

## **A Futuristic Look at the Threats Facing the Islamic Republic of Iran**

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### **Abstract**

In the international system, powerful countries have been constantly struggling to gain and maintain global hegemony, and trying to expand and strengthen their power and weaken the elements and components of competing power and eliminate them. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the US had this power struggle as well. In the end, it was the United States that managed to defeat the Soviet Union through a series of strategic actions. Following the Soviet Union collapse, the United States, as the claimant of the world hegemony needed external enemy. So, to create internal cohesion and set up the international actions, the US introduced Iran, Afghanistan, and North Korea as the axis of evil and its external enemies so started to confront them. Using futuristic approach and historical information, this study has examined the US actions toward the collapse of the former Soviet Union while it refers to the similarities between the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Soviet Union because both of them are ideological and hostile towards the US. Later, using library and internet resources, it studies the American actions against Iran. Finally, threats to IRI (Islamic Republic of Iran) have been descriptively analyzed and some optimistic and pessimistic scenarios are presented for each enumerated threat.

**Keywords:** *Futurism, the soviet union, the islamic republic of iran, the united states of america.*

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## Introduction

The Islamic Revolution of Iran triumphed in conditions in which its nature was essentially opposed to the bipolar structure of the international system. The essence of IRI foreign policy was set based on the slogan "Neither Easy nor West, just the Islamic Republic" (Movahed, 2017, 73), so it sought to fight against the arrogant tyrants around the world. IRI independent and hegemonic policy led to the confrontation of two superpowers of the time, namely the Soviet Union and the US with Iran, which was represented in the attempt by these two superpowers to support Iraq's attack to Iran; In the meantime, for various reasons, Iran disagrees with the American government more than what it does with the Soviet Union, and once the Soviet Union fell down, the United States turned into Iran's supreme enemy. For this reason, the confrontation between the two countries took on a new form, so that the US named Iran, along with Iraq and North Korea, the axis of evil<sup>3</sup> after September 11<sup>th</sup> and turned to global consensus and intelligent power in order to destroy this axis.

The present study is based on the assumption that the US, for the following reasons, has applied a method against Iran which was used for the break-down of the Soviet Union:

- 1- The Islamic Republic of Iran has an ideological identity like the Soviet Union.
- 2- Thanks to the Soviet Union activity, the influence of some Marxist ideas among the revolutionaries at the onset of revolution and the relative positive view of some Iranian officials towards Russia; the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Soviet Union are somehow alike each other. Similarities between Iran and the former Soviet Union have made the US take Soviet – like initiatives to disintegrate the Islamic Republic of Iran. The question which arises in this study is, given the similarities between Iran and the former Soviet Union, if the US wants to use a similar method to the Soviet Union in disintegration of Iran, what threats can be imagined by the US toward Iran?

## Methodology

Futurism is a set of efforts that visualizes and schedules the potential futures by studying sources, patterns and influencing factors. Futurism reflects the way by which the reality of tomorrow emerges from remaining unchanged today though it has gone through the depth of

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<sup>3</sup> It means the clever combination of hard and soft power in the face of threats to national security.

changes. Futuristic research methods include possible, probable and desirable species for change from the present to the future (Ojaghi, 2020, 67). The effective framework and components in Martin and Yerevan’s futuristic projects have provided a model for futurism studies with the aim of setting priorities. In this model, futurism process follows the steps below:

- 1) Pre-futurism: In this stage, data is collected and the program required for future studies is designed.
- 2) Futurism: this step is to do future studies and prioritize its chapters.
- 3) Post-futurism: In this stage, operational plans are designed and implemented (Mahmoudzadeh, 2019, 119). The research process is as follows:



Figure 1. Research Process

### Looking at the Cold War and the Process of the Soviet Union Collapse

- **US Actions toward the Collapse of Russia**

To get full recognition of US actions against the Soviet Union, the way Russia fell down has been briefly described below. Russia, known as the Soviet Union, was the largest country in the world at its time, covering more than 13 percent of the earth. This vast land had been surrounded by several seas whose the main ones were Baltic Sea and Gulf of Finland in the west, White Sea, Pechora Bay, Kara Sea, Barents Sea, Laptev Sea, Eastern Siberian Sea, Chukchi Sea and the Arctic Ocean in the north, Bering Sea, Okhotsk Sea, Sea of Japan and Pacific Ocean in the east, Black Sea and the Caspian Sea in the south. Thus, the length of its

coasts reached 653.37 km (Abazari Fomashi, 2012, 35). Because most of its coasts were located in the North Frigid Zone or its related seas were connected to free canals through the straits controlled by other countries, the Soviet Union did not have an ideal position to establish a free sea connection with the rest of the world, and suffered from lacking proper access to open waters. This was considered a main geopolitical and crippling problem for that country. (Amir Ahmadi, 2007, 37). As the world's leading communist think tank, this country was one of the two great poles of the world power during the Cold War, and one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.



