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## Third Millennium US Military Strategies in the Persian Gulf Region and National Security of the Islamic Republic of Iran

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### **Abstract:**

The Persian Gulf region has always been a turning point of the US military strategies' focus. Accordingly, the US has used all its political, economic and military levers to pursue various military strategies and approaches based on its region domination to maximize its interests. This article seeks to answer this question that what are the effects of the US military strategies of the third millennium on the Islamic Republic of Iran's national security in the Persian Gulf region? In order to collect data, descriptive-analytical method library and phishing methods and the propositions of the theory of aggressive realism have been used, and the result is that, the US during the presidency of George W. Bush and after the terrorist attacks of September 11, has established a military presence in the Persian Gulf region, by relying on its military power and also by taking precautionary measures to consolidate hegemony. That is replacing the strategy of increasing interventionism with a deterrent strategy which was left from the Cold War. However, under Barack Obama and subsequent presidents, it chose a coalition-building strategy and handed over responsibility to its regional allies in the Persian Gulf to secure its vital interests. Pursuit to the US military strategies and its security influence in the Persian Gulf region's development, which has changed the balance of power to Iran's detriment, the tensions in relations between the two countries has been increased and ultimately has been spread it to the rest of the region.

**Keywords:** United States of America, Persian Gulf, Islamic Republic of Iran, Military strategy, National security

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### **Introduction**

The Persian Gulf region is strategically an important part of the Middle East. The strategic hub which connects Asia, Africa

and Europe. Due to the existence of important ports and the role of its maritime trade as an important commercial and military

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waterway, this region has been of special importance to great powers for centuries. The discovery of massive oil and gas reserves in the context of this strategic area has increased the importance and position of this region in the structure of international security and has also provided a suitable space for the role of trans-regional actors.

This area is one of the most important areas that has been the focus of US policy for many years. As the most powerful trans-regional player in the developments of the Persian Gulf region, this country considers this region as the sphere of influence and continuity of life and the center of its strategies' gravity. Therefore, due to the rapid pace of global and regional developments that began in the 1990s and intensified after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the US has used all its political, economic and military levers, in order to ensure its maximum interests, and it has pursued various strategies and approaches based on domination in the Persian Gulf region.

The most important security challenge of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Persian Gulf region is the expansion of the US presence in this region and the lack of lasting security in this region due to its geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-strategic position. Maintaining the security of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz with the cooperation of the countries of the region and without the intervention of trans-regional actors, has always been one of the main strategies and policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards this strategic region. This article seeks to answer the question that what effect do US military strategies of the third millennium in the Persian Gulf region have on the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran? In order to answer the research ques-

tion, this hypothesis is raised; That the US military presence and political influence in the Persian Gulf region, and the pursuit of US military strategies in the region, while increasing tensions in the relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the United States and its regional allies; It will also change the balance of power in the Persian Gulf region to the detriment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this research, descriptive-analytical method has been used to test the hypothesis and library and filing method has been used to collect data.

### **Research background**

Lobatfard (2020) addresses this issue in an article entitled "The Future of the US Presence in the Persian Gulf in the Light of Changes in the Balance of Power in the Region"; That US foreign policy in the Persian Gulf region is changing. And American politicians intend to take a new approach, instead of using policies that have cost them the most, to pursue policies that, in addition to securing their long-term benefits, resolve domestic problems arising from foreign policy.

Ghafari Charati and Khodaverdi (2019) in an article entitled "Deployment of US Missile Defense Shield in the Persian Gulf region and its impact on regional security"; It is pointed out that the deployment of the US missile defense shield in the Persian Gulf region has started an arms race, upset the balance of power and blurred regional relations and instability in the Persian Gulf region. And the fragile security of this region has affected it more than ever.

Hosseini (2016) in an article entitled "The pattern of US political-military intervention in the Persian Gulf"; points to George W. Bush's strategy of democratizing the Middle East from the outside after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and Obama's policy of

rebuilding America's distorted image using smart power.

