

The Foreign Policy Imperatives of the Islamic-Iranian Model of Progress

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Abstract

The design and development of the Islamic-Iranian model of progress is a strategic action with extensive national, regional and international dimensions and requirements. The present article tries to review the requirements for the design of the Islamic-Iranian model of progress in the former and latter periods in the field of foreign policy and diplomacy, both at the regional and international levels. The main question of the present article is what are the requirements of foreign policy in designing and formulating an Islamic-Iranian model of progress at regional and international levels? The paper examines these requirements in both the former and latter periods. The former requirements for designing and developing an Islamic-Iranian model of progress include how to use the positive and successful experiences of other countries so that the religious, cultural, geographic and national characteristics of Iran are taken into account and the output of the pattern would be a native pattern. On the other hand, the development of the Islamic-Iranian model of progress, in such a way that this model has the capacity to be presented to the world and also the ability to be transferred to other communities on the level of neighbor, the region, the world of Islam, as well as the international level, is one of the most important follow-up considerations.

Keywords

Islamic-Iranian Model of Progress, International System, Foreign policy, Diplomacy, World of Islam, Development.

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Introduction

Development and advancement in the general sense and economic development in the special sense are multidimensional and multi-layered concepts that there is not a common consensus in their definition. The common denominator of these concepts actually refers to a process of transformation in society that leads to an increase in the level of welfare and satisfaction in the country (Kuria, 2011, p. 416). In the classical and traditional view of development, there is a direct relationship between these concepts and the amount of per capita income. Certainly, this view is not the consensus of all the scholars, and in the meantime a group of intellectuals have a different conception of the development and advancement. From this perspective, concepts such as human development and existing capacities in countries are fundamental factors in development, which do not necessarily relate to the per capita income. Issues related to development and advancement were mainly raised in academic circles in post-world war II years, on the basis of which the countries of the world were divided into two categories: developed or advanced, undeveloped or developing.

Concentrated and targeted investment in order to gather all the country's capacities, assets and capabilities to achieve a tangible result in the economic and social situation is a milestone in the process of development and advancement of the countries. In this regard, the positive and optimal use of foreign capacities is only possible in the light of the recognition of regional and international opportunities and requirements. Another concept used in the modification of the concept of development is the concept of balanced development in which there is an additional emphasis on balanced

and homogeneous development and development in all fields and areas (Nurke, 1953). This concept can be defined in such a way as to include a balance among the internal and external causes and reasons.

1. Conceptual Framework

Diplomacy, independence, dependence, local model, and globalization have been used as key concepts that are briefly defined as follows. In this research, diplomacy has been presumed to be the management of interactions with the outside world by governments, in which safeguarding the national interests and independence of the country are the most important goals of governments (Khani, 2006).

In this framework, independence means making decisions for the affairs of the country in various political, security, economic, social and cultural domains without direct or indirect influence of cross border and transnational actors (both governmental and non-governmental), the opposite point of which is dependence (Berridge & Alan James, 2001, p. 122). Finally, what is meant by a native model is a pattern in which the peculiarities and the demographic, cultural, religious, social, economic, historical and geographical characteristics of a nation-state are supposed to be considered to reach the desired development and advancement. In other words, indigenous development refers to a particular type of development in which inherent factors play the central and major role in its design, and indigenous inventions and innovations are used by considering the relative indigenous advantages (Coffey & Polese, 1984).

The existence of efficient and influential institutions is one of the most important prerequisites for the realization of developed countries. The lack of these institutions will ultimately lead to the continuing underdevelopment of the state, even though there are sufficient financial and material resources and human resources in the country indeed. Consequently, it is most likely to consider a direct relationship between the type of government system, how to allocate political power, and the quantity and quality of the political, economic, and social institutions available in the country, and the relationship that the intermediary circles could find even in the field of foreign politics and decision-making institutions and foreign policy makers.

2. Various Patterns and Perspectives

Theories of progress and development have always undergone changes throughout the different decades of the twentieth century. These developments, which are evaluated by many theorists in an evolutionary process, are mainly focused on providing different models for economic development.

The starting point for these models was the classic ‘Ricardo model’ that dates back two centuries ago. Then, came the neoclassical model, which was introduced by Harrod and Domar, and dates back to the final years of the Second World War. The third model, which is also the most influential model, is the ‘Solow model’, which dates back roughly a generation ago, and is the latest model, presented by the name of ‘Theory of New Growth’ (Jurado, 2003).

