

ANALYSIS OF IRAN'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE SYRIAN CONFLICT AND THE STAKES OF NATIONAL INTEREST OF COUNTRIES

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze Iran's foreign policy formulation model in the conflict in Syria. Furthermore, this paper tries to identify Iran's foreign policy formulation model as a response to the Syrian conflict. This writing uses a qualitative research method, that emphasizes case studies of Iran's foreign policy in the Syrian conflict by emphasizing literature studies that focus on official documents, reports, and certain international analyses, which are used to collect some data to provide an overview of the focus of analysis. Theoretically, Lovell's thoughts on models of foreign policy formulation and adaptation as a response to external conditions, namely leadership, accommodative, confrontative, and concordance strategy are used as an analytical tool to analyze Iran's foreign policy formulation and response in the Syrian conflict. The findings in this paper explain that Iran's foreign policy formulation is more influenced by leadership factors where the domestic political system emphasizes the importance of achieving national interests, namely economics, and security. While the implementation or response of Iran's foreign policy is more confrontative considering that Iran's involvement is more likely to encourage an increase in conflict escalation against countries in opposition to Iran while protecting the Syrian regime under Assad. The results of this article illustrate that a country's foreign policy is influenced by the political system that characterizes the nation while also explaining the importance of foreign policy responses by national interests even though confrontational interactions are ultimately a consequence of foreign policy implementation.

Keywords: Iranian Foreign Policy Model; Syrian conflict; Regional Interests.

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis model perumusan kebijakan luar negeri Iran dalam konflik di Suriah. Lebih jauh, tulisan ini mencoba mengidentifikasi model formulasi kebijakan luar negeri Iran sebagai respon terhadap konflik Suriah. Penulisan ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif, yang menekankan pada studi kasus kebijakan luar negeri Iran dalam konflik Suriah dengan menitikberatkan pada studi literatur yang berfokus pada dokumen-dokumen resmi, laporan-laporan, dan analisis-analisis internasional tertentu, yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan sejumlah data untuk memberikan gambaran umum mengenai fokus analisis. Secara teoritis, pemikiran Lovell mengenai model-model formulasi dan adaptasi kebijakan luar negeri sebagai respon atas kondisi eksternal, yaitu kepemimpinan, akomodatif, konfrontatif, dan strategi konkordansi digunakan sebagai pisau analisis untuk menganalisa formulasi dan respon kebijakan luar negeri Iran dalam konflik Suriah. Temuan dalam penelitian ini menjelaskan bahwa formulasi kebijakan luar negeri Iran lebih dipengaruhi oleh faktor kepemimpinan dimana sistem politik dalam negeri lebih menekankan pada pentingnya pencapaian kepentingan nasional yaitu



ekonomi dan keamanan. Sedangkan implementasi atau respon kebijakan luar negeri Iran lebih bersifat konfrontatif mengingat keterlibatan Iran lebih cenderung mendorong peningkatan eskalasi konflik terhadap negara-negara yang berseberangan dengan Iran sekaligus melindungi rezim Suriah di bawah kepemimpinan Assad. Hasil dari artikel ini menggambarkan bahwa kebijakan luar negeri suatu negara dipengaruhi oleh sistem politik yang menjadi ciri khas negara tersebut.

Kata Kunci: Model Kebijakan Luar Negeri Iran; Konflik Suriah; Kepentingan Regional.

INTRODUCTION

This paper emphasizes the analytical model of Iran's foreign policy formulation and response to the Syrian conflict. In more detail, this article emphasizes how Iran, as a country, has a foreign policy that is leadership, accommodative, confrontational, and concordance strategy, in viewing Iran's involvement in the conflict in Syria. The process behind Iran's foreign policy model cannot be separated from the ability of Iran's leaders to adapt to developments in the geopolitical environment in which Iran's regional region is located. On the other hand, there is the presence of the US and its allies which, politically and militarily, have been a threat to Iran since the 1979 Iranian Revolution, within the framework of Iran's alliances and security interests in the Middle East.

Middle East area, Iran's alliance with Syria has been around for a long time. The relationship between Iran and Syria is often referred to as an alliance and became even closer when the civil war broke out in Syria. Moreover, Iran's role in Syria is quite central, not only defending the Damascus regime in the civil war but also developing long-term relations between the two countries. According to the Wilson Center, relations between the two countries are particularly important because of Iran and Syria's geopolitical location in the region. Relations between Iran and Syria have gone through several phases, starting when the power structure and dynamics began to change in the 1980s (Darmawan, 2023).