Jalenousi et al. (2014) in an article entitled "The Divergent Role of the United States in the Persian Gulf Region after 9/11"; While expressing the geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economics' components of the Persian Gulf region, it deals with the important role and position of this region in the structure of international security. The results indicate that the United States, by creating divergence among the countries of the Persian Gulf region, seeks to stabilize the balance in this region in order to prevent the domination of rival states over the Persian Gulf.

Many previous studies, despite having strengths and providing useful information, have addressed each of the specific aspects of the US presence in the Persian Gulf region; And in general, the impact of this presence and pursuit of the military strategies of this country on the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been less accurately studied. This article intends to take advantage of the useful results of previous research by considering new influential components, and take a deeper look at the US military strategies in the Persian Gulf region and their impact on the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

#### **Theoretical framework (aggressive realism)**

Analysis and analysis of the reasons for the behavior of countries in the field of foreign policy is one of the most important areas of research in international relations. Therefore, understanding the foreign policy and behavior of governments and explaining its dimensions is one of the requirements of this field. One of the most important strategies is to use different theories of international relations, which is a good guidance in this field by providing specific frameworks for these

theories. In the meantime, "realist theories have been the dominant theory of world politics since the beginning of the formation of the field of international relations." (Qavam, 2005, p. 79)

From the point of view of realism, the international system consists of sovereign, selfish, and utilitarian states with different and conflicting interests that seek to maximize those interests as much as possible. Realism relies on these fundamental principles and concepts to explain international relations and foreign policy analysis; Power-orientation; Government-orientation; National Interest; Balance of power; Normal condition; Rationality and survival. From the point of view of realism, international politics is a policy of struggle and struggle for power. The most important motivation and goal of countries in international relations and foreign policy are to gain maximum power and expand it. (Dehghani Firoozabadi, 2010, pp. 28-30). Aggressive realism is one of the most important branches of realism that has based its intellectual apparatus on realistic teachings and assumptions.

Aggressive realists, such as John Mearsheimer, argue that strategically, gaining as much power as possible and, if the right conditions are in place, gaining a hegemonic position are perfectly reasonable moves for governments. This does not mean that victory or domination is good in itself, but that having great power is the best way to ensure its survival. (Dan et al., 2017, p. 157).

According to the propositions of the theory of aggressive realism, it seems that the performance of the United States and its military strategies in the Persian Gulf region can be analyzed and examined with the propositions of the theory of aggressive realism. According to the teachings of this theory, the United States, as the only regional hegemon

in the Persian Gulf, has always sought to establish its dominance at the regional and global levels by pursuing an aggressive strategy; And it has exploited a variety of strategies to strike the right balance against what it considers to be threatening countries. The US has also paid special attention to the Persian Gulf region in terms of oil and gas, which feed the Asian and European economies, and other geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economics' features; Therefore, it has designed a part of its army for the valley war in this region. Therefore, with an in-depth look the behaviors and actions of the United States in the Persian Gulf region and its unification in this region over the past years, as well as the pursuit of its cross-border goals will be examined. The most appropriate perspective for examining the future of the US military presence in the Persian Gulf region has been identified as the use of propositions and components of aggressive realism. Therefore, to the performance of this country in order to increase its power and interests and to expand its sphere of influence, it has the least contradiction and the most similarity with this theory.

### **Strategic components of the Persian Gulf in international equations**

Southwest Asia, from Turkey to India, forms a peninsula that acts as a geostrategic unit in military terms. This unit is located in the valley of the central part of Rim land, with the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz as its center (Safavi, 2006, p. 8). The Persian Gulf is also the most important communication center between the three continents of Asia, Europe and Africa; And forms part of a communication system that connects the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, and the Atlantic Ocean. For this reason, this region has long

been in the middle of the world powers' consideration. (Hosseini Tabar, 2003, p. 20).

