

New Systemic Order and Foreign Policy Strategies of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Middle East

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The international system has characteristics that have a direct influence on the foreign policy of the countries. Among these, the systemic cycle of power is one of the most conspicuous features of the global system and the regions that affect this issue. In this vein, the systemic order resulting from the cycle of power in the strategic policy-making circle of units can play a limiting role and influence the type of strategy and strategy. The Islamic Republic of Iran is also one of the units of international order; hence, it is not exceptional. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the order of the Middle East and, accordingly, to determine the strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in that region. Accordingly, it assumes that the regional order in the Middle East puts defense strategies, especially deterrence and passive defense, at the forefront of the strategies of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Middle East. So, the present paper, while explaining the order of the international system and the order of the Middle East region, designs the foreign policy strategies of the regions of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Keywords: international system, systemic order, foreign policy, strategy, Islamic Republic of Iran

Introduction

International and regional systems, due to their realistic nature, have a cycle of power, or in other words, a cycle of power-oriented, in which there is a tendency to assimilate power, interests, and role. The units of the international system use various tools to achieve their national goals and interests. In such a system, due to the lack of a central government and the nature of anarchy, these units are self-sufficient and the realization of their interests is based on individual abilities. Accordingly, due to the anarchic nature of the international system, countries have faced various security threats from the very beginning, which are due to their strategic environment. Among these, the most important feature and element affecting the strategic environment is the ruling system of the global system and the regional system. The Middle East region as one of the most important strategic environments of the Islamic Republic of Iran can also pose special threats and vulnerabilities for this country.

By knowing the strategic environment accurately, special benefits can be created for the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this regard, Iran's strategic environment has changed drastically over the past several years, and this change in strategic environment has brought new opportunities and threats for

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policy-makers. The direct presence of US in the region makes the dimensions of this strategic change very sensitively. Examining this change is the prelude to any attempt to formulate a defense strategy and policy for the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, the main question of this research will be the type of order governing the international system and the order governing the Middle East region and consequently the type of strategic environment resulting from the combination of these two types of order and the type of regional foreign policy strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Middle East. How is it and then assumes that the chaotic systemic order prevailing in the Middle East region has created various threats and restrictions for the Islamic Republic of Iran (located in the Middle East) and passive deterrence and defense strategies in the priority of the Islamic Republic of Iran's strategies. Iran is located in the Middle East.

Background of the Research

In pursuit of finding an answer to these questions, several groups of literature in the field of international relations and regional studies can be seen. In the first group, the literature that analyzes the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the power cycle, which is currently found in the field of international relations, a specific effect that is found in relation to understanding the strategy cycle can be referred to Ghasemi's writings (Ghasemi, 2005a). The second group is the theoretical field related to the literature that tries to analyze the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, including: Dehghani Firoozabadi (2010), in his book *Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, defined the dimensions and dimensions of Iran's national goals and interests and also, in the framework of discourse analysis, examined the foreign policy of different governments ruling Iran; Ruhollah Ramezani (2004), in his book *Analytical Framework for Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, introduced a model of dynamic tripartite interaction, i.e., the combination of domestic, foreign and international policy for foreign policy of countries, and examined Iran's foreign policy; and Sheeran Hunter (2010), in her book *Iran's Foreign Policy After the Collapse of the Soviet Union* described the characteristics of the international system and its challenges and opportunities for Iran, described and evaluated Iran's relations with the outside world. The third group of literature is related to strategy, including: The book *Strategy and Strategic Planning* by Saeedeh Lotfian (2002), the book *The Great Strategy* by Collins (1991), the book *Theories and Problems* by John Belis (1990), and the article "The geopolitical construction of the new international system and the US military and security strategy" by Ghasemi (2005b). These sources have examined some levels and types of strategy.

In this respect, it can be mentioned that there are several weaknesses in the existing literature, including:

- Descriptive nature of most of these sources, especially the existing literature in the field of foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- Lack of attention to foreign regional strategies.
- Lack of attention to the interrelationship between the order of the regional system and the type of regional strategy.