In the initial phase, Syria was a strong and dominant country in the region because it received full support from the Soviet Union. At the same time, Iran was busy fighting Iraq.

However, when the geopolitical status in the Syrian region changed, circumstances made Iran have a stronger and more dominant role in its relations with Syria. Furthermore, when the civil war broke out in Syria in 2011, Iran was faced with two big choices; providing aid to the regime or not interfering in the hope that the next regime will not be hostile to Iran. In the end, Iran chose to side with President Bashar al-Assad's regime. The choice of Iran and its ally, Lebanese Hezbollah, to support the Syrian regime means that Tehran must face opposition supported by the United States, Saudi Arabia, and several European countries (Darmawan, 2023). Iran's involvement in the Syrian conflict cannot be separated from the alliance between Russia, Iran, and Syria. The following action shows Iran's foreign policy which is at odds with the United States and its allies.

In the Syrian conflict, when the Syrian crisis continued into the fall and winter of 2011, it increasingly took on regional and international dimensions. Proxy wars began to emerge involving regional and international actors. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf Arab states began providing material and financial support to the Syrian opposition. As a result, Iran, Hezbollah, and Iraq felt compelled to fully support the Assad regime. Tehran sees the Syrian crisis as a golden opportunity to confront its regional rivals and reduce their power and influence in the Middle East. At the international level, the United States and the European Union are united in exerting pressure and isolating Damascus. Moscow, traditionally the main supplier of weapons to Syria, continues to send weapons to Damascus (Goodarzi, 2013: 3).

Iran and its allies increasingly view the situation in Syria as a zero-sum game, because of the fear that the overthrow of Syria's Ba'athist

regime could pave the way for the emergence of a new regime in Damascus that would be hostile to Tehran. As a result, the Iranian leadership made a strategic decision to fully support Assad by providing weapons, oil, and financial assistance (Goodarzi, 2013: 4).

On the other hand, Iran's foreign policy and the Iran-Syria alliance relationship cannot be separated from Iran's political revolution which changed the direction of Iran's foreign policy in looking at Western countries. The Iranian political revolution, which is often referred to as the "Islamic Revolution" in Iran, was the collective resistance of the Iranian people against the government of Reza Pahlavi who was considered dictatorial, corrupt, and tyrannical. The form of the state changed from an absolute monarchy to a republic based on the Shi'a school of Islam. Thus, the Iranian Revolution was ideologically a resistance born from the spirit of acculturation, reflective religious resistance, and cultural studies, and at the same time colored by the spirit of modernity (Riza 1989: 3). In this way, it is interesting to examine the formulation and response of Iran's foreign policy in the Syrian conflict from the perspective of Iran's political system and security interests in the Middle East, especially regarding Iran's hostile relations with Arab countries which are allies of the United States (US).

THEORETICAL CONCEPTUAL

The study of foreign policy is an attempt to integrate two levels of analysis into a unified whole. In other words, analysts rely on both systemic and domestic independent variables to account for different types of foreign policy behavior. Systemic factors such as the nature of the international political system, whether bipolar, multipolar, or unipolar, and direct policy actions of other actors in the regional environment are very important to understand and analyze in the formulation of the country's foreign policy as internal resources. Apart from that, the geographic location of a country will determine how the domestic situation prepares forces to face systemic pressure. This will also underline the nature in

which a country's geography will come upon another country's geography. Hence, it will determine the type of force used by other countries in exerting pressure, both political and military pressure.

National attributes can be defined as characteristics, as well as, the main character of a country. East defines national attributes in several ways, namely: (East 1978: 124).

1. National attributes refer to national characteristics as a whole and not specific sub-national characteristics.
2. National attributes are characteristics that can be conceptualized and measured without reference to entities outside national boundaries.
3. National attributes are stable characteristics.

National attributes which include national resource factors, national capability and capacity factors, and value-forming factors in using and utilizing national resources, are the main and independent variables in determining national capabilities and in influencing the tendencies of leaders and policymakers in utilizing national resources. to realize national interests through foreign policy (East 1978: 127).

