



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Iranian Foreign Policy and its Position on the Palestinian Issue

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ABSTRACT

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Iran's foreign policy is manifested in strengthening its regional and international influence by supporting Palestinian resistance movements, as it sees this support as part of its broader strategy to confront Israel and the West and strengthen its position in the Islamic world. Moreover, Iran's support for resistance movements is an important tool for enhancing its regional influence and forming strategic alliances. For example, Iran's support for Hezbollah in Lebanon has strengthened its presence on the Israeli border, giving it greater leverage in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In addition, Iran has used its support for resistance movements as a means to challenge its regional rivals, such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE. These two countries, which have a moderate approach to the Palestinian issue and advocate diplomatic solutions, view Iran's support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad as a threat to regional stability. Iran's support for the Palestinian resistance can be said to be an important part of its regional and international strategy to enhance its influence and challenge Israeli and Western hegemony in the region. Although this support enhances Iran's standing in some regional and Islamic circles, it has caused significant tensions with moderate Arab states and Western countries, leading to the imposition of severe sanctions and increased international pressure on Tehran. Iran's support for Palestinian resistance movements has also complicated Iran's relations with many moderate Arab states that reject the military approach to resistance. These states, such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, see Iran's support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad as a threat to regional stability, as it increases tensions and complicates efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This regional division between the Iranian axis and the Gulf axis has deepened political and diplomatic differences between Iran and moderate Arab states.

INTRODUCTION

Iranian foreign policy is considered one of the most influential and active policies at the regional and international levels. Iran's political approach is based on a rapid dynamic in responding to changes on the global stage, which gives it a distinctive presence in various geopolitical regions, such as Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and Latin America. These escalating international activities provoke strong and condemning reactions from many countries, especially the United States and Israel, which see Iran's ambitions to expand its influence as a threat to their interests.

Iran is striving to consolidate its position as a prominent regional power and aspires to play a major role on the international stage. In this context, it competes with other countries within the Islamic world such as Turkey and Egypt, and adopts a comprehensive strategy that relies on various tools to achieve its goals. These tools include active diplomacy, providing financial and military support to opposition groups, as well as supporting Shiite communities in various countries.

Iran focuses particularly on areas of vital importance to it, such as the Arabian Gulf region and its neighboring countries, and adapts its strategies and tools to suit the nature of each issue and the country concerned. With this approach, Iran seeks to enhance its regional and international influence, and continues to play a pivotal role in complex geopolitical interactions at the global level (Munir, 2015, pp. 100-104)

Iran's foreign policy in support of the Palestinian cause aims to achieve several main goals. Iran seeks to confront what it considers Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territories, and it affirms the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. In addition, Iran seeks to enhance its position as the leader of the Islamic world and a defender of resistance to Western influence in the Middle East.(Abdul Jawad & Hafez Abdul Jawad, 2020, pp. 423-455)

Iran provides political, financial and military support to various Palestinian resistance factions, most notably Hamas and Islamic Jihad. This support includes arms shipments, training and funding for the construction of tunnels and rockets used in the conflict with Israel. Iran views these groups as key allies in the broader struggle against Israel and a means of exerting its influence in the Palestinian territories.. (Daneshfar, Marouf, & Naif, 2022, pp. 69-104)

Iran's strong opposition to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process reflects its skepticism about the ability of negotiations to achieve a just and lasting solution to the conflict. Iran views the peace process as a tool of Western powers to legitimize the Israeli occupation and undermine Palestinian rights. As a result, Iran has consistently rejected any concessions that do not fully recognize Palestinian sovereignty and self-rule.(Munir, 2015).

Iran's unwavering support for the Palestinian cause has major regional implications. It has raised tensions with Israel, which views Iran as a major security threat because of its support for anti-Israel groups in Lebanon, Syria and the Gaza Strip. Iran's support for Palestinian militant groups has also contributed to regional instability and has been a bone of contention in its relations with Sunni Arab states, many of which have normalized relations with Israel..

Iran's stance on the Palestinian issue has also shaped its relations with the international community. The United States and its allies have criticized Iran for its support of terrorist organizations and its role in perpetuating conflict in the Middle East. At the same time, Iran has found support among some Non-Aligned Movement countries and the Islamic world that share its anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist sentiments (Abu Saada, 2020).

Iran's foreign policy toward the Palestinian issue is a complex and multifaceted aspect of its broader regional and international strategy. By supporting Palestinian resistance groups and opposing the peace process, Iran seeks to challenge Israeli hegemony and assert its influence in the Middle East. However, this stance has also contributed to tensions with Israel and Sunni Arab states, as well as criticism from Western powers. The ongoing dynamics of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the broader geopolitical landscape in the Middle East will continue to shape Iran's foreign policy and stance on the Palestinian issue in the coming years..

The problem:

Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran has pursued a firm policy of supporting the Palestinian cause, manifested in providing political, financial and military support to Palestinian resistance factions such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, while categorically refusing to recognize Israel and calling for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. This policy is considered an integral part of its comprehensive approach to confronting Zionism and Western colonialism, and is based on building strategic alliances with countries and groups that share its resistance, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and some Palestinian factions. Despite the stability of its fundamental goals, Iranian methods evolve over time to keep pace with political and security developments in the region, making its policy towards the Palestinian cause a dynamic and changing element within its foreign strategy, and reflecting its ongoing efforts to enhance its regional role and position on the international stage.

Hypothesis:

In light of the prevailing trend in Iranian foreign policy, it is conceivable to hypothesize that Iran considers the Palestinian issue as part of its battle against Western and Zionist hegemony in the region. This hypothesis is evident in Iran's continued support for Palestinian resistance movements, its steadfast refusal to recognize Israel as a state, and its call for the liberation of Palestine and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. This hypothesis can be considered a fundamental path in analyzing Iran's policy towards the Palestinian issue, as Iran considers the Palestinian conflict as part of its strategic confrontation with the West and Israel in the region.

