

# Foreign Policy Planning in Iran in Twenty Year Outlook Plan

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## Abstract

Foreign policy is influenced by structural elements, internal, regional and international political dynamics. The decisive role of human factors in decision making and orientation as well as the role and priorities in the path taken by nation-states in foreign relations also have an impact on foreign policy. The most considerable reflection of the elites' will in determining the orientation of foreign policy and international planning is embodied in the formulation of national outreach documents like national strategic plans, long-term strategic plans or perspective plans. As a regional power, the Islamic Republic of Iran, after three decades of struggle for its independence and national sovereignty, codified the 2025 National Perspective Document in 2003 after lengthy debate and a consensual decision making process. It serves as a key outreach document in which the framework of domestic and foreign policies aimed at turning Iran into a superior power in the southwest Asian region takes form. While explaining the link between foreign policy planning and economic development both from domestic and international perspectives, as explained in the document, this paper stresses the indivisibility of the two concepts. By emphasizing the structural and human elements at the same time, an explanation of the two concepts and the link between them are also considered. The theoretical framework of this research is based on constructivist theory, it holds that becoming a regional superpower is dependent on a developmentalist foreign policy. Moreover, it argues that from a normative point of view, simultaneous consideration of domestic sources of development and positive action and engagement with the international community is essential.

**Keywords:** Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2025 Perspective Document, Economic Development, Developmentalist Foreign Policy, Foreign Policy Planning

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### **Introduction**

One of the major aims and objectives of states is to fulfill peoples' needs in the fields of economic and social development. In other words, a principal component in good governance in this era is to attend to the exigencies of sustainable development in society so that they can offer an appropriate response to people's demand for a prosperous life. In this regard, developments on the international political scene should also be taken into consideration. Globalization has left deep and vast impacts on the formation of these demands and the mode of fulfilling them. There are two viewpoints on this trend in international politics literature. The first viewpoint maintains that globalization is a project and that there are some agents who plan developments, while on the contrary, another viewpoint is of the belief that this trend is not a project but a process; a trend that is the continuation of past developments. This paper intends to put emphasis on impacts and consequences of this phenomenon regardless of it being a trend or project. Thus, today no state can confine itself to its national boundaries and see no need of the world for its own development and growth, and this fact, which vividly explains interdependence as well as deep and mutual impacts between a country's development and its foreign policy, is our departure point.

As Esmael Tareq points out, a state's choice of development model has extensive and determining impacts on the formulation of its foreign policy orientations. This, as the development model is considered to be one of the domestic sources for states' foreign policy making (Tareq, 1986: 17-40). Therefore, the type of development



model chosen by a state imposes some requirements on the sphere of its foreign policy making, seeking supplementary and fulfilling conducts which fit the needs specific to the adopted development model, an issue affecting the regulation of the foreign relations behavior of the state.

As indicated above, the foreign policy of any state is closely related to its development model, but usually the link between these two concepts is considered in the heart of outreach documents of countries like constitutions or strategic documents produced for the mid- or long-term, mainly intended to realize essential and fundamental goals as well as ideals and values of a state. These documents, like the Twenty-Year Perspective Document in the Islamic Republic, signify the main strategic lines for a country to attain mid- and long-term goals and also to define the relationship between institutions and organizations, serving as a source for sectional strategic plans.

In fact, these strategic documents are the result of a collective effort by the elites of a country which serve as guides for general policies of the state in different sectors. Because these documents are strategic, normally the type of links between different sectors including the economy and foreign policy is also determined, but the dimensions of those links and the quality of their implementation mechanisms are to be explained. For this reason, a precise study of the documents and examination of their various aspects is vital. The Iranian 2025 Perspective Document, which is also a strategic document for development and thorough advancement of the country, should be reviewed for the same reason.

### **Research General Framework**

The Perspective Document introduces Iran as a "regional superpower" from the angle of foreign and international relations. Given the importance of this document on the one hand, and significance of research related to foreign policy planning especially



from the angle of the link between economic requirements of the regional powers' foreign policies on the other hand, scrutiny and focus on this subject is considered to be an executive and scientific necessity. From the scientific point of view, this question is important: How is the foreign relations behavior of regional powers formed and influenced by economic factors? The answer to this question could be beneficial in bringing about an understanding of successful regional powers' behavior in studies of foreign policy and international relations. From an academic point of view, exploring the links between foreign policy planning, economic development and regional power could pave the way for moving towards realizing the implementation of the perspective document's objectives. This research is conducted by taking these requirements into consideration.

The fundamental question of this research is how we can understand and explain the foreign policy planning of the Islamic Republic of Iran from the angle of the link between regional power and economic development, based on the perspective document, and utilize it in practical policy making. To answer this question, it is necessary to put forth these queries: 1. What does the 2025 Perspective Document say about the links between foreign policy planning, regional power and economic development? 2. What are the features of a regional power's foreign policy from an economic point of view and the related existing models? 3. What is the meaning and implication of the aforementioned features in terms of policy making for the foreign policy goals expressed in the perspective document, if they are materialized, and what do they require?

Given the vacuum in the existing literature on the link between foreign policy planning and development, and economic policies as well as the raised questions, the theoretical framework which is adopted in this research is founded upon a combination of political economy, foreign policy planning and public policy. As far as data gathering is concerned, this research relies on library sources. The



theoretical assumptions of this research, from the angle of foreign policy, simultaneously consider structural elements, agents and constructivism. That is to say, both structural and human foundations affect the making of foreign policy. Hence, foreign policy planning, which deals with the role of agents, is important and effective.

