

The impact of geopolitical situation on the National Strategy (Case Study: South East Iran)

Morad Kaviani Rad*

Associate Professor of Political Geography, Kharazmi University, Tehran

Hasan Maldari

PhD candidate in Political Geography, Kharazmi University, Tehran

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Much of countries have their national strategy as a function of their geopolitical situation. Geographical location determines that if a country is dried land or maritime; is landlocked or passage; is marginal or has a geopolitical importance. We can say that this is a situation that defines greatly the activity of any country in international affairs and its spatial- location functions. Each situation has its own geopolitical codes that a country follows for policy making and strategy development according to these codes. Paying attention to these codes determines geopolitical weight of a country in spatial geographical configuration of geopolitical arrangements and orders governing the world. United States of America and Soviet Union have chosen maritime and dried land strategies, respectively, due to their geographic location. Former Soviet Union's did not pay attention to geopolitical codes due to its geographical location. This caused that the efforts of this country, during 1957-1979, to influence in marine field was failed, in addition to bearing high costs, and it eventually collapsed. Therefore, in formulating strategies, paying attention to geographical location is essential for proper implementation. Iran is the only single layer country between dried land and maritime powers and is in the focus of geopolitical theorists because of its geographical position on Rimland margin and it has had various roles in different era such as passage, retaining and influencing region. The South East region of Iran is one of the most important geographical positions because of allowing Iran to have relationship with the geopolitical structures of Indian Ocean, South and Southeast Asia and International Sea. The importance of this coastal area can be considered so much that it gives Iran the chance of selecting policy making in two different areas of maritime and dried land strategy. For this reason, the present paper is going to examine Iran's geopolitical position, particularly in the South East region. This study attempts to answer these questions:

- 1 - What impact does have Iran's geopolitical status on Iran's national strategy?
- 2 - What strategies do have South East region geopolitical codes for Iran?

The main hypothesis argues that adopted strategy by Iran in the South East region of the country is not in accordance with geo-political and geo-economical capacities of that region and is not effective in producing national power.

* Corresponding Author, Email: kaviani@khu.ac.ir

Methodology

This article is based on knowledge of political geography and geopolitics. The present article seeks to explain how geographical location and space influence codifying strategy based on geopolitical theories. Since the present study has objective and the subjective nature, the research methodology is based on empiricism and proof and the study method is descriptive-analytical using library, internet resources and Yearbook Statistical data of Sistan and Baloochestan province in 2011.

Results and discussion

In most geopolitical theories, the importance of geographical location has been emphasized as an important factor affecting the countries' strategy. Geographical position with its dual functions can strengthen the country in meeting its national interests and aims, in addition to create its dependency and weakness context.

Iran has considered geographical status and regional conditions in strategic policy making and formulation in higher documents, particularly country's outlook document in 2025 horizon. However, what is felt as a disadvantage is that this view is not made objectively at five-year plans. Geopolitical codes of Iran due to the geographical status of South East region of the country in local, regional and global levels include:

- Acting as a gateway country in the international arena and relating inland countries to maritime and to East Asia geo-strategic fields and geo-political structures of Persian Gulf, Oman Sea and Indian Ocean, Caspian Sea, OPEC and South West Asia.
- Investing Navy power and being in line with the states having power in maritime level
- Adopting maritime strategy and economic policy making based on this strategy
- Attracting foreign and domestic investments to bring out South East region from geopolitical isolation and developing Infrastructures of Chabahar Free Trade-Industrial Zone for promoting its geo-economic status.

The study results show that those in charge of the issue have not understood the importance of geopolitical codes of the country in South-East region. The reasons is weakness of the economic infrastructures in the study area, and it seems that five-year plans have been remained in codifying level at this area and have not been explained and implemented. Iran should pay attention to South East oil reservoir potentials in order to avoid expositing in geopolitical impasses. South-East Iran can be converted into national effective land and regional effective land and be promoted to a developed economic and population region by attracting foreign investments. Development of a transportation network, advanced technology facilities and economic focus can help better use this area. Iran should focus on strengthening North-South, South pathways and developing East axis under the security caused by energy exchange. Accordingly, geopolitical codes of South East region by planning maritime strategy for Iran will cause that this country achieves its actual position as a passage area and connecting geo-strategic and geo-political areas and its result is to move towards specialized integration and sustainable development of the country. Geopolitical opportunities arising from the movement towards a strategy based on above codes are:

1. Empowerment of Iran in the field of maritime trade and strengthening its naval power.
2. Conversion of Chabahar Port into a central and international port to provide broad and different services to international ships in terms of refueling, repairing, furnishing and manufacturing ships. It can also be used to create geopolitical dependency of the neighboring countries to these services.
3. Covering and supplying the ships for marine transportation of other countries,
4. Activities in North- south pathway,

- 5 . Promotion of Iran's role in regional integration,
- 6 . Conversion of Iran into a stable gateway country,
- 7 . Strategic depth and increasing military strength and control on the coast of Persian Gulf and its opening,
- 8 . Creation of a suitable path to transfer intercontinental energy to South East Asia market and decrease in the dependency on the Persian Gulf,
- 9 . Creation of fields for landlocked countries access to open water,
10. Construction of international airports for different countries access,
- 11 . Development of the tourism industry.

Conclusion

Due to the weakness of infrastructure needed for sustainable development in the region under study, the research hypothesis has been confirmed and has been based on the fact that the adopted strategy by Iran in the South East region of the country is not consistent with the geo-political realities of the country and has not influenced by the geopolitical weight of Iran in the region.

Keywords: National Strategy, Geo- economic, Geo- politic, South-East Iran.