Figure 2. Geographical Location of the Former Soviet Union and its Independent States

## US Plans to Defeat the Soviet Union in the Cold War

After the Cold War broke out between 2 great Powers of East and West, each side took several steps to overcome the other. The following are the steps taken by the US:

### 1-Marshall Plan

The plan helped many Western European countries rebuild their economies after the war. On the way of creating the post war world, the United States and George Marshall's foreign policy team sought to eliminate the causes of two world wars and their economic problem

due to it. Yet, it was a long-term plan to create a viable market for American products that would effectively prevent communism from dominating Europe. In response to this plan, in Western Europe, the Soviet Union, which practically forbade the Eastern Bloc to benefit from such contributions took an initiative and set up an international organization called Comecon to fight the Marshall Plan. Marshall Plan was the beginning of the complete polarization of the world; because countries responding positively to the plan showed their dependence on the Western camp and those whose response was negative showed that they were dependent on the Eastern bloc (Pishgahifard, 2007, 516-518).

## **2-Barrier Influence (Containment) Plan**

In February 1955, a joint military and defense treaty was signed between Turkey and Iraq, which was later joined by Britain, Pakistan and Iran. After the monarchy was removed from Iraq in the year 1958 and Iraq withdrew from treaty, this military union was renamed as the Central Treaty Organization "CENTO". This organization had been established in line with the US government's strategy of forming a circle of Western-affiliated military alliances around the Soviet Union and China (Containment). The plan had lost its importance after the Soviet Union break down and it was abandoned by the West (Qarayan Zandi, 2008, 85-90). In 1396, Putin, President of Russia, criticized the creation of a new "containment" around that country.

## **Limiting Russia's Military Power**

The Soviet Union had been so significantly developed in terms of military capabilities that the US launched a series of programs to reduce this power. Such programs are outlined in brief below:

### **Salt Treaty I**

The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks known as SALT I was signed in May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1972 between the United States and the Soviet Union. Under this, in exchange for accepting the mutual commitment to reduce Anti-Ballistic Missile production (ABMI), the number of ballistic missiles of the Soviet Union was set at a maximum of 1600 and for the US at 1054.

SALT I Treaty was signed by Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev and US President Richard Nixon (Goodarzi, 2012, 65).

### **The Salt II Treaty**

After SALT I Treaty and its effectiveness, the two countries entered into negotiations on the following issues with Nixon and Brezhnev's talk in 1973 under the SALT II Treaty:

- Permanent restriction on offensive strategic forces
- Control of Equalizing factors in the arsenals of offensive weapons
- Mutual reduction of strategic forces

Which were finally signed in 1979 by Carter and Brezhnev. With the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Carter withdrew the treaty from the Senate and the treaty remained fruitless (Ezzati, 2009, 10).

### **Other Concluded Treaties**

Thinking about how to reduce the military power of the parties and its perceived threats, the two superpowers involved in the Cold War reached treaties, plus the above, in other cases, including:

Treaty on the Prohibition of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF): was an agreement reached in 1987 between the United States and the Soviet Union. This document is unique in many ways. This is the only agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States that not only limited nuclear weapons systems, but also destroyed two complete types of missiles at the same time. With signing this agreement, risk of nuclear dispute in Europe was reduced several times. This contract is deadline – free, although its terms had been implemented by the parties until June 1991. Moscow destroyed 1846 missiles, and the US destroyed the 846. ([www.fa.wikipedia.org](http://www.fa.wikipedia.org))

Reagan met Gorbachev four times during his second term in office and surprised neoconservatives. They were:

- Geneva negotiation in 1985 on lifting the ban on production and use of chemical weapons and the role of two countries in maintaining global peace.
- Reaching preliminary agreements in Reykjavik in 1986 to evacuate Europe from nuclear weapons in exchange for a halt to the Star Wars program.
- Signing a treaty on elimination of short – range nuclear missiles in Washington in 1987.
- Finalizing a medium-range missile agreement in Moscow and beginning negotiations on the elimination of half of the strategic long-range missiles in 1989 (start).