Another quite relevant approach is the concept of foreign policy which talks about cross-border relations between countries in the international system. comprehensively, explaining the operational environment (perational milieu) that surrounds a country as an environment that influences a country's behavior (Walker 1987: 269).

Apart from that, a country's foreign policy is also a form of political bureaucracy where this approach prioritizes a country's domestic structure in formulating its foreign policy. Political bureaucracy is an approach that can reveal the characteristics of a country's government through sub-variables, namely: (Allison 1969: 707).

1. Basic Units of Analysis
2. Organization
3. Dominant Interaction Patterns

4. General Problems
5. Specific Problems

The scope of the basic unit of analysis explains that policy is a political product aimed at improving a country's bargaining position. Meanwhile, the organization emphasizes the role and involvement of influential organizational positions so that it can determine the scale of priorities, perceptions, and issues that need to be discussed. The role of the organization's position emphasizes the interests and power that the organization has through actions that can reach the organizations below it to limit the results of the resulting foreign policy (Allison 1969: 710).

FOREIGN POLICY ADAPTABILITY

Foreign policy analysis is explicitly discussed as part of the assumption in which state-centrism is heavily emphasized and pinpointing that the State is the actor. The state, acting through its government is seen as a 'unitary' and 'rational' actor, pursuing national interests shaped by its power, and competing with other states in an environment characterized by conditions of anarchy. As the only significant actor in international affairs, the relationship between countries in their interactions through foreign policy is very important to analyze.

Foreign policy elements are depicted through concentric circles which become permanent elements. And it even fades and changes other permanent elements outside the concentric circles, such as population, national character, social structure, etc. These elements are components that describe what is called national power.

Apart from that, several variables serve as models in analyzing foreign policy, including actors, perceptions, values, motivation, competency of the environment, international system structure, and many other variables that tend to be difficult to understand and research. On the other hand, external conditions in the international system are also a reflection of a country or an input that influences decisions made, so that these decisions can be detected

and measured, as output, and then these decisions are ratified and formalized.

The analysis of a country's foreign policy is a step to see the calculation patterns of policy-makers to achieve national goals (Lovell 1970: 69). For this reason, analysis of foreign policy will lead to interactions between two or more countries as a process of sub-actors within countries interacting with each other to shape or limit the resulting policy decisions (Lovell 1970: 76).

Based on Lovell's writing, there is a logical pattern that emphasizes foreign policy as a strategy to fulfill national interests, which is produced through the ability of national leaders to adapt to their strategic environment and is formulated by policymakers in the state bureaucratic system.

In every country, the bureaucratic structure does not only talk about the culture, beliefs, or values adopted by a country, but the bureaucratic structure places more emphasis on groups that have more authority in determining or responding to important situations. The group that has the most influence in a country's bureaucratic structure tends to determine the political system which has a major impact on the foreign policy formulation system (Lovell, 1970: 247).

In other words, a country's foreign policy is formulated based on the country's political system which is adjusted to external developments as an adaptive step to respond to external conditions. The combination of the country's political system in formulating foreign policy is aimed at adapting to conditions outside the country as a form of state response. Foreign policy responses can be categorized into four theoretical objectives that focus on several points of view such as leadership, accommodative, confrontative, and concordance strategy (Lovell, 1970).

Therefore, Lovell's thoughts on models of foreign policy formulation and response are used as an analytical tool to analyze Iran's foreign policy formulation and response model in the conflict in Syria.