Importance:

It has become necessary to deepen the understanding of Iranian foreign policy due to its increasing role as a major player in the Arab region. Iran possesses many elements of power and influence that make it influential in regional affairs. Therefore, important regional issues have become the focus of Iranian foreign policy. This is partly due to its competition with the great powers to extend its influence in the Middle East, in addition to its quest for recognition as an influential regional power. The Palestinian issue also stands out as one of the most important issues in the region, and even in the entire world, and Iran is aware of the depth of this Arab issue rooted in history. Based on this importance, Iran seeks to achieve its interests and goals through its position on the Palestinian issue, using it as a means to enhance its influence and assert its presence in the region.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

An integrated methodology will be used, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis, with an emphasis on historical methodology to analyze the hypothesis that Iran's support for the Palestinian cause constitutes a fundamental pillar of its foreign strategy. Relying on historical sources, the research will focus on tracing the development of Iran's policies toward the Palestinian cause from the Islamic Revolution in 1979 to the present, by analyzing official discourses and relations with factions such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and studying the ideological and religious context that supports this support, and how it is used to enhance Iran's image as a defender of Islamic and Palestinian rights. Information will be collected from books, academic journals, and official sources to analyze how Iran achieves political and military gains through building alliances and confronting regional opponents, as well as confronting Western hegemony, especially American and Israeli influence, and the impact of this on regional tensions and alliances. Quantitative analysis tools will be used through the program SPSS, including designing a questionnaire to measure the impact of Iranian support and selecting a random sample of respondents, with the inclusion of a pilot sample to test the questionnaire and correct errors. Reliability will be calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and after reviewing the questionnaire by experts, it will be distributed to the final sample and analyzed using SPSS to identify patterns and conclusions. In the qualitative analysis, interviews will be conducted with politicians, analysts, and experts in foreign policy and international relations, while maintaining the confidentiality of the data and flexibility of participation, as participants will be allowed to withdraw at any time to ensure compliance with research ethics. The sample will be selected in a purposeful manner using the "snowball" technique to expand the sample through participants' recommendations. The qualitative analysis will approach the data using realist theory in international relations to understand Iran's strategic motives and how it employs the Palestinian issue in its foreign policy. At all stages of the research, documentation standards will be adhered to according to the APA system to ensure accuracy and academic integrity. This methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of Iran's role in supporting the Palestinian cause and its impact on regional and international dynamics, helping to analyze regional tensions and estimate Iran's future moves and impact on international issues.

PREVIOUS STUDIES:

Iran's foreign policy and its stance on the Palestinian issue have been the subject of extensive study and analysis by scholars in the Middle East and beyond. Numerous research articles and dissertations have

provided valuable insights into Iran's foreign policy towards Palestine, shedding light on its motivations, strategies, and impact on the region. This literature review aims to synthesize the main findings from selected academic works to provide a comprehensive understanding of Iran's foreign policy on the Palestinian issue..

In Youssef Mounir's article (2015), the author explores the implications of the agreement with Iran for the region, Israel, and Palestine. The study examines the multifaceted consequences of Iranian foreign policy decisions and their implications for political dynamics in the Middle East, particularly with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict..

Daneshvar, Marouf, and Nayef (2022) present a comparative study of the proposed solutions to the Palestinian issue, and an analysis of the roles of Iran and international organizations. By examining the various approaches and interventions of Iran and international entities, the research provides a nuanced perspective on the complexities surrounding efforts to address the Palestinian issue..

Munir (2015) also examines the implications of the agreement with Iran for the region and Israel and Palestine, focusing on the complex interaction between diplomatic agreements and regional dynamics. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding Iran's foreign policy agenda in shaping the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East..

In his doctoral dissertation, Mohammad Ahmed Abu Saada (2020) examines Iran's foreign policy towards Palestine from 1991 to 2016. Through a historical lens, the study traces the evolution of Iran's approach to the Palestinian issue, highlighting key milestones and shifts in Iranian policy over the years..

Abdul Jawad and Ashraf (2020) present an analytical vision of the methods and policies of Iranian intervention and their repercussions on the Arab region. The research provides a critical assessment of Iran's interventions in the Arab world, and an evaluation of the effects of its actions on regional stability and security..

Overall, these scholarly works contribute to a deeper understanding of Iran's foreign policy toward Palestine and its broader implications for the Middle East. By examining Iran's diplomatic strategies, regional engagements, and ideological commitments, scholars have sought to shed light on the complexities of Iran's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the broader Arab region. Such studies are essential for policymakers, analysts, and academics seeking to understand the changing dynamics of international relations in the Middle East and the complexities of the Palestinian issue..

Study axes

Chapter One: Analysis of Iranian Foreign Policy

The first requirement: the foundations and principles of Iranian foreign policy

Iranian foreign policy is based on a complex mix of revolutionary and religious principles that crystallized significantly after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. That revolution, which overthrew the Western-backed monarchy and replaced it with a theocratic regime led by clerics, marked a radical shift in the foundations of Iran's foreign policy. This combination of Islamic ideology and national sovereignty reinforced Iran's vision of itself as a regional power and a supporter of the oppressed and downtrodden in the Muslim world and beyond.. (Friedman, 2010, p. 6).

After the Islamic Revolution, Iran adopted a religious approach based on the idea that Islam is a complete political and social system that should govern all aspects of life, including foreign policy. Iran sees itself as the defender of Muslims and the oppressed of the world, and sees it as its duty to support them in the face of injustice and oppression. This vision, derived from Shiite thought, has evolved into a part of modern Iranian identity. Iran seeks to spread the values of the Islamic Revolution, which include justice, equality, and resistance to foreign domination, especially by Western powers.(Rakel, 2007, pp. 159-187).

