

Blocking the Strait of Hormuz and the Consequences for the United States of America

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In recent years the pre-existing challenge in US-Iranian relations has become vaster due to Iran's developing nuclear activities. The US considers an international hegemonic right to itself, therefore, keeps the authority of manipulating all of other countries in the world. In the manifest international politics, all countries have nuclear rights but, experience suggests that in hidden policies, the US has taken a different strategy. In the Middle East, which is considered as the heart of the world's energy, the US's policy is defined as: nuclear rights should be only considered for those countries which are either completely dominated by the US, or be considered as its strategic ally, like: Pakistan, Israel, and Turkey. Otherwise they are not liable to such rights and should not attain such a scientific technology. As a country possessing potentials and superior defensive power in the Middle East, Islamic Republic of Iran's policies disagree with such dominating wishes, and therefore, strategically confront the US. This disagreement in security policies has caused that the relationship of the two countries to change into opposition and finally possible encounter, from severance of political relations in 20 Farvardin 1359. Since 2001, the US, which has a background in anti-Iranism and intervening in the country's internal affairs (the coup of 28 Mordad 1332 and overthrowing Mosadeq's popular government, the shameful law of Capitulation, Iranian passenger plane crash in Persian Gulf, weaponry support for Iraq against Iran...) in order to accomplish this anti-Iran project, has edited and began a vast political and strategic restrictions against the Islamic republic. But these measures, having little effects on Iran, increase the possibility of leading the US to bombarding Iran's nuclear centers; unaware of the fact that Iran has already considered this by not limiting the nuclear technology in its distinguished nuclear centers. Therefore attacking Iran's nuclear establishments, in spite of all heavy economical losses, would not mean for Iran losing nuclear knowledge, technology and, industry; because Iran has always considered the chance military strikes from the US. So the extent of Iran's nuclear knowledge, technology, and industry is not limited to the defined centers like Arak and Natans, but the vastness of Iranian land that lowers the

probability of attacking them. But yet, the Islamic Republic of Iran's national defense doctrine considering such external threats and also the critical position of the Middle East codifies its general policies, with respect to the enemies' threats, based on long term strategy of asymmetric wars out of Iranian borders and even inside of the aggressor country, and defends the country, which is every government's obligation.

In the initial years of 21st century, the indexes of the Islamic Republic of Iran's national security has changed, which is due to the transformation in the international system structure. Yet in these years transformation has been taking place in regional districts continuously. The dissolution of the bi-axial system and 11 September 2001 events can be considered as the reference points for the strategic changes and transformations in regional and international extents. Meanwhile and along with the above-mentioned changes, due to securing the region, in the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy some transformation has taken place to glorify Iran's key role, more than ever, in the Middle East's equations considering the country's geopolitics and geostrategic. Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic of Iran is facing different threats in the region which some of these challenges include confronting deviated and satellite groups like: Jondollah, Monafeqin, Wahhabion, Pan-Turkism, Al-Ahwazi, etc. but the main threat is the US which has made Iran the chief challenge of the great industrial powers(leading by the US) in the international arena. Iran's response to confront such threats from countries like the US which its military budget is 700 billion dollars, equal with the military budget of more than 90 countries, and has far flung military force of 1445000 troop, (1)should possess clever and special features to be effective and maintain a deterrent role. Nevertheless, a country like the US with such military power still does not possess enough capability in leading irregular wars to confront Iran which is called the island of peace and stability (considering the experiences in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan); moreover, seeming legitimacy by public opinion can not be gained for such an aggression without the world's great powers consensus. For this presumptive confrontation, the Islamic Republic's national defense doctrine has considered several responses some of which include defending from within the country and some others are out of Iranian geographical borders. Some of Iran's retorts would include bombarding Israel thoroughly, as one of the US states in the region. Some other responses would include bombarding and destroying all of the oil establishments of those Arab countries that had helped the US in this aggression, to cut the oil exports to the world. In case of military attack one of the Iran's defense responses would be blocking the Strait of Hormuz. In this paper, we try to survey the consequences of blocking the Strait of Hormuz on the US economy and security. These items are only a part of the Islamic Republic of Iran's clear response to any kind of aggression. Undoubtedly, there are some other concealed, security, and military responses which are known as Iran's winner cards in any military encounter that would greatly shock all those countries which have participated in this aggression, against Iran.