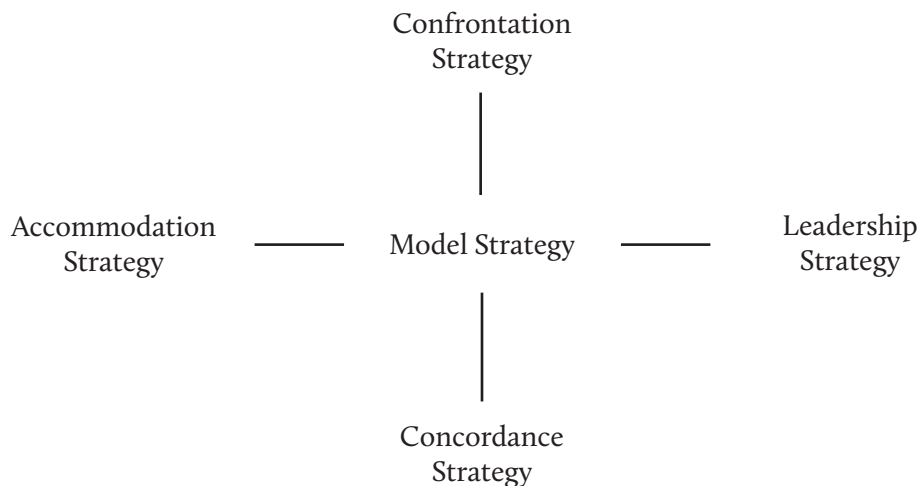


Fig 1. Model FP John P. Lovell

DISCUSSION

Overview of the Conflict in Syria

The Middle East is a place that has consistently captured of attention and interest of humanity. Periodically, the region has witnessed an accumulation of significant historical events, ranging from prosperous eras of cultural progress in the Nile, Euphrates, and Tigris valleys, to the emergence of unexpected political phenomena in Iran, resulting in the transformation of an empire into an Islamic republic. Additionally, the region has experienced numerous cases of violence driven by various domestic, regional, and international political motives, illustrated by conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli War, the US-Iraq invasion, and the political revolution known as the “Arab Spring” in various countries. in recent years. Additionally, it is worth noting that several centuries earlier, the Middle East had witnessed the emergence of extraordinary phenomena, thereby establishing itself as a significant spiritual center through the creation of major global beliefs. The ongoing impact of these religions continues to resonate with many individuals around the world.

The Arab Spring in Syria began in the city of Deraa. The perpetrators responsible for

writing “al-shaab yureed isqat al-nizam” (people who want to overthrow the regime) on the wall have been identified as a group of fifteen students, all aged 15 years. As a result, the students were arrested by security personnel under the command of Atef Najib, who is known to be a relative of President Bashar al-Assad. The children were subjected to punishments such as having their nails removed. In response to parents’ objections, Atef Najib expressed indifference towards their children. Please engage in the act of taking a break with your current partner and consider the possibility of forming a new marital relationship. Alternatively, you may choose to transfer your partner to my care, where I will perform the tasks mentioned above. About a thousand people participated in demonstrations against the Omari Mosque as a direct reaction to the reported abuse of children (Sahide, The Arab Spring: Reading the Chronology and Casual Factors, 2015).

The cities of Damascus and Aleppo, experience economic disparities between their urban and rural populations. The rental economy that existed under Bashar al-Assad’s rule was dominated by individuals who had strong affiliations with the authorities, as a consequence of the economic system established

under neoliberal colonialism. Revolutions can be attributed to factors such as high population growth and unemployment. Around 25% of Syria's total population, which amounts to around 22 million people, consists of young people in the productive age range.

According to Kuncahyono (2013), the unemployment rate among individuals who have completed university education has reached 81%. State oil income in 1996 reached 583,000 barrels per day, but in 2010 it was reduced to 385,000 barrels per day. The current situation has placed the Syrian economy in an unstable position, with the potential for sudden collapse.

The Arab Spring revolutions affected Arab countries and contributed to the existing historical documentation of war incidents in the Middle East. The terms "Arab Spring" (*alrabii' al-arabiy*) and "Arab Revolution" (*al-thauraat al-arabiyyah*) encompass different connotations. The Arab Spring can be characterized as an intellectual phenomenon driven by increased awareness, conceptual frameworks, and popular aspirations for democratizing significance, which has gained unbridled momentum, facilitated primarily by the use of social media platforms. The Arab Revolutions represent the collective aspirations of individuals in various fields for substantial transformation. This multi-faceted phenomenon not only encompasses the essential components of freedom of expression but also extends to multiple dimensions of human existence. Similar to the aspirations of Egyptian activists, namely related to political equality (democracy), social welfare, and the creation of human dignity.

The Iranian government's strategic decision to provide support to President Bashar in his continued leadership of Syria is a wise move aimed at strengthening alliances across the Middle East region. Iran sees Saudi Arabia as actively forming a coalition of Gulf countries to undermine Iran's influence in various fields. Saudi Arabia has extended an invitation to member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), including Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), to cut their diplomatic ties with Iran.

The value of trade between Iran and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has reached a significant amount of US\$ 22 billion.