Therefore, considering these inefficiencies that exist in the existing literature, it is necessary to address the regional system order and, consequently, the type of regional strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In line with the research hypothesis and inefficiencies in the literature of international relations, the current study pursues two theoretical and practical goals. In the theoretical field, the study of the power cycle of the global and regional system and drawing the ruling order in the Middle East and in the practical field, the

purpose of this study is to provide appropriate strategies to ensure the national interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Middle East. Therefore, according to the main question, hypothesis, and objectives of the research, first to the principles and foundations of cyclic theories and systemic order, in the second part, the link between cyclic theories and strategy, in the third part, the systemic order governing the world system and the ruling order of the Middle East regional system, and finally, the strategies of the regions of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Middle East region are discussed.

Principles and Foundations of Cyclical Theories and Systemic Order

Cyclic theories are among the theories that analyze international relations and systemic order by generalizing and conceptualizing trends in the system. The above-mentioned analytical and logical apparatus and its theoretical skeleton are formed on the axis that the world system is a system whose process, while having the characteristics of axial power, is a cyclical process; this is indicative of the fact that power includes the stages of life consisting of formation, growth, maturity and decline, and countries have a certain position within the cycle due to the stages of growth, and according to the dynamics, the power of displacement. Countries can be observed in it and this shift will play an essential role in the behavioral patterns of countries and its type (Ghasemi, 2012). According to this issue, the most important principles of the theory can be drawn as follows:

1. Anarchy is a good basis for analyzing the distribution of power and world order (Ghasemi, 2012). Cyclic theories begin with the assumption that the international system lacks supreme authority. And so, the system will face a security dilemma, which is the result of such a situation of self-help and the central power of the system and its constituent units.

2. The tendency of the system to concentrate power and polarize it is real; we must pay attention to the principle of a system that all free systems, including anarchic systems, tend to polarize; the orientation of the power cycle is based on its accumulation in the countries that are at the top of the cycle.

3. The orientation of all great powers towards world politics is the same; due to the anarchy of the system and the principle of power-oriented cycle, the behavioral orientation of all the forces governing the cycle is the same, and all of them try to gain, maintain, and increase power.

4. Power is not a static phenomenon, but a transformative and dynamic thing. Power has its own life process, starting from the stage of potential growth and continuing until decay and destruction.

5. In international politics, there is a strong link between power and role; countries seek role based on their position in the power cycle, in other words, the role of countries in the international system is determined by their position in the cycle.

6. In international politics, power, satisfaction, and role are intertwined, and the stability of the world system is not possible without regard to coordination between these three aspects.

7. Power within the system has a cyclical feature that according to the stages of power growth—its dynamics can also be observed (Ghasemi, 2012). The power cycle is different for different countries, but what is important is that the power cycle belongs to the powerful countries in the system. This cycle is repeated alternately and has a starting and ending point. Considering in which part of the cycle security, stability, and instability occur, there are five orders (Ghasemi, 2012):

1. Hegemonic order (with intense concentration of power, conformity of other powers with hegemony and closure);

2. Inhibitory order (weakening of hegemony, emergence of new hegemonic challengers and formation of strategic competition with hegemony);

3. Concert order (consensus of the great powers);

4. Balancing and inverse order (multipolarity of power);

5. Unstructured order (conflict of great powers with each other).

It is available that each of these disciplines forms a different pattern of behavior. One of the existing realities is that the power cycle at the global and regional levels will be interconnected. Basically, all systems are composed of different subsystems. In the international arena, the global system itself has regional subsystems, and therefore, both have specific patterns of order at the same time, which have a functional link between them. Therefore, the intersection of such orders in the cycle of power is considered as the foundation of regional order. The intersection can be shown in Figure 1:

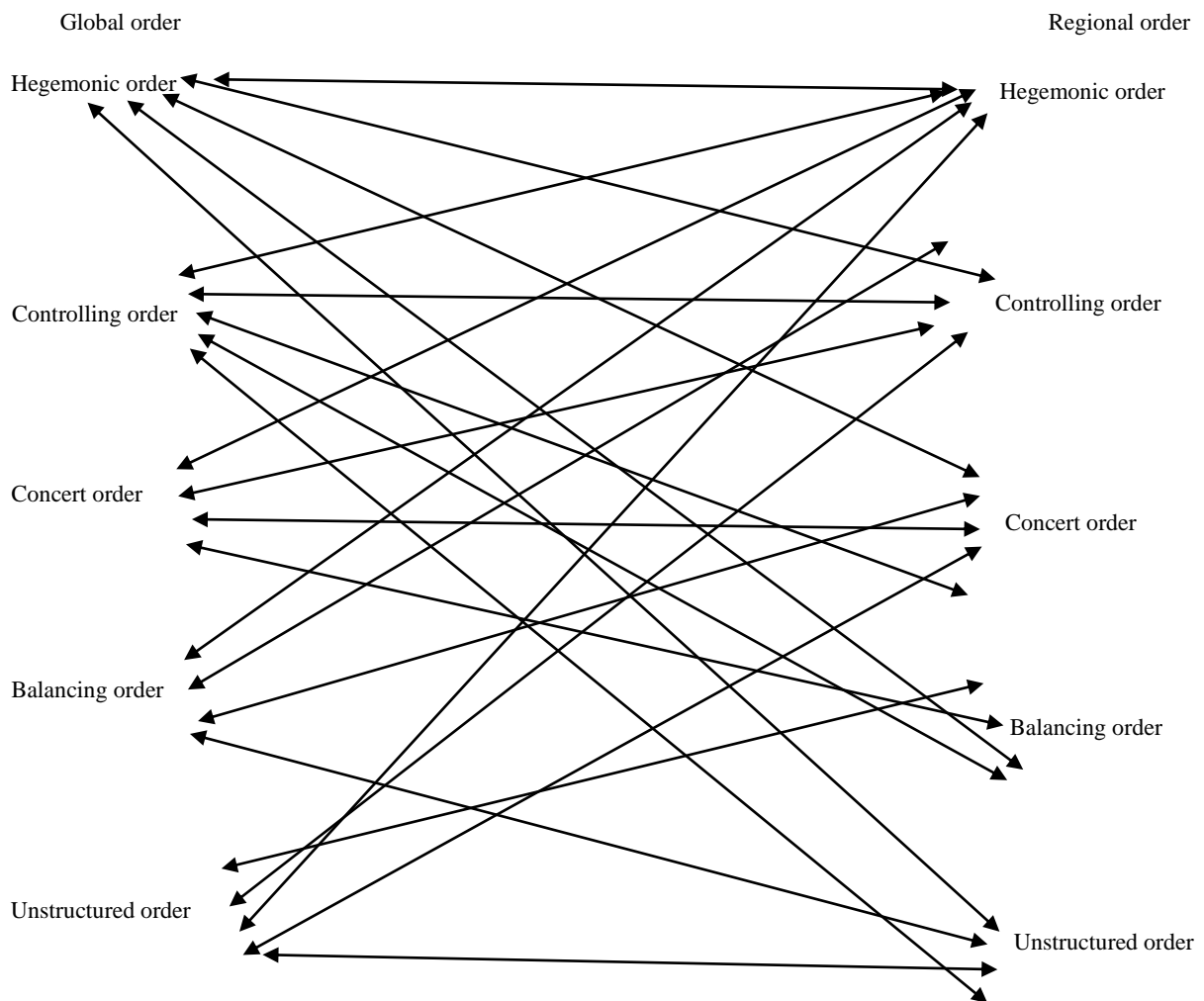


Figure 1. The intersection of regional and global order (Source: Ghasemi, 2012, p. 117).

In this regard, the interaction between regional order and world order shows the pattern of order in the region in the form of Table 1:

Table 1

Interaction of Global and Regional Order and Regional System Order

	Hegemonic	Controlling	Concert	Balancing	Unstructured
Hegemonic	Global and regional strategic stability—overall stability	Cooperation for the benefit of regional power	Reduce world order interventions and increase regional independence	The impact of global instability on the region is less	Rare situation
Controlling	Cooperation with the global hegemon as an intervener in the region	Global strategic stability and reducing regional stability	Further entanglement of regional order in world order	The impact of global turmoil on the region is higher than the previous phase and less than the next phases	Reduction of regional power as a result of reducing the rate of integration in the region
Concert	Weakened regional order so the regional cooperation will be raised.	Global order is more stable than regional stability. The region is under the influence of global hegemon	Increased instability in globally and regionally	Chaos and instability in the region	Chaos and instability in the region
Balancing	Instability and scattered pattern	Analyzing the pattern of global order on regional order	Global chaos affects more than before	Chaos and instability in the region	Chaos and instability in the region
Unstructured	Complete chaos, the global hegemon intrudes more than ever	Region is under management and will of the powerful order	Chaos and war in the region	Chaos and instability in the region	Chaos and instability in the region

Andre Buffer is one of the strategists who study and analyze the concept of strategy. In his view, it is an artistic strategy in which issues that arise from the collision of two opposing wills can be identified, and as a result of full knowledge of these issues, a technique and method can be adopted to achieve maximum benefit.