Iran's approach combines religious and national dimensions, as it is committed to preserving its national independence and rejecting any kind of interference in its internal affairs. This independence is considered one of the basic pillars on which the Islamic Revolution was built, and which still deeply influences Iranian foreign policy decisions. Iran considers itself an independent power from the major global axes, and adopts a policy of non-alignment and non-submission to pressure from major powers. (Golmohammadi, 2019, pp. 93-102).

Iran seeks to promote the idea of justice internationally, in line with the Islamic vision that sees resistance to injustice as a religious and moral duty. For this reason, Iran supports resistance movements in many countries, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine. This support stems from a broader vision that includes combating colonialism and foreign interference, especially by Western powers. It is part of Iran's response to a long period of foreign interference in its internal affairs, especially during the Shah's rule. (Abbasov, 2014, pp. 139-146).

Iran does not consider supporting resistance movements as a mere foreign policy, but rather as part of its role in protecting Muslims and the oppressed in the world. This approach is not only ideological, but also strategic, as Iran seeks to enhance its regional influence and confront Western influence, especially American and Israeli. Supporting resistance movements is not only a defense of a specific cause, but also enhances Iran's ability to build strong regional alliances and shape the geopolitical landscape in the region (Nia, 2010, pp. 148-180).

Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has pursued a primary goal of preserving its national sovereignty and independence. This policy stems from Iran's long experience with foreign interventions, especially during the Shah's reign when the country was heavily dependent on the United States and the West. The revolution was a response to this intervention, and one of its main goals was to achieve true independence for the country. For this reason, Iranian foreign policy is characterized by rejecting foreign pressure and sanctions, and trying to build balanced relations with countries that respect its sovereignty. (Soltani, Mottaqi Dastnaei, & Simbar, 2022, pp. 109-122).

This strategy means that Iran refuses to submit to Western pressure regarding its nuclear program or its support for resistance movements in the region. Iran sees its national independence as an essential part of its revolutionary and Islamic identity, which cannot be compromised under any circumstances. At the same time, it seeks to build alliances with countries that share this vision, such as Russia and China, to avoid the international isolation imposed by Western sanctions.. (Abedin, 2011, pp. 613-628).

Iran's foreign policy after the Islamic Revolution represents a combination of religious ideology, a commitment to justice, and a pursuit of national sovereignty. This policy reflects Iran's vision of itself as an independent state capable of defying external pressures and supporting the oppressed around the world. By supporting resistance movements and defending its sovereignty, Iran seeks to achieve its regional and international goals and play a leading role in the region and the Islamic world.. (Nia, 2012, p. 3).

The second requirement: Iranian foreign policy goals and regional and international aspirations

Iran's foreign policy seeks to achieve significant regional influence, especially in the Middle East, by strengthening its role as a major regional power. This influence stems from Iran's aspirations to impose its presence in the region and the world, aspirations that are in line with what it considers ideological, political, and religious commitments. Iran aims to achieve internal and regional stability by building strong alliances with countries and groups that agree with its vision, and it seeks to resist Western interventions that it sees as threatening its sovereignty and security (Zarif, 2014, pp. 49-59).

One of the most prominent examples of Iran's strategies to enhance its regional influence is its support for armed groups in some Arab countries. In Lebanon, Iran supports Hezbollah, which is considered one of the most powerful armed militias in the region. By providing financial, military and political support to Hezbollah, Iran has been able to consolidate its influence in Lebanon and enhance its power in the conflict with Israel. Hezbollah is considered a key tool in implementing Iranian policy in the region, as it represents

a bridge to pass the Iranian agenda, and it also plays an important role in influencing Lebanese domestic politics (Joharchi, 2016, p. 50).

In Syria, Iran has played a prominent role in supporting the regime of President Bashar al-Assad since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011. This support has been crucial to the survival of the Syrian regime, as Iran has sent military advisors, provided funding, and even weapons to Syrian forces. Through this support, Iran has been able to maintain its strategic alliance with Syria and ensure the presence of a reliable regional ally. Iran's intervention in Syria is part of its strategy to promote regional stability and advance its interests in the face of other regional powers, such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey. (Ayman, 2012, pp. 85-114).

In Iraq, Iran has strengthened its influence after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003. Iran has taken advantage of the vacuum left by the US invasion of Iraq to build strong alliances with the Iraqi government and various Shiite armed factions. Iran's support for the Popular Mobilization Forces, a group of Iraqi Shiite militias, has helped it to become an influential force in Iraq, enabling it to influence Iraqi domestic and regional politics. Through these alliances, Iran seeks to enhance its internal security, protect its borders, and ensure friendly governments in neighboring countries. (Raouf, 2019, pp. 242-256).

Internationally, Iran is working to resist Western interference by building balanced relations with global powers such as Russia and China. Iran seeks to exploit these relations to mitigate the effects of Western sanctions imposed on it, especially after the United States withdrew from the nuclear agreement in 2018. For example, Iran signed long-term economic and strategic agreements with China, which included infrastructure projects and investments in the oil and energy sectors. These agreements are part of Iran's strategy to expand the scope of its international cooperation and confront the economic isolation imposed by Western sanctions (Rakel, 2007, pp. 159-187).

At the same time, Iran is trying to strengthen its presence in international and regional organizations to protect its interests and confront external pressures. An example of this is its continued negotiations on the nuclear agreement with the major powers (P5+1), through which Iran seeks to ease sanctions in exchange for limiting its nuclear program. Despite tensions with the West, Iran continues to seek a deal that guarantees it economic benefits while preserving its sovereignty. (Abedin, 2011, pp. 613-628).

Iran is also working to expand its influence in regional organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Non-Aligned Movement. Through these organizations, Iran seeks to enhance its image as a leading state in the Islamic world and promote its vision against Western hegemony. This trend reflects Iran's ambition to play a leading role in shaping international policies that affect the region. (Ramazani, 1992, pp. 393-412).

