

## Threats and Opportunities Facing the Foreign Policy of Ebrahim Raisi's Government from the Perspective of "Statement of the Second Step of the Revolution" Using the SWOT Model

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### Abstract

The "Statement of the Second Step of the Revolution" that Ayatollah Khamenei, as the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, published in 2018 is a document that defines the future strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran; And governments in the Islamic Republic must adjust their policies accordingly, foreign policy is no exception to this rule. Ebrahim Raisi's government has tried to adjust its "justice-oriented idealist" foreign policy according to the statement of the second step. One of the characteristics of this "statement" is that it can be found references to internal and external opportunities and threats facing the Islamic system, and by analyzing that text, certain things can be identified. By analyzing the "second step statement" based on the SOWT model, it is possible to determine the opportunities, threats, weaknesses, and strengths, and determine the appropriate strategies for the foreign policy of Ebrahim Raisi's government. Based on the SOWT analytical model, four strategies in the SOWT model, namely SO strategy, ST strategy, WO strategy and WT strategy, are the basis of the analysis. As a result, based on the statement of the second step of the Islamic Revolution, four strategies can be designed for the government of Ebrahim Raisi in the period after the 40th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution. First, the Islamic Revolution's "advanced" strategy focusing on internal forces and external opportunities. Second: the "defense" strategy of the Islamic Revolution, looking at internal forces and external threats. Third, the "competitive" strategy of the Islamic Revolution focusing on external opportunities and internal weaknesses. And fourth, the "resistance" strategy of the Islamic Revolution, looking at internal weaknesses and external threats.

**Key words:** statement of the second step of the revolution, Ebrahim Raisi government, SWOT, foreign policy, opportunity, threat

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## Introduction

All foreign policy discourses of governments in the Islamic Republic of Iran are based on principles. In this connection, the following are the principles of foreign policy discourses of the Islamic Republic: complete rejection of colonialism; preventing the intrusion of foreigners; fraternal commitment to all Muslims in the world; Unhesitatingly supporting the oppressed of the world; defending the rights of all Muslims; lack of commitment to the dominant powers; maintaining comprehensive independence; non-interference in the internal affairs of nations; mutual peaceful relations with non-belligerent states; Supporting the righteous struggles of the oppressed against the oppressors around the world. During the period of the Islamic Republic of Iran, each government has adjusted its foreign policy according to these principles and implemented it in different ways. On the other hand, in 2018, the leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran issued a statement entitled "Statement of the Second Step of the Revolution" to outline the current situation and the future path of the Islamic Republic of Iran. According to the ideas and views of Ayatollah Khamenei, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the statement of the second step of the revolution as a powerful tool of the political system is like a fight that all the world's politicians are engaged in. Part of this fight is dedicated to diplomacy. In the field of diplomacy, one should not trust the enemy and should proceed based on principles. The 13th government in the Islamic Republic, headed by Ebrahim Raisi, has also tried to adjust the foreign policy discourse of his government in accordance with these principles and the expression of the second step of the revolution. Therefore, the

statement of the second step of the revolution can be considered as an important document, which can be used to determine the goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the future. One of the characteristics of this statement is that it can be found references to internal and external opportunities and threats facing the Islamic system, and by analyzing that text, certain things can be identified. As a result, in this research, we try to determine the opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses of the foreign policy of the 13th government by analyzing the "statement of the second step of the revolution" using the SOWT method.

## Statement of the second step of the revolution

On the threshold of the 40th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, February/11/2019, the leader of the revolution, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, issued a statement addressed to the people of Iran, especially the youth, and outlined the future path of the revolution. This statement is known as "Statement of the Second Step of the Revolution". The statement of the second step of the revolution is a written and relatively detailed statement that, in a broad view and in terms of content, this statement can be seen as containing three parts and answering three key questions. 1) How and where did we start the revolution? 2) What is the path taken and where have we reached now? 3) What is the roadmap for the future and where should we go? (Kalantari, 2020, p. 37). Therefore, the leader of the revolution has defined the evolution process of the revolution in 5 stages. (1) Victory of the Islamic Revolution. (2) Establishment of the Islamic system.

(3) Transition to the Islamic State. (4) Islamic Society. (5) Modern and international Islamic civilization. The first forty years of the Islamic revolution, according to the statements of the leader of the revolution, will be the first step and the next forty years will be the second step of the revolution. This statement in the form of "text" consists of four main parts; 1) A description of the situation in Iran and the world before the revolution. 2) Explaining Iran's capabilities and the great achievements of the Islamic Revolution. 3) Draw a promising future perspective. 4) Seven recommendations in different fields (2nd step statement, 2018).

#### **Ebrahim Raisi government's foreign policy discourse: justice-oriented idealism**

Ebrahim Raisi, focusing on the Achilles heel of Rouhani's government - the priority of foreign policy over domestic policy - announced the priority of his government to focus on domestic policy and look from the inside out. While criticizing Rouhani's government's foreign policy and his excessive trust in the West, especially the United States of America, he emphasized important issues at different levels in explaining the foreign policy of the 13th government. A leader at the micro (national) level emphasized the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear efforts and emphasized the lifting of sanctions and support for related diplomatic projects. At the middle (regional) level, while emphasizing the solution of regional crises through real intra-regional dialogues and based on securing the rights of the nations, they have emphasized the negation of foreign interference in the region and the policy of good neighborliness. At the macro level (international system), the foreign policy of the

13th government, while pursuing peace and justice in the field of international relations, is based on the use of the country's strength in order to confront the domineering and oppressive countries (Rezaei, 2021, p. 30).