In its quest for economic stabilization, Iran continues to strive to promote collaborative relations with foreign countries, with Syria as a preferred partner. Syria, due to its geographical proximity and strategic position, serves as the closest country in the region, facilitating trade with European and African countries. In 2011, a bilateral agreement was made between Iran and Syria, which resulted in the signing of a natural gas contract worth 10 billion US dollars. This included the integration of Iraq into the deal. Establishment of a natural gas pipeline network spanning Iran, through Iraq, and Syria, and eventually reaching the Mediterranean and Lebanon. The profit allocation will be distributed as follows: Iraq will receive a supply of 20 million cubic meters of natural gas per day, while Syria will be given a range of 20 to 25 million cubic kilometers per day. Iran's landmark project has been operational since 2008, boasting projects worth 1.3 billion US dollars (Kuncahyono, 2013).

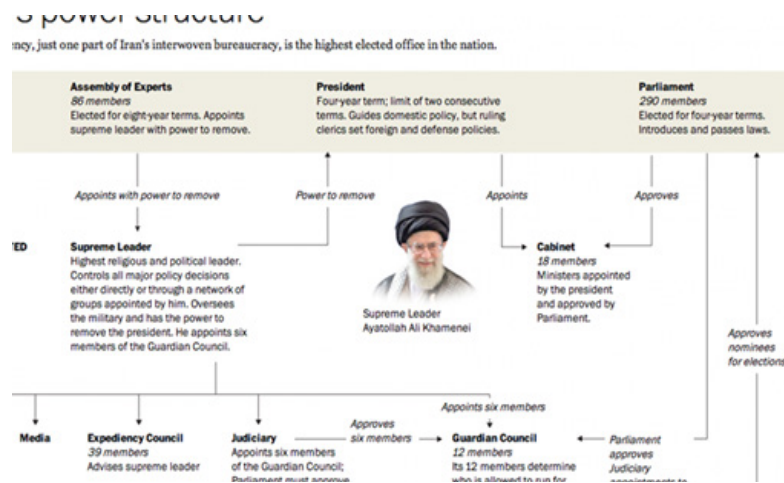
Analysis of Iran's Foreign Policy Model in the Syrian Conflict

The Iranian government has an Iranian political system that has several democratic institutions, such as a legislature and a president, both of which are elected by Iranian voters. But it also has a supreme leader, whose title makes it clear that he is more powerful than the president and is not democratically elected. In short, These are all practical ways to demonstrate the importance of the president in Iran's government, especially in domestic policy and its implementation, but have limitations when it comes to economic and security matters, given how much of the state's authority is under his control. supreme leader.

To analyze Iran's foreign policy, it is important to know the key that unlocks the driving force of Iran's foreign policy, namely the Wilayat al-Faqih ideology. How Khomeini's ideology of Wilayat al-Faqih influenced foreign policy. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, "ideology has a religious character that strengthens its dimensions its myths and frees

Iran's power structure

The presidency, just one part of Iran's interwoven bureaucracy, is the highest elected office in the nation



decision makers from presenting rational justifications. That is Allah's will and what Islam wants is often used as justification." Furthermore, Khomeini's religious ideology emphasized the importance of freedom and independence not only of the Iranian people but also of Muslim nations from the shackles of imperialism (Islamic imperialism against Western imperialism).

At the international level, it is very important to understand that Iran is involved in strategic issues that concern several large countries which are also key countries in international security and economic mapping, such as Russia, China, the United States (US), Israel, and Saudi Arabia.

In more detail, Iran is recognized as a founding member of the United Nations (UN), as well as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The political structure in Iran is based on a constitutional framework known as "Qanun-e Asasi" or the Basic Law. The prevailing political system is characterized as a presidential republic, in which a supreme leader and president hold positions of authority.

a. Supreme Leader

The Supreme Leader of Iran is responsible for formulating and supervising the "general policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran". In addition,

he also holds leadership positions within Iran's armed forces and intelligence agencies, thus having the unilateral authority to initiate a declaration of war. Appointments to key positions in Iran's judiciary, radio stations, television networks, police, army, and most of the Guardian Council fall under the authority of the Supreme Leader. The Assembly of Experts is tasked with the responsibility of selecting and dismissing the Supreme Leader, based on an assessment of individual qualifications and level of public support. In addition, this Council is also responsible for overseeing the duties of the Supreme Leader.