Following events took place as a result of these international meetings:

Economic sanctions of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was canceled and the relations between two countries were given a new dimension. Disarmament talks were continued and also extended to conventional weapons. The relations between the Soviet Union and China greatly improved, Vietnam forces left Cambodia, and Iran-Iraq war ended ([www.wikizero.com](http://www.wikizero.com)).

### **3-The Weakening of the Soviet Economy**

To weaken the Soviet Union, some policies were used of which the most effective has been the policy of economic sanctions. These sanctions played a significant role in the Soviet Union economic decline. On the other hand, pressure on the people because of the escalated economic problems paved the way for protests and riots. The sanctions began under the pretext of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Beside other Western issues and actions, this can be considered the beginning of the decline of the Soviet Union.

### **4-Increase Russia's Expenses by Involving that Country in Arms Races**

Some critics have argued the Soviet Union heavy spending on military technology, which Russia saw as necessary in response to NATO's increase in military power in the 1980s, and they have seen the Soviet technological backwardness and the heavy burden of the expenses it has spent for entering into other countries and competing with the American capitalist system a major factor in the country's development which resulted in its collapse (Towhid Pham, 2016, 66).

## **5-Consecutive Deaths of Intellectual Leaders and the Emergence of Young Leaders**

After the successive deaths of three old Soviet leaders since 1982 Politburo (Political Bureau) 12 (the most important decision-making committee of the Communist Party) elected the young Gorbachev as chairman of the Communist Party and a new generation of leadership was created. In Gorbachev's period, relatively young technocrats quickly became powerful, accelerated economic and political liberalization, and promoted cordial trade relations with the West.

Gorbachev took a dual approach to cooperation with the West and economic reconstruction (perestroika) and freedom of criticism (glasnost) within the Soviet Union. Gorbachev's foreign policy called the European Joint House sought to destroy NATO's philosophy of existence through cooperation and friendship with Western European countries, and then cut off the United States from Europe. He wanted to build a common European community on a larger scale involving all European countries, including the Soviet Union, and to pursue comprehensive cooperation on the Moscow-Berlin axis, meaning that Moscow would be the military capital and Berlin the economic capital of a single Europe (Fazel, 2011, 158). He had calculated that once two Germanys were unified, the country would leave NATO and distance itself from its neighbors, France and Britain, which had been terrified with the Soviet's power.

But these events ultimately prevented Gorbachev from gaining central control over the Warsaw Pact states, and in 1989 Eastern European communist governments overthrew one by one. In Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria, government reforms brought a peaceful end to communist rule and establishing democracy. Massive demonstrations in Czechoslovakia overthrew the Communists. In Romania, a general uprising brought the regime of Nicolai Ceausescu down and caused his execution on December 25, 1989(www.hamshahrionline.ir). Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Estonia, and finally the Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan), and Central Asia declared their independence one after another. The Soviet Union (Russia) also bid farewell to the ideology of Marxism and embraced a democratic and liberal regime (Miley, 2012, 138).



## **The Collapse of the Soviet Union**

After the Soviet Union collapsed, the following actions were taken by the country's officials:

### **1- Reducing itself**

Regular republics became independent to the Soviet Union. In doing so, while reducing its commitments, a wall of countries was made between the Soviet Union and the outside world to prevent intrusion and encroachment of the enemies into the country, tired and wounded from the Cold War.

### **2. Going into Isolation**

Following the Soviet Union collapse, Russia announced that it had pursued a policy of isolation and tried to rebuild itself from within, thus defined 3 zones, naming each by a color and declared a special policy towards it:

#### **White Zone**

This zone included all the allies and the world outside the former Soviet Union. Russia refrained from any interference in or support of these countries and declared that it would not intervene in their political, military and ideological course. In fact, Russia quit these countries.

#### **Yellow Zone**

Includes the republics of the Soviet Union or the newly independent Soviet Union countries whose intervention was said to have met with a Russian response.

#### **Red Zone**

Included the territory of Russia, according to which any intervention in that region will be faced the strongest reaction. (Shamani, 1394, 20).

### **3- Changing the Economic System**

Shifted its economic system to the market system and non-communist economy.