Based on these strategies, it is clear that Iran's foreign policy aims to enhance its regional influence by expanding alliances, using soft power and military support for its allies, in addition to expanding its role in international organizations. Through this, Iran seeks to achieve internal stability, resist Western interference, and protect its regional and international interests in the face of external sanctions and pressures. (Dorraj & Entessar, 2013)

The third requirement: Iranian foreign policy strategies and tools

Iran relies on a variety of strategies to achieve its foreign objectives, exploiting various tools such as soft power and direct support for political and military movements, in addition to diplomacy and economic relations. The main goal is to enhance its influence in the Middle East region and protect its interests in the face of regional and international pressures. (Haji-Yousefi, 2010, pp. 1-23).

Iran uses soft power by supporting allied Islamist movements, and exploits religious and cultural ties to strengthen its presence in the region. One of the most prominent examples of this approach is its support for Shiite groups in Iraq, especially after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. Iran took advantage of the political vacuum in Iraq to build strong relationships with Shiite parties and religious leaders, allowing it to

influence Iraq's internal politics. This influence helped Iran build a strong presence in Iraq, which is one of Iran's most important regional allies, and serves as a bridge to expand its influence in the Gulf region. (Jahanbani & Levy, 2024, pp. 340-353).

In Lebanon, Iran's support for Hezbollah has been one of its most important tools for regional influence. Hezbollah, founded in the 1980s with Iranian assistance, has become a major player in Lebanese politics and a prominent military force in the conflict with Israel. By providing financial, military, and political support to Hezbollah, Iran has been able to influence the Lebanese arena and strengthen its presence in the region. Hezbollah is an example of how Iran uses resistance movements to advance its regional strategies and balance opposing forces. (Halliday, 2024).

In addition to soft power, Iran relies on direct support for political and military movements allied with it in conflict zones. In Yemen, Iran supports the Houthis, who have managed to take control of the capital, Sanaa, and challenge the internationally recognized Yemeni government. By providing military and financial support to the Houthis, Iran seeks to strengthen its influence in the Arabian Peninsula and counter Saudi influence in the region. This support is not simply an attempt to control Yemen, but rather reflects part of a broader strategy to counter Gulf hegemony and promote balance in the region (Mozaffari & Akbar, 2024, pp. 597-614).

Iran's support for the Syrian regime during the civil war is one of the most significant examples of direct intervention in regional conflicts. Since the outbreak of the war in Syria in 2011, Iran has provided significant military and financial assistance to support the regime of President Bashar al-Assad. This support has helped Assad remain in power and has allowed Iran to strengthen its military and political presence in Syria. Iran sees Syria as a vital strategic ally, and its continued support for the Syrian regime reflects its commitment to preserving its regional interests in the face of competing powers such as Türkiye and Saudi Arabia.

In addition to military and political support, Iran uses diplomacy and economic relations as a weapon to enhance its influence vis-à-vis international powers. In recent years, Iran has strengthened its economic relations with global powers such as China and Russia to counter the effects of Western sanctions. For example, investment and infrastructure agreements with China, which include long-term projects in the oil and energy sectors, enhance Iran's ability to confront the economic isolation imposed by Western sanctions. This economic cooperation provides Iran with political and strategic support that strengthens its position vis-à-vis the United States and its allies. (Freudlsperger & Meunier, 2024).

Iran is also seeking to use diplomacy to ease sanctions, as seen in its handling of the nuclear deal with Western powers. Despite the US withdrawal from the deal in 2018, Iran has continued to negotiate with European countries to try to preserve some economic gains and ease economic pressure. These negotiations reflect Iran's desire to use diplomacy as a tool to protect its economic and political interests, while continuing to work to strengthen its regional position. (Cadier, 2024).

Based on these diverse tools and strategies, it is clear that Iran seeks to achieve its goals through a combination of soft power, military support, economic relations, and diplomacy. These strategies enhance its regional influence and protect its interests in the face of international challenges and pressures, making it a key player in determining the course of events in the Middle East region.

Section Two: Iran's Position on the Palestinian Issue

The first requirement: The evolution of Iran's position on the Palestinian issue over the years

Since the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, Iran's position on the Palestinian issue has undergone a radical transformation. Before the revolution, Iran under the Shah maintained good relations with Israel, viewing it as a strategic ally in the face of common threats, including the Soviet Union and Arab influence. However, this alliance changed completely after the Islamic Revolution, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, as Iran reshaped its foreign policy based on revolutionary Islamic principles. (Alcaro & Dijkstra, 2024, pp. 1-18).

After the revolution, the Palestinian issue became central to Iranian foreign policy, as the new leadership saw supporting the Palestinians and their resistance against the Israeli occupation as a religious and political duty. Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the revolution, emphasized the need to support the “oppressed” of the world, and Palestine became a symbol of this idea, as it suffered from the Israeli occupation. From this standpoint, Iran adopted a policy of supporting the Palestinians by all possible means, including financial and military support for resistance movements.. (Dinçer, 2024, pp. 245-264).

A prominent example of this change is Iran’s support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad, two of the most prominent Palestinian armed movements fighting against the Israeli occupation. Iran has provided financial and military assistance to these movements, enabling them to enhance their capabilities in confronting Israel. This support is part of Iran’s strategy to enhance its influence in the region, as it sees supporting the Palestinian resistance as a means to confront Israel, which it considers a major enemy in the region, as well as to limit Western influence, especially American influence.(Saraswat, 2024, pp. 60-65).

In addition to direct support for Palestinian resistance movements, Iran has taken diplomatic and symbolic steps to support the Palestinian cause. For example, the Israeli embassy in Tehran was converted into the Palestinian embassy immediately after the revolution. This move was a strong message to the world that Iran is now a strong supporter of the Palestinians and against Israel. In addition, Iran has become one of the most prominent countries that celebrates the international “Jerusalem Day,” a day on which Islamic countries celebrate to affirm their support for the Palestinian cause and demand the liberation of Jerusalem from occupation.(Perletta, 2024, pp. 1-21).