Therefore, justice is one of the main elements of Ebrahim Raisi's foreign policy discourse. In his speech at the United Nations General Assembly in 2021 and in his speech in 2022, he has used the words "justice" and "fair" many times. He introduces justice as one of the messages of the "great nation of Iran", one of the "basic principles for contemporary human life" and "the common aspect of all Abrahamic religions". According to Raisi, justice is the basic criterion for building a better world. All human ideals are ultimately measured by justice. He introduces the formation of "just international order and system" as one of the goals of the Islamic Republic in the "second step of the Islamic Revolution". In Raisi's opinion, "the Islamic Republic of Iran deeply believes in global justice and considers it an undeniable necessity to turn this lofty ideal into a comprehensive discourse in the world arena" (Masoudi, 2022, p. 191).

#### **SWOT analysis template**

The word SWOT is made by combining the first letters of four words (Strengths), (Weaknesses), (Opportunities) and (Threats). SWAT, as the name suggests, helps us to identify our strengths and weaknesses, identify opportunities in front of us, and manage potential threats in an effective manner. It was around the 60s or 70s when a university professor named Albert Humphrey was in charge of a research project at Stanford University. In order to evaluate their strategic plans and find out the reason for their failure, this professor

presented a technique called the SOFT technique. Just like the SWOT method, in the SOFT method, the first letters of four words are arranged together:

- The Letter S instead of the word Satisfactory for parts of the work that are currently satisfactory.
- The letter (O) instead of the word Opportunities for opportunities that can be used for advancement in the future.
- The letter (F) instead of the word Faults to identify the faults in the work.
- The letter (T) instead of the word Threats to indicate the threats that delay the progress and success of the work.

The question may come up, how did the (SOFT) method become (SWOT)? In 1964, a seminar called (Long-Term Planning) was held in Zurich (Switzerland). In this seminar, one of the speakers introduced the SWOT model for the first time and told the audience that this model is an adaptation of Mr. Albert Humphrey's SOFT model. According to the SWOT model:

- The letter (S) indicates Strengths.
- The letter (W) indicates Weakness.
- The letter (O) indicates Opportunity.
- The letter (T) indicates Threat. (Fasihi, 2006, pp. 12-25)

	Constructive	Destructive
Internal factors	Strengths	Weakness
External factors	Opportunities	Threats

(SWOT analysis table)

### Types of strategies in SWAT model

There are four strategies in the SWAT model, which are:

First, the SO strategy is aggressive. The second is the ST strategy, which is a diversification strategy. The third is the WO strategy, which is a review strategy. The fourth strategy is WT, which is a defensive strategy. (Fasihi, 2015, p. 32)

### Data analysis

This part of the research is responsible for examining the statement of the second step of the revolution, emphasizing the data and findings of the research. And based on the SOWT model, it identifies opportunities, threats, weaknesses, and strengths, and identifies suitable strategies for the foreign policy of Ibrahim Raisi's government with the SOWT model. According to SOWT analytical model, four strategies in model B, namely SO strategy, ST strategy, WO strategy and WT

strategy will also be the basis of analysis. The data and findings of this part of the research emphasize that:

A) Among the foreign policy opportunities ahead according to the second statement of the Islamic Revolution, the following can be mentioned. Positioning without challenges and stabilizing the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the world system through victory over the domination system and relying on domestic ability while maintaining foreign relations, turning Iran into a developing country, changing the balance of power in the West Asian region.

b) Among the threats facing the foreign policy according to the second statement of the Islamic Revolution, the following can be mentioned. The structure of the international system of domination, the indifference and neglect of the revolutionary process, the growing hostility of the domination system through the imposition of sanctions and the maximum pressure campaign from the West, and the increasing hostility of the Hebrew-Arab groups through the establishment of a balance of threats.

c) Among the strengths of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, according to the statement of the second step of the revolution, the following can be mentioned. insubordination to the arrogant system; preventing foreign powers from dominating the country; The formation of the three-polar and dual international system (Islam and arrogance); Strategic cooperation between Iran and Russia and the new alliance; Reliance on propellants, the final victory of the resistance axis; forming a powerful pole of the Islamic world; Achieving the status of a developed country and a

great regional power; pursuing a revolutionary strategy based on the theory of a revolutionary state; pursuing an optimistic strategy and hope for the future; resistance to negate domination and domination; Maintaining independence, distrusting domineering powers and authority.

d) Among the weaknesses of the diplomacy and foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, according to the statement of the second step of the revolution, the following can be mentioned. Lack of attention in the employment of political elites and experts in the field of foreign policy and lack of independence in decision-making and the existence of parallel work in regulating and advancing inherent responsibilities and missions.

#### **The opportunities facing Ebrahim Raisi's government from the point of view of the statement of the second step of the revolution**

According to the second declaration of the Islamic Revolution, the following are the opportunities ahead for foreign policy. Victory over the system of domination and reliance on domestic ability while maintaining foreign relations, turning Iran into a developing country, the ability to change the balance of power in the West Asian region, the signs of the decline of the American superpower, the signs of the collapse of the Zionist regime.