Key Words: the Strait of Hormuz, Geostrategic, the Islamic Republic of Iran, security, the United States of America

Prelude

Straits are natural paths which interlink two bodies of water. Considering the importance and the role of the straits in communicative, political, military, and economical issues, since a long time ago they have been matters of regional and global dispute. For instance, some strategic straits like Bosphorus and Dardanelles are run and controlled according to multilateral treaties. Some of traits are so important and influential that a law system was designate for them in 1958 convention. The Strait of Hormuz with a yearly traffic of 20000 sails is considered as one the most important international straits and is among the most vital straits in the world; because Persian Gulf is a half-closed sea which is of a special importance in the world's energy equations. Consequently the Strait of Hormuz is like a key to enter this sea. There are more than 100 straits between several oceans and channels in the world which have the width of less than 40 km (25 miles). Based on the number of passing ships, being an economical axis, geographic vulnerability, military usage, and strategic importance, among these one hundred narrow channels only 5 of them are remarkable. Hormuz, Gibraltar, Bosphorus, Dardanelles, and Bab-el-Mandeb maintain a special economical and political position in the world, because operate as the gates of Middle East and Northern Africa. Here the Strait of Hormuz maintains a special international security importance, because it is the most important oil transport pass in the world, and it seems that, in spite of all efforts made by the Arab countries on the margin of Persian Gulf on transporting their oil via other paths, this significance will be maintained in coming years. The Strait of Hormuz is a 600 miles wide channel and the only outlet of Persian Gulf. Iran's six strategic islands in the entrance zone of Persian Gulf (Hormuz, Larak, Qeshm, Hengam, Greater Tunb, and Abu Musa) are located on a hypothetical defense curved line. This significant factor makes Iran a major player in Persian Gulf and affiliates the stable security of the Strait of Hormuz with the country. This strait separates the vast the Iranian plateau from the Saudi-Arabian desert peninsula and interlinks Persian Gulf to the sea of Oman and Indian Ocean. There is no defined scale to measure the length of the Strait of Hormuz; perhaps the best scale could be the defined Iran-Omani marine border with the length of 202.1km (124.8 marine miles).

The farthest distance in the Strait of Hormuz is 84km (from Bandar Abbas shore to the most northern point of Musandem shore in the south), the nearest is estimated 33.6km (between the Iranian island of Larak in the north and the island of Omani-al-Salami, which is called Big

Queen, in the south). Based on the article 38 of marine law (1982) the channel of Hormuz is known an international strait that can interlink a part of an open sea and an economical district. The privilege of the passage of commercial ships, warships, submarines, and planes in this strategic extent is based on the interests of the countries located on its shores.(2)In fact according to article 39 of convention 1982, ships and submarines, passing international straits, should follow several principles. Some of them are”

1-passing without delay; in other words, contentiously and speedily

2- Forbidding the use of any kind of threat or force against the authority, political independence, and territorial integrity of the coastal countries of the strait

3-observing the rules of marine safety, among them the international rules of prevention of marine accidents, controlling marine pollution (3)

The significance of the passage of oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, which is like blood circulation in the vessels of North America, Western Europe, and some Asian countries like Japan and China, holds a special position in Iran’s security and defensive policy. Debates on blocking the Strait of Hormuz get serious only when the strait, which should be, based on the interests of the two riparian countries of Iran and Oman, a passage to international sails, on the contrary becomes a channel for the passage of the enemies and aggressors to Iran’s national interests. From the international law point of view, the country that has been attacked by another has the right of defending itself legitimately; to do so, it can apply military measures by any means. Nevertheless, the Islamic Republic of Iran’s authorities constantly emphasize that, as far as possible, they wouldn’t like to sabotage the passage of the world’s energy through the Strait of Hormuz, but in response to any kind of military attack, one of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s strategic aims, would be blocking the strait or shooting the passing sails of any kind, whether passing the strait or located in Persian Gulf. (4)Because as strategic managements experts believe (5) in the recent years invadieing Iran has been a top priority for the US; and their goals are: overthrowing the system, occupying the country, breaking off Iran into small satellite countries, occupying Iran’s oil resources, and the sovereignty of American and British colonels over Iran. Therefore, defensive preparedness for such a possible aggression is on the top of Iran’s programs. Undoubtedly, the consequence of this action would cause a spread international crisis, and consequently, many of the US’s allies like Persian Gulf council, Britain, and France would suffer heavy losses. The region’s high-leveled military experts, too, have emphasized a lot, that initiating the war against Iran, would have disastrous consequences, not only for the region but also for whole world.