### **4- Changing the Political System**

Moved from the communist system to the democratic system....

### **5- Decreasing the Army Downsizing**

Gathered its military bases outside Russia, sold much of its equipment, and reduced military spending....

### **6- Minimizing Technological Costs**

Diminished its space activities and limited its spatial structure.

#### **Events:**

Almost after collapse, Russia has more seriously programmed the balance of power policy with the US since 2007, (Koulayee, 2012, 47).

### **The Reason for Iran's Importance in Controlling Russia's Power**

Given Russia's position on the path of re empowerment, the United States has been forced to confront Russia's rise to power in order to maintain its international position and prevent the creation of a strong global rival. For these reason, Iran is an important, decisive country in succeeding US actions to prevent Russia from gaining power.

1. Iran is the Achilles heel of the new containment. (based on Hartland Mackinder's theory and Mahan's naval power).

2. Iran is Russia's access to hot waters (Peter the Great's<sup>4</sup>will)
3. In struggling with economic sanctions, Iran has been a source of revenue and a support for Russia's opposition to international boycotts
4. Iran is the intellectual leader of the Shiite world, and its association with Russia means it is possible to use Iran's influence in the Shiite world and among the intellectual groups under its effect.
5. Iran as Russia's stronghold in Syria.
6. Iran is Russia's backyard and one of its gateways to enter the world of power (according to the author).

For the above reasons, the United States tried to align Iran with its regional and international policies, but on the account of IRI ideological nature and US conflict with the ideals of the Islamic Revolution, it failed to do so, accordingly it took coercive actions and attempted force and violence (in soft or hard shell) to bring the authorities and IRI system to fulfill its goals and plans.

### **US Actions against the Islamic Republic of Iran**

In order to put pressure and have Iran join it, the US initially took the following measures after the end of Cold War to prevent Iran's confrontation with the US, but as soon as Russia rose to power, such pressures intensified aiming at bringing Iran into the Western Front and creating a new barrier of influence against Russia.

#### **1- Complete Geographical Siege of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

After the Soviet Union downfall, the United States made a soft presence in the newly independent countries of the former Soviet Union. The unfavorable economic situation and people's dissatisfaction with the policies of the former communist government caused the people of these areas to get inclined to the US and its programs and this quickly facilitated the US presence and influence in these areas. Now, all countries around Iran either have US puppet state or their central government is pursuing US programs. The southern countries of

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<sup>4</sup> Peter the Great has been Tsar of Russia from 1682 to 1725 AD and in his will he has emphasized two goals: one to control Europe, and the other to conquer Iran and gain access to the waters of the Persian Gulf. Although the originality of this will has been denied in some cases, but Russia's practical policy throughout history reflects the fact that Russia is very interested in implementing these two strategies.

the Persian Gulf, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey and the newly independent countries of the former Soviet Union can all be classified into one of the two mentioned countries<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, it may not be irrelevant to say that the IRI does not have a significant strategic ally<sup>6</sup>.

## **2- Isolating Iran in the International Arena**

For ages, the US has striven to isolate Iran while destroying its image in the international arena and to take a stand against it using terms such as the axis of evil. By this and thanks to the construction of the front against Iran, in sanctions and issues like this many countries which were expected to accompany and support Iran were seen to forsake it in times of need, followed the West and even voted against IRI at the United Nations. To spread its soft and spiritual influence worldwide, Iran has, therefore, come into trouble.

## **3- Decrease in Military Power**

The military structure of the Iranian army has been an American structure and relied on the use of that country's equipment. After the Islamic Revolution, despite efforts to be independent from the United States on the structure and military equipment used by the armed forces, such dependence on the West was still among the armed forces. Therefore, the United States weakened Iran military power by imposing a military embargo on it and preventing the overhaul of military equipment. In other words, in the last 40 years, Iran's military power has decreased in three dimensions:

- a) Wear and tear of existing equipment and their reduced efficiency<sup>7</sup>.
- b) Obsolescence of military technology in the Armed Forces of the country.
- c) Ban on training the Armed Forces: the quality of training the armed forces has also declined because military science is on a rapid change in the world and old trainings lack to transfer in proper, active way<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> It refers to the official government of these countries and does not mean popular forces such as the popular mobilization (shd ha'bi).

<sup>6</sup> Even Russia in its strategic documents describes Iran as an important friend, not a strategic partner.