Also, the general rule of strategy is to find a way to overcome the enemy and reach the ultimate goal. In general, according to Buffer's strategy patterns, different tools can be identified in the strategy, which are (Ghasemi, 2005b):

- means of threat: such as assertive demands;
- tools related to indirect pressures;
- defense tools;
- abrasive tools;
- military tools and weapons (offensive): the use of force.

Strategy in the field of international politics manifests itself in various ways, the most important of which are (Bilis, 1990):

- conventional strategy and nuclear strategy;
- direct and indirect strategy;
- defensive and offensive strategy;
- step-by-step and intensive strategy;
- anti-force and anti-city strategy.

Conventional and Core Strategy

The first formulation of strategy in contemporary international politics is based on the type of equipment and tools used in it. In other words, the most important difference between these two types of strategies is the

type of military weapon used. Conventional strategy relies on the use of conventional military weapons, and there will be a kind of uncertainty in military victory, because the unit does not have absolute destructive power. On the other hand, the emergence of weapons of mass and absolute destructive power, including nuclear weapons, led to a fundamental change in strategy and the emergence of its new form, nuclear strategy.

Direct Strategy and Indirect Strategy

In indirect strategy, the goal is to achieve domination and supremacy over the enemy, but this supremacy is not achieved through the direct use of military force. Here, as in other strategies, the goal is to achieve broad freedom of action so that the enemy can be suppressed, and this goal is achieved in two ways: external maneuver and internal maneuver.

In foreign maneuvers, the goal is to gain more freedom of action and restrict the enemy's freedom of action. The focus here is on change in factors that are targeted outside the geographical area. It places more emphasis on psychological operations and will use international tools, as well as the sensitivities of the enemy, to question its possible actions and behavior in international relations. In internal maneuver, the goal is to design a map for a specific geographical area in which the ultimate goal must be achieved. This map is drawn based on the factors of material forces, psychological factors and time.

Offensive and Defensive Strategy (or Deterrent and Deterrent-Based)

Countries adopt different patterns of behavior in terms of strategy and the type of behaviors needed to achieve their goals. Some try to directly change the enemy's environment, but others just look inside their unit and mostly want to neutralize the strategic offensive and defensive threats (Lotfian, 2002). Offensive strategy means using the element of war and offensive policies to achieve the goal, and defense strategy, measures, and ideas adopted to protect a country from foreign threats, and a variety of defense strategies include:

- strategic defense: protecting a country from the threat posed by strategic weapons;
- agent defense: using the armed forces against enemy attacks;
- passive defense: the use of civilian tools to counter external threats;
 1. Inward-oriented defense: increase the coefficient of internal cohesion against the enemy;
 2. External defense: creating vulnerability in the enemy, creating divisions in the enemy, psychological operations against the enemy, change in the external environment of the enemy.
 3. Defense-oriented defense: demonstrate defensive and offensive readiness to the enemy.
- urban defense: defense of civilian points;
- regional defense: the defense of the target area;
- point Defense: defend the target point.

Step-by-Step and Intensive Strategy

Strategy can be cumulative, condensed, and step-by-step, or gradual. In other words, in step-by-step strategies, the final goal is divided into a set of goals and a kind of hierarchy is established between them. On the other hand, some strategies are cumulative. In other words, the relevant units believe that they will be able to change the environment and transform its various dimensions in order to achieve their strategic goal, simultaneously and simultaneously (Wylie, 1967).

Anti-force Strategy and Anti-city Strategy

The basis of this classification is based on the existence and function of nuclear weapons. The goal here is to create deterrence. Some strategists put targeting and bombing of civilians and enemy production centers on

their agenda, and believe that if an unacceptable threat can be imposed on the enemy from this perspective, it will strike a balance of terror. It creates power, and with the emergence of a stable balance of terror, nuclear war does not actually occur. On the other hand, some strategists are skeptical of this strategy and believe that it can only be achieved by disarming the enemy. In other words, strategies must be designed against the enemy's military forces and lead to their neutralization. Only then can the deterrent stability be considered (Collins, 1991). In this regard, countries as the constituent units of the international system have a cycle of power. Different tools are considered in the strategy based on which phase of growth, maturity, and decline of power they are in. System order, which plays a limiting role in strategy design, also stems from this cycle of power. Systemic order also forms the strategic environment of the unit in question, which with its special characteristics causes several strategic threats. And it is in the presence of strategic threats that the use of different types of strategy finds meaning.

