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The Impact of the Indo-Pacific Structure on the Competition Between India and China

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This article traces India and China's rivalry in the Indo-Pacific as a newly emerging pivot region. These recent developments, which have been extremely violent and include military conflicts with casualties, have greatly damaged bilateral relations. While examining the reasons for the fall of bilateral relations to the lowest level, this article answers the question of how the Indo-Pacific structure has placed India and China in a competitive relationship with each other. The article hypothesizes that, apart from specific bilateral disputes, Sino-Indian relations have been affected by global and regional developments. The increase in tension between the United States of America and China and the evolution of the Indo-Pacific structure are among the reasons that have increased the distance and mistrust between the two countries. China's efforts in the fight for strategic areas, China's increasing influence in India's neighboring countries, and the Belt and Road Initiative, on the one hand, and India's actions in the form of establishing strategic alliances, the quadrilateral security dialogue, and the Look East policy, on the other hand, on the neighboring countries. It has been influential and has forced them to make complex choices in the field of political-security interactions and commercial-economic development.

▪ **Keywords:**

India, China, Belt and Road, and Road Initiative, Security Dialogue, Cooperation, Indo-Pacific.

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Geopolitical Relations of the Countries of the Aras River Basin and Hydropolitical Effects

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The Aras River is one of the major common water sources entering Iran, which has experienced a unique hydropolitical situation over time, resulting from the geopolitical relations of the coastal countries within this watershed. Therefore, the present study seeks to analyze the impact of the geopolitical relations pattern between these countries on their hydropolitical situation, emphasizing the components of water quality and environmental pollution. To achieve the goal above, a descriptive-analytical method and library resources, including articles and reliable Internet databases, as well as research results related to the water quality of the Aras River, have been utilized. According to the findings of the study, Armenia is known to be the main polluter of the Aras River, which pollutes the Aras River and reduces its water quality through industrial wastewater and heavy metals. However, the conflicting geopolitical alignments between the countries of the Aras River basin and, consequently, the interactive geopolitical relationship pattern between Iran and Armenia, and the two countries' location on one side of the regional geopolitical alignments, along with Armenia's upstream and hydropower location, have caused this country to not respond positively to control measures and prevent pollutants from entering the Aras, and the decline in water quality and environmental pollution has continued. Accordingly, it is necessary to create a legal structure in international forums and form a water-based organization with the aim of consensus-building, monitoring, and controlling the crisis-causing aspects of this basin, especially from the perspective of environmental pollution.

▪ **Keywords:**

Hydropolitics; Aras River; Environmental pollution; Water quality; Geopolitical relations.

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China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Implications for Iran's Geoeconomic Position

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The purpose of this article is to analyze the impacts of the implementation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on Iran's geo-economic position. This corridor, one of the major regional infrastructure projects under the Belt and Road Initiative, includes an extensive network in three main areas of infrastructure, energy, and economic development. Geographically, CPEC is not just a bilateral project that will strengthen relations between China and Pakistan, promote economic growth in Pakistan, and enhance China's regional influence in South Asia, but it also has significant regional dimensions and impacts. In terms of subject matter, this project is not necessarily economic and has political, social, and even security dimensions. In this text, CPEC will have impacts on Iran's regional geo-economic position, which will be particularly noticeable in the two areas of energy (gas exports) and infrastructure (transit). This article uses an explanatory method and, within the conceptual framework of the new geo-economics, attempts to investigate these effects. The findings of the article show that although the impact of CPEC on Iran's geo-economic position is a combination of opportunities and challenges, and from the perspective of opportunity, Iran can adopt a smart policy, including linking its geo-economy with CPEC in the form of its macro-cooperation with China, to use this project as an opportunity for development and strengthening its regional position. However, it seems that its challenging dimension, including reducing Pakistan's demand for gas imports from Iran and upgrading the transit position of this country, including the Gwadar port against Chabahar, will relatively weaken Iran's geo-economic position.

▪ **Keywords:**

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Geoeconomy, Iran, Peace Gas Pipeline, Gwadar, Chabahar.