<sup>7</sup> Although the efforts of Iranian scientists have led to the construction of new military equipment, but the fruits of these efforts have not yet been able to completely solve this problem.

#### **4- Economic Sanctions**

After the Cold War ended, geo-strategy gave way to geo-economics, namely, the economy replaced military might at power levels, so the West and the United States began to impose extensive economic sanctions on Iran which included individuals, organizations, banks, insurance industry, oil, medical treatment, etc. All these sanctions, which some believe are the most severe ones imposed on a country in the last century, have intended to bring the Islamic Republic of Iran to its knees and support the West in the region and worldwide.

#### **5- Doing a Soft War against Iran**

The difference between Iran and the Soviet Union in sort of Western hostility is that concerning Iran there is much wider possibility for the US and the West to use cyberspace such as satellite, internet, virtual networks, especially telegrams to attract public opinion to the direction they want. Recently, these factors have clearly shown their efficiency after years of vicissitudes and in the riots of years 2016, 2017, 2018, sedition of year 2008, parliamentary elections, presidential elections and Tehran City Council elections, they proved to be the most decisive tool in directing and guiding the public opinion of the country. The West has also used this opportunity well and is slowly destroying the credibility of the Islamic Republic, the signs of which can be seen in society. However, It is in times of crisis that the depth of the tragedy will become apparent so a solution must be found from now on.

#### **6- Increasing Iran's Costs by Entering into the Arms and Military Races**

Iran has entered the arms and military races in two dimensions.

- a) Efforts to acquire modern weapons technology, especially nuclear, missile and space technology, which imposes significant costs on the country.
- b) Acting out in Syria, Iraq, etc. and supporting the military and ideological groups of such countries which sets a heavy financial burden on Iran. Sometimes we have seen that some of

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<sup>8</sup> In spite of the fact that in recent years the presence of armed forces personnel in international courses and arenas such as Russian military competitions, UN peacekeeping courses, courses in China and Russia, etc. has had a significant increase, but to achieve the ideal point, actions must be take beyond such cases.

these groups like Hamas, despite using financial support, have taken a stand against the interests of Iran.

### Ideals, Future Images, etc

This part is about definitions and scenarios the Western elites have drawn for the region and can be paid attention to.

### The New Middle East Plan

According to this British plan put forward by Dr. Bernard Lewis, secularism and nationalism should be created to support ethnic uprisings of minorities such as the Druze in Lebanon, the Baloch, the Turks and Kurds in Iran, the Alawites in Syria, Christians in Ethiopia, religious sects in Sudan, Arab tribes in various Arab countries, Kurds in Turkey, and so on. Of course, the purpose of this plan is to fragment the Middle East and turn it into a mosaic of small, weak countries competing with each other so that the power of current republics and kingdoms get weak (Kazem Beiki, 2017, 73 – 76). Iran is of great strategic importance in this plan. Any change in Iran's geographical borders could easily destabilize its neighbors, especially Iraq, Turkey and Pakistan and greatly contributes to the development of Bernard Lewis' plan to Balkanize the Islamic world (Jahan Tigh, 2016, 78).



Figure 3. Bernard Lewis Ideal Map for the Division of the Middle East (www.mashregnews.ir)

## New Containment Plan

In an article in Foreign Offers magazine in 1974, George Kennan, the former US Deputy Chief of Mission to the Soviet Union suggested to the US government that in order to counter the threat of Soviet expansionism, the US would adopt a policy of blocking influence around Russia so that the communist system dismantles over time. NATO, Sinto and Santo were created by this strategy. (Valadi, 2015, 72). When the Soviet Union fell down, this strategy continued other way, which one of its manifestations could be the deployment of US forces in the countries around Russia and **NATO influence into the east.**

Although the US managed to surround the environment around Russia and create a new containment, due to geopolitical and geo-strategic reasons, getting Iran to accompany as an influential and determining country is the necessary condition success of the plan.