b. Executive

The term "executive" refers to individuals who hold high-level positions in an organization. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the president holds an important position, ranking second in terms of political influence and authority. The President of Iran is elected through a general election process and serves for four years. In accordance with the principles of an Islamic state, Iran's Guardian Council is responsible for evaluating and approving each presidential candidate before the election. This evaluation process ensures that candidates are aligned with the basic principles of the Islamic State. The president's primary duty is to maintain the principles and provisions outlined in the nation's constitution.

tion, while also controlling administrative authority. However, it should be noted that the President has no jurisdiction or control over matters that are under the control of the Supreme Leader. Iran's Cabinet is appointed and headed by the President, who has the authority to exercise decision-making powers relating to the government of the country. In contrast to other countries, Iran's executive branch has no authority over the armed forces. However, Iran's president is given the authority to select the defense and intelligence ministers, with approval from both the supreme leader and the legislature.

c. Guardian Council

Iran's Guardian Council has a total of twelve lawyers, with six of them nominated by the Supreme Leader. Iran's parliament, also known as the Majlis, will officially appoint six reserve members, who will be selected by the Supreme Court Justice. Constitutional interpretation is within the control of the Assembly, which has the authority to veto parliamentary decisions and membership in Iran's parliament. If any law is found to be inconsistent with Sharia law, it will be reviewed by parliament.

d. Wisdom Assembly

The Expediency Assembly has the authority to effectively handle and resolve problems that may arise between the parliament and the Guardian Council of Iran. Additionally, it serves as an advisory entity to the Supreme Leader.

e. Expert Assembly

The Expert Council meets every year for one week, and consists of members from 86 people who have expertise in the field of religious knowledge. The individuals are selected through a random process and will serve an eight-year term. This process will ensure the qualifications of candidates vying for presidential and parliamentary positions. Additionally, he would have the authority to vote for the position of Supreme Leader and utilize the ability to remove officeholders (Karnen, 2015).

In connection with the Arab Spring, when

the initial wave of popular protests first began in Tunisia in the winter of 2010-2011 and spread to neighboring Arab countries, Tehran expressed its support for the demonstrators, most of whom opposed the authority of conservative and pro-Western regimes. Describing the opposition movement as an Islamist movement, the Iranian leadership confidently stated that the Arab Spring would usher in a new pan-Islamic era in the Middle East and North Africa, in which authoritarian regimes would be replaced by Islamist governments. From Tehran's perspective, the tide is finally turning against the West and its regional allies. History seems to be on the side of Iran and its supporters (Goodarzi, 2013: 2).

All this changed with the eruption of protests in Syria, which caught Iran off guard and put it at a serious disadvantage. Tehran faces two unattractive options. If they choose to support their most valued and long-standing Arab allies, they will be considered hypocritical and opportunistic by the Arab-Muslim community. On the other hand, if the country remains silent and does not support the Assad regime, there is no guarantee that if a new government comes to power in Damascus, it will maintain close ties with Tehran. Given these circumstances, Iran chose to support the Syrian regime. A senior Iranian official speaking about the Arab Spring in the context of US-Iran regional rivalry commented, "Bahrain tripped America up, while Syria tripped us up." These decisions not only tarnish the reputation of the Islamic Republic in the Middle East. East, but its ally in Lebanon, Hezbollah, also supports the Syrian government (Goodarzi, 2013: 5).

Tehran initially hoped that by helping the Ba'ath regime, Damascus would be able to get out of this crisis in a short time. As a result, Iran has steadfastly supported Assad's efforts to crush the protests by providing technical support and expertise to neutralize the opposition. Iran provided advice and equipment to Syrian security forces to help them contain and disperse protests. In addition, they provide guidance and technical assistance on how to monitor and limit the opposition's use of the Internet and mobile phone networks (Goodarzi, 2013: 6).

The outbreak of the Syrian Crisis in 2011 marked a new chapter in the political history of Iran-Syria relations, when a strategic partnership of forty years was again tested. The two countries' priorities for coordinating their foreign policies are centered on their respective main priorities, namely regime continuity. To achieve this, there is a strong focus on protecting national security and safeguarding the maintenance of territorial integrity and independence of the two countries (Risseuw, 2018: 2).