The security of the Strait of Hormuz and the Islamic Republic of Iran's national strategy

The necessity of surveying the role of the Strait of Hormuz security in Islamic Republic of Iran's national strategy and security is of a special significance. Considering the influential role of Iran in ECO, that shows the Iran's salient strategic role after the Cold War, many of the observers believe that Iran, because of having a strategic importance as the convergence center of gravity of among the members of ECO, necessarily will play a salient beyond-regional role. Iran has been the cradle to the world's civilizations; is located in the largest energy resources in the world, and has the world's oil and natural pass in the Strait of Hormuz, under its control. In the present time the most of our country's political and especially economical prestige has been tied to the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf. In comparison with the rest of the region's countries, it can be clearly gathered that Iran holds a much more significant and critical geopolitical position than the small Arabic newly independent countries. Also from military and population viewpoint Iran holds a higher position than the other countries of the region; as it is home for 60% of the total population of the Persian Gulf region. Undoubtedly, from military viewpoint, Iran has been the strongest country in the region, through the history. Also having 1375km shoreline from Bandar Abbas to Vafa peninsula holds 56.5% of the total shores of Persian Gulf. And this gives Iran such an authority to know its own legitimate right, which in case of any act of aggression towards the country, blocks the traffic of ships through this region. Indeed, on the southern margins of the Strait of Hormuz, the historical country of Oman, with scattered rocky islands, is located. Through marine surveys, it has been known that the deepest area of the Strait of Hormuz is near the Musandem shores in Oman, but despite this, it holds a lot weaker position than Iran in the Persian Gulf region. The country of Iran, considering the strategic position and military power, and also the existence of several islands in the Strait of Hormuz and counting the shore lines of all Iranian and Omani islands, and according to Iran-Omani border treaty on 20 July 1974 (practiced from 28 May 1975) possesses the main part of the political and geographical ownership of this strait. Until 1358 the most of the ways used by the oil tankers crossed through Little Queen Island and rocky shores of Omani Masnadm. In that year Omani government declared to IMCO (international marine consultation organization) that it can not warrantee the safety of the ships crossing through the rocks of Queen and Msnadm islands, and asked them to recognize the sailing path from the north of Ai-Slalameh Island to Iran's marine borders as the official path. From that point, among Queen Islands (big and little Queen) and Iranian borders and Oman, two parallel paths in north and south, has been known for the passage of the oil tankers. The Omani rocky path is not safe for gigantic oil tankers, so naturally the best and proper way is crossing the Iranian area. According to land-marine principles, riparian countries can have the dominion over 3 to 12 miles (1 marine mile is 1852m) from the original line towards the sea. Counting these 12 miles, in case of any sabotage in its borders by the ships passing the Strait of Hormuz, Iran can exercise its authority over this strait. On the other hand, it should

be remembered that considering freeing the triple islands and regaining the sovereignty on the islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu-Musa, and after announcing the Iran-Sharjah agreement of Azar 1350 the 12-miles-coastal-waters law was practiced about Abu-Musa too. Consequently, the border of Abu-Musa's coastal waters almost entered coastal waters of Emirate in Umm-al-Quwain. The several Iranian islands, in addition to increasing the extent of Iran's coastal waters, are always like some precious bases that able Iran to control this important channel.