#### **Consolidation of the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the world system through victory over the domination system**

The negation of domination and acceptance of domination has been repeatedly reflected in the words of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution. The leadership believes that

the Islamic revolution and the people of Iran were able to end the duality of East and West by resisting. Even today, efforts should be made to break the false dichotomy created by East and West. They believe that the people of Iran have the ability to stand up to the oppressors of the world and resist their domination. He believes that the slogans of resistance and standing will never become old and as long as there is a system of domination, there will be resistance. Ayatollah Khamenei, the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, considers one of the goals of the Islamic Republic to be non-tyrannical and non-oppressed. In the second and third principles of the constitution, the expressions (negation of any form of domination) and (negation of the system of domination and colonialism) show resistance against the system of domination. From Ayatollah Khamenei's point of view, it is the epitome of the domination system of America. According to Ayatollah Khamenei's system of thought, as long as the dominance of America and its allies exists in the world, there will be resistance against their domination. Therefore, the foreign policy apparatus should pay attention to the dominance of these countries and try to resist their actions (Khamenei, 2019, p. 1).

#### **Relying on internal capability while maintaining external relations**

The theme of trusting and relying on domestic ability while maintaining foreign relations is another theme that has been repeated many times and with high frequency in the statement of the second step of the revolution. In this statement, the leader of the revolution tried to restore the spirit of self-belief in the sense that we can and will be able to. In his opinion, relying on domestic power and using the country's capacities to move the country's

economy, brings honor to the country. In the second step of the revolution, the foreign policy apparatus of the Islamic Republic should define the foreign relations in line with trust and reliance on internal capabilities. These relations should be in a way that increases the capacity of the country's domestic production. Iran's foreign apparatus should deal with its external action from the position of strength and power, with the confidence of having internal capacities and capabilities. (Khamenei, 2019, p. 1)

#### **Turning Iran into a developing country**

With the consolidation of the revolution and the systematization and independence of Islamic Iran from the international domination system, the country turned from an underdeveloped state to a developing country. Statistics and figures in the field of research and development, information and communication technology and investment, which is the foundation of development and progress, show the country's scientific movement to achieve the first ranks of developing countries and approach the level of developed countries in advanced technologies. (Khamenei, 2021, p. 1). He also says about the future path, an important part of which is related to the way of foreign relations; "We have started the movement now and we are moving forward with speed, but this speed must continue with high intensity for years to make up for the backwardness" (Khamenei, 2021, p. 1).

#### **The ability to change the balance of power in the West Asian region**

The transformation in the regional power equation and the movement towards a new regional order in the turbulent region of West Asia for the benefit of the Muslim nations of



the region is one of the decisive consequences of the process of the last forty years after the Islamic Revolution. The signs of this change in the balance of power can be seen in the expansion of Iran's power in the region as a major regional actor, the Islamic awakening and the failure of American policies and the formation of the axis of resistance in the region. In such a way that it is not possible to determine the fate of the region without the presence of Iran. Field facts show that the strategic depth of Iran's regional power has increased (Khamenei, 2021, p. 2). The result of the past process of the revolution and its achievements in foreign policy, although it was associated with bearing costs and limitations. But not only at the national level, it has led to maintaining the country's independence and preventing foreign powers from dominating the country, but it has also increased the country's power level both internally and at the regional and global levels. In the second step of the revolution, trying to institutionalize the new balance of power, maintaining the country's independence and achieving the status of a developed country is considered one of the most important goals of foreign policy (Sotoudeh, 2021, p. 181).

### **Signs of the decline of America's super-power**

The policies of American unilateralism and the tendency to over-concentrate power on the one hand and the development of the power of Russia, China and India show a vision of the future structure of the world system that America will not be in the position of a super-power (Rezaei Mir Quaid, 2021, p. 29). Now, forty years after the revolution, one of the two foci of hostility has been destroyed and the other is struggling with problems that indicate

its imminent death. And the Islamic revolution keeps going forward by maintaining and adhering to its slogans (Khamenei, 2021, p. 3).

### **Signs of the collapse of the Zionist Regime**

Another event that has far-reaching effects and consequences for the region and the Islamic world is related to the collapse of the power of the Zionist regime. By strengthening the jihadist spirit of Palestinian fighters, it shows that not only has this regime been unable to maintain its position of military power and security over the past two decades; Rather, it is also facing increasing security threats in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (Rezaei Mir Quaid, 2021, p. 45). In this regard, the Supreme Leader says that "the evil Zionist regime is clearly weaker today than in the past. A few years before this, the Zionist regime was defeated by the Lebanese Hezbollah. He was able to resist for 33 days and then failed. Two years later, he was able to resist the Palestinians for 22 days and was defeated. A few years later, he was able to resist the oppressed people of Gaza for 8 days and was defeated, and in recent years, he was able to resist for 2 days and was defeated. This is the weakness of the Zionist regime. I am very optimistic about the future of Palestine and I believe that Israel is moving down a steep slope of decline and decline, and God willing, its destruction will be certain" (Khamenei, 2021, p. 4).