In answering the proposed questions and given the theoretical concepts, hypotheses that are tested in this paper are as follows: 1. By highlighting “regional superpower”, the perspective document proposes a distinctive link between foreign policy and economic development, being centralized by the indivisibility of these two concepts from each other. 2. Becoming the regional superpower is dependent on a developmentalist foreign policy. 3. From the operational point of view, developmentalist foreign policy requires conjoined attention to domestic sources of development, and positive action and interaction vis-à-vis the international community.

After defining the framework and a review of its literature, this research is organized in three sections: 1) Dealing with the links between foreign policy planning, regional power and economic development; 2) Considering the link between foreign policy of a regional power and economic development at a macro-level; 3) Shedding light on the requirements of the foreign policy of a regional power and its policy concepts.

As mentioned above, this research focuses on policy planning in Iran, making it essential to examine the two research fields of foreign policy and planning in Iran. Reviewing this literature makes it clear that in the field of policy planning in Iran there is a vacuum of research, and it is hoped that this paper, while bringing about necessary attention to the topic, will serve as a an academic and applicable document in the sphere of policy making knowledge in strategic grounds.

Existing literature and research in the field of Iranian foreign policy indicate that the sphere of foreign policy planning has not been attended to by researchers although it has pervasive results and



impacts on international behavior. Independent writings on foreign policy are gradually growing and in general, they could be divided in different categories: “power based” or “history based” research works like the books *Iranian Foreign Policy: 1500-1914* (Ramezani, 2001), *Recent Political Developments in the Middle East and Iranian Foreign Policy* (Chubin, 1975), *Iranian Foreign Policy in the Pahlavi Era* (Mahdavi 2005), *Analytical History of Iranian Foreign Policy* (Farmanfarmayan, 1976). Some “theory based” research works are: *Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran: A Theoretical Renewal and the Paradigm of Coalition* (Sariolghalam, 2000) and *An Analytical Framework for the Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran* (Ramezani 2001). Another group of works is of a value-based nature, like: *Principles of the Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran* (Mohammadi, 1991). In the field of “geopolitics-based research” which has viewed foreign policy through a geopolitical approach, these books are given as examples: *Geopolitics and the Iranian Foreign Policy* (Eta'at, 1997) and *Foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Light of Regional Developments* (Haji Ysefi, 2005).

There is also another group of research called “theory-based” in this field, like *Conceptual and Research Frameworks for Foreign Policy* (Sajjadpour, 2004) and *Iranian Foreign Policy: Essays in Theoretical and Practical Fields* (Sajjadpour, 2002). Some books like *Iranian Foreign Policy in the Construction Era* (Ehteshami, 1999) and *Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran* (Azghandi, 2002) also fall within this category.

Another collection of works related to foreign policy is a “subject-based” one like *Great Tension: Iranian Foreign Policy under Reza Shah from 1922-1962* (Motazed, 1997) and *Politics and International Organizations* (Nazem, 1977). These works have considered a specific juncture or subject.

Reviewing the existing literature and research works mentioned above testifies to the fact that almost no work has been produced in connection with foreign policy planning. In the field of research on planning in Iran, looking at foreign policy is more or less neglected. As Ali Azam Mohammad Beigui has pointed out in the preface of his



book *Planning in Iran*, Thos H. Mcleod said that, having more than half a century of experience in planning, Iran is amongst the developing countries with the longest precedent, and which has not only failed to reach conventional goals of economic development and growth, but it also seems that now, in comparison with the beginning of planning and implementation of economic plans in the country, factors in line with economic development requirements have not gained much weight (Mcleod, 1998, p. 5). Here, we are not evaluating the Iranian planning system, however, a review of which could contribute to identification of factors involved in the development, one of which, could be foreign policy.

The background of planning in Iran is considerable and as it is shown below, in the fairly long history of planning in Iran, sufficient attention has not been paid to the foreign policy element. In the contemporary history of Iran, for the first time since 1937, we face the concept of planning (Tofiq, 2006 p.23). In March 1937, AbolHassan Ebtehaj was elected as the first head of the Economic Council Secretariat, established by the cabinet for planning. In his diary, Ebtehaj says: "Since many years ago... I have been emphasizing that unless we have a map for our activities, the situation of the country will not improve." (Ebtehaj, 1992, p.297).

The first attempts to initiate the ratification of a plan in the country became fruitful in 1947 and the first plan gained parliamentary approval in February the same year, and consequently in 1955 the second development plan was adopted. Until the Islamic Revolution in 1979, four more plans were adopted, three of which were implemented. The characteristics of pre-revolutionary development plans are shown in table 1 (Tofiq, 2006, p.23).

**Table 1: Development Plans before the Islamic Revolution**

Characteristics	First	Second	Third	Forth	Fifth
Ratification Date and transmission of the Plan	16/2/1948	28/2/1956	11/05/1967	17/3/1968	12/03/73
Start	23/9/1948	23/9/1956	23/9/1962	21/3/1968	21/3/1973
Conclusion	23/9/1955	22/9/1962	19/3/1968	20/3/1973	20/3/1978
Duration	7 years	7 years	5 years	5 years	5 years
Approved Credit	21	84	230	568	1560
Quantitative Target Growth	Nil	Nil	6.0	9.4	11.3

Figures for the credits are in billion Iranian Rials.

It is important to note that in 1959, the government proposed a bill to the parliament which transferred the powers of the Planning Organization to the government and the person of the premier, and immediately afterwards, Ebtehaj resigned and was jailed in 1961 (Tofiq, 2006, p.52).