And these threats are formed, according to the enemy's ability to take special actions, the enemy's intentions, and vulnerabilities (prominent enemy weaknesses) (Collins, 1991). Accordingly, the relationship between power, order, and type of strategy is shown in Figure 2:

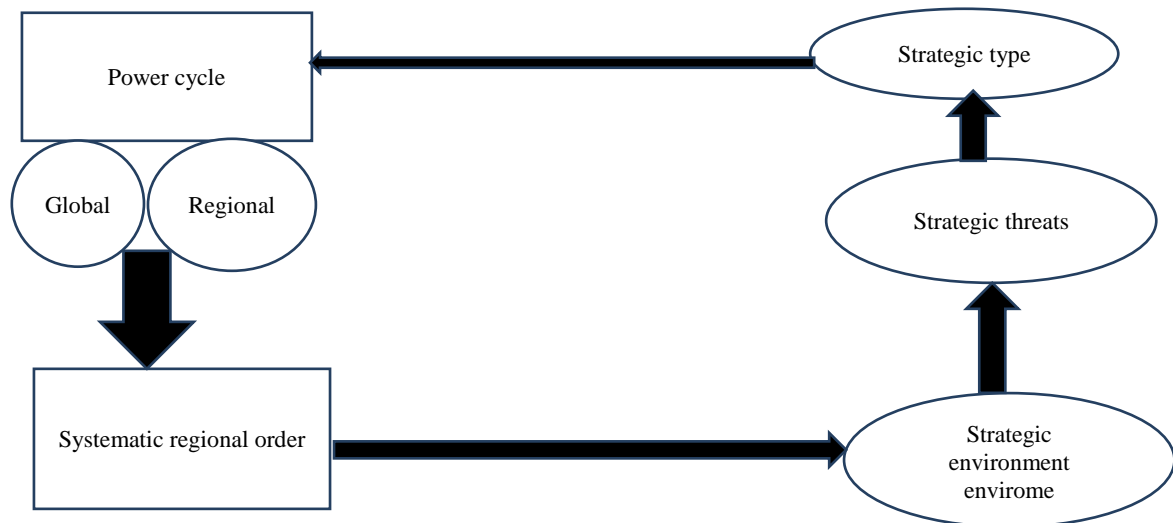


Figure 2. Interaction between power cycle, order, and type of strategy.

The cycle of power and the pattern of order in the world system. In general, in the world system, based on the distribution of power and the measurement of relative power, in different periods, different great powers played a fundamental role in the international system. According to the structure of the international system, although at one time there was a distribution of power among European countries and with the world wars this type of structure and distribution of power disappeared, but it must be said that countries, such as Great Britain, France, and Germany are still considered an influential power in the international system. After that, a bipolar system centered on the United States and the Soviet Union was formed, which even after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of this type of structure, the Soviet Union was still considered one of the most influential powers in the system. But the United States has taken the management of the system by surprise. During this period, although the old powers, such as Great Britain, France, and Germany existed, other new powers, such as Russia, the European Union, and Japan entered the cycle of world power, although their

influence, especially after America's declining movement was different. In the new system, the three powers of the United States, Japan, and China are the most important countries in the system, growing in both the economic power cycle and the military power cycle, as shown in Figure 3.