During the exposed war, Iran had observed some of reactionary countries of the region, the US, and some European countries vastly supported Iraq; therefore, it has been warning the world many times, that in case of putting Iran's national interests this strait would be blocked. One of these warnings refer to the imposed war and when Iraq bought some Super Atandard bombers from France to destroy Iranian oil tankers. The Islamic Republic had announced that in case of being deprived of oil resources, it should block the Strait of Hormuz to all. The Iraqis had ordered the Super Atandards to hit Iranian oil tankers and platforms. A Super Etandards could throw Exocet to Iranian fleet. The functionality of these missiles had been proven in the war of Falkland (Britain-Argentina). Iranian oil was exported by this marine path and the oil tankers, and Super Etandards Could play a significant role in decreasing Iran's oil export. In this connection, Timerman writes: in a meeting, Tariq Aziz shared another subject with George Schultz. There was some news on papers that Iraq was going to borrow five fighter bombers from France. Iran had threatened if France acceded to that they would block the Strait of Hormuz to the entire world. The Foreign Office of Britain scared of that blocking the Strait of Hormuz would put the world in extreme shortage of oil, emphatically asked France to withhold the Super Atandards.(7)

The consequences blocking the Strait of Hormuz for the United States of America

The transitions caused by the recent crisis between Iran and The US on the nuclear issue have extended the military threats domain against Iran. Iran, holding several available options, has announced that is prepared to response the possible aggression. One of these responses would be blocking the Strait of Hormuz and stopping stranger sails from passing this region. Blocking the Strait of Hormuz would have direct and indirect effects on many countries among them the US and the European Union. The most significant effects of this probable conflict on the US can be divided into three main groups:

- 1-Energy security crisis
- 2- Initiating closing down the American bases in the region
- 3- Breaking down the military prestige of the US in the world

Energy security crisis

To western politicians energy security is of a great importance. The phrase *energy security* refers to the constant and safe presentation of energy with reasonable prices for all of the types. The people, who use this phrase, look for reducing the geopolitical, economical, technical, environmental, and psychological threats which influence the energy markets. But the intention of politicians in using this phrase provides for: first, easy and safe access to the worldwide sources of oil and gas. Second, the oil and gas be provided mostly from the areas that, in a long period, the possibility of stability and unchangeableness in their governments is high. Therefore, oil and gas consumers express the significant of energy security from their own point of views and naturally the producers, too, look for there own special definitions. For the producers energy security is the accessibility of a constant market with reasonable development in future. The statistics show that, since 1973, oil and gas production and exportation has never experienced any halt or extreme change in the amount. At the climax of Iran-Iraqi or the US-Iraqi wars the flow of oil export from Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, for a short period, reduced but never halted.(8)

The Strait of Hormuz holds a significant position in universal energy exchanges, and any anxiety for this strategic region's security provides big challenges for West and especially the US. Undoubtedly, oil is especially important because it is used in providing energy, as motor power in all industries and vehicles and also as the primary substance in producing many fundamental goods in the world (like: rubber production, chemical drugs, clothes, industrial goods, foodstuffs, original industries, etc.) Through the twentieth century, oil had been the cause to many significant military, political, and economical changes in the world. Meanwhile, the region of Persian Gulf, because of dominating over the huge reserves and considerable production ability, in fact, has been the center of these important events and changes. More or less, almost all countries in the world, except the Communist Block, are related to oil and the economical, military, and political life of many of these countries, especially western industrial countries, Japan, and China depends on continual flow of oil from the extent of Iranian Persian Gulf. According to the statistics by International Energy Agency (IEA) the amount of the oil passing this channel, is equal to 40% of all exporting oil in the world, and this number, based on OPEC production amount, fluctuates. International Energy Agency has estimated that in the past years the amount of the exportation of crude oil from the Strait of Hormuz has been 13 millions and 400 thousand barrel a day. Before reduction in OPEC production this number was 61 to 17 million barrel a day. In addition, 2 million oil products, among them fuel oil and natural liquid gas is exported to other regions in the world, via this waterway. On the other hand the gas exports of, the biggest natural gas exporter in the world, are sent to the European and Asian center via the Strait of Hormuz that is almost 31 million tons a year. Also 90% of Persian Gulf oil producers' exports pass the Strait of Hormuz on oil tankers. After occupying Iraq, the heavy arms for American