Even though five development plans were implemented before the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran was not categorized as a developed country. The question is then raised; what are the reasons for this failure? One of the reasons is insufficient attention paid to the dimensions of the domestic sphere and foreign relations. Generally, it should be kept in mind that three standpoints exist on this failure, with some evidence of which we encounter when examining the literature of political development during that era. The first standpoint is of the belief that the reason behind the failure has something to do with technical factors or in other words, it was due to the technical mistakes of policy makers in choosing targets and executive means of the plan (McLeod, 1998, p.7). Adherents to this view, consider the development process as one based on the interaction among absolute economic variables (Mashayekhi, 1978) and hence, they undervalue the role of foreign policy (Razaghi, 1390, p. 11).

The second standpoint views economic planning in Iran and





other developing countries not as a conscious attempt of their governments to improve their own economic situation, but as a dominant modern capitalist tool to exploit peripheral or backward economies (Razaghi, 1989, p. 168). Proponents of this view believe that the inconclusiveness of development plans is due to the impact of non-economic factors of the planning environment on the government's behavior. According to this standpoint, foreign policy plays the role of a facilitator for the domination of foreign states.

The third standpoint is held by the Harvard University advisory group, whose members were recruited at the request of Ebtehaj, head of the planning organization at the time, and with the financial support of the Ford Foundation of the U.S. to participate in drafting the first development plan of the country. The reports published by the group (after returning to the U.S.) say that a government in an underdeveloped country is an embodiment of its society. They add that behaviors also represent underdevelopment. Hence, attempts made for planning therein are futile (Razaghi, 1990, p.12).

Wrapping up our consideration of the pre-revolutionary period, one could say that regardless of the correctness or incorrectness of the abovementioned standpoints, in that period, economic development was the focus of planning while foreign policy was confined to military and security fields and ignored in development planning.

Another reason is that due to the concentrated nature of the Pahlavi regime, the Shah was in the focus of policy making in different fields and personally carried out coordination among economic, military, security-defense and foreign policies. Planning sets were mainly of an economic nature and no institution rather than Shah was responsible for the bonds between domestic and foreign sectors.

After the Islamic Revolution, 4 five-year economic development plans were adopted, starting from 1989 till early 2011 (Tofiq, 2006, p.74). In the first to third plans, international politics and foreign



policy are not accounted for. Only in the fourth plan, there is a glance at affairs related to foreign policy. A feature of the fourth plan is the inclusion of a mid-term plan within the framework of the 2025 perspective document which determines the assignments of the next four development plans. Based on the perspective document, the objectives of the consecutive plans are as follows: Fourth, “sustainable and knowledge-based economic growth”. Fifth, “consolidating principles of economic growth and social welfare”. Sixth, “sustainable and knowledge-based development”. And seventh, “ensuring social justice”.

Documents of the Iranian Planning Organization have enumerated four general objectives for the fourth plan: Knowledge-based and justice-oriented development having *world interaction*, provisions for ensured national security and comprehensive deterrence, guarding the Islamic culture of Iran, effective sovereignty and deployment of a good government (Planning Organization, 2003). In all, in post-revolutionary plans and particularly from the fourth one, which endeavors to carry on development based on the 2025 document, special consideration has been given to the link between the economy and foreign policy.

Exploring the subject literature shows that the bond between foreign policy and economic planning in Iran has not been very appealing to researchers. Dominance of idealistic, realist, economic and political logic over the structural logic has impeded consideration of foreign policy planning which in fact bridges the domestic and foreign economic, social and political structures on the one hand, and human and willful factors on the other. Hence, viewing the perspective document from the angle of foreign policy planning and economic structures is a scientific necessity followed by scientific outcomes. Given our general review of the planning and development history in both pre- and post-revolutionary periods, and as the survey of the background in the field of foreign policy shows, links between key concepts like national power and economic development from a



foreign policy point of view, either has been given peripheral status or examination and survey of them have been done at a rare scale and to some extent in a scattered and disordered manner. Hence, one could assert that the perspective document, as an outreach national strategy, has for the first time attended to this significant issue and more importantly, this document is the result of endeavors and intellectual consensus of Iranian elites. If in regards to implementation, the plan continues to take advantage of this intellectual and executive consensus, a ponderous step is taken in realization of the country's goals. Any discussion on the link between foreign policy and economic planning in the perspective document needs to be done with a comprehensive acquaintance with its contents. Now, we should see how this link is looked at in the perspective document.

### **Economic Development and Foreign Policy in the Perspective Document**

As said in the explanation of the research subject, in order to have a better understanding of links drawn between economic development and foreign policy to attain the main objective of the perspective document, i.e. Iran becoming the primary regional superpower, we need to explain the details of these links. Therefore, the strategic structure of this document should be explored. With a glance at the contents of the final text of the twenty year- perspective document of the Islamic Republic of Iran, one can divide the document into three distinguishable parts: preface, contents and epilogue.

Examination of the contents of the document, which was passed in November 2003, could explain the nature of the link between ideals and goals from one side and adopted policies and tenets from the other. It is specified in the twenty year perspective document that:

“With reliance on the ever-lasting power of the Almighty Allah and under the auspices of faith and national will, and the programmed and the prudent collective attempt on the way of the ideals



materialization and the principles of the constitution in the 20-year outlook: Iran is a developed country, with a first class economic, scientific and technological status in the region, with the Islamic and the revolutionary identity, inspiring in the world of Islam with the constructive and the effective interaction in international relations...gaining the economic, scientific and technological primary position in the region of Southwest Asia (including Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Middle East and neighboring countries). We put emphasis on software development and knowledge production, fast and constant economic progress, and comparative promotion of income level per capita and achieving full employment.”