Regionally, Iran has used the Palestinian cause as a tool to strengthen its position as a regional power resisting the Zionist project. Through its support for Palestinian resistance movements and Hezbollah in Lebanon, Iran has sought to build an axis of “resistance” that challenges Israel, the United States, and their allies in the region. This support has enabled Iran to gain popular support in some Arab and Islamic circles that see the Palestinian cause as a just cause.(Zaccara, 2024, p. 54).

However, Iran's role was not limited to military and political support, but also included economic support. During the years of the economic blockade on Gaza, Iran provided financial and humanitarian aid to Gaza, including support for rebuilding infrastructure destroyed by Israeli attacks. Iran also contributed to providing medical support and humanitarian aid to the residents of the besieged Strip.. (Falki & Asrar, 2024, pp. 123-131).

However, Iran’s support for the Palestinian resistance has raised tensions with some Arab countries, especially those seeking better relations with Israel. Some Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have criticized Iran’s support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad, arguing that this support increases tensions and complicates possible peaceful solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These countries see Iran’s policies as deepening divisions in the Arab world and weakening the drive toward peace..

It can be said that Iran’s shift in its position towards the Palestinian issue after the Islamic Revolution was a strategic and ideological shift. From an alliance with Israel to supporting the Palestinian resistance, Iran has become a major player in supporting the Palestinian cause at the regional and international levels. This role was not only for ideological or religious reasons, but also as part of a broader strategy to enhance its regional influence and confront its traditional enemies. Iran’s continued support for the Palestinians is a key part of its foreign policy, and demonstrates its long-standing commitment to resisting the Israeli occupation and strengthening resistance in the region.. (Mens, 2024, pp. 438-461).

The second requirement: Iran’s role in supporting Palestinian resistance movements

Iran has played a pivotal role in supporting Palestinian resistance movements, especially Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran has come to see itself as a protector of the oppressed and the weak, and in this context, it has considered supporting the Palestinians in their resistance against the Israeli occupation a religious and political duty. Tehran sees supporting these movements as part of its regional strategy to expand its influence and confront Israel and the West.(Bakhshandeh, 2024).

Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, is one of the most prominent movements that has received financial and military support from Iran. Relations between the two sides began in the 1990s, and grew stronger after Hamas won the Palestinian elections in 2006 and took control of the Strip in 2007. Iran has provided significant financial support to Hamas, estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars, including funding military operations and humanitarian aid, especially during times of the Israeli blockade of Gaza. In addition to financial support, Iran has provided Hamas with military and logistical training, which has helped it develop its military capabilities, including the manufacture of missiles and weapons used against Israel. For example, missiles financed and developed with Iranian assistance have been used in various conflicts with Israel, such as the 2014 Gaza War (Abbas, 2024, pp. 181-197).

The Islamic Jihad Movement, the second largest Palestinian resistance movement after Hamas, has also received significant support from Iran. Since its founding in the 1980s, Islamic Jihad has built strong ties with Iran, thanks to its ideology that is close to the Islamic Republic. Islamic Jihad adopts the revolutionary Islamic ideology promoted by Iran, which has made Tehran see it as a natural ally in Palestine. Iran has provided financial and military support to Islamic Jihad, which has enabled the movement to carry out military operations against Israel and significantly develop its military capabilities. Islamic Jihad possesses an arsenal of rockets, which were developed with Iranian assistance or funding, and the movement has used them in multiple attacks on Israel.

This Iranian support for the resistance movements is not limited to direct aid only, but also includes military and intelligence training. Iran sends experts and advisors to train Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters in combat techniques, preparing defensive tunnels, and developing weapons. It is believed that many of the military leaders in these movements received training in Iran or at the hands of Iranian experts in other regions. This acquired experience has strengthened the Palestinian movements' ability to withstand Israel, and provided them with advanced military tactics.. (Bukhari, Khan, & Haq, 2024).

Iran's support for these movements enhances its influence in the region. By providing this support, Iran builds a network of regional allies who share the same strategic goals, particularly in terms of confronting Israel and reducing Western influence. The presence of Hamas and Islamic Jihad as part of the "axis of resistance" that includes Iran, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the Syrian regime, enhances Iran's ability to confront Israeli and Western pressure. Iran benefits from the presence of these movements as active forces in the region to increase its influence and expand the network of alliances that support it.

On the other hand, this Iranian support for resistance movements has angered some Arab countries that see Iran as a threat to the stability of the region. Countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE believe that Iran's support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad deepens the internal Palestinian division and complicates peace efforts. These countries also fear that Iran's growing influence will destabilize the region and increase sectarian tensions, especially in light of the presence of political forces allied with Iran in other Arab countries such as Iraq and Yemen.

Iranian support for Palestinian resistance movements has also had international repercussions. The United States and European countries have imposed economic sanctions on Iran, in part because of its support for these movements, which some countries classify as terrorist organizations. This support has put Iran in constant confrontation with the West, and was considered part of the reasons that led to the imposition of severe sanctions on the Iranian economy.

Iran's support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad appears to be an integral part of its regional strategy to expand its influence and confront Israel. By providing financial, military, and training assistance, Iran has helped these movements develop their capabilities and enhance their role in confronting the Israeli occupation. While this support increases Iran's influence in the region, it also raises regional and international tensions, further complicating the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East.

The third requirement: The impact of the Iranian position on the regional and international situation

Iran's support for the Palestinian resistance has caused great tensions at the regional and international levels, as its policies have conflicted with the interests of many Arab and Western countries, leading to an escalation of tensions and political conflicts in the region. This support, which is considered part of Iran's strategy to enhance its regional influence, has created a state of regional polarization, especially with Arab countries that see Iran's support for Palestinian resistance movements as a threat to the stability of the region.