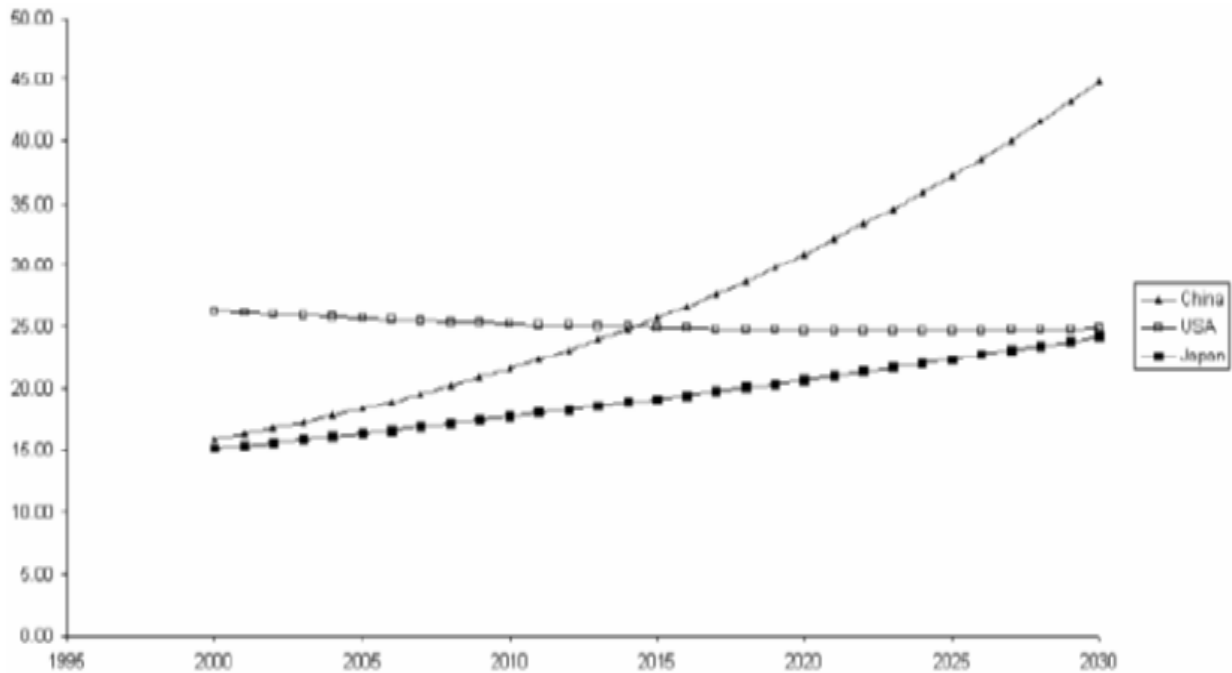


Figure 3. The power cycle of China, the United States, and Japan from 2000 to 2030 (Source: Kissane, 2008, p. 33).

Based on Figure 3, it can be concluded that the United States has moved away from the hegemonic order in this situation and has entered the next phase, namely the restraining order. In this phase, although the relative power of the United States is more than the rest, but its level of power is less than the previous phase. That is why it cannot take action against the units in a hegemonic manner with direct imposition. Thus, the policies and control system he uses are defensive in nature and eliminate potential challengers through a unilateral deterrent system.

The cycle of power and the pattern of order in the Middle East. The Middle East region has special characteristics in terms of the power cycle. One of its most important features is the involvement of power or non-indigenous powers in it. In the global power cycle, although there is a lot of competition between the world's top powers, the United States is still the most important world power, despite its relative power decline and its entry into the restraining order phase. For this reason, it has a relatively active presence in vital areas, especially in the Middle East, and is highly in control of the region against internal challenges and external competing powers.

Considering the degree of orderly interference in the Middle East, relative instability in the global system affects the regional system of the Middle East. Thus, given the situation of structural stability in the Middle East, the regional order is in an unbalanced state towards an unstructured order, which is due to the strategic instability of the region, which is strongly influenced by the system, puts the world.

The systemic order of the Middle East and the regional strategies of the Islamic Republic of Iran. As a result of the interference of global and regional order, the strategic environment of the Islamic Republic of

Iran in the Middle East is in a state of regional instability and turmoil. In the turbulent environment of the Middle East, there are no cooperative relations within the region and include hostile relations patterns (Iran-Zionist regime, Lebanon-Zionist regime, and Syria-Zionist regime), the pattern of cold relations between the Arabs and the regime. Zionist, the model of competition between Iran, Saudi Arabia, the southern countries of the Persian Gulf, Egypt, and Jordan, the model of relations between Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, the model of Arab cooperation in the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the Arab Maghreb Union, the model of cooperation between Iran and Iraq, the model of US-Zionist alliance and strategic cooperation between the US and the Arabs in the form of the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the Arab Maghreb Union, the model of cooperation between Iran and Iraq, and finally, the model of US-Zionist alliance and strategic cooperation between the United States and the Arabs, can be shown in Figure 4.