The perspective document entails components explaining fundamental assumptions and goals which, from its writers' point of view, should be considered as pillars for the rest of the principles of the document. Looking at the preface, one could see that its writers are in favor of attaining an outstanding and advancing place for the country within the intended period of time and believe that necessary conditions for attaining this level of development are provided for by enjoying an Islamic and revolutionary identity which inspires the Muslim world. The document also shows that its writers prefer a foreign policy approach which does not focus on surrendering to or encountering other states but to interact constructively on the scene of international politics.

This part, in which the drafters are actually trying to explain the features of Iranian society in 2025, enumerates the attributes of society in the horizon of this outlook as follows:

In *political and civil area*, the society and government are founded on transcendental Islamic principles identified as “developed, proportional to cultural, geopolitical and historical requirements, dependent on moral principles and Islamic, national and revolutionary values emphasizing religious democracy, social justice, legitimate freedoms, preserving human dignity and human rights and enjoying social and judicial security.”



In the area of *knowledge and technology production*, an independent society, producing science, is in focus, i.e. “at the advanced level of knowledge, able in production of knowledge and technology, reliant on the uppermost share of human resources and social capital in national production.”

In the *security area*, key concepts for the realization of which there has been planning, are: “*political and national authority and stability*” and therefore it is stipulated in the document that Iran is a “secure, independent and powerful” country “with a comprehensively deterrence-based defense capability, integrity and authority.

Attention is focused in *health and welfare area* on public welfare and indices of an advanced and reasonable quality of life, meaning, *having a healthy and happy society*.

The perspective document stresses that apart from growing and attaining transcendence based on Islamic religious and cultural thought, Iranian society should bring about some *compromise and mutual completion between Iranian and Islamic cultures*, the results of which contributes to both attaining transcendence, and pacification of society. Therefore it stresses that at the 2025 horizon, as far as the cultural dimension is concerned, Iran would be an “active, responsible, sacrificing, faithful and satisfied” country “with work ethic, discipline, cooperative and social compatibility morale, commitment to the revolution, Islamic system and flourishing and glory of being Iranian”.

In *economic area*, the plan considers Iran as an advanced country with the key objective being advancement to become the *number one economy in the region*. Those who drafted the document believe that after becoming the supreme economic power in the region, Iran would transform into the superior regional power. Therefore, the document reiterates that, economically, Iran at the 2025 horizon is a country that “has attained the first place in economy, science and technology throughout southwest Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, Middle East and neighboring countries by emphasizing software development and



science production, rapid and constant economic progress, and comparative promotion of income level per capita and achieving full employment.”

What is asserted as the epilogue or resultant and corollary of *perspective document* is in its conceptual essence a “civilization building” outcome. In more precise words, if the trend planned in the perspective document could advance proportional to its conditions and requirements, it is concluded that Iran is at the outset of a new era of civilization building. This feature of Iran has three distinct dimensions or layers: Inspiring and being a pioneer in the Islamic world, advanced in the region and effective at the international level.

Therefore, the essence of the document explains the fact that having constructive ties with the rest of the world is a necessity for being inspiring, effective and a pioneer. This is also an assertion of the inherent logic of the plan. This is so, because it is not possible to gain a superior position in the region and promote the economy to the highest regional level without having constructive interaction with the outside world, as far as foreign policy is concerned. Hence, the perspective document reiterates that Iran at the 2025 outlook is a country “with constructive and effective relations with the world based on the principles of dignity, wisdom and national interest. The perspective document as explored above shows that those who drafted this strategic document have put emphasis on some goals and desires: First, they pursue the aim of transforming Iran into a number one power in the region and for them, attaining this place depends inevitably and inalienably on success in economic growth and development, and also becoming the superior economy in the region. Second, balanced and transcendent development is a distinctive feature of Iranian society in the horizon of the perspective document and therefore indicators like scientific independence, political stability and firmness, social welfare and comfort, tranquility and transcendence of society, and sustainable and equiponderant development are requisites thereto. Third, Iran is pursuing civilization



building in the modern era, and that pursuit is dependent on gaining a proportional economic position. Hence, it could be concluded that key concepts of development and foreign policy planning and the nature of the link between them are considered to be important, fundamental and integral in the perspective document. And the realization of its objectives are dependent on a developmentalist foreign policy, having constructive interaction with its surroundings to stand for features like being inspiring, effective and a pioneer while facilitating its economic development and gaining a superior role in the region.

Therefore, by answering the question of how the perspective document views the link between foreign policy planning, regional power and economic development and given the outcome of the discussion above, the first hypothesis of this research is that the perspective document agrees with and stresses the indivisibility of foreign policy planning and economic development in order to gain a supreme role in the region. We will now take a closer look at the nature and quality of this link.

### **The Link between Development and Foreign Policy**

With regard to the importance attached by the perspective document to economic growth and development, the second question proposed by this research is: What are the models and features of a developmentalist foreign policy? Answering this question firstly requires an explanation of the attributes of such a foreign policy. So, while taking a general look at the link between economic development and foreign policy, reviewing different models of this link, we examine the situation of the Islamic Republic of Iran in this regard.

As far as the link between development and foreign policy is concerned, we should focus on the link between politics and economics. During the past eras, as a result of the domination of economic liberalism over political studies, the interaction between



these two fields was neglected. However for theoretical and practical development in both realms, a political economy approach became very popular in political and economic studies (Balan, 1996). Based on this function, various theoretical approaches vis-à-vis the role of economic factors in foreign policy insight have been established.