The Persian Gulf includes nations that are culturally different; But in terms of political, strategic and economic concerns, they are coordinated and homogeneous (Mojtahedzadeh, 2000, p. 334). This region is the center of the emergence and spread of the religion of Islam and from this region, Islamic thought has spread to the west and east. With the advent of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the revival of Islamic and liberation movements, the importance of the Persian Gulf in the equations of world politics and strategies of the great powers has multiplied (Mojtahedzadeh, 1970, p. 10).

With the priority of the economy in recent decades, the importance of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz has become much more significant and even more important. Since, the Persian Gulf is the economic artery of the contemporary world (Safavi, 2006, p. 7). The region has about 650 billion barrels of the world's 991 billion barrels of oil reserves. This figure is about 65% of the total known oil reserves in the world. There are also 31 trillion cubic meters of natural gas, or 30 percent of the world's known natural gas reserves. For this reason, the Persian Gulf has a decisive role in the world economy, especially in industrialized countries (Jafari Valadani, 2002, p. 12). This fact will have a profound effect on the political destiny of major democracies, such as the United States. Thus, the Persian Gulf will continue to be a major US military concern (Camp and Harkawy, 2004, p. 190).

### **Factors underlying the US military presence in the Persian Gulf region**

#### *Different security views of regional actors*

The distrust of the countries of the Persian Gulf region towards each other and their

individual actions to ensure their security, has deprived them of security and peace, and has become an excuse for the presence of supra-regional powers to ensure the security of the region. The behavior of governments in the Persian Gulf is fundamentally influenced by their understanding of the current situation and the desired state of the world around them. Leaving the Persian Gulf region in a security vacuum has created the conditions for adventurous actions and finally the presence of foreign powers and the seizure of its vast wealth.

Today, one of the most important factors of instability in the Persian Gulf region and the basis for the presence of extra-regional powers in it, is the issue of billion-dollar purchase of facilities (Burrell, 1999: p. 359). The existence of regional rivalries and the resulting convulsions have made this region an insecure region and one of the global arms sales markets. The uncontrolled entry of advanced and state-of-the-art weapons, regardless of regional capacity, has led to severe regional instability and instability. This instability and insecurity have caused foreign powers to prevent the creation of any appropriate and comprehensive security system by the presence and implementation of military maneuvers, under the pretext of creating peace and security in the region (Asadi, 2009, p. 190).

#### ***The need to ensure the continuation of energy exports from the Persian Gulf***

Free access to the seas is a central principle of national security for the United States, and the most important reason for the importance of the Persian Gulf region for the United States today is to ensure the continued flow of energy exports from the region and prevent other countries from dominating the process. The United States

is well aware of the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf region, and since it consumes a quarter of the world's oil, it considers maintaining security in the Persian Gulf region as one of its vital issues; And it considers itself as the guardian of the energy interests of other partners and allies.

#### ***Increasing regional power and expanding Iran's sphere of influence***

In the modern history of international relations, one of the important strategies of the growing power has been the strategy of expanding the sphere of influence. Throughout this period, the middle powers have used the strategy of expanding their sphere of influence to become a great power. This, as a policy, has a simple yet important logic; this means that, given the limitations of a country's national sources of power, the expansion of power requires the sources of power and territorial scope to enable a power to maneuver outside its borders without harming the mainland (Feizi, 2011, pp. 158-168).

The United States claims that the balance of power in the region has shifted in Iran's favor by launching a series of accusations against Iran, including supporting terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, destabilization, the Middle East, destructive cyber activities, and so on; And the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken advantage of regional instability to expand its influence through partners and intermediaries. To counter this trend, the United States seeks to revive partnerships and alliances with reformist countries - aligned with the United States - and encourage cooperation among its partners in the region. To re-establish stability and balance in the interests of the United States.