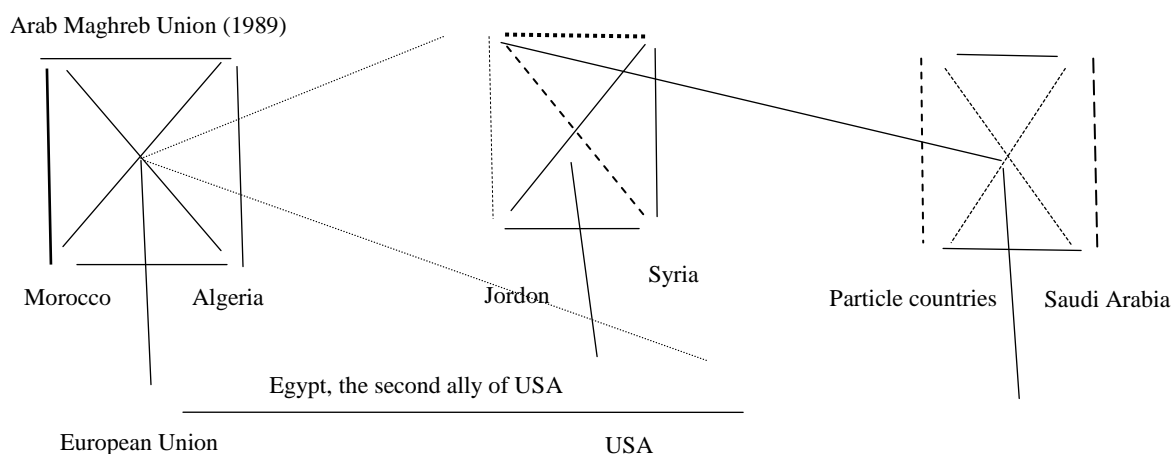


Figure 4. Pattern of relations in the Middle East (Source: Ghasemi, 2011, p. 42).

In this regard, by recognizing the strategic environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the threats facing this country can be examined.

In fact, Iran's strategic environment has revealed various threats against this country, which can be categorized as follows:

- Strategic threats to the system, which itself consists of the following dimensions:
- Structural threats due to the hegemonic tendency of the US-led system as the most important strategic enemy, which can be seen in the nuclear issue;
- Process threats to the system, including the process of economic globalization and cultural processes, including the subject of the Western civilization in the form of Huntington's theory of the clash of civilizations.

Strategic regional threats include:

- Threats from interventionist regional powers, especially in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf;
- Threats arising from the role of the region by large and effective regional powers;
- Threats from some powers in the Middle East, including the Zionist regime in occupied Palestine.

National strategic threats include threats arising from demographic, ethnic, and religious structures and the existence of similar structures in the periphery of a region that can sometimes be manipulated by other powers.

According to the threats, the most important and effective strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the turbulent region of the Middle East is the defense strategy, or more precisely, deterrence, and passive defense.

In this regard, the general policies in the field of passive defense in the Islamic Republic of Iran have been announced by the supreme leader, emphasizing passive defense, which is a set of unarmed measures that increase deterrence, reduce vulnerability, continue essential activities, and promote sustainability, nationalization, and facilitation of crisis management in the face of enemy threats and military actions.

Observing the principles and criteria of passive defense, such as choosing a safe area, dispersing, or aggregating as the case may be, desensitization, concealment, camouflage, deception of the enemy and securing important population centers, especially in land management plans and future development plans;

Classify important centers, places, and facilities as vital, sensitive, and important and update it if necessary; According to these general policies in the field of passive defense, Iran pursues the following goals:

1. Promoting effective deterrence and achieving lasting security in the development of the country against threats;
2. Promoting knowledge and efficient and effective management system specific to crisis situations;
3. Reducing the set of vulnerabilities of the country and minimizing the impact of threats and increasing the cost of the enemy;
4. Completing the country's defense cycle and the positive interaction between active defense and passive defense;
5. Achieving the structure and continuity of national, provincial, municipal, and institutional services and crisis scene management and civil defense in crisis situations caused by war;
6. Raising the threshold of national tolerance against threats and increasing the survival and protection of the country in conditions of threat and crisis (Yasi, 2010).

Conclusion

This study aims to investigate the systemic order of the Middle East and its impact on the type of strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Middle East. According to the systemic order governing the world system and the systemic order of the Middle East, the strategic environment governing the system of the Middle East appears and by using this environment, the restrictions, and threats in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Creates, it affects the type of strategy. Therefore, considering that the strategic environment of the Middle East has been the focus of research, first the power cycle, systemic order and the strategic environment derived from them are examined.