Concurrent with the formation of these theoretical approaches, the issues of priority and posterity of economics and politics are also considered. Liberalism puts forth assumptions such as: 1) Belief in the priority of economics over politics, 2) Attaching primacy to economic interests, 3) Believing that politics should be at the service of economics whose aim is to ensure economic welfare. On the contrary, political realism argues that the economy should serve political interests and from the other side, Marxism not only gives priority to economics but it also considers economics as infrastructure on top of which politics is built. This school of thought looks at development in an outside-in manner, prioritizing the world system and attaching no importance to the details inside national systems leading to some sort of determinism. Therefore, Marxist and neo-Marxist theories in international relations, within the framework of Marxist traditions, consider foreign policy as a function of factors and relations of the capitalist economic system and believe that a determinant of a state's behavior is its economic system, meaning, a capitalist economic system leads to an expansionist and imperialist foreign policy and there is a direct link between these two (Vioti and Kauppi, 1987, chapter 4).

Economic liberalism argues that a liberal economic order in national and international environment leads to adoption of peaceful foreign policy (Mersheimer, 1990, pp. 12-48.). This pacifism impacts foreign policy in two ways: Firstly, this economic order brings about welfare and development, and prosperous successful nations are satisfied with the status quo and turn into pacifists. Secondly, the liberal economic order increases economic interdependence among states and assessing war costs, no one pursue war as an extension of





politics (Keohane and Nye, 1997).

Of course, there are new types of economic liberalism that while complying with the principles of this school of thought have tried to provide new readings proportional to realities. This group of theories argues that free trade and market economy would cause welfare and economic prosperity, in turn leading to democracy which ends in peaceful and cooperative foreign policy behavior (Weede, 1995, pp. 519-537).

Within the framework of this economic liberalism, Ettel Solingen, rejecting the accompanying feature of democracy inside and conforming behavior outside, believes that there is a positive integrity between the nature of dominant coalitions in a country and its cooperative inclination in foreign policy (Solingen, 2002, pp. 105-148). In fact, Solingen's assumption is that the adoption of adaptive foreign policy is more dependent on the interests of domestic coalitions instead of economic calculations on cost and benefit (Ibid.). That is to say that coalitions advocating liberalization of the economy (market-oriented reforms, privatization and lessening the role of the government in the economy) depend on being open to world markets, capital, investments and technology. The agenda of these coalitions is to adapt to, and conform to an economic order inspired by international competition and opposition to any conflict with world investors. For these coalitions, a cooperative, reconciliatory and collaborative foreign policy leading to regional and global cooperative orders is considered to be the most desirable foreign policy behavior.

Realist theories have different assessment of countries' motives in foreign policy and means of power. Realism in all its branches, believes in the principles of the international environment being anarchic, self-help and survival. Based on these primary principles of realism, an environment lacking confidence prevails in relations among countries and due to the non-existence of a paramount power in the international system, each country should depend on itself to remain secure and survive. Thus, power and military means are being



prioritized. Based on this logic of realism, politics is prioritized over economics and the realm of foreign policy is separate from the domestic one and each country acts based on its own priorities. However, security and survival overshadows everything else. Therefore, economic problems, development and welfare are given second priority and if there is a conflict between the requirements of the political realm and those of the economy, the political realm will always be given priority (Morgenthau, 1995, p.5).

In conclusion, one could say that none of the two intellectual paradigms alone can explain the reality of foreign policy and international relations. This is because we cannot say that market economies and free trade can create a pacifist and adaptive foreign policy directly and by themselves and it is not correct to suppose that the ultimate goal of states in foreign policy is the mere acquiring of economic welfare. This is because the latter is only one of the goals and thus, foreign policy is a multi-variable and not a single-variable phenomenon. On the other hand, the realms of domestic and foreign policy are not separate. In fact, economic development is one of the goals of foreign policy which is defined on the basis of three elements: National interests, the international situation and national power. Other goals like survival, national security, international prestige, and pursuit and ensuring of national power as well as preservation and expansion of ideology are also important factors. The goals of foreign policy of states are beyond economic and technological development and as a result, foreign policy is not a tool just for achieving economic development.

Also, given the importance of economic development and its ability to increase state power and materialize other foreign policy goals of a country, one could say that the objective of economic-technological development has a high place in the hierarchy of national goals. Therefore, one of the main and essential functions of the diplomatic machinery of states is to direct and implement economic diplomacy in order to facilitate the access of states to world



capital, interests and markets, and it is for the same reason that if this objective does not top the list of priorities due to its impact on other objectives, it would make our reaching of defined goals very difficult and far from expected if not impossible. This position is derived from the fact that in the post- Cold War period, economic priorities have gained found a high level of importance to national states.

As shown in our discussion of development and foreign policy, the link between them is two-way. Now we should see what the conditions of different models of development are, and Iran's place in regards to them. From a theoretical and empirical point of view, one can distinguish three models for development: "internal-oriented development", "external-oriented development" and "hybrid development".

#### ***Internal-Oriented Development Model***

This model is based on the strategy of replacing imports and economic self-sufficiency. Based on this model, development is attempted without resorting to foreign resources. This model has different indicators, the most important of which are: 1) Expansion and growth of volume of state interference in the economy, 2) Comprehensive supervision of the private sector, 3) Control over foreign trade and investment, and 4) Full oversight of capital and technology movement. With this level of growth in state interference, interaction with the outside world would be minimized (Oscar Korz, 2004, pp. 329-353).

#### ***External-Oriented Development***

This model of development emphasizes free market system, private property, a maximum role for the private sector and minimum for the government, and "expansion of export strategies". This model tries to attract foreign technology and capital and utilizes foreign skills to increase exports and as a result, creates an extensive bond with the international system (Oscar Korz, 2004, pp.329-353.). Therefore,



from the perspective of this strategy, the reason for the underdevelopment of developing countries is a cycle of poverty which is itself a result of a lack or shortage of capital. Therefore, the wisest way to end this cycle is to attract foreign capital, financial contributions, technologies and skills to promote an expansion of exports of goods and services.