forces in Iraq and the other Persian Gulf countries were carried through this channel; on special American naval vessels and under some other countries flags. Consequently, it is a safe path to import arms to the countries of Persian Gulf extent. West has already experienced energy crisis, but in more limited measures. For example, between 1984 and 1987 that Iran-Iraqi oil tankers war, as they call it, began both countries started firing at each other's oil tankers, and some other foreigner vessels got involved in this battle. At that time, due to this conflict the passage of the ships reduced by 25%. This worried the American naval force and made them get involved in this waterway. But this time energy experts believe that the domain of the world crisis would be much more extensive, in a way that if oil production and exportation is reduced and Tehran blocks the Strait of Hormuz to all international oil tankers, oil market would face the shortage in presentation of 20 million barrels a day. This may be the worst imaginable scenario for oil market. Because it can get the coast of oil up to 250 dollars per barrel. (9)

While 40% of the world's daily need for energy is passing from this strategic water path, any probable halt in oil exportation would cause a major oil crisis (such as six-day war, the war of October and Arabic oil prohibition, occurrence of Islamic revolution in Iran, beginning of Iran-Iraqi war, invading Kuwait by Iraq, strikes in Venezuela, Katharina hurricane) like what the world's energy market had experienced before because of interrupting oil exportations; but in comparison with today's situation those were insignificant. This is important because, a part of the need for oil for the US (35%), Europe (56%), and many Asian countries like Japan (80%) pass through this waterway. Iran, in addition to controlling the Strait of Hormuz, controls all of the traffic through the entrance of the channel of Hormuz, via the bases located in some islands such as Greater and Lesser Tunbs and also Abu-Musa island. Moreover, Iran owns some kinds of missiles that totally cover Persian Gulf and Oman Sea, that all of these items extremely increase the vulnerability of the Strait of Hormuz in case of any aggression towards Iran. However, Iranian leaders and high leveled military commanders have warned repeatedly about adventurousness of strangers in the Strait of Hormuz and officially announced that incase of invading Iran: the level to sea missile systems would be able to reach any spot of Persian g the Strait of Hormuz Gulf and Oman Sea." No ships or boats can cross the Strait of Hormuz without being in the range of our missile system". (10) American institutes' reports, also confirm the fact that Iran can block the Strait of Hormuz or extensively sabotage Persian Gulf's security. (11) Unfortunately, nowadays because of security and political weakness of Cooperation Council for the Arab States of Persian Gulf and their dependence on outsider powers, even in circumstances of peace, more than 90 western warships are positioned in Persian Gulf waters that is one of the instability in the region, and in case of challenging the Islamic Republic of Iran's national security, these warships would be the first targets to Sipah Pasdaran's (Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution) missiles and driverless boats. (12)

Initiating closing down the American bases in the region

The geographical extent of Asia Minor and the Middle East are the regions of paradoxes, contrasts, pessimisms, suspicions, and complements. After the disintegration of former Soviet Union, Asia Minor tried a lot to make national identities and get political dependence. After the Russians were out, the Americans tried to fill this power gap in Asia Minor, and therefore they sent their forces to the region, and made their illegitimate presence official. On the other hand, Arab countries of the Middle East, under one roof, established the Arabic union council and out of the council they are looking for arming themselves. Seemingly sympathetic and agreeing Arabic Union has been always under the shadow of Arab-Arabic and foreigners-Arabic disagreements. These misunderstandings have prepared the grounds for the US, and even Britain and France to use utilize these countries' market, and nowadays outsiders have confirmed their suspicious military presence in these weak countries. As an example, the peninsula of Qatar in Persian Gulf can be mentioned, which has fairly good relationships with Tehran, but yet is the settling location for about 3500 American military forces in Persian Gulf. The presence of America and its allies in the region, on one hand is shadowing Iran's interests, and on the other hand would be the first targets for Iran in case the US-Iranian war begins. In fact one of the US's weak points in the region is their settlement around Iran. Since blocking the Strait of Hormuz would begin a worldwide crisis, it is anticipated that blocking the strait in long-term boosts the possibility that some of the powerful countries that agree with the US, make a union to take military measures against Iran and unblock the Strait of Hormuz. Undoubtedly, this action of the Westerns would prepare the grounds for a regional and extensive war during which, many countries would be harmed. Therefore, one of the consequences of blocking the Strait of Hormuz would be hitting the American bases in the region. Considering the 2000km range of Sejil II missiles or high ranged land to land ballistic missiles Shahab III these bases could be easily hit. In the present time, the US's most important bases are in countries such as Bahrain, Qatar, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen, that in the case of necessity, they would be in direct range of Iranian guns. Some of these targets can be considered as:

The Fifth Fleet of the US in Bahrain: This pier is located on the western district of Manama which is the capital of Bahrain. It can usually have 2 to 4 destroyers in that unit, and about 10 PT boats berth there and there few fast sails there too. Next to that, there is a military airport for the US Navy helicopters and planes. Most of the warships cruise the international waters, and not Iranian waters, while the rest of thee stay at the fifth pier of Bahrain as reserves. This fleet is responsible for protecting the US interests in Persian Gulf, Oman Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and a pat of Red Sea. Bahrain is a collection of very small islands with a population including Arabs and Persians with a majority of Shiite, which in the Pahlavi era

broke off from Iran. The Bahraini government has announced many times that using this base for any military measure against Iran is forbidden. Iran has threatened that in case that the US invades Iran, the Fifth Fleet of Bahrain would be cluster bombed.

Delaram base in Afghanistan: is located in the region of Dlaran from the state of Farah in Afghanistan. This state is located on the western Afghanistan and is one a side of Iranian state of southern khorasan. The region of Delaram is located on the path of Heart to Helmand and Qandahar which is a strategic forked road that at one end reaches Iranian Zabol. The state of Farah is one of 34 Afghan states with a size of 18000 square miles, and the most of the population are Pashtoos. This state is surrounded by: from west to Iran; from north to Heart; from east to Helmand; and from south to the southern state of Nimrooz. Despite that the majority of the population of this state is Pashtoos, since the invasion of the allied forces few conflicts has been observed in this region. The US and NATO forces have established a reconstructing team in this state.

Khan Abad base in Uzbekistan: in return for yearly paying of 120 million dollars to the government of Uzbekistan, the US holds Khan Abad base. In addition, every year, Washington presents military aids to the army and police of this country to stay there. Therefore the US government does not pay much attention to the vast violation of human rights in Uzbekistan. Several riots are being committed in Uzbekistan, and millions of Persian Tajik people residing in the southern Uzbekistan, have several times officially announced, that they do not like the imposed geographical borders that are set for them, and they consider their race different from Uzbeks.

Baluchistan base in Pakistan: it is said that the US, having the government of Islam Abad's approval, is holding an air force base around Khuzdar region in the state of Baluchistan; a region that is considered the most significant center of natural gas in Pakistan. Basically the region of Baluchistan is a disturbed region, and is out of control of the central government of Pakistan. Because of the closeness of the Baloch tribes to Iran, this region holds a strategic position. Pakistan has provided the US forces several exercising facilities in the regions similar to the geography of Iran. These forces have operated maneuvers in Karachi too.

Diego Garcia base in Indian Ocean: is considered as one the main American air force and naval bases in Asia. American strategic bomber fighter planes (B-52, B-1, and B2) take off from it, aircraft carriers and ships armed with Cruise and Tomahawk missiles has berthed in there. This base is located in the south of India (Indian Ocean); so it is protected from the range of Iranian missiles, but it is not unreachable.

Presence of the Americans in Asia Minor: at this moment, all over Asia Minor is occupied with thousands of American forces and oil experts. With introducing the project of fighting

the international terrorism, America has extended the domain its ambitions beyond the region. Using cheap way in Asia Minor, the US is trying to develop its bases in this region. The problems specified to new republics of this region, which have appeared especially after the fall of the wall of Berlin, has worried the leaders of Asia Minor countries. One other hand Russia's incapability in fulfilling their economical needs and their progressive eagerness in getting independence, have made them incline to the other axis.