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North-South Corridor and Its Role in Iran's Political Economy

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The North-South Corridor is an economic and political initiative aimed at facilitating transportation and enhancing global trade, holding significant strategic importance for the countries along its route (Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, and India) as well as neighboring nations. Iran, due to its multifaceted geopolitical and geoeconomic position, stands at the core of this project. Employing a neoliberal approach and utilizing library and online resources through a descriptive-analytical method, this study addresses the question of how the North-South Corridor will impact Iran's political economy. The research hypothesis posits that the corridor will influence Iran's political economy by reducing transportation time and costs, increasing trade, elevating its geopolitical status, decreasing dependency on the West, and strengthening regional cooperation. The findings confirm the hypothesis, demonstrating that this initiative will contribute to neutralizing Western sanctions and gradually support the process of de-dollarization in Iran's economy.

▪ **Keywords:**

Iran, BRICS, revisionism, unilateralism, hegemony.

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Foreign Policy of Emerging Powers: Iran in Central Asia-Caucasus

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Emerging powers have been recognized as a new form of power in the international arena. In this regard, some countries, including Iran, can be considered as emerging powers. The research question is: What is the foreign policy strategy of emerging powers in general and the foreign policy strategy of Iran in the Central Asian, the South Caucasus, and Southwest Asia? The research results show that emerging powers mainly use strategies such as hard balancing, bandwagoning, hedging, Accommodation, appeasement, and soft balancing to achieve their goals. In the case of Iran, it should be noted that this country is trying to block American hegemony in Central Asia, in the framework of a soft balancing strategy, with the support of Russia and China. In the South Caucasus, it uses a strategy of hedging and balancing from the outside to contain Türkiye and the Republic of Azerbaijan. This country uses different strategies in Southwest Asia and its various subregions. For example, in the Levant, a hard balancing act is being pursued to contain Israel and accommodate Türkiye. In the Persian Gulf, it has used hedging to contain the UAE-Saudi Arabia axis. This research aims to examine the foreign policy strategy of emerging powers, with an emphasis on the foreign policy strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the two environments of Central Asia - Caucasus and Southwest Asia. The research method used is a theory-case matching and qualitative comparison method using a descriptive-analytical approach.

▪ **Keywords:**

Iran, an emerging power, strategy, Central Asia-Caucasus, Southwest Asia.

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Gorchakovism and Pragmatism in Russian Foreign Policy

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Russia's foreign policy has been significantly shaped by the concept of pragmatism throughout its history, particularly in recent decades. This article seeks to provide a clearer explanation of how this pragmatism can be analyzed in the conduct of Russian statesmen. The central question posed is: how does "Gorchakovism" demonstrate the dimensions of Russian pragmatism in historical and empirical contexts? The hypothesis advanced here is that the restoration of Russia's international status after its defeat in the Crimean War (1853–1857) and the Treaty of Paris, achieved through a step-by-step diplomatic approach and the effective utilization of opportunities within Europe's geopolitical environment, established Gorchakov as a historical emblem of Russian pragmatism. To examine this hypothesis, the authors employ the theory of pragmatism in foreign policy and a qualitative analysis of historical texts, political literature, and Russia's international developments. The primary finding of this article is that in the realm of international politics, national interests can only be effectively pursued through pragmatic, calculated, and incremental diplomacy. Furthermore, abstract ideals, unless they possess tangible applicability, risk leading nations and states toward collapse and failure.

▪ **Keywords:**

Russia, Crimean War, Pragmatism, Gorchakov, Europe.

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The Pattern of Relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Armenia in the South Caucasus region

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The geopolitical transformations in the South Caucasus following the Second Karabakh War (2020) have profoundly impacted Iran-Armenia relations. This study focuses on the behavioral pattern of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards Armenia, employing the geoeconomic framework to analyze their political, security, and economic interactions. Findings indicate that Iran has sought to strengthen ties with Armenia, particularly post-2020, to maintain a regional balance of power. However, geoeconomic concerns, such as Armenia's alignment with the West, the Zangezur Corridor, and Azerbaijan's military cooperation with Turkey and Israel, have escalated tensions in the South Caucasus. The research adopts a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach, utilizing library and online sources.

▪ **Keywords:**

Iran, Armenia, South Caucasus, Geopolitics, Karabagh.