The Third model is a hybrid of the other two and includes some elements of internal-oriented and external-oriented strategies and stresses the simultaneous and parallel use of domestic and external resources, opportunities and possibilities. This model is also a hybrid of the public and private sectors which does not require the integration of national economies with the global economy nor the severance of relations with the capitalist system. On the contrary, it considers links and interaction with the international system as unavoidable.

#### *Hybrid Model*

This model could be divided into two types based on the priority and importance of domestic and external resources and opportunities: "introvert external -oriented" and "extrovert internal-oriented". In the first type, priority is given to using external opportunities and facilities while the domestic environment is coordinated with it. In the second type, internal resources and facilities are prioritized and parallel thereto, while external facilities and possibilities are used on a selective basis (Razaghi, 1990, p.12.).

The development model of the Islamic Republic of Iran can be considered as an internal-oriented one with the strategy of "substitution of imports" till 1999. In this period, the Iranian economy was based on government planning, the pillar of which was self- sufficiency and self-reliance with a very high degree of government interference. There were also efforts to make the country independent from imports by relying on domestic resources and lessened interaction with international system. Therefore, Iran, based on this model and considering special conditions under its war with



Iraq, kept the level of interaction with the international system at a minimum. At the end of the war in 1988, and due to the inevitable reconstruction of the country, Iran's economic model started changing from government-based towards external-oriented development and the policy of, terminologically speaking, "balance" was adopted. Focus was turned towards external-oriented development and a strategy of "expansion of exports". It encouraged enormous endeavors for interaction with the outside world, as the external-oriented development model required such behavior. Alongside this model, the first to fourth development plans continued with the same strategy, which led to an expansion of links with the international economy and world markets (Secretariat of Expediency Council, 2003, p.3).

By the end of President Rafsanjani's term in office in 1997, serious steps were taken to draft the strategic perspective document. The main topic of contention was how to transform Iran into a regional power with the strongest economy in the region. Therefore, the spirit surrounding this collective effort was concentrated on subjects like national development and approaches thereto. Although there is no direct mention of a development model in the perspective document, considering its preface and the process anticipated for transforming Iran into a regional superpower with an advanced economy and a primary position in science and technology in interaction with the international system, and also based on the framework of the five-year plan adopted for the realization of the objectives of the perspective document under the title of "Sustainable National Development with a Global Approach", one can conclude that in order to achieve its goals, an expansion of exports" strategy has been chosen. Within the framework of this document, the approach adopted by the Islamic Republic of Iran is "external orientation in economy" because based on the provisions of the perspective document, due to interdependence in the international system and trend of economic globalization, the achievement of the



aforementioned objectives is not possible while confined to an internal orientation.

Thus, the model focused on in the perspective document is an "external-oriented development model". Moreover, with regard to the discussion above, in any theoretical analysis of the link between economics and politics or between development and foreign policy, it should be emphasized that only a development-oriented foreign policy based on interaction with the international system can facilitate an external-oriented economic development model. Exploring the provisions and the contents of the perspective document along with the preferences of the Iranian government and society as well as means and resources considered for the development of the country as reviewed in the introduction, it could be clearly understood that those who drafted the document also believe in an introvert orientation. *Therefore, the economic model intended by the twenty-year perspective document is based on an introvert external-oriented development with a developmentalist foreign policy as its approach, accompanied by constructive and effective interaction with the international community.* In such an approach, a dynamic balance between domestic and foreign policy is enduring, symmetry is established between different sectors and determination of the country's geopolitical capacities serves as a basis for a sphere of influence. Another feature of this approach is the use of NGOs, amalgamation of foreign policy with the government's national security strategy, provision of alternative plans and instructions, and uniformity of diplomatic behavior in all sectors of the government (Vaezi, 2008, p.63.). This developmentalist foreign policy with a tolerant and interactive essence is based on four principals: *Peaceful coexistence, detente, confidence building and multilateralism at regional and international levels* (Dehghani FiruzAbadi, 2008, p. 366).

As this review shows, the answer given in this part endorses the second hypothesis of this research, which is that becoming the superior regional power is dependent on a developmentalist foreign policy. Here, it should be emphasized that this model of development



and foreign policy, which is founded on the goals of the perspective document, entails some requirements in foreign policy and relations which organize and direct foreign behavior of the country in such a way that leads it to achieve the outlook goals pointed out below.

### **Requirements of an External-oriented Foreign Policy in Achieving Outlook Objectives**

In conclusion, this question should be answered: What requirements are posed by a developmentalist foreign policy, with the features we enumerated for it, in making policy towards realization of the goals of the perspective document? In other words, what conditions should be considered as a basis for action in foreign policy planning to achieve the goals enumerated in the perspective document? In reply to this question and given the existence of different models of development and various approaches of foreign policy, the first requirement which should be taken into consideration is "*proportionality and correspondence of the development model with the foreign policy pattern*". Based on an analysis of the perspective document, we believe that the development model offered by this document is "*introvert external oriented development*". None of the internal-oriented approaches of foreign policy could lead to the achievement of the goals provided for in the perspective document because the requirements of this approach in foreign policy necessitates isolationism and doing away with constructive interaction with the international system. The document, however, puts emphasis on constructive interaction with the international system. The geopolitical situation of Iran, political ideology of the Islamic Revolution, nature of the culture in the scope of Iranian civilization which enjoys a supra- territorial identity, and other factors are all readily prone to interaction.