The fact that we have witnessed the emergence and decline of different and sometimes conflicting patterns of development and

progress over the past two centuries, has demonstrated that the development and advancement for numerous causes are inherently a fluid phenomenon and are affected by the very complex internal and external factors and reasons, and can never be prescribed for all communities in a single and identical version.

This fact is in clear contradiction with the assumption and claim of Rostow believing that in order to achieve development, countries have to cross a single path and more or less go the same way. In the theory of unification, the process of transition to development Rostow goes beyond this, saying that societies that want development and progress cannot deny any stages of development, or disturb the order governing the process and pass one stage before the next stage (Stevens, 2009).

According to this strategy, a chain of policy-makings at both governmental and non-governmental levels based on indigenous knowledge and national experience, along with the use of transnational experiences, outlines a roadmap for the development and advancement of countries. In this approach, there is a significant emphasis on decentralization and the optimal use of relative-native advantages.

Mr. Hunterstad, a professor of political economy and development at the London School of Economics, acknowledges encouraging the developing countries to follow the prescriptions of the west and forcing them to stick to the principles of the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements along with the general policy of the west to keep back the developing countries by means of the policy of “kicking and throwing the ladder” that they had gone up to develop themselves (Wade, 2003); Therefore, the acceptance

of the principle of theoretical and practical diversity in the design of the progress model should be considered as a pivotal element; And this shall indicate a counterpart for itself in the outside world, not only within the framework of intellectual autonomy, but also in the field of political independence, which is the domain of the emergence and practice of foreign policy.

3. The Relationship between Development and Progress with the Foreign Policy

In this part of the article, we will discuss the most important requirements of foreign policy in the design and development of the Islamic-Iranian model of progress. The following issues are among the most important considerations that should be noted in this regard:

3-1. The Necessity of a Common Understanding of the Concept of Progress

Since progress is a relative concept, we must be able to give a fairly comprehensive and definite definition of progress, and in order to achieve a comprehensive definition, we must see how the concept of progress in the literature of development is defined in the political, economic, social, and technological domains. Strictly speaking, in spite of the concern for progress and development specified by the Iranian and Islamic definitions, we still need to measure our optimal model and scale by means of international yardstick and standards, which we can be able to present for foreign audiences and experts in the form of an intelligible and comparatively appreciable model.

3-2. Need for Maximum Interaction with the Outside World

In designing the Iranian model of progress, the maximum interaction with the regional and international environment shall be considered as an important principle. Undoubtedly, in the 21st century and in the age of globalization, countries need to engage with the outside world for their national development and progress. In a world where the interdependence in political, security and economic domains between international system actors is rapidly expanding, bilateral, multi-lateral, logical and targeted interaction with the outside world is unavoidable. It ultimately leads to the reduction in the vulnerability of the country in various areas by increasing the dependence of other actors and sharing their vulnerabilities among the two parties. The tangible result of this strategy is to play a deterrent role in the political and security domains, as well as the maximum and the most effective use of foreign capital in the economic domain. Changes in classical approaches in the field of commerce and foreign trade are among the other things to be considered. More emphasis on establishing a balance between a demand-based strategy and the indigenous needs with a strategy for export is among the approaches (Mayer, 2013).

3-3. Maintaining Political Independence

Regarding the country's political independence in the international system is one of the most fundamental principles and requirements of foreign policy in designing and developing an Islamic-Iranian model of progress. Protecting and safeguarding the independence of the country should always be considered as a major and strategic objective, and the development and advancement of the coun-

try should be designed and operated in such a way as to not only undermine the principle of independence, but also to deepen its strength. This point in a country like Iran is becoming a serious matter and a fundamental concern. Some scholars emphasizing this point that for nations like Iran who are considered to be hostile and incurred by the wrath of the dominant and arrogant powers of the world, breaking the vicious circle of scientific retardation and achieving real progress, is not possible except by the spontaneous and inherent movements run by the people and depending on the internal actual capabilities based on the native pattern (Peiqami, 2012). On the basis of what has been said, perhaps at the first glance it is understood that there is a kind of contradiction between protecting true independence and maximum interaction with the outside world; But the reality is that establishing a logical balance between these two is the most important and, of course, the hardest missions and responsibilities of diplomacy. Relations with the outside world do not necessarily mean the choice between two situations of surrender or sanctions, since diplomacy is essentially blocked in these two situations. The main art of diplomacy is the discovery, exploitation, and relentless activity in the space between these two spectra.