### ***The spread of regional terrorism***

Today, the Persian Gulf region has a unique position in the strategic cycle of world power, and as a region of turmoil, it has become the birthplace of American values and radical and new terrorism. From the perspective of these terrorists, the region must always be insecure about US policies. As al-Qaeda says, "Because we do not have security, our enemies should not have security." (Taheri and Zare, 2012, p. 19) "The security of the Persian Gulf region is an issue of strategic importance and determines the interests of the United States of America," said Dick Cheney. And the need to tackle instability and destabilizing elements, even through the use of military means and direct intervention, is an inevitable part of US foreign policy. (Cheney, 1995, p. 46).

### ***Undemocratic and underdeveloped Arab society***

The national security and interests of the United States are secured by the expansion of a global order that revolves around democracy and free markets. The idea that no invisible hand of the international environment has predisposed American values and will not protect American interests at various levels; It caused Americans to take on such responsibilities after the Cold War in all governments, under different headings and tactics (Hass, 1994, p. 7). The greater the cultural and structural similarity of the region to the civilized world of the West, the less force is used in the strategic issues of the region and the less the United States is involved in regional issues (Rayne, 1995, 39).

### ***Ensuring the security of Israel***

US-Israeli relations form a very important part of US Middle East policy. Israel is a strategic asset to the United States. It has

been with Israel since its recognition as the most important ally and supporter of Israel at various levels; And it went so far that the mutual interests of the two countries were reflected in the form of special relations, and all-American presidents, both Democrats and Republicans, accepted their full commitment to Israel's security. (Maleki and Mohammadzadeh, 2000, p. 108)

### ***Deployment of US Rapid Reaction Forces in the Persian Gulf region***

The outbreak of World War II marked the United States' entry into developments in the Middle East and Iran (Chamankar, 2000, pp. 41-42). After the war, the US military presence waned due to the deployment of British elements in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. But after the announcement of the British withdrawal from the lands of East Suez in 1968, due to the geo-strategic and geo-economic importance of West Asia and the Persian Gulf; The United States began its efforts to effectively influence and secure interests in the West Asian region (Gohari Moghadam, 2014, p. 120).

The need for a US strike force to intervene in Third World conflicts emerged with the creation of the Rapid Reaction Force on February 18, 1980. When Reagan took over the presidency of the United States, all the capabilities of the US war machine were ready for military intervention in the Persian Gulf. To counter what was considered a Soviet threat to Western access to Persian Gulf oil, the Reagan administration sought regional support for its policy in Southwest Asia; And create a strategic consensus in the face of external threats to the region. The Reagan administration suggested that in order to counter these threats, it would be better to strengthen US interventionist and strike forces, as well as to rely on pro-Western forces in

the region, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel. (Entezar, 1996, pp. 309-310). The occupation of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990 provided a golden opportunity for the United States to implement its military strategy, beginning in the Cold War, first in the Persian Gulf region and then in the Arab Middle East and Central Asia; And it declares its undisputed superpower more than ever. (Haji Yousefi, 2004, p. 625)

Strengthening bilateral military-security arrangements with the Gulf states after Saddam's invasion of Kuwait and increasing the concern of the small Gulf states about the security threats of the regional powers; US efforts to expand its military-security relations with Arab governments and gradually increase its direct military presence in the Persian Gulf; It provided the basis for the permanent deployment of US troops in the Persian Gulf region under the command of the US Central Air Force (CENTCOM) as well as the US Navy's Fifth Fleet. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the US invasion of the Persian Gulf region in order to fight terrorism; A large number of military bases, including naval, air and ground, in the Arab countries of the southern Persian Gulf were provided to US forces. And the Persian Gulf became the permanent location of aircraft carriers and helicopter carriers and a large number of US warships.