Regionally, Iran's support for movements such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad has heightened tensions with Gulf Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE. These states view Iran's support for armed movements as a way to enhance their influence in the region at the expense of stability, and see it as part of Iran's ambitions to impose its regional hegemony. The Gulf states, which have adopted a different approach to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, often see a peaceful solution and negotiations as the best way to resolve the Palestinian issue, and view Iran's support for armed resistance movements as a threat to peace efforts. This divergence in policies has strained relations between Iran and the Gulf states, and has created deep divisions in the Arab world.(Khalaf, 2024, pp. 318-331).

Saudi Arabia, in particular, strongly opposes Iranian support for resistance movements, seeing this support as part of Iran's plan to expand its influence in the Arab world. Riyadh also believes that support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad increases instability in the region and complicates international efforts to achieve peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis. In this context, any escalation in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict could lead to increased tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran, as happened during the various wars in Gaza, where some Arab countries called for restraint while Iran continued to provide support to armed movements.

In addition, many Arab countries view Iran's support for resistance movements as a tool to enhance its regional influence, which is of great concern, especially in countries that suffer from other Iranian interference such as Iraq, Syria and Yemen. In these countries, Iran is accused of supporting armed militias to achieve its political and military goals, which leads to destabilizing these countries. Therefore, Iran's support for the Palestinian resistance is seen within this broader context of Iran's attempt to expand its regional influence. (Dadparvar & Kaleji, 2024, pp. 203-225).

Internationally, Iran's support for Palestinian resistance movements, especially Hamas and Islamic Jihad, has angered many Western countries, especially the United States and the European Union. These countries consider Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorist organizations, and accuse Iran of financing terrorism by supporting these movements. The United States has imposed harsh economic sanctions on Iran over the years, in part because of its support for the Palestinian resistance and Hezbollah in Lebanon. US sanctions include freezing the assets of individuals and institutions linked to financing these movements, in addition to imposing a ban on companies that deal with Iran. (Bajoghli, Nasr, Salehi-Isfahani, & Vaez, 2024).

International sanctions on Iran aim to reduce its ability to support armed movements and develop its nuclear program, but they have also contributed to deepening its international isolation. For its part, Iran insists that its support for the Palestinian resistance is part of its commitment to helping the "oppressed" in the face of Israeli occupation, and rejects Western accusations of financing terrorism. This Iranian position increases tensions between Tehran and the West, and complicates any attempts to ease sanctions or improve relations between Iran and Western countries.

Israel, in turn, views Iran's support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad as a direct threat to its national security, as it sees Iran's financial and military support for these two movements as a factor that increases the Palestinian resistance's ability to launch military strikes against it. During previous wars between Israel and Gaza, Iran played a prominent role in supporting the military operations of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, whether through financing or providing military equipment. This support contributed to the escalation of violence and prolonged the conflict, which prompted Israel to work to strengthen its regional alliances with Arab countries such as the UAE and Bahrain, which in turn seek to limit Iran's influence.. (Siavoshi, 2024, pp. 209-223).

Iran's support for the Palestinian resistance has not only been an element of its regional policy, but has had profound effects on regional and international relations. While Tehran sees its support for the Palestinians as part of its religious and political commitment, many countries view this support as a threat to regional stability, which has deepened divisions in the region and led to international sanctions on Iran. This support remains a central pillar of Iran's regional strategy, but it is also a major source of ongoing tensions and conflicts in the Middle East.

Section Three: The Regional Impacts of Iran's Policy towards the Palestinian Issue

First requirement: Regional tensions as a result of Iran's support for the Palestinian cause

Iranian support for the Palestinian cause has greatly contributed to increased tensions with many moderate Arab countries that reject the military approach to resistance and instead call for peaceful solutions to reach a settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. These countries, such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt, prefer to resolve the conflict through diplomatic negotiations and political initiatives such as the Arab Peace Initiative proposed by Saudi Arabia in 2002. Under this initiative, Arab countries proposed recognizing Israel in exchange for its withdrawal from the occupied territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. For these countries, Iran's military support for the Palestinian resistance, especially Hamas and Islamic Jihad, is an unnecessary escalation that complicates peaceful solutions and increases the suffering of the Palestinian people.. (Bukhari, Khan, & Haq, 2024).

Iran, for its part, sees support for Palestinian armed resistance as part of its regional strategy to confront Israel and the United States. By providing financial and military support to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Iran seeks to expand its influence in the region and enhance its role as a protector of the Palestinian cause. This approach is a direct challenge to the moderate positions adopted by some Arab countries that seek to achieve stability in the region through diplomatic and negotiating means (Mozaffari & Akbar, 2024, pp. 597-614).

In Syria, Iranian support for Palestinian armed factions has strengthened relations between Iran and the Bashar al-Assad regime. Syria has always been a major player in supporting the Palestinian cause, and Iran's presence in Syria, especially after the civil war that broke out in 2011, has strengthened its influence not only in the Syrian conflict but also in the Palestinian arena. The Syrian regime is considered a strategic ally of Iran, and Iran's military presence in Syria, whether through the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps or allied armed factions such as Hezbollah, has given it significant influence in regional issues. Iran's support for the Palestinian resistance has strengthened its alliance with Syria, strengthening the Iranian axis that extends from Tehran to Damascus, and then to Beirut, where Hezbollah has an active role..

In Lebanon, Iran's influence has grown significantly through its support for Hezbollah, whose role is not limited to internal Lebanese affairs, but also extends to supporting the Palestinian resistance. Hezbollah, which receives financial and military support from Iran, is considered one of the most prominent military forces in Lebanon and plays an important role in supporting Palestinian factions, especially Hamas and Islamic Jihad. This support makes Lebanon a vital arena for Iran to strengthen its presence in the conflict with Israel. Every time tensions escalate between Israel and Gaza, Hezbollah plays a direct or indirect role, whether through logistical support or threats of escalation against Israel.. (Bukhari, Khan, & Haq, 2024, p. 3).