In this regard, units at the level of regional system and global system have a power cycle consisting of three phases of growth, maturity and decline, which is determined by the order of the regional system in proportion to the power cycle in the global and regional system. Meanwhile, the Middle East region, which has always been at the heart of world politics, and any change in this region has had a great impact on the relations between the great powers, has an unstructured order that combines hegemonic order with a restraining order. The ruling world system has been in turmoil in the Middle East system and makes the strategic environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran insecure and brings various structural, process and national threats to it and strengthens the model of the foreign policy strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Middle East in the field of deterrence and passive defense. Slowly Figure 5 shows the relationship between the power cycle, system order, and type of strategy:

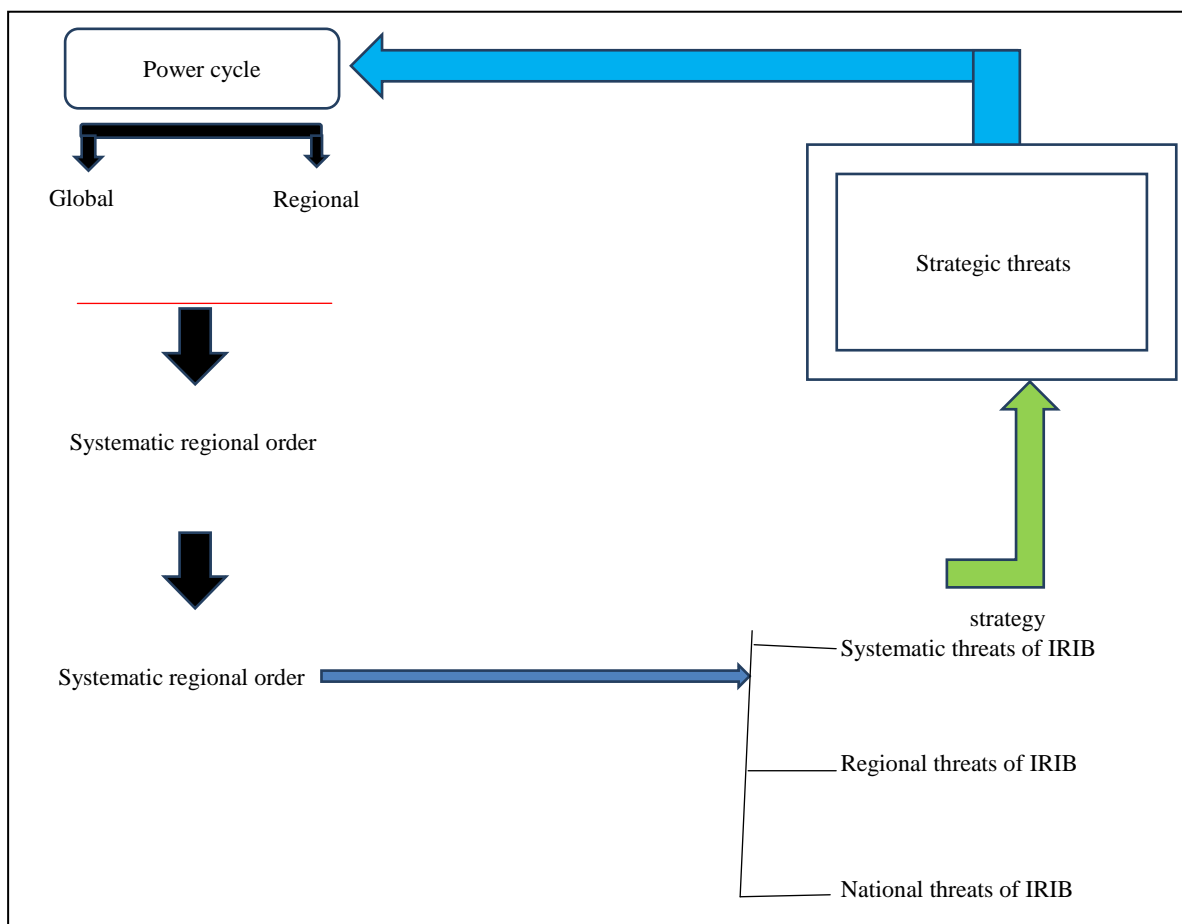


Figure 5. Strategic model of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Middle East.

Note. IRIB = Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting.

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