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The Pattern of Political and Social Interactions of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan: A Grounded Theory Approach

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Problem Statement: The political and social interactions of the Islamic Republic of Iran in foreign policy encompass processes through which states adopt and implement foreign policy and respond to the foreign policies of other countries. The literature of international relations emphasizes that domestic politics plays a fundamental role in shaping foreign policy. Therefore, this research aims to identify the pattern of political and social interactions of the Islamic Republic of Iran in foreign policy with Azerbaijan.

Methodology: This research adopts a qualitative approach using the grounded theory method. The study's target population includes senior government officials, policymakers, and professors in the field of foreign policy and international relations. Sampling was conducted purposively and snowballing, with data gathered through exploratory interviews.

Findings: Data analysis revealed that the pattern of political and social interactions of the Islamic Republic of Iran in foreign policy with Azerbaijan consists of five main components: causal conditions (national interests, realism, domestic policies, countering sanctions, etc.), contextual conditions (support, service to elites, participation, trust-building, etc.), intervening factors (weak diplomacy, economic problems, executive inefficiencies), strategies (balancing, de-escalation, controlling public opinion and media, strengthening hard power), and outcomes (economic development, strengthening economic alliances, etc.).

Results: The findings of this research highlight the importance of identifying the various dimensions of the political and social interactions of the Islamic Republic of Iran in foreign policy with neighboring countries, particularly the Republic of Azerbaijan. These results can assist policymakers in the field of international relations in improving and enhancing political and social interactions.

▪ **Keywords:**

Political interactions, social interactions ‘international relations ‘foreign policy ‘ qualitative research
Political interactions, international relations ‘foreign policy ‘ qualitative research.

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The New Strategic Policies and Approaches of China and Russia in the Middle East

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Today, the role of emerging powers in the Middle East is very important in the framework of global politics and influence in the region. China and Russia, as two countries with unique capabilities in the fields of politics and economy, have been able to strengthen their influence in this region. This research examines the new strategic policies of these two powers in the Middle East. The main question of this research is as follows: What strategies have Russia and China used to increase and strengthen their influence in the Middle East? Which one has been more successful? The research hypothesizes that Russia and China, by focusing on three main strategies, namely, strengthening and developing economic relations, seeking regional leadership through increasing political presence and influence, and a positive image of themselves in the region, are trying to increase their influence in the Middle East. This research tries to investigate this issue with a descriptive analytical method and using library sources.

▪ **Keywords:**

Great powers, strategic strategies, Russia, China, UAE.

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Uzbekistan's Policy towards Afghanistan: from Islam Karimov to Shavkat Mirziyoyev

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Over the three decades since the collapse of the Soviet Union, security, stability, and sustainable development have been the goals of every Central Asian country, the realization of which has always been overshadowed by a number of limitations and threats. Some of these threats originated in Afghanistan, including terrorism, religious extremism, and drug supply and trafficking. The unequal extent of these threats to the countries of the region, at least due to geographical factors, has led to different perspectives of these countries on Afghan issues and different positions of Afghanistan in their foreign policy priorities. Uzbekistan's foreign policy towards Afghanistan consists of two stages: the first stage (1991-2016), the stage of maintaining distance and a cautious approach towards Afghanistan, and the second stage (2016 - present), which is the stage of developing political and economic relations. This research seeks to answer the question of whether Uzbekistan's foreign policy towards Afghanistan during the Shavkat Mirziyoyev era follows Islam Karimov's policy (closed-door policy) or has a different approach? In response, the hypothesis is put forward that Uzbekistan's foreign policy during Mirziyoyev's term towards Afghanistan is an open-door policy, and despite the fall of Republican Afghanistan and the establishment of the Taliban in power, it is striving to bolster ties and increase cooperation with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. The findings of this study show that Tashkent's policy regarding its relations with Kabul within the framework of Mirziyoyev's foreign policy strategy underwent changes upon his coming to power, and the overthrow of the Ashraf Ghani government and the rise of the Taliban did not bring about notable changes in this policy. Considering the comparative study approach and focus on its descriptive phase, the method used in this paper is qualitative and comparative.

▪ **Keywords:**

Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Foreign Policy, Peacebuilding, Security, Karimov, Mirziyoyev.

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