Presence of the Americans in Iraq: beginning any kind invasion towards Iran, would mean serious damages to the American army in Iraq and even in Afghanistan. In case of any conflict against Iran, the war against the American army in several fronts in Afghanistan and Iraq would be intensified; besides Iran, the US would have to make new fronts to resist the flood of resistance forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. The most important thing in this case is the presence of the irregular troops of the Islamic Revolution of Iran Sipah Pasdaran, who, for many years, had been fighting against the former Soviet army and Saddam Hussein's Bathi regime in the lands of Afghanistan and Iraq, and know these lands very well. The forces who operate even more accurate then the American spy satellites. And besides immense capability in military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, they have the high ability of mobilizing the resistance forces of the two countries against the US. Officially, the US holds 55 important military centers some of which are:

- Baled or Anaconda base, 68 miles away from Bagdad in a space of 15 square miles, and mostly related to aerial operations, and 130 planes and 120 helicopters are kept there.
- Al Talil 14 miles away from Nasiria; 20 square miles space
- Al Assad 120 miles from Bagdad; 17000 forces
- Al Qyarah 50 miles from the south east of Mosel
- Camp Victory near Bagdad air port; 140 square miles space; 20000 soldiers
- Marines base around Mosel airport
- Kirkuk base and Erbil base in Iraqi Kurdistan; each keeps 14000 forces

Breaking down the military prestige of the US in the world

High- leveled Iranian military commanders believe that the US or Israel could begin the military attack on Iran, but the end of this probable war would in hands of Iran, and this country would be able to lead this probable war in the region for several years, which could cause a heavy blow on the US. (13) Undoubtedly, The American analysts know about Stark warship being hit, by mistake, by two French Exocet missiles thrown from an Iraqi fighter

plane on 17 May in which left the warship with many dead and wounded. During the imposed war, this warship was hit in Persian Gulf waters, and considering the warlike atmosphere of those days, Stark warship certainly was on the alert; but in spite of this, how could it not defend itself? In October 1987, in Persian Gulf, Iran hit a ship named Isle City Sea, which had the flag of the US on it; or in April 1988, during Iran-Iraqi war the American ship USS Samuel. B. Robert hit a marine mine in Persian Gulf and got seriously damaged. Today, after 20 years from that time, Iran's technology of air to level missiles has been developed a lot; so can American warships present in Persian Gulf resist the variety of Iranian armed forces missiles?

Military experts know best, that this critical region, in case of necessity, can be changed into a swamp for western forces; and this would prepare the grounds for the fall of American military prestige. During the recent years, we have been observing little examples of outsider sail being hit. Attacking the French oil tanker Limburg in October 2002 in Yemeni shores is one of them. This attack, which was done by a speedboat full of explosives, left a person dead and caused the spilt of 90000 barrels of oil into the sea. Also in April 2008 a Japanese tanker which has berthed in the shore of Red Sea in Yanbu harbor in Saudi Arabia was attacked by bombs and grenades and got slightly damaged. Five anonymous speedboats participated in this attack which after the operation they fled to the shores of Somalia. Another incident of the kind happened on February 2006 in which the al-Qaida group attacked Abqaiq building in Saudi Arabia slightly damaged the establishments of the building; or attacking the main oil terminal of Saudi Arabia in Ras Tanura.

Iranian military forces are much more capable, organized, and devoted than such groups. Iranian army holds 545000 troops. Apart from this, about 360000 forces are serving in other military organizations such as the Islamic Revolution of Iran Sipah Pasdaran, Basij, and police department. This quantity of forces holds the highest position in the region, because provides a proper potential for regular or irregular wars. Iranian armed forces are equipped with ballistic missiles and Shahab III averaged range type A with a range 1300km; and recently high-ranged missile Sejil II and shahab III type B with a range of 2000km have been successfully tested. An important job of Iranian naval forces is mining the shores and the waterways. After the war against Iraq, Iran has made significant progress in this field. Iranian naval forces hold several types of missiles in variety of sizes. These types include from individual and portable missiles to 500 kg anti warship ones. Also Iran has improved and changed the Chinese missiles like Silk Worm and etc. Apart from missile bases in the strategic islands in Persian Gulf and coastal areas, Iranian naval forces own pilotless and controllable aircrafts. Another one of Iran's remarkable achievements was the representation of an advanced sea to sea missile that is able to hit such targets as warships and submarines at the speed of 100 mps. This speed is many times more than the speed of any kind of warships; besides these missiles are untraceable, and in case of necessity, they

can easily include all countries in Persian Gulf and the sails over the sea of Oman in their targets. (14) Therefore, if any military conflict occurs, they can fatally blow the American warships in Persian Gulf, their bases in the Middle East, and also to the land of Israel; and this can be a means of acceleration in ending the dominating empire of America in the world.