### **Opportunities ahead for foreign policy discourse of the 13th government based on SOWT strategies**

The opportunities arising from the foreign policy discourse of revolutionary valueism of the 13th government are a function of hybrid strategies in the SOWT model. In this connection,

the victory over the domination system and also relying on internal ability while maintaining foreign relations is a function of the SO strategy, which means power and opportunity. The SO strategy is an aggressive strategy that challenges the dominance system and displays the capacities and capabilities for a dynamic external relationship. In this connection, the transformation of Iran into a developing country and the ability to change the balance of power in the West Asian region is a function of the WO strategy. This strategy is based on weaknesses and opportunities. In fact, turning Iran into a developing country is a kind of opportunity, but the ability to balance in West Asia is a function of weaknesses and is mostly defensive. Opportunities such as the signs of the decline of the American superpower as well as the signs of the collapse of the Zionist regime are a function of the ST strategy, which is a diverse strategy that can change the situation towards the SO strategy, which is an aggressive strategy for foreign policy.

#### **Threats facing the foreign policy of Ebrahim Raisi government according to the statement of the second step of the revolution**

According to discourse cycles, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has faced many obstacles and challenges that can be interpreted as threats. The foreign policy discourse of the 13th government is no exception to this rule, and this discourse also has obstacles and threats, some of which are related to the operational environment of foreign policy or the international system, and some of which are caused by domestic policy issues and trends. In this connection, one of the major threats facing the foreign policy discourse of the 13th government, according to the second

statement of the Islamic Revolution, are the following. The structure of the international system of domination; Inattention and neglect of the revolutionary current; The increasing hostility of the ruling system through sanctions and the campaign of maximum pressure from the West; and the increasing hostility of the Hebrew-Arabic groups to the establishment of the threat balance.

#### **The threats facing the foreign policy of the 13th government with an emphasis on the structure of the international system of domination**

In the structure of the bipolar international system led by the United States and the Soviet Union, the governments had to obey the power blocs and there was no possibility of a third actor. Iran's Islamic revolution took place in the structure of the bipolar international system and faced various structural limitations, of which the imposed war and US sanctions against Iran can be considered a part of it (Khamenei, 2021, p. 5). What is certain is that in the future process of the revolution, the structural obstacles of the world domination system against Iran's foreign policy will continue, and knowing these obstacles and strategies to face them is vital in the second step of the revolution.

#### **The increasing hostility of the ruling system through the imposition of sanctions and the campaign of maximum pressure from the West**

Dealing with Iran has been the main focus of the strategic thinking of the United States of America. Among the presidents of the United States, Donald Trump started to establish the sanctions system against Iran more than others. Trump believed that other American



presidents did not have the necessary self-confidence to confront Iran, and for this reason, the ground has been created for the promotion of the regional power of the Islamic Republic (Mottaghi, 2019, p. 114). The publication of the US government's national security document in December 2017 and the publication of Mike Pompeo's (diplomatic roadmap) with the Islamic Republic of Iran showed that the strategic group of the US government has put the mechanisms to deal with Iran on the agenda. It is natural that the attitude of each of America's strategic agents towards Iran will be effective in the mechanisms of America's political and strategic action. Because the integration of conservative agents in the American government creates more strategic limitations for the structural and regional power of the Islamic Republic in West Asia. This process will inevitably be among the challenging factors for regional security (Mottaghi, 2019, p. 115).

Economic sanctions are considered as the main strategic tool of the United States against the Islamic Republic. U.S. sanctions in the context of government behavior patterns are parallel to established mechanisms set by Congress. In this connection, we can refer to the (CIDA) and (KATSA) sanctions. The sanctions imposed against Iran can be seen as a part of economic and social policies that create broad strategic restrictions for Iran's economy. Such patterns have also been set in response to Russia's regional policies. The aforementioned sanctions are important because they will create the most economic and strategic restrictions against the Islamic Republic of Iran (Mottaghi, 2019, p. 124). The economic sanctions of the American Congress have been organized in order to deal with the aggressive actions of regional countries and great powers. Sanction policy means that the

political structure of the United States tries to set its strategic limits in the form of fighting bills and destabilizing actions. Based on the public policies of the United States, we can see signs that economic sanctions will create the most security problems for the Islamic Republic of Iran (Moghadam, 1997, p. 93). In fact, American political and strategic authorities have prepared the economic sanctions bill with the aim of applying comprehensive restrictions. In this process, the Foreign Relations Committee of the US Senate led by (Bob Krueger) prepared the plan and put it in the process of becoming law. Each of the aforementioned laws can be seen as a part of the mechanisms that provide the infrastructure to confront the Islamic Republic of Iran (Mahmoudi, 2019, p. 57).