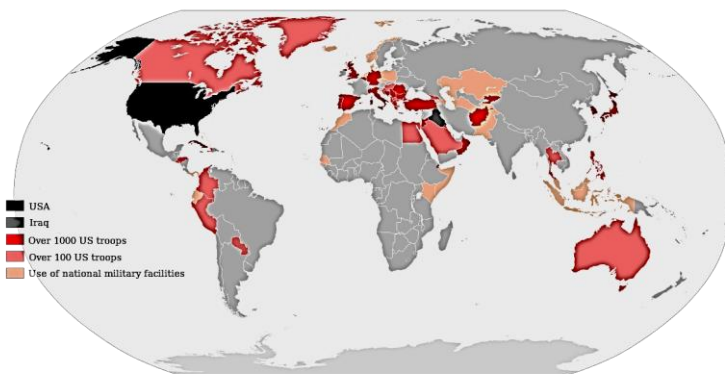


Figure 4. Number of US Military Forces in Different Countries of the World

## Iran Being Located in the Region of Turmoil and World War

According to Barry Buzan in book “Regions and Powers”, after the end of Cold War the world got divided into 2 regions. (Buzan, 2008, 29). By little reflection on the story of the Middle East since the end of the Cold War so far and the wars taken place in this region (the war in Kuwait, the first and second wars in the Persian Gulf, the US invasion of Afghanistan and its occupation, the war Azerbaijan and Armenia, the war in Yemen, the presence of ISIS, etc.) we can vividly realize that the Middle East is indeed the same as the war zone in the world, so the slightest excuse can be the basis for a new war in this region.

### Adapting US Actions against the Soviet Union and Iran

Looking at US actions for bringing the Soviet Union to its knees and adapting it to recent developments in Iran, it can be concluded that there are significant similarities between US plans and actions for the collapse of the Soviet Union and Iran. The following is an example of US action against these two countries:

Table 1

*Adaptation of US Measures Taken against the Soviet Union and Iran*

Measures taken against Iran	Measures taken against the Soviet Union	row
Complete geographical siege of IRI	Influence barrier plan (Containment)	Similar actions taken by the US against 2 countries of Iran and the Soviet Union Actions taken so far in opposition to Iran
Reduction of military power	Reduction of military power	
Increasing Military Expenditures	Increasing Military Expenditures	
Iran Economic Weakening	Soviet Economic Weakening	
---	Marshal Plan	Actions taken by the US in face of Iran
---	Using consecutive death opportunity of Soviet intellectual leaders and emergence of young leadership	
Isolating Iran in the international arena	---	Measures taken against the United States and Iran, but not against the Soviet Union to such an extent.
Doing a large-scale soft war against the system -	---	



## **Conclusion**

### **Study of Possible Scenarios**

According to Table 1, the following threats can be counted against the Islamic Republic of Iran:

1. Intensification of sanctions and economic pressures aimed at putting constraint on the people and creating confrontation between the people and officials due to such pressures. Measures such as US withdrawal from JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), pressure on Iran to join FATF. Reducing oil prices, etc. can be considered as examples of these measures in this regard. The spread of coronavirus and its economic consequences will have a great impact on the implementation of economic pressure on Iran.

### **Possible Scenarios**

- **Pessimistic Approach**

The biggest problem of the country is the passionate dependence of some officials on the first world countries. Therefore, pessimistic view involves the internal turmoil, the intervention of hostile countries in directing the riots and the people who, due to their dependence or that of their family on the world superpowers, are likely to join them and strike a blow at the country. These cases, when combined with other dimensions of civilian and military threats, can put the existence of the Islamic Republic at risk.

### **Possible Scenarios**

- **Optimistic Approach**

People's experience during the last 4 decades has shown that they have a good understanding of the time situation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and in times of crisis sacrifice their demands and even their rights to national interests and independence of the country. So, there should not be too much worry in this regard because if the enemies could take effective action, they would have done so already. In consequence, because Iranian government has

not faced much security problems at the height of the economic crisis caused by Western sanctions, such a crisis also seems unlikely in near future.

2- Stimulating dissident groups and activating them with the purpose of creating military and internal security tensions in 7 regions of Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, Khuzestan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Khorasan, the north of the country (Turkmen) and the central part (with the intention of weakening the center and facilitating the disintegration of the country) according to Bernard Lewis Plan of Great Middle East.

### **Possible Scenarios**

- **Pessimistic Approach**

Changes in the region, such as the war in Syria, the unrests in Iraq, Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, etc. indicate the West's efforts to implement Bernard Lewis plan and as Iran's hostility to the US intensifies, we should expect stronger sabotage and separatist movements.

- **Optimistic Approach**

Lewis plan belongs to the past few decades and has become virtually inefficient and inoperable since it failed to be implemented in recent years. Thus, though there are movements, it has nothing to do with Bernard Lewis plan. The West failed in independence of Kurdistan region which all its political, cultural, social and other conditions were met, so if it is determined to carry out disintegration, it cannot be done at the present time.

