. In the international system, the ideal situation is to be hegemonic, and in that case, survival is almost guaranteed (Mersheimer, 2009: 38).

Potential power and actual power

Mersheimer believes that "the effective power of government is ultimately the performance of forces and its military compared to the military forces of a rival country. In other words, he believes that military power can be evaluated separately and used to identify major powers in the international order. However, Mersheimer also acknowledges that countries have both perspectives when it comes to balancing power which are considered short-term and long-term. In short, the balance of power at any given moment reflects the distribution of the power military and what Mersheimer calls "hidden power" and is actually based on a country's wealth and population (Little, 1389: 342). It follows that regardless of any distribution of power, the great powers must pay attention to have a special power to hide; because this power will determine the balance of power in the future. What Mersheimer worries about China, this is the importance of hidden power from his view. He believes in the future balance power will change in favor of China (Little, 1389: 343). To understand the nature of power from the perspective of aggressive realism, it is first necessary to distinguish between potential and actual power.

Governments have two types of power: potential power (hidden) and actual power (military power). These two forms of power to are closely related but not exactly alike because they are derived from different sources and capitals. Potential power is the socio-economic elements used to create and establish

military power which is rooted in the wealth and population of a state. Governments to form military force and participate in wars require money, technology and trained manpower, and the latent power of a state as a whole potential factors and forces that the government can mobilize when fighting rival governments (Mersheimer, 2009:63). The potential power of a government depends on its population and wealth. These two factors are the cornerstone of military power. Wealthy rivals, who have large populations, always have the ability to create a huge and powerful military force. The scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy in the first place it is due to its position in the international system and especially its capabilities and the field of military power (Moshirzadeh, 2005:129)

The concept of hegemony: "Hegemony" is originally a Greek word and in pPersian it means leadership, superiority and domination. And domination is translated as the expansion of the influence or exercise of power of a more powerful country in another country or region. (Harsij and Tuyserkani, 2007: 17). The concept of hegemony refers to a situation in which a country, first of all, be more powerful than other countries in terms of material capabilities; second, on the main sources of raw materials, dominate the process of circulation of goods and capital; third, the ability to justify and harmonize other countries in terms of having ideological and moral issues (Shouri, 2003: 151). Also the expansion or exercise of superior power by one country over

another country or territory also expresses the concept of hegemony (Plano and Alton, 2008: 392) Regional hegemony: Regional hegemony is a state that has the largest army and the most power compared to other states. It has a region, and no other government in the region has enough military power to challenge it (Mersheimer, 1388: 47). The government that has the most power is the first level power in the region. It is in the position of regional leadership and control and exerts influence in the affairs of the region. To answer the main question of this article, we will continue to examine and compare the potential and actual capabilities of the 6 Gulf countries. Persia includes the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Finally, it is possible to rank and position these countries in terms of military power in the Middle East.

Assessing and comparing the potential and actual capabilities of the Persian Gulf countries.

The two most important global energy centers are the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Basin in the neighborhood of Iran (108; Scott, 2009). At Having 9% of the world's oil reserves and more than 15% of its gas reserves and being located on the shores of the Persian Gulf, the geopolitical situation is unique that cannot be ignored (Ahmadvand and Dale, 2008: 7). The Islamic Republic of Iran due to its high position in the classification of exploited and non-exploited oil and natural gas reservoirs of the world has (Taft, second after Saudi Arabia and gas, second after Russia) the amount of oil and gas reserves that can replace the daily share of other producing countries, having the longest borders in the Persian Gulf and in the result of dominating about half of the world's oil trade and a unique transit position is considered as the most important country in terms of geopolitical position in the Persian Gulf region (second Joshaghani, 2010: 100)

In addition, Iran is the only country that has special facilities for acting in the Persian Gulf, across its north coast which it dominates and geopolitically it should be in the lead (May Afshar, 2012: 109). Iran, in the Persian Gulf region and the Sea of Oman, has more than 2000 km of suitable coastline. It has strategic islands and in the north it borders the second largest oil and gas source in the world (Mayel Afshar, 2012:134).

Iran has historically been considered a buffer between the great powers. The geopolitical position