Although so far, a significant part of the US sanctions has been against countries that have the ability to produce weapons of mass destruction; But what happened in CIDA and KATSA shows that the United States is trying to put the Islamic Republic of Iran in the scope of sanctions related to conventional weapons. Arms embargo has been another part of American public policies to limit the power of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In Section 7 of the Iran Economic and Strategic Sanctions Bill, the reduction and prohibition of arms cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran has been emphasized. In this connection, the main trends of America's relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran should be explained and interpreted based on security policies (Mossalanejad, 2016, p. 36). Sanction trends indicate the fact that the US government's security policy will be aimed at intensifying economic and strategic sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Sanctioning of the central bank and the head of the central bank

of Iran shows that the ground has been prepared for (structural sanctions). The available evidence indicates the fact that many Iranian individuals and institutions that were previously on the SDN sanctions list will now be reinstated (Rose, 2017, p. 12). The main goal of US sanctions policies against the Islamic Republic of Iran can be analyzed in the form of expanding restrictions. The reality of the new sanctions is that they are viral in nature. The virus of sanctions means that any policy of restricting Iran's economic institutions creates new political and security problems. In such a process, limitations are of an organized nature. That is, if the central bank or national bank or any other person or institution cooperates with the IRGC and the US Department of State identifies this cooperation, it will be included in the SDN sanctions list by the US Treasury Department (Rose, 2017, p. 53).

Some other actions of America to exert maximum pressure on the Islamic Republic can be briefly categorized as follows:

A) Attempting to normalize relations between Arab countries and Israel through the initiative (Deal of the Century) as well as the Shiite crescent threat plan and highlighting the Islamic Republic as a common enemy of Arabs and Israel.

b) Trying to extend the arms embargo of the Islamic Republic and activate the trigger mechanism of Resolution 2231 to restore the sanctions resolutions of the United Nations.

c) Trying to prevent the passage of oil and gas pipelines from Iran to India, Turkey and Europe (Dahesh var, 2020, p. 25).

The growing hostility of the Hebrew-Arabic groups through establishing a balance of threats

Balance and tracking are two approaches that governments use in situations of threat. Balancing against threatening power and following up with threatening power. Of course, balancing strategy is much more common than tracking. Follow-up is done only in situations where a government is not able to balance against the threatening power due to vulnerability or lack of power and is forced to adopt a follow-up strategy. This theory was presented by Stephen Walt, the theorist of defensive neorealism. According to Walt's opinion, countries do not seek to balance every power, but rather they seek to balance against a country whose increasing power is considered a threat (Kaufman & et al, 2007, p. 15). In modifying the theory of the balance of power, Walt described four components as threatening factors:

A) general capabilities (population, economic power, military) This index is the common feature of the balance of power and the balance of threats;

b) Geographic proximity (threat proximity) There is a direct relationship between threat perception and geographic proximity.

c) Offensive capabilities: The higher the offensive capabilities of a country, the greater the security concerns of that country.

d) Aggressive intentions: Governments with aggressive intentions involve more threats compared to governments that maintain the status quo (Walt, 1986, p. 117).

Therefore, governments try to increase their relative security against the threatening power. Therefore, governments only want to increase security and only try to expand their power when they feel insecure (Ahmadipour, 2019, p. 95).

The balance of the threat of the Hebrew-Arab groups, instead of the defined enmity with Israel, has been prepared to counter the political influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the West Asian region. Because Iran had taken control of a part of the region in terms of its geopolitical position in the West Asian region, as well as its missile doctrine and regional behavior in the four key capitals of West Asia, Damascus, Baghdad, Beirut, and Sana'a, and launching proxy wars against Riyadh and its allies. And Iran had started devastating conflicts in Iraq, Syria and Yemen and made Lebanon its main strategic base in the region. In other words, the sides and sides of the strategy of balancing the threat of Hebrew-Arab complexes in the turbulent Western region of West Asia is, first of all, confronting Iran, which was still at the top of the failed foreign policy program of Trump and the United States of America. Yet there are broader concerns for both Israel and the Persian Gulf sultanates, though Iran is the biggest instigator of these new alliances. In fact, Iran also knows that this agreement endangers its position in the Middle East region, a position that has been associated with the leverage of traditional anti-Israel sentiments. The same anger can be seen in the reaction of Lebanon's Hezbollah, where it refers to the agreement to normalize relations with Israel as a betrayal of Jerusalem (Barzegar, 2019, p. 69).

### **Inattention and neglect of the revolutionary current**

Another level of limitations and obstacles of Iran's foreign policy in the path of realizing the goals of the revolution originates from the domestic environment and the legacy of backwardness. But among them, the non-adherence of some agents of the Islamic system to the values and slogans of the revolution and the lack of a revolutionary approach in the process of the past forty years are important (Khamenei, 2021, p. 4). In the second step of the revolution, in order to achieve the goals of foreign policy, it is necessary to recognize international opportunities and limitations; The strengths of foreign policy attitudes and positions should be strengthened and the consensus among agents should be increased for revolutionary action and overcoming obstacles.

### **Threats facing the 13th government's foreign policy based on SOWT strategies**

As it was said, among the threats facing the foreign policy according to the second declaration of the Islamic Revolution, the following can be mentioned. The structure of the international system of domination, indifference and neglect of the revolutionary process, the growing hostility of the domination system through the imposition of sanctions and the maximum pressure campaign from the West, and the increasing hostility of the Hebrew-Arab groups through the establishment of the balance of threats. The Republic's best strategy against these threats is the WT strategy, which is a defensive strategy. Defensive strategy is focused on weakness on the one hand and threats on the other hand. To resolve such a threat, a strategy change is required, that is, the WT strategy should be transformed into an SO strategy, which is an offensive strategy,

considering the weakness and threat of Washington and the Hebrew-Arab complexes.