The political alliance between Syria and Iran has endured through shared perceptions of threat, convergence of interests in Lebanon and Iraq, and shared perspectives on Palestine, Israel, and the United States. This strategic partnership is channeled through mutual economic, diplomatic, and political assistance in meeting their respective strategic needs. By combining political influence and military resources in building a network of surrogate militias, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon, they were able to thwart the ambitions of their opponents. Despite differences and ideological differences, such as religion and ethnicity, as well as the regime's long-term and specific goals, they have succeeded in strengthening their position in the regional security constellation (Risseuw, 2018: 3).

CATEGORIES OF IRAN'S FOREIGN POLICY FORMULATION MODELS

In the leadership strategy analysis, Iran sent several soldiers and military advisors as reinforcements in overcoming the conflict in Syria in the context of peacekeeping, not peacemaking world. In the next analysis, namely confrontation strategy, Iran sent several troops to Syria, specially building troops in Lebanon called Hezbollah which is affiliated with Shia and military advisors which were criticized by the United States and the international community. Next, the accommodative strategy which explains the nuclear agreement between Iran and the IAEA and the JCPOA agreement, and finally, the concordance strategy where Iran and Russia work together in

overcoming the conflict in Syria because they are compatible and have the same interests.

In more detail, the leadership strategy emphasizes Iran's economic defense and security interests in the Middle East. Syria, due to its geographical proximity, holds a position of strategic importance as it serves as a gateway for trade with European and African countries. Meanwhile, security interests are more crucial considering that the factors of hostility and political security competition are more dominant in the formulation of Iran's foreign policy.

In the context of confrontation strategy, Tehran's involvement in the war has allowed it to portray itself as the guardian of the Shiite sect - the branch of Islam that is predominantly adhered to by Iranians. Syrian Shiites have reportedly been targeted by several militant groups who identify themselves as Sunnis, another main branch of Islam. Iran also wants to maintain Assad's power. The Syrian leader allowed Iranian aid to flow to Hezbollah in Lebanon, opposed United States (US) influence in the Middle East, and preferred Iran to Saudi Arabia to be the regional leader in the Middle East (Sabide, 2013). Furthermore, Iran's strategic efforts to exert influence in the Middle East through providing aid to Shia militants had an important role in strengthening Bashar al-Assad's position and allowing him to suppress opposition forces seeking to destroy his regime.

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In the context of an accommodative strategy, Iran made agreements with the West regarding Iran's nuclear program, such as the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) and the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). On

the other hand, in the concordance strategy, Russia and Iran consistently show a convergence of interests in the Syrian context. The potential for Russia to engage in collaborative efforts with Iran in a defense alliance aimed at supporting Bashar al-Assad is now unimpeded. In 1995, Russia provided Iran with US\$ 800 billion in financial assistance, intending to support Iran's development of nuclear reactors. In addition, Russia assisted in the form of 2,000 tons of natural uranium.

From the Iranian foreign policy formulation model, the leadership and confrontational model is more dominant considering that Iran's foreign policy formulation is aimed at supporting Iran's national interests through its political system, especially in dealing with rival countries in the region. Then, Iran's foreign policy response was seen in various confrontational military steps to increase conflict with countries that had been in opposition to Iran. With the choice of this policy model, a confrontational logic is more visible in Iran's formulation and response in supporting Syria regarding the increasing escalation of the conflict.

CONCLUSION

The Arab Spring as the starting point of the conflict which then threatened Syria's position, became the reason for Iran's strategy in formulating and responding to the Syrian conflict. The factors of security interests, regional competition, and conflictual relations between Iran and countries that support the US in the Middle East explain that although there are considerations of strategy, accommodative strategy, and consistency (concordance strategy), the atmosphere of Iran's foreign policy formulation and response is more dominant which leads to confrontational logic".

The findings in this paper explain that although Iran accommodates various agreements with the West, especially on other security issues, and is consistent in maintaining its alliance with Russia, especially on the nuclear program. However, leadership factors that consider economic and especially security interests encourage foreign policy to maintain economic and security interests by supporting

the Assad regime in Syria. Meanwhile, in its implementation, Iran's foreign policy response is more confrontational, where Iran's security and military issues influence the conflict atmosphere in Iran's involvement in the Syrian conflict. This also explains Iran's foreign policy formulation and response in the Syrian conflict, where the formulation and response are more directed at military maneuvers to achieve national interests (leadership) and confront (confrontational) political and security opponents in the Middle East region. In other words, leadership and confrontational strategy models dominate Iran's foreign policy formulation and response to the Syrian conflict issue.

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