#### **US Air Force Central Command (CENTCOM)**

CENTCOM, or "US Central Command," is one of six command headquarters defined within the US Department of Defense. This command was established on January 1, 1983. The choice of the central word in the name of this headquarters had a geographical reason, because it controlled and managed an area that was located between the head-

quarters of Europe, Africa and Indochina. It is interesting to note the timing of the establishment of this headquarters, as it was apparently not unrelated to the outbreak of the Iraq-Iran war. This war was important in several ways; Its impact on Middle East oil flows; Involvement of the former US main ally in the region, Iran, and the former Soviet Union ally, Iraq, and the Israeli element, which has always been particularly sensitive to US policy in the region. CENTCOM is the only active US military headquarters facing a variety of challenges in its area of operations. The US military has not paid as much attention to CENTCOM as it has in the last 20 years, and this shows the sensitivity of CENTCOM to the US military and political machine. Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria were the most important areas of CENTCOM's active operations in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in the United States (Amini, 2019, pp. 2-3). At present, Al-Adeed Air Base in Qatar, as the largest US air base in West Asia, is the headquarters of the US Air Force (Islamic Consultative Assembly Research Center, 2002, p. 2). For the past two decades, CENTCOM has had combat plans, mainly in Iraq and Afghanistan, and support bases in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Pakistan, Jordan, and Central Asia. ([www.CENTCOM.mil](http://www.CENTCOM.mil)).

#### **Command of the US Navy Fifth Fleet**

The port of Salman near Manama is one of the most prominent US naval bases in the Persian Gulf region. Since 1995, it has been the headquarters of the US Navy Fifth Fleet and the headquarters of the Marines Special Forces (Chamankar, 2010, pp. 48-49). This fleet as a powerful naval force to confront and deter threats against US interests and allied forces, is obligated to guard and patrol

the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, parts of the Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Aden, the Bab al-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea. During the Afghanistan-Iraq war, the base played an important role in advancing US military programs by providing equipment to the Persian Gulf forces, logistics and troop transfers.

### **US military strategies of the third millennium in the Persian Gulf region**

Decision-making and policy-making in the United States is not superficial and short-lived; And the decisions and strategic policies of this country are the product of summaries made by the hidden layers of American governance and a large group of theorists, politicians, and political elites. However, the wide range of approaches and tools in these strategies does not lead to comprehensiveness, because there are always events that change the course of affairs and pave the way for the adoption of new strategies in various fields. This content and principles are influenced by two important factors of the political situation in the Persian Gulf, especially in terms of the strength of the US Allied and Enemy Front; And second, American economic and political challenges and future opportunities will emerge in the region. In the foreign policy of the United States of America, most attention has been paid to the Middle East region and the strategic area of the Persian Gulf. Accordingly, developments in the region have always influenced political, economic, and especially military processes in other parts of the world.

US diplomacy in the post-Cold War period in the Persian Gulf, which is a clear example of active and capable foreign policy in the field of international politics, has always sought to influence the behavior of other regional and international ac-

tors; And guide them in the direction of their various goals and interests. Hence, it has always sought to establish arrangements in the Persian Gulf that could serve US interests. Although the pursuit of American interests has always been a constant principle, but according to different international and regional developments in different historical periods, the country has used different methods and arrangements. (Ghasemi and Sarai, 2013, p. 114).

### ***Preventive defense strategy through increasing interventionism***

The collapse of the Soviet Union left US foreign policy in a crisis of meaning in the 1990s and unable to redefine its grand strategy. Until the terrorist attacks of 9/11 redefined America's grand strategy and freed American foreign policy from a crisis of meaning. And in fact, this incident made it possible for the American government to offer a new definition of national interests. In a way that has been acceptable and justifiable to the American people. George W. Bush's first national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, wrote in the 2000 Foreign Affairs Quarterly; In the absence of Soviet power, it is very difficult for the United States to define national interests. However, she says after 9/11: "9/11 is one of the biggest earthquakes that makes things clear". Opposition to terrorism and countering the accumulation of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of irresponsible governments now define the national interests of the United States of America (Zahraei, 2002: p. 80). She also said that this period should not be just a great danger but an extraordinary opportunity (Gohari Moghadam, 2007, p. 121).