### **Analysis of research data based on strengths in the foreign policy of the 13th government in line with the statement of the second step of the revolution**

According to the data and findings of the research, among the strengths of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, according to the statement of the second step of the revolution, the following can be mentioned. in-subordination to the arrogant system; preventing foreign powers from dominating the country; The formation of the three-polar and dual international system (Islam and arrogance); The strategic cooperation between Iran and Russia and the new alliance, reliance on propellants; The final victory of the resistance axis; forming a powerful pole of the Islamic world, achieving the position of a developed country and a great regional power; pursuing a revolutionary strategy based on the theory of a revolutionary state; pursuing an optimistic strategy and hope for the future; resistance to negate domination and domination; maintaining independence; Distrust of domineering and powerful powers (Sotoudeh, 2021, p. 189).

### **Unyielding against the arrogant system**

One of the characteristics of the past process of the Iranian revolution, which must continue in the future, is aimed at confronting the international domination system. In the domination system, there are two categories of dominating and dominating countries. In its foreign policy, based on the principles of non-dominance and acceptance of domination, Islamic Iran has not only opposed the exercise of domination and intervention in other countries, but

has also not surrendered to the domination of great powers. In this field, Iran has suffered a lot of costs since the beginning of the revolution in the form of sanctions from the United States, Europe and the United Nations. Sanctions continue in the post-JCPOA period as well (Khamenei, 2021, p. 6). On the other hand, in the past process, in no case has Islamic Iran initiated military action and has always defended itself and the ideals of the revolution against arrogant powers (Khamenei, 2021, p. 7).

### **Preventing foreign powers from dominating the country**

With the victory of the revolution, America's plans and conspiracies intensified to overthrow the Islamic system and restore its domination over Iran. The Nojeh coup, the military attack on Tabas and the eight-year war imposed by Saddam were among them. At this time, with the leadership of the Imam and the sacrifice of the people of Iran, the territorial integrity of the country was preserved and the establishment and foundation of religious democracy was formed. In the period after the war, the development and progress of the country continued under the guidance of the leader of the revolution, and Iran's foreign policy was able to preserve the independence and national honor of the country against the domineering powers. He says about the consequences of the revolution process and standing against the arrogant powers that have been achieved with the spirit of jihad and revolution; The product of forty years of effort is now before our eyes. independent country and nation; free; powerful with honor religious; advanced in science; Accumulated of precious experiences; confident and hopeful; having a fundamental influence in the region and

having a strong logic in global issues; Record holder in the acceleration of scientific progress; The record holder in reaching the top ranks in important knowledge and technologies such as nuclear, stem cells, nano, aerospace, and the like; Excellence in expanding social services; The leader in motivating the spirit of jihad among the youth; The leader in the efficient young crowd and many other honorable features; All of which are the product of the revolution and the result of revolutionary and jihadist orientations (Khamenei, 2021, p. 8).

### **The formation of the three-polar and dual international system (Islam and arrogance)**

With the strengthening of the revolution and the formation of the country's political system, the model of the third actor appeared in Iran's foreign policy and was able to continue its existence without depending on the poles of power. Islamic Iran gradually turned from a dependent and backward country into an independent and developing country and relied on the material and spiritual resources of its power. What is certain is that in order to become a new pole in the structure of the international system, many fields and conditions are necessary, which are not easy to achieve (Khamenei, 2021, p. 9).

### **Strategic cooperation between Iran and Russia and the new alliance**

Another event that represents the formation of a new trans-regional and global name is related to the formation of a new alliance of Iran, Russia, China and India. The relations between Iran and Russia have entered a new phase following the cooperation between the two countries to fight terrorism and contain ISIS, and with the arrival of Iran's adviser to

Syria and Putin's support for Bashar al-Assad, it has taken on strategic dimensions. These strategic relations with the joint exercises of Iran, Russia and China in the waters of the Oman Sea and the Indian Ocean in December 2019 showed the determination of the three countries in forming a new alliance and institutionalizing it in the structure of the future international system. "The good experience of cooperation in Syria showed that common goals can be achieved" (Khamenei, 2021, p. 10). Ayatollah Khamenei says regarding the emergence of new global powers; The new powers that emerged in Asia and the East, such as the power of China and India, are the proof that the previous world order can no longer be continued if the Westerners take over the management of the world. A new situation is being formed, which of course has not been formed yet (Khamenei, 2021, p. 12).

### **The final victory of the axis of resistance**

The formation of the axis of resistance in the current process and playing its key role in the new regional name of West Asia is one of the future events. This victory is based on the role of intra-regional forces and the development of horizontal interactions instead of vertical relations in order to secure the interests of the Islamic society. In the future horizon, the one-sided relations of the big extra-regional powers with the countries of the region will be removed and a new name will be formed by independent nations and governments (Khamenei, 2021, p. 12). Regarding the future path, he says: "Resistance is not possible except in the shadow of faith in God, reliance on God, and trust in God's promise." Almighty God has promised, He has said with emphasis: (And God will help those who help him) He has promised victory with emphasis; This promise

will come true. The nation of Iran has proven its faith in God's promise; is standing and this version is the movement of Muslims and the progress of Muslims in the Islamic world" (Khamenei, 2021, p. 12).