On the other hand, the Gulf states, led by Saudi Arabia, see this support as a threat to regional stability. Saudi Arabia and the UAE believe that Iran is using the Palestinian issue as a pretext to expand its regional influence and destabilize Arab countries. Iranian-Gulf relations, already tense due to disagreements over issues such as Yemen, Iraq and Syria, have been further complicated by Iranian support for Palestinian armed factions. The Gulf states see this support as exacerbating conflicts and giving Israel a pretext to increase military attacks on Gaza, which negatively affects the Palestinians..

The differences between the Iranian axis and the Gulf axis have become more evident in recent years. Countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE have taken clear steps to normalize relations with Israel within

the framework of the so-called “Abraham Accords” that were signed in 2020. These steps represent a major shift in regional attitudes towards Israel, and express the desire of the Gulf states to enhance regional stability through economic and diplomatic partnerships with Israel, distancing them from the Iranian approach that relies on armed resistance (Mozaffari & Akbar, 2024, pp. 597-614).

It can be said that Iranian support for the Palestinian cause, especially for armed resistance movements, has further complicated the regional landscape. While Iran sees this support as a means to enhance its regional influence and confront Israel, moderate Arab states see this approach as deepening divisions and increasing tensions, thus hindering efforts to achieve a peaceful and lasting settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The second requirement: The impact of Iran’s relations with Arab countries and Israel as a result of its position on the Palestinian issue

Iran’s support for the Palestinian resistance, especially armed factions such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, has greatly contributed to deepening differences with many Arab countries that oppose support for armed groups. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt believe that Iran’s military approach in supporting these movements increases instability in the region and complicates efforts to achieve peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis. These countries call for a political and peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and believe that support for armed factions contributes to the continuation of conflict and violence, and increases the suffering of the Palestinian people (Anwar & Abbas, 2024, p. 17).

(Aljebori, 2024).

Iran, for its part, considers support for armed resistance a fundamental part of its regional strategy. Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran has adopted an anti-Israel stance, and considers supporting Palestinians in their resistance to occupation a religious and political duty. Iran sees support for armed movements such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad as part of the “Axis of Resistance,” which consists of Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, and the resistance movements in Palestine. Through this axis, Iran seeks to strengthen its influence in the region and stand against what it sees as attempts at Israeli and American hegemony.

Iranian support for Palestinian armed factions has led to escalating tensions with moderate Arab states that seek to avoid violence and support diplomatic solutions. Saudi Arabia and the UAE in particular view Iran’s support for armed groups as undermining peace efforts and strengthening Iran’s control over some Arab states, such as Lebanon and Syria. In Lebanon, Iran-backed Hezbollah wields significant influence in domestic politics and plays a direct role in supporting Palestinian armed factions. This strong Hezbollah presence enhances Iranian influence in Lebanon and makes it an important arena for Iranian influence in the conflict with Israel.

In Syria, Iranian intervention and support for the Syrian regime and Hezbollah has strengthened its influence in the region. Syria has also provided a base for support for the Palestinian resistance, especially after the Syrian civil war, which saw a greater rapprochement between the Syrian regime and Hamas after a period of cold relations. This alliance reflects Iran’s regional strategy of building strong alliances with armed groups and states that share its hostility toward Israel. (Fiedler & Dehnavi, 2024, pp. 51-56).

Internationally, Iran’s hostile stance toward Israel has increased its international isolation. Israel views Iran as an existential threat to its security, especially in light of Iran’s nuclear program and continued support for Palestinian resistance movements and Hezbollah. Israel sees Iran not only as a source of military support for resistance movements, but also as a direct threat through the development of its missile and nuclear capabilities. This stance has prompted Israel to intensify its diplomatic and military efforts to limit Iranian influence in the region, which contributes to the complexity of regional relations.

The United States and many European countries view Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism and have imposed economic and political sanctions on it because of its support for Palestinian resistance movements and Hezbollah. These sanctions aim to reduce Iran’s ability to finance and arm armed movements and increase

its international isolation. For its part, Iran continues to emphasize its position that it supports the “oppressed” and opposes the Israeli occupation, and considers support for the Palestinian resistance a legitimate right in confronting the occupation (Stemmann & Arana, 2024).

Although Iran sees its support for the resistance as part of its commitment to the Palestinian cause, this support reinforces regional divisions, as many Arab states reject this approach. The differences between the Iranian axis and the Saudi-led Gulf axis complicate the political landscape in the region and increase tensions between the competing parties. Ultimately, Iran’s position in support of the Palestinian resistance reflects part of its larger regional strategy, but at the same time it contributes to deepening its international isolation and increasing tensions with moderate Arab states that prefer a peaceful approach to resolving the conflict.

The third requirement: The regional and international repercussions of Iran’s support for Palestinian resistance movements

Iranian support for the Palestinian resistance has significant regional and international implications, as it has formed a large part of its strategy to enhance its regional influence and confront international powers that oppose its policies. Regionally, this support has led to the formation of strong alliances with other regional powers such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Syrian regime, which has strengthened Iran’s position in the Middle East and allowed it to play a major role in regional balances. At the same time, on the international scene, this support has negatively affected Iran’s relations with Western countries, especially the United States and the European Union, which consider Tehran’s support for Palestinian factions a threat to regional stability and a justification for imposing severe sanctions on it.

Regionally, Iran’s support for Palestinian resistance movements, especially Hamas and Islamic Jihad, has strengthened its ties with regional allies such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria. Hezbollah, which is heavily backed by Iran, plays a crucial role in funding and training Palestinian armed factions, enhancing their military capabilities in the face of Israel. Iran’s alliance with Hezbollah is not limited to supporting Palestinian resistance, but extends to include shared strategic interests in the face of Israel and the United States. This alliance forms part of the “axis of resistance” that Iran seeks to establish as a counterweight to other regional powers such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE.. (Kaye & Vakil, 2024, p. 32).