American designers believed that a country might not have the conventional military capability to strike against the United

States; But these countries have leaders who want to hurt the United States, and in the future, if these countries reach their military capacities, they will hit the United States. So, when they do not have the military power to carry out their leader's views, they should be attacked so that the United States does not face danger in the future. The forward-looking policy is based on the intentions of the leaders and does not take into account the current military capabilities (Daheshyar, 2009, p. 84). Thus, after the 9/11 attacks, George W. Bush named Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as the "Axis of Evil." Pressure has mounted on these governments, claiming that they are seeking weapons of mass destruction or supporting terrorist groups, and that they are likely to provide these weapons to groups such as al-Qaeda. The Bush administration stressed that although al-Qaeda could not use weapons of mass destruction in the 9/11 attacks against the United States, the nature and method of these attacks greatly increased the likelihood of using such weapons against the United States. Therefore, the US government must take precautionary measures to prevent such attacks. (Khosravi, 2008, p. 63). Thus, with the US military invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the Middle East has witnessed a new trend of US military activity in the Persian Gulf region.

Considering that the essence of the American national interest is to become a hegemonic and undisputed power, and other interests are in this direction; Hence, the country has tried to rely on the international opportunity created after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and its superior strength in the field of hardware and software; While shaping and establishing the desired world system, provide the grounds for the continuation of military superiority and domination in the future. The United

States did its best to shape the structure of the international system based on its interests (Aminian, 2004, pp. 8-9). In other words, 9/11 gave the United States an opportunity to fight terrorism in order to consolidate its hegemony through a policy of "preemptive" attack. In fact, the strategy of "deterrence" used during the Cold War was replaced by the strategy of "increasing interventionism" (Mottaqi, 2010). The adoption of this strategy caused the Persian Gulf region to undergo two major changes. First, the development of the necessary conditions for the military presence of American forces in countries that have close ties with the United States. This included preparing and equipping bases, stations, ports, airports, and strategic centers that would be used in a military operation. Even countries that did not previously have a close relationship with the United States have in some cases assisted the United States and participated in joint maneuvers, such as; Utilization of the country's airspace, mooring of naval fleets in ports, provision of airports, participation in operations, accommodation of forces, refueling, repair and maintenance of weapons, etc. The second development was the unprecedented increase in central military bases, so that only five major US military bases were equipped in the Persian Gulf region. The importance of these bases has been due to the fact that they have become one of the main military operational centers of the American forces in the Persian Gulf region.

#### **Strategy of remote balancing and outsourcing of responsibility for providing security in the Persian Gulf region**

A few years after the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq and the failure to achieve tangible results, with the coming to power of Obama, new strategic changes in US policy in the

Persian Gulf region. And new approaches, called "alternate warfare" and "remote balance", were used to deal with developments from North Africa to the Levant region and the Persian Gulf. In general, by showing and revealing the consequences of the war, Obama somehow tried to avoid direct interference in developments. (Krieg, 2016, p. 105) Hence, the idea was raised that reducing widespread direct military and political intervention in the Persian Gulf region is a vital benefit to US national security. This meant not only reducing the US direct presence in the region, but also stopping support and challenging US allies to take greater responsibility for their own security. (Marc, 2015) Accordingly, Obama's grand military strategy was based on maintaining US leadership in an extraordinarily desirable international order by reducing costs through the use of stronger and more flexible diplomacy. (Brands, 2018, p. 63).