The second requirement of a foreign policy model proportionate to economic development suggests "*harmony and conformity of foreign policy priorities*". It is not possible to envisage some priorities for economic development of a country, but ignore them in



the foreign policy approach. This is against economic and political functionalism. This problem is seen in relations between Iran and EU in such a way that economic ties are always overshadowed by political issues (Dehghani FiruzAbadi, 2006, pp. 441-475).

Third, is the *“requirement for presenting a clear and reality-based portrayal of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the international arena”*. All states regulate their links with others on the basis of their image in mind. Hence, it is necessary to present an image of Iran as peaceful and seeking friendly and equitably relations with other countries. The building of this image is so important that one could say that if this mission fails, Iran will be known as an isolated instability initiator that breaches peace and security, regardless of reality. Accusations leveled against the Iranian nuclear activities in recent years based on which Tehran was accused of attempting to build an atomic bomb and attempts by foreign media to accuse Iran of sponsoring terrorism all reflect the necessity of portraying a clear image of the country. This is while the most important aim of falsifying the Iranian image is to destroy its credibility and isolating Iran in the international arena. As constructivist security studies show, the basic structures of international politics are built and set by social structures. Hence, a change in approach vis-à-vis the international relations leads to a change in the state of international security. In other words, states' behavior is a function of their approaches and ideas and not their power. Thus, the security of a state is realized through establishing alliances and cooperation (Abdollah Khani, 2004, pp.91-93).

The fourth requirement, which is derived from the building of an accurate image of the country to some extent, encompasses *“preventing the country from becoming a security target in the international arena”*. The approach considered by the 2025 outlook document should be able to prevent the portraying of Iran as an actor responsible for the breaching of international peace and security. This, in order to avert the formation of anti-Iranian coalitions and establish required regional and international relations needed for





achieving the specified goals (Dehghani, 2006, p.409.). What is sought by the perspective document indicates that via positive and constructive interaction, Iran should have defined ties and cooperation with the northern and southern ends of the geopolitical arena as well as its neighbors. Therefore, if common values and extensive economic cooperation are placed on the agenda, it is hoped that Iran could take advantage from its comparative advantages in the fields of energy, economy, culture and politics to acquire a privileged place. However, the condition for the realization of such scenarios is that Iran should not have a negative role with regards to the security factor. In other words, regional states must not consider Iran as responsible for disorder or seeking hegemony. The goal and position Iran is seeking can only be achieved through constructive and continuously developing ties with its neighbors.

The fifth and most important requirement needed by the foreign policy approach proportional to the development model defined in the perspective document is *“to promote Iranian dignity in the international arena”*. Seemingly, international environment requirements and strengthening of domestic capabilities are two parameters which could cause promotion of Iranian dignity in the international system and prepare appropriate settings for the success of foreign policy and consequently, realization of goals specified by the perspective document, i.e. achieving development and finally turning into the superpower of the region (Mazaheri, 2006, p.16).

As mentioned above, all of the parameters (domestic possibilities and international requirements) are a function of two groups of factors: On the one hand, domestic capabilities (possibilities) are severely influenced by soft and hard factors. Hard factors are features like population, surface area, industry and communication infrastructure while soft factors include for instance the drive for development, progress and producing knowledge. On the other hand, international requirements (restrictions) are also impacted by hard and soft factors.



Hard factors could be the international military-political structure, international economic-technological structure and international cultural-communicational structure. Soft factors include the international political structure (international order), legal international institutions and international alliances.

Normally, the higher the domestic capabilities (possibilities), the greater the influence they can exert upon international requirements. In some cases international requirements themselves can become a source for the expansion of national power. The vice versa is also true. That is to say, the less the domestic capabilities, the smaller the power to influence international requirements. Conversely, these requirements could turn into factors weakening national power. Therefore, what determines the position of states in the international system is a combination of the two parameters of domestic capabilities and international requirements. To determine the position of states in the international system, based on these two parameters, three approaches should be mentioned:

Firstly, the dignity of states is determined on the basis of military-political observations leading to recognition of five levels of state positions in the international system: 1) Superpower, 2) Big power, 3) Middle power, 4) Small Power, and 5) Micro-power. The levels of power vary depending on the volume of domestic capabilities, international restrictions, ability to influence matters and dimensions of power.

Based on the second approach, the dignity of states is classified based on the economic-technological observations leading to recognition of four general positions for states in the international system: 1) Central powers, 2) Semi-central powers, 3) Semi-peripheral powers, and 4) Peripheral powers. They vary based on the indicators of knowledge, technology and capital production.

The third approach categorizes the dignity of states based on cultural-communicational observations in four different ways: 1) Influenced but not influential, 2) Influenced and influential, 3) Non-



influenced and influential, and finally 4) Non-influenced and not influential. These observations are presented in table 2 (SeifZadeh, 2006, pp. 111-123).

**Table 2**  
**Classification of States Based on Their Positions in the International System**

Military-Political Observations
Economic-Technological Observations
Cultural-Communicational Observations
Super Power
Central Power
Knowledge, Technology and Capital Producing
Non-Influenced
Big Power
Semi-Central Power
Importing Knowledge, Producing Technology and Capital
Influenced-Influential
Middle Power
Semi-Peripheral Power
Lacking Knowledge, Importing Technology and Capital
Small Power/Micro-Power
Peripheral Power
Lacking Knowledge and Technology, Having Raw Material for Producing Capital
Influenced-Non Influential

Source: Seifzadeh, 2006, pp.11-124.

As table 2 indicates, for reasons of military-political, economic-technological and cultural-communicational observations, states are placed in different categories. However, If they could eventually make changes in the elements constituting power, including science, technology and capital, then they would be able to promote their position in the international system.