### **Distrust of the ruling powers**

Ayatollah Khamenei has always stated in his statements that foreign policy should be based on mistrust of hegemonic powers, especially European and American governments. Distrust of the promises of the domineering powers has been one of their most important emphases in the field of foreign policy. In this regard, they have emphasized more on America and consider any negotiations with this country useless. Ayatollah Khamenei's special emphasis on America and some European countries shows that the foreign policy apparatus of the Islamic Republic should not trust America and engage in dialogue with it in the second step of the revolution. Because the dialogue and relationship with it is harmful, the Zionist regime should be placed in the forefront of its enemies and the malice and enmity of England should be taken into consideration. Even though some other European countries such as France have committed betrayals towards the Iranian government and nation since Sarkozy's era, but relations with it and other European countries must be maintained (Sotoudeh, 2021, p. 152).

### **Analysis of the foreign policy discourse strengths of the 13th government based on SOWT strategies**

As it was said, the following are the strengths of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran according to the statement of the second step of the revolution. insubordination to the arrogant system; preventing foreign

powers from dominating the country; The formation of the three-polar and dual international system (Islam and arrogance); Strategic cooperation between Iran and Russia and the new alliance; reliance on propellants; The final victory of the resistance axis; forming a powerful pole of the Islamic world; Achieving the status of a developed country and a great regional power; pursuing a revolutionary strategy based on the theory of a revolutionary state; pursuing an optimistic strategy and hope for the future; resistance to negate domination and domination; maintaining independence; Distrust of domineering powers and authority. In fact, the strength of the revolutionary value-oriented foreign policy discourse of the 13th government from the perspective of the SOWT model strategies is influenced by the ST strategy, which is the strategy of diversity. This strategy is aimed at power on the one hand and threats on the other hand. This strategy can gradually turn into an aggressive SO strategy in the shadow of the threat points.

### **Lack of independence in decision-making and the existence of parallel work in regulating and advancing the inherent responsibilities and missions of the diplomatic system.**

At the international level, it is common that governments sometimes follow a kind of hidden diplomacy through special envoys in addition to official diplomacy, which, of course, should be accompanied by rationality, planning and in line with the overall foreign policy strategy. But unfortunately, along with the diplomatic apparatus, we sometimes witness the interference of parallel institutions such as Friday prayer tribunals and factional movements and factions to make decisions in foreign policy. In fact, some of the decision-



making and decisions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are followed outside of these institutions, and this parallel work takes place in a situation where parallel work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cannot help with important issues. During the 9th and 10th administrations, Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad appointed Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei, Hamidreza Baqaei, Mohammad Mehdi Akhundzadeh and Abolfazl Zohrehvand as special representatives of the president for the affairs of the Middle East, Asia, Caspian Sea and Afghanistan by separate decrees, and we have witnessed the delay in the desired results of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the current situation and considering the controversial issue such as the JCPOA and considering the existence of a bipolar environment in the axis of the JCPOA and even in the policy of looking to the east, especially foreign relations with Russia and China, we are witnessing parallelism. The existence of parallel formations and institutions will have a major impact on foreign policy departments and will bring huge costs and inappropriate competition. The most obvious result of parallel work is the failure to reach a consensus in securing national interests (Lotfiyan, 2020, p. 127).

#### **Analyzing the weaknesses of the thirteenth government's foreign policy discourse based on SOWT strategies**

The best type of strategy to adopt against the weaknesses of the revolutionary value-oriented foreign policy discourse of the 13th government is the WT strategy or defensive strategy. This strategy is the result of weakness and internal and external threats. Indeed, by revising and avoiding parallel work and using specialist forces and elements for the circulation of the mechanisms and inherent missions of

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the strategy of cooperation can change its position first to the strategy of diversity i.e. ST strategy, then to the revision strategy i.e. WO and finally to the offensive strategy i.e. SO; and bring the performance and results of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the desired state and point.

#### **Conclusion**

In this research, the threats and opportunities of the foreign policy ahead of the Islamic revolution were evaluated based on the statement of the second step. The basis of the analysis of these reviews was the SOWT analysis model. The results of the data analysis and the results in this research resulted in the fact that: the foreign policy discourse of the 13th government, according to the statement of the second step of the revolution, the failure of American strategies in the region, the increase in global demand for the energy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the creation of weakness and challenges in the pillars of the Zionist regime, the increase of the gap in the front of the allies against Iran from opportunities and the escalation and increase of terrorism and security holes and information intrusion, sanctions and economic isolation are among the threats facing it. In this research, it was determined that establishing the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran without challenges and stabilizing its position in the world system through victory over the domination system and relying on domestic ability while maintaining foreign relations, turning Iran into a developing country, and changing the balance of power in the West Asian region are among the opportunities for foreign policy according to the second declaration of the Islamic Revolution.