After Trump took office, the US pursued a strategy of remote balancing in the Persian Gulf with greater intensity than during the Obama administration. Take action to withdraw US troops from Syria, reduce troop numbers, especially in the West Asian region, negotiate with the Taliban in Afghanistan, and emphasize the comprehensive role of regional allies in securing their security; shows that Trump, like Obama, emphasized outsourcing and responsibility for regional security. Trump, like Obama, has sought to moderate some of the dual commitments imposed on the United States following the post-Cold War hegemonic strategy by pursuing a remote balancing strategy (Douthat, 2018). Donald Trump has repeatedly stated in his speeches: The United States' participation in any kind of war

to support its allies is subject to its financing by its regional allies and local partners (Farokhi and Attar, 2017, P. 152). The US National Security Strategy (2017) explicitly mentions US allies and partners as its great power, which directly enhances US political, economic, military, intelligence, and other capabilities. According to the document, a favorable and lasting balance of power will require strong commitment and close cooperation with allies and partners. (U.S. NSS, 2017, pp. 45-49).

The interim document of the US National Security Guide 2021 during Biden's presidency also emphasizes that the United States will revitalize and modernize its alliances and partnerships around the world. For decades, allies have stood with the United States in the face of common threats and enemies, and have worked hand in hand to advance common interests and values. They are a source of great power and a unique asset to the United States that, with the necessary responsibilities, help maintain the national security and well-being of the American people. The document also acknowledges that no country alone can effectively counter threats without ignoring the United States (U.S. NSS, 2021, p. 10). The Middle East section of the document also states: "In our view, the use of military force is not the solution to regional problems. We are working responsibly to end the longest US war in Afghanistan (U.S. NSS, 2021).

### **The impact of US military strategies in the Persian Gulf on Iran's national security**

A look at the map of energy resources shows that Iran has a key and pivotal role in the regions that are called the base of geostrategic territories. Iran is located in the center of a region where the United States of America has made control of this region a strategic

axis in its policies (Rahimpour, 2002, pp. 58-59). The United States has a global interest and is working hard to expand it to all parts of the world. Of course, this leads to clashes with those major powers that see the United States as an uninvited guest and believe that they themselves should play a major role in the development of their regions. Thus, there has always been a natural ground for competition between the United States and the major regional powers, because the middle powers in each region are not interested in being dominated by the great regional powers; And hence, they try to limit the ability of those powers to shape developments in the region. These competitive relationships have paved the way for cooperation between the United States and regional powers. A situation that we are also witnessing in the Persian Gulf. (Ghasemi and Sarai, 2013, p. 122)

The Islamic Revolution in Iran made the Islamic Republic of Iran the main player in the region opposed to the presence and influence of the United States in the Persian Gulf. Considering the pursuit of a strategy based on the consolidation of hegemony by the United States of America on the one hand and the adoption of anti-hegemonic policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the other hand in the Persian Gulf region; Therefore, the goals, interests and strategies of these two countries have been in conflict with each other in most areas and issues. Hence, the United States has always sought to prevent Iran from emerging as an independent regional power and opposed to US presence and influence in the Persian Gulf region; And Iran has always sought to challenge the United States as a trans-regional interventionist power in the Persian Gulf region.

The biggest challenge to achieving Iran's regional status in the Persian Gulf region is the strong military presence of the US mili-

tary in the Persian Gulf region and, most importantly, the conclusion of numerous security agreements with the Arab countries in the region. This has always been considered a serious threat to the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Because the increase of the US military presence in the floating zone of the region or in the territorial zone of the Arab countries in the region, has led to full monitoring of movements in Iran's regions, especially in the military field, as well as restrictions on regional diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. On the other hand, the sale of large quantities of destructive and advanced military weapons to the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf region under the pretext of Iran phobia and the use of these weapons in possible military conflicts between these countries and Iran; Is a serious threat to the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The US strategy to use the capacity of its allies in the Persian Gulf region will also turn the region's crises into an arena of mediation between regional powers. In this regard, countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which have failed to achieve their goals and positions in the valley of these crises, especially in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, are trying to continue the crisis in various ways. In this way, on the one hand, these countries will try to spread the crisis to the countries that are somehow connected with the axis of resistance, to provide the ground for the weakening of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the entry of new regional actors against the axis of resistance; On the other hand, by fanning the flames of ethnic and sectarian crises in the valley of the Axis countries of resistance, they should keep the centers of the crisis alive. This issue will mean spending more material and spiritual costs

for the Islamic Republic of Iran in the long run (Abbasi and Taheri, 2019, p. 30).