3-4. Presenting a Successful and Unparalleled Pattern

Another important point that belongs to the regional and international considerations, in the design and development of the Islamic-Iranian model, is its “Islamic” trait. As it is understood from the Islamic constraint of this pattern, this model is intended to visualize and crystallize the efficiency of a religious-centered approach to progress within the framework of the teachings of Islam. The

assumption of this analysis is that the developers and designers of the Islamic-Iranian model of progress believe that the output and the final result of this project will lead to the presentation of a successful and unparalleled model in the field of advancement and development that can and shall be presented beside other western and eastern patterns and to the people of the world in general and the world of Islam in particular. Other western and eastern patterns were presented specifically to the world in general and the muslim world in particular. Surely this approach requires such a level of engagement and dialogue with the outside world that it has not had before, and its success depends on the design and implementation of an active and professional diplomacy by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

3-5. The Use of the Capacities of Public Diplomacy and Cultural Diplomacy

Finally, the last reason to learn about the necessity to include foreign policy requirements in the design of the Islamic-Iranian model is to introduce the fact that enemies and malicious people with the name of Islamic Iran will not stop working to bar Iran reaching progress, and do their utmost to defeat and paralyze it. Competitive players will also pursue their special goals and agenda at the regional level. The main and important tactic and mechanism that they will face in this encounter will be from diplomatic type and its various types includes classical, public, economic and cultural diplomacy, and anyhow the Islamic Republic's response to it should be of the same type. The views and opinions of Samuel Huntington in the controversial theory of the "clash of civilizations" and the version that he prescribes for the continuation of the supremacy

of the east in the face of other civilizations, including Islamic civilization is completely intelligible in this framework (Huntington, 1993, pp. 48-49).

Conclusion

Clever detente at regional and international levels with other actors of international system, and the maximum use of soft power in advancing foreign policy goals in order to neutralize negative propaganda against Iran and providing a positive and real image of Iran and eventually a multilateral and broad-based, and institutionalized interaction with elites and academic circles at both regional and international levels with the purpose of setting the stage for the introduction of Islamic-Iranian model is among the most important aspects that should be considered in designing and compiling the Islamic-Iranian model of progress.

The sanctioning conditions and imposed by sanctions in fact can act as a double-edged sword. The sanctions on the one hand reveal the hidden and dormant capacities in the country and disclose them to the public. The sanctioned conditions can even further help in some way to revitalize and strengthen the self-confidence and the national self-esteem and set the stage for designing the entirely native model of progress; in spite of all this, it should be noted that in the current international system, the principle is to interact with other actors in a normal and competitive environment, and the isolation and sanction conditions are an exception. The conditions of isolation and sanctions essentially prevent the country from engaging in the requisite interaction in the political, economic and commercial domains with the outside world and will expose the coun-

try's development and advancement path to different fundamental obstacles in the long run. Since foreign policy can lead the country to interact or oppose the international system, there is a direct and meaningful relationship between foreign policy and the pattern of progress that must be taken into account in the development of the Islamic-Iranian model of development.

The evolutions of the Islamic awakening and the search for countries that are undergoing these developments, including Tunisia and Egypt in order to find a suitable and ideal pattern, reflects the fact that the Islamic-Iranian model, wanted or unwanted, will have observers, audiences and aspirants outside of Iran's borders. Therefore, diplomatic tips and subtleties supervising the foreign policy shall be considered in designing the model. Finally, in the contemporary world and based on the existing political and economic realities, it is not possible to reach a model of development and progress in which there is no previous or past interaction with the outside world and the mechanisms for its operations not included, since such an option is neither desirable nor possible.

Notes

1. Economic Development
2. Developed
3. Underdeveloped/Developing
4. Balanced Development
5. Local Model
6. Globalization
7. Ricardo
8. This model was presented by Roy Harrod and Evsey Domar in 1939 and 1946, respectively

9. Solow

10. For further reading refer to.

www.ilo.org/empent/areas/local-economic-development-led/lang--en/index.htm.

www.iisd.org/pdf/2004/measure_sd_strategies_initiatives_brochure.pdf

11. The GATS and TRIPS agreements are among the most important of these agreements:

GATS: General Agreement on Trade in Services

TRIPS: Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights

12. This term was first used by the George Friedrich List, an American-born German economist, in the nineteenth century. He referred to the regulations and restrictive policies imposed by civilized and advanced western countries on other countries; While they had already benefited from it in their development path. For more information refer to Chang, 2002.

13. Some interpreters have interpreted verse 143 of Surah 13al-Baqarah "...Thus We have made you a middle nation, so that you may act as witnesses for mankind, and the Messenger may be a witness for you...." in this sense.

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