In this connection, the structure of the international domination system, the other is the indifference and neglect of the revolutionary process, the growing hostility of the domination system through sanctions and the maximum pressure campaign from the West, and the increasing hostility of the Hebrew-Arab groups through the establishment of a balance of threats, are among the threats facing the foreign policy according to the second statement of the Islamic Revolution. In addition to these, it is the strength of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran according to the statement of the second step of the revolution. insubordination to the arrogant system; preventing foreign powers from dominating the country; The formation of the three-polar and dual international system (Islam and arrogance); Strategic cooperation between Iran and Russia and the new alliance; Reliance on propellants, the final victory of the resistance axis; forming a powerful pole of the Islamic world, achieving the status of a developed country and a great regional power; pursuing a revolutionary strategy based on the theory of a revolutionary state; pursuing an optimistic strategy and hope for the future; resistance to negate domination and domination; maintaining independence; Distrust of domineering powers and authority. And lastly, the lack of attention in the employment of political elites and experts in the field of foreign policy, the lack of independence in decision-making and the existence of parallel work in regulating and advancing the inherent responsibilities and missions are among the weaknesses of the diplomatic and foreign policy apparatus of the Islamic Republic of Iran, according to the statement of the second step of the revolution.

From the point of view of pathology, it was emphasized that: the opportunities arising

from the foreign policy discourse of the revolutionary values of the 13th government are a function of the combined strategies in the SOWT model. In this connection, winning over the domination system and also relying on domestic ability while maintaining foreign relations is a function of the SO strategy, which means power and opportunity. The SO strategy is an aggressive strategy that challenges the dominance system and displays the capacities and capabilities for a dynamic external relationship. In this connection, the transformation of Iran into a developing country and the ability to change the balance of power in the West Asian region is a function of the WO strategy. This strategy is based on weaknesses and opportunities. In fact, turning Iran into a developing country is a kind of opportunity, but the ability to balance in West Asia is a function of weaknesses and is mostly defensive. Opportunities such as signs of the decline of the American superpower and also a sign of the collapse of the Zionist regime are a function of the ST strategy, which is a diversification strategy that can change the situation towards the SO strategy, which is an aggressive strategy for foreign policy.

The best strategy against threats is the WT strategy, which is a defensive strategy. Defensive strategy is focused on weakness on the one hand and threats on the other hand. To resolve such a threat, a strategy change is required, that is, the WT strategy should be transformed into an SO strategy, which is an offensive strategy, considering the weakness and threat of Washington and the Hebrew-Arab complexes. In this connection, the strength of the value-oriented revolutionary foreign policy discourse of the 13th government from the perspective of SOWT model strategies is influenced by the ST strategy,

which is the strategy of diversity. This strategy is aimed at power on the one hand and threats on the other hand. This strategy can gradually turn into the SO strategy, which is offensive, in the shadow of the threat points, and it is noteworthy that the best type of strategy to adopt against the weaknesses of the revolutionary value-oriented foreign policy discourse of the 13th government is the WT strategy, or the defensive strategy. This strategy is the result of weakness and internal and external threats. Indeed, the defensive strategy by revising and avoiding parallel work and using expert forces and elements for the circulation of the mechanisms and missions inherent in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can change its position first to the diversity strategy i.e. ST strategy, then to the review strategy i.e. WO and finally to the offensive strategy i.e. SO and bring the performance and results of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the desired state and point.

As a result, based on the statement of the second step of the Islamic Revolution, four strategies can be designed for the government of Ebrahim Raisi in the post-forty years of the Islamic Revolution. First, the Islamic Revolution's "advanced" strategy focusing on internal forces and external opportunities. Second, the "defense" strategy of the Islamic Revolution, looking at internal forces and external threats. Third, the "competitive" strategy of the Islamic Revolution focusing on external opportunities and internal weaknesses. Fourth, the "resistance" strategy of the Islamic Revolution, which focuses on internal weaknesses and external threats. Considering the successes of the Islamic Revolution in the matter of the maximum "strengths" and "opportunities" compared to the weaknesses and threats, the efforts of the statesmen should be to

mobilize the resources, facilities and capacities in order to plan in line with the operationalization of the mentioned strategies with the focus of the "leading edge" strategy in the regional environment and the international system. This strategy, specifically in the matter of governance, emphasizes on governing inward-oriented policies (looking at capabilities, internal material and spiritual capacities, and regional influence) instead of outward-looking policies (looking at the support of foreigners) on the governance apparatus and public opinion of the society by taking the design and institutionalizing the Iranian-Islamic lifestyle.

At the end, solutions and suggestions are presented to strengthen the foreign policy, which:

1. In this regard, it is necessary to preserve and strengthen the achievements of the past process, and at the regional level, policies should be directed towards institutionalizing the new balance of power.
2. It is necessary to identify and exploit international opportunities to overcome obstacles as soon as possible and to determine strategies to control transnational and global threats.
3. It is necessary to formulate the policy of issuing the revolution according to the new global conditions; The revolutionary spirit and jihad action should be strengthened, the process of Islamic awakening should be supported and the necessary policies should be applied to institutionalize the strategic relations between Iran and Russia.
4. The strengthening of constructive relations with countries should be strengthened and by creating and institutionalizing political and security unions and preventing the security of

the country from foreign policy to its stability and order and its mechanisms should be regulated and directed according to the provision of national interests.

5. More attention should be paid to the weaknesses of foreign policy and their restoration

based on the emphasis of the leader of the revolution. In this connection and considering that the leader of the revolution considers America to be the embodiment of today's domination system, the way out of this situation as a threat is to stand against this domination system.

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