The Islamic Republic of Iran in its security approach in this region, has always considered the following policies. Partnership and cooperation with the countries of the region; Adopting a policy independent of the transnational and trans-regional powers of East and West; Changing the balance of power in the region; Establish sustainable security arrangements with the agreement of the countries of the region and the peaceful settlement of disputes through de-escalation policies. The participation of the countries of the region in eliminating the challenges and tensions of the region can reduce the current distrust among the countries of the region and the lack of military presence of supra-regional powers to resolve the conflicts in the region, resulting in a stable security system in the region. This requires long-term planning so that security conflicts can take place at the national, transnational, regional and trans regional levels, based on a security model based on cooperation and participation.

### **Conclusion**

An examination of US military strategies in the first two decades of the third millennium AD is a good testament to the United States' willingness to change its approach to the Persian Gulf region. The events of September 11, 2001, redefined the foreign policy and macro-strategy of the United States of America, which had been in a crisis of meaning in the last decade of the twentieth century due to the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the aftermath of this incident, the national interests of the United States were redefined from the perspective of the United States, such as Iran and Iraq, in the two rebellious and evil spheres, such as Iran and Iraq. Thus,

after the US military invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the Middle East has witnessed a new trend of US military activity in the Persian Gulf region. During this period, the Bush administration sought to map the world's expansionist geography in favor of the United States, relying on military might and precautionary measures to consolidate hegemony. Given that the core of American national interests is to become a hegemonic and undisputed power, and other interests of this country should be in this direction. Hence, this country has always tried to rely on the opportunity that came after the terrorist attacks of September 11 and to use its superior military power; By substituting a new strategy of increasing interventionism instead of a deterrent strategy left over from the Cold War, its formation and modernization will pave the way for its continuation and military domination in the Persian Gulf region.

But during the Barack Obama era, there were serious changes in the country's military strategy towards the Persian Gulf region and its surrounding areas, which is referred to as a change in the historical strategy of the United States. A strategy that was also pursued in the post-Obama administrations. The results show that the United States is no longer willing to have a physical presence and a direct military role in the developments in the Persian Gulf region and its surrounding areas and to spend exorbitant costs in the region; And prefers to guide and manage the developments in the Persian Gulf region in order to maximize its vital interests by pursuing coalition-building policies and delegating responsibilities to regional allies. But that will never mean abandoning America as the world's only superpower and retreating to America's fortress. By

adopting its military strategies in the Persian Gulf region, the United States has pursued several major goals in this region, including the following. Access to the region's oil and gas energy resources and continue its cheap injection into Western world markets, especially US industries; Supporting US security allies in the Persian Gulf against the regional power of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Continuing to preserve the region as a consumer market for American goods and services; Ensuring the desired regional security of the United States by using the capacity of regional allies and, most importantly, ensuring and ensuring Israel's security in the region.

Pursuing the US military strategies in the Persian Gulf region and increasing its presence and influence in the region will have and will have irreparable consequences for the interests and national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The military presence of this country in the region, by upsetting the balance of power to the detriment of Iran, will cause tensions and even a military confrontation between Iran and the United States. As in the past, there have been numerous military tensions between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States military; For example, the assassination of the commander of Iran's Quds Force by the United States and the downing of the US RQ-4 drone by Iran were among the crises that led to tensions in relations between the two countries in the Persian Gulf region. Tensions in the relations between the two countries have strengthened the scope of proxy wars and, in the end, the crisis has spread to other countries in the region and has also had a negative impact on the relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the countries of the Persian Gulf region.

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