Conclusion

In recent years, the position of the US has lower from the hegemonic power to the superior power. This means that the US can not advance its worldwide policies single-handedly and unilaterally. The US involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan has given the chance to the regional and universal rivals all over the world to increase their national extensive power with emphasize on development. This has made the US, contrary to the former policy of preventing the manifestation of the regional powers in critical regions, consider more significant role for new regional powers in the universal and regional policy. Therefore, Iran as a strategic country, and also the second producer and exporter of oil in OPEC, with respect to its own power and ancient background, considers getting the superior position among the countries of the region as a natural right. This is a fact that the US has to accept it. Otherwise, diplomatic dialogues would end in military confrontation, and consequently a universal crisis would not be unlikely. In confrontation with any probable attack, oil would only be one of Iran's weapons. The Iranian government has warned several times that is prepared enough to use the weapon of oil in case of any military measure. In the speech of the supreme authority of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the leader of the revolution, too, this warning has been clearly expressed. Naturally, Iran considers itself as the natural predominant power of the region of Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. Therefore, Iran can not stand the presence of any outsider power in the region. In January 2008, after announcing the establishment of French military base in the sheikdom of United Arab Emirates, the Iranian government expressed their protest as follows: "we are against the increase of the presence of outsider forces in the region, and we believe this presence is not going to help the peace and security in the region, but on the contrary, develops the suspicion and instability in the region ...". Also afterwards Iranian ambassador to Bahrain declared: "the region is in a critical and fragile situation and the extensive presence of foreign forces has caused the oppressive powers to have the intention of dominate the energy sources, market, and security of the region". Nevertheless, the regional transitions are shaping to Iran's benefit. Therefore, while Iran is gaining ever-increasing power, the western countries which find their profit in plundering the weak nations of the region, are getting cornered. The regional strategic role of Iran that has been repeated over and over through the history, this time has become a bitter nightmare for the countries like the US.

The struggle to stop Iran and threatening to military attack, are inefficient tools that only disturb the situation of the world. Undoubtedly, blocking the Strait of Hormuz would affect the US economy and, in case of beginning the war, its military prestige. Iran, too, knows that blocking the Strait of Hormuz would affect its own economy, but in spite of this, in response to any probable aggression would feel free to use any kind of counteraction.

Footnotes:

- 1- Rick Rozov, the US Military Budget, Global Research news website
- 2- Geography and National Strategy of Iran, Dr. Masumeh Taheri Musavi, p 149
- 3- Classification of International Borders, Research Assistance of NAJA University, p 91
- 4- Return to Threatening to Blocking the Strait of Hormuz by: Admiral Habib-Allah Sayari, commander in chief of Iranian naval force, Major General Commander of the Islamic Revolution of Iran Sipah Pasdaran, Yadollah Javani, the boss of political department of the Islamic Revolution of Iran Sipah Pasdaran, Asadi, commander in chief of Sipah...
- 5- Dr. Hassan Qadiry Abyaneh, the strategic counselor to Expediency Discernment Council
- 6- Interfax press conference with General Leonid Ivashov, the dean of Russian Geopolitical Issues Academy
- 7- Cont. R. Tirman, Death Trade, p 276-277
- 8- The world's Future and Energy Security, Dr. Abbas Maleki
- 9- David Vis, the chief expert to Andpoors Standard Financial Institute
- 10- The speech of Commander Yahya Rahim Safavi the former commander in chief of the Islamic Revolution of Iran Sipah Pasdaran (IRGC) on 15 august 2007
- 11- The American Spectator site and the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) report on Iran's power in use the Strait of Hormuz
- 12- The Office of Political and International Studies of Persian Gulf, 28-29 Dey 1388, The speech of Commander Vahidi the Administer of Defense and Support of the armed force of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- 13- Brigadier General Seyed Masud Jazayeri, [Deputy Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran interviewing the Emirati newspaper al-Khalij](#), 4 Fravardin 1387
- 14- Retired Major General Hassam Svylm, al-Ahram Strategic Studies Center of Egypt