3- Death of revolution and system leaders (through bioterrorism or old age) and the enemies' use of its resulting crisis.

### **Possible Scenarios**

- **Pessimistic Approach**

Just as in the former Soviet Union the death of regime leaders and the rise of young leaders changed the course of the movement and eventually destroyed the former Soviet Union, there

is a threat that the death of the heads of regime ( particularly the Supreme Leader) will make a change in the course of the system so that this change in direction clears the way for the system to decline and finally collapse<sup>9</sup>.

- **Optimistic Approach**

In order to prevent this raised problem, the Assembly of Experts for Leadership is working on it, those have certainly done thorough studies to select the right one to forbid the problem. Besides, this country has a historical experience regarding the death of Imam Khomeini, which was more sensitive and tense than the current period, but it was observed that the country was well governed and even the process of gaining power in IRI system progressed faster and stronger.

4- Raise on military spending and the resultant intensification of the country's economic and political crisis.

### **Possible Scenarios**

- **Pessimistic Approach**

Continuation of the West's economic war with Iran, creation of public discontent among the people, the enemies maneuver on Iran's military expenditures abroad, economic pressure and the stress of the enemy's psychological warfare would intensify dissatisfaction and increase the likelihood of unrest.

- **Optimistic Approach**

Iran's military acting overseas is one of the tools of power where the enemies, due to importance of this acting and Iran's influence, attempt to downplay and prevent Iran's international acting. Therefore, Iran's acting at the international level is a tool for Iran to gain

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<sup>9</sup> The author assumes that the three countries of Iran, Saudi Arabia and Oman are important in the region as the triangle of stability and acting and one of the world powers' ways to change the infrastructure in the region is to change regional leaders and bring new leaders in line with their plans. Considering the death of Sultan Qaboos, King of Oman, there is the fear of bioterrorism and operationalization of the proposed assumption.

power, and although doing this imposes costs on Iran, it will increase Iran's power and reduce the acting ability of its enemies in the long run.

5- Limited military strikes by regional adversaries and/or military groups such as ISIS (because of Iran's presence in the World War Zone).

### **Possible Scenarios**

- **Pessimistic Approach**

The US and the West will launch military operations against Iran in three ways to put pressure on Iran and make it accompany them.

- 1- Activation of internal dissident groups
- 2- Using foreign dissident groups such as ISIS
- 3- Carrying out a limited military attack by a country's army

- **Optimistic Approach**

Iran is a conflict place of Europe and the US on one hand and Russia and China on the other, so taking any military action against Iran would mean violating the interests of the other side, thus an attack on Iran would not only mean a conflict with Iran, but also a war with the other side. In other words, the experience the US and the Soviet Union had in Iran Azerbaijan which caused the start of the Cold War, so it is unlikely to do so due to bitter historical experience and fear of its consequences.

- **Pessimistic Approach**

If each of the powers does not succeed in overcoming its rival in the economic, political, etc. arenas, taking military action to shape the structure of the region and/or change the game in its favor may be the worst solution.

## 6-Applying International Pressures

### **Possible Scenarios**

- **Pessimistic Approach**

To achieve favorable result and to increase the pressure on Iran, the West will try to isolate Iran worldwide, and Iran could also be traded by the West and Russia.

- **Optimistic Approach**

To protect their interests, countries supporting Iran all over the world (China and Russia) will stop applying irregular pressure on Iran, so international pressure will be exerted, but it will not go too far.

## 7-Using the above Methods as Combined (The Most Probable Option)

### **Possible Scenarios**

- **Pessimistic Approach**

The worst possible case is the occurrence of all the above situations, that is, the spread of economic problems, the beginning of street riots, dissatisfaction of the armed forces as supporters of the system, occurrence of separatist armed actions, controlled attacks by foreign groups, limited aggression of a foreign country, application of international pressure, condemnation in the UN and coincidence of these currents with the death of heads of regime and the emergence of young leaders who lack enough experience and influence to manage the crisis, consequently the system will move towards decline.

- **Optimistic Approach**

Considering 40 years of experience and leaving similar conditions behind in the onset of revolution and the imposed war and regarding the matured experience of officials in the system, if such crisis happens, it will be very likely for the system to manage the atmosphere.

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