Hence, taking the said classifications into consideration, and in order to be able to attain the intended position by the perspective document, we should first answer this question: What is the position of Iran based on the following observations: military-political, economic-technological and cultural-communicational. In reply, one could say that given the possibilities and restrictions at the international level, Iran, is at most, a middle power. As far as hard possibilities are concerned, Iran, due to its surface area, strategic situation and energy is in a favorable situation. However, on the basis



of other parts of the possibilities and restrictions like industry, technology and means of communication, it still needs to develop. In the field of soft possibilities i.e. the will for development and progress, and also making efforts to produce knowledge, Iran is at a distance from the position suitable for it. The twenty-year perspective document is the first important step taken by Iran to achieve that position. Thus, the strengthening of Iran's position at the level of a middle power as explained above requires the achieving of the objectives of the twenty-year perspective document.

In his Ph.d. thesis, Seyed Hadi Zarghani (Tarbiat Modarres University, 2006, pp.415-444), entitled *Assessing Factors and Variables Affecting National Power and Designing A Model for Measuring States National Powers* has presented a model containing nine factors namely economic, political, cultural, scientific, military, trans-border, spatial and territorial, based on which Islamic Republic of Iran is fluctuating from first to third place among the 24 countries of the southwest Asian region. However, with regard to international hard restrictions, the maximum is a middle-power position for Iran. International requirements are numerous for Iran, in a way that these requirements have been turned into obstacles in the way of expanding its national power. The international military-political structure is often in conflict with Iranian national interests and has led the range of Iranian national interests and the scale of Iranian influence in the international arena to be confined to the regional level at best. From the viewpoint of soft international restrictions, the political structure of legal international institutions (due to being influenced by international politics) is also not necessarily in conformity with Iranian national interests.

Regarding the Iranian position in an international system marked by economic-technological observations, one could say that the most important parameter of the power of Iran from the viewpoint of domestic capabilities is energy. In the field of soft possibilities, though Iran has the potential and ability to produce



knowledge, develop and progress, this important goal has not been achieved yet. The emergence of viewpoints on knowledge production and software development and the presentation of the twenty-year perspective document in itself are evidence of that the issue of planning and an institutionalized effort for development in Iran has a long way ahead. As far as international restrictions are concerned, Iran is also located in the realm of countries which theoretically are between periphery and semi-periphery (Hobden and Jones, 1997, pp.125-145). Iran has opened new horizons for acquiring technology and capital. On the other hand, it is in possession of crude oil resources using it to produce capital.

With regard to the Iranian place in the international system based on cultural-communicational observations, one could say that this country, benefited with a special cultural stamina, has the potential to affect the international environment.

Iranian identity, with its brilliant precedence and Islam acting as a driving force, are two important cultural possibilities for Iran. Of course, challenges of balancing between Iranian identity and Islam on the one hand, and challenges of setting a balance between international requirements and domestic observations should also be paid attention.

The abovementioned principles show that firstly, stepping up domestic capabilities is vital to promote dignity in the international system, and secondly, we should take advantage of the abilities of this system. These abilities could help promote the country's dignity both through affecting domestic capabilities as well as potential and actual possibilities of the international system. What was mentioned here verifies the third hypothesis of the research asserting that a developmentalist foreign policy requires attention to be paid to domestic resources of development and at the same time interact with the international system.



## Conclusion

As indicated above, economic development has been always among the fundamental issues located in the heart of concerns for the intellectual community, political elites and the government in Iran. However, although there has been a fairly long history of economic planning, desired conditions for development have not been established yet. The pathology of this phenomenon in Iran is a necessity attaching utmost importance to present types of surveys. Theoretically, explaining the link between development as the axis of government politics and foreign policy as a means of authority has been a source of concern for many theoreticians of political economy. And this brief analysis made it clear that the two concepts of foreign policy and economic development are interdependent. Underdevelopment is connected to a peripheral security environment, tied with political independence. It is also related to the potential of confidence building in the domestic and international environment. Thus, efforts to regulate the link between these two concepts are critical from the theoretical point of view and a basis for adjusting the behaviors of a state to achieve its objectives related to economic and political development.

From a functional point of view, one could also say that if a country is seeking economic development, its normative approach in foreign policy should be development-oriented. This approach requires constructive and dynamic interaction with the international system to assume the role of providing security. In the absence of a stable and secure environment, development cannot be achieved. Constructive diplomacy should normatively follow neutralization, impartiality, desensitization and encouraging other actors to associate with you. A state acting on the basis of such an approach should place the establishment of a constructive understanding with others beside its ability to produce norms on its agenda.

This way, both of the abovementioned elements are in close



relation with each other. What is capable of causing a gap in this link is our approach, objectives, strategy, politics and tactics towards the international system. To achieve the objectives of the 2025 perspective document, it is essential to reconsider these five topics: approach, objectives, strategy, politics and tactics. Now, if we want to promote the Iranian position to make it proportional to the perspective document's objectives, we should consider an upgrading of domestic capabilities or possibilities in the policy making sphere as well as reduction of international restrictions or obstacles. In this sense, a foreign policy coordinated with an external-oriented development plan should be adopted. Therefore, a realistic approach based on constructive interaction with international community and achieving the objectives asserted in the perspective document should also be adopted in Iranian foreign policy. Indeed, such a strategy could also materialize the objectives provided in the economic development outlook of 2025. These policies would be developmentalist and at the tactical level, foreign policy should also be able to utilize suitable tactics according to time, situation and subject. In the event that such a situation arises, it could be expected that the objectives of the perspective document have been achieved and could transform Iran into the superpower of the region by 2025. To be brief, becoming a regional superpower depends on foreign policy planning and exploring the concept of an indivisible link between economic development and foreign relations.

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