Iran’s support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad strengthens its influence in occupied Palestine. Iran sees this support as a means of sending political and military messages to its regional and international opponents. Supporting the armed Palestinian factions strengthens Iran’s position as a regional power that enjoys the support of large segments of the Arab and Islamic peoples who see armed resistance as a legitimate means of confronting the Israeli occupation. Through its support for the Palestinians, Iran has been able to strengthen its position as an effective regional power in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In Syria, Iran’s support for the Syrian regime in its civil war since 2011 has strengthened their strategic alliance, with both sides sharing support for the Palestinian resistance. The Syrian regime is a vital ally of Iran, and its support for Palestinian armed factions comes in the context of its joint confrontation with Iran against Israel and the United States. Iran’s presence in Syria has allowed it to provide logistical and military support to Palestinian factions, making Damascus a pivotal base in Iran’s strategy to support the resistance.. (Saraswat, 2024, pp. 60-65).

Internationally, Iran’s support for Palestinian factions has strained relations with Western countries, especially the United States and the European Union. Western countries consider Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorist organizations, and accuse Iran of financing terrorism through its support for these movements. This support was one of the main reasons that prompted the United States to impose strict economic and political sanctions on Iran, as Washington considers this support to threaten regional stability and complicate international efforts to achieve peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The sanctions imposed on Iran aim to reduce its ability to finance and arm armed factions, and have significantly affected the Iranian economy and Tehran’s ability to maintain its regional influence.

In addition to economic sanctions, Iran's support for the Palestinian resistance has been used as a pretext to increase political pressure on Iran in international organizations, such as the United Nations. The United States and European countries often raise the issue of Iran's support for Palestinian armed factions in international forums as part of their efforts to undermine Iran's influence and limit its regional interventions. This support is also used as a tool in diplomatic maneuvering, with the West demanding that Iran stop supporting Palestinian factions as a condition for improving economic and political relations with them..

On the other hand, Iran sees supporting the Palestinian resistance as part of its religious and political commitment to the Palestinian cause, and considers that this support strengthens its position as a leading state in the Islamic world. Iran rejects Western accusations that it supports terrorism, and considers its support for the Palestinian resistance as legitimate support to confront the Israeli occupation. Tehran believes that armed resistance is the only way to achieve Palestinian rights and end the occupation.

Iran's support for the Palestinian resistance can be said to have broad regional and international implications. Regionally, this support has strengthened Iran's influence and formed strategic alliances with regional powers such as Hezbollah and Syria, which has strengthened Iran's position in the Middle East. Internationally, this support has strained relations with the West, which uses it as a pretext to impose sanctions and increase political pressure on Iran.

CONCLUSION:

Iran's foreign policy is manifested in strengthening its regional and international influence by supporting Palestinian resistance movements, as it sees this support as part of its broader strategy to confront Israel and the West and strengthen its position in the Islamic world. Iran's support for resistance movements, especially Hamas and Islamic Jihad, is one of the most prominent examples of its use of revolutionary and Islamic policies to strengthen its influence in the Middle East. Through this support, Iran seeks to enhance its image as a state that resists injustice and occupation, and relies on a religious ideology based on the principle of supporting the oppressed and resisting occupation.

Since the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iranian foreign policy has radically shifted from an alliance with Israel to full support for the Palestinians and resistance movements. The Islamic Revolution made the Palestinian issue one of the central issues that receives priority in Iranian foreign policy. Through this approach, Iran seeks to form strong alliances with other regional powers that oppose Israel, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Syrian regime. Iran's support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad was not limited to financial support, but extended to providing military and logistical support, which strengthened the ability of these movements to resist the Israeli occupation.

Moreover, Iran's support for resistance movements is an important tool for enhancing its regional influence and forming strategic alliances. For example, Iran's support for Hezbollah in Lebanon has strengthened its presence on the Israeli border, giving it greater leverage in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In addition, Iran has used its support for resistance movements as a means to challenge its regional rivals, such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE. These two countries, which have a moderate approach to the Palestinian issue and advocate diplomatic solutions, view Iran's support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad as a threat to regional stability..

Internationally, Iran's support for Palestinian resistance movements has angered many Western countries, especially the United States and the European Union. Western countries view Hamas and Islamic Jihad as terrorist organizations, and consider Iran's support for them part of its hostile policy toward Israel and the West. This has led to the imposition of strict economic and political sanctions on Iran, which are used to pressure Tehran to stop supporting the Palestinian resistance and modify its regional policies. The sanctions imposed on Iran were aimed at reducing its ability to finance and arm armed factions, but they have also increased Iran's international isolation.

In addition to sanctions, Western countries have used Iran's support for resistance movements as a pretext to increase diplomatic pressure on it. In international forums, especially at the United Nations, the issue of

Iran's support for armed factions is often raised as part of international efforts to counter Tehran's growing influence in the region. However, Iran sees support for the Palestinian resistance not only as part of its regional policy, but also as part of its religious and moral commitment to the Palestinians.

Iran's support for Palestinian resistance movements has also complicated Iran's relations with many moderate Arab states that reject the military approach to resistance. These states, such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, see Iran's support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad as a threat to regional stability, as it increases tensions and complicates efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This regional division between the Iranian axis and the Gulf axis has deepened political and diplomatic differences between Iran and moderate Arab states.

Iran's support for the Palestinian resistance can be said to be an important part of its regional and international strategy to enhance its influence and challenge Israeli and Western hegemony in the region. Although this support enhances Iran's standing in some regional and Islamic circles, it has caused significant tensions with moderate Arab states and Western countries, leading to the imposition of severe sanctions and increased international pressure on Tehran.

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