

Understanding the Security Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran based on a Systemic Approach

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Abstract

Understanding the "security environment" is one of the main pillars of countries' security strategy. Unless a country's "security environment" is defined, any security planing will be useless. The "security environment" is usually assessed in terms of threats to that environment, but Shiping Tang in his famous article entitled "systemic Theory of the Security Environment ", offers a new approach to defining the 'security environment'. According to it, the "security environment" is considered as a "system" that is formed by several factors. In this study, while introducing the main parts of Tang's theory, it examines five indicators "permeability of geographical barriers", "power of State", "behave with self-restraint", "robust constraint behalf international structure (structural constraints)" and "dominance of defense" that he presents about the good security environment of a country, is discussed and while examining the above five indicators, it is concluded that the "security environment" of the Islamic Republic of Iran is good (or desirable) and the likelihood of war is low. The purpose of this study is to apply a system-oriented theory in order to understand the security environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to manage the threats posed by that environment by understanding the "security environment". The necessity of research also stems from the use of a system-oriented approach that has received less attention, because the theoretical effort of researchers has been focused on using the traditional threat-identifying approach in order to understand the security environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Keywords: Systemic Theory of Security Environment, Geographical Barriers, Self-Restraint, International Structure, Defense, Aggression.

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1.Introduction

The concept of "security environment" is one of the most widely used and important concepts in the literature on "Foreign Policy" as well as "Strategic Studies". Understanding the security environment of a country is very important and vital.

If we consider geopolitics as the science of studying the interrelationships of geography, power and politics and the actions resulting from their combination with each other (Rasouli and Shariati,2020:206-205), the concept of "security environment" is also influenced by the triad of geography, power and Politics can be assumed as a concept under the field of geopolitics. The term "security environment" consists of two concepts, "environment" and "security".

"Security" as the first component of the concept of "security environment" has different and even contradictory definitions. Researchers have proposed different definitions of "security" according to their ontological and epistemological approaches. However, it can be said that "security" in the concept of "security environment" is the same as "military security" as defined by "Buzan". Thus, security, like traditional security studies researchers, can be defined as a necessary quest for survival (Aradau and Van Munster,2010:73).

environment as the second component of the concept of "security environment" can be considered a general concept that includes all external forces and factors which an alive creature or a group of living alive creatures actually or potentially react against them" The environment can also be considered to include the material and spatial dimensions of the world around it." (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff,2009:134)

Harold and Margaret Sprout point to three types of environmentally active relationships. The first type of environmental actor relationship is called environmental feasibility. Here, the environment refers to the set of pressures that are applied to the actor. In ancient times, actors were not able to exchange behaviors with each other due to the lack of advanced technology on the one hand and the distance and geographical conditions on the other. But with the advancement of technology, especially military technology, behavioral exchanges of actors became possible. For example, Napoleon, could not intimidate Moscow by threatening of nuclear destruction. Therefore, Roosevelt could not force the Japanese to do so in 1941 with the threat of an atomic bomb, but Truman did, because of

technological advances. The second type of actor-environment relationship is called Environmental probability. This topic refers to the pressures exerted by the environment on the actor, and makes a certain type of behavior possible. For example, in Cold War environment, how likely is it that an actor like the Soviets use force to maintain control of the Eastern bloc (such as Hungary, Czechoslovakia, or Afghanistan)? In the third type of relation of the environment actor, cognitive behaviorism is discussed, according to which the actor reacts to the environment as he imagines or perceives the environment.

In other words, each actor communicates with the environment through the images he has of her surroundings. The actor's images of his surroundings may be very different from what is happening in the real world (Rost and Star,1992:33-32) and this is how the sprouts distinguish between "psychological environment" and "operational environment". Harold and Margaret Sprout define the psychological environment in which actors perceive and interpret the international context (Haji Yousefi,2008: 49). The operational environment is the same as the real environment.

The concept of "security environment" is also important. " Shiping Tang " believes states that adopt an appropriate security strategy usually have a sound understanding of their security environment," And this is how Tang theorizes in order to gain a sound understanding of the concept of "security environment. But Tang's systemic theory is very similar to "positivist" theories. The "positivist" theories of international relations, known as the "mainstream" or "Rationalist," use a variety of criteria to select a theory, one of which is "Corroboration/Range." Corroboration/Range is the breadth of different events and kinds of events that can be inferred from the laws of the theory. The idea of explanatory power is sometimes associated with range (Chernoff,2007:86). In other words, if a theory can "explain" a wider range of events, that theory has a higher "explanatory power". This is one of the concerns of "positivist" thinkers in International Relations (IR).

Christian Reus-Smit, one of the leading constructivist thinkers in this field, points to a very important point: "It has long been the ambition of rationalists, especially neo realists, to formulate a general theory of international relations, the core assumptions of which would be so robust that they could explain its fundamental characteristics, regardless of

historical epoch or differences in the internal complexions of states" (Reus-Smit,2005:202). Thus, from a positivist point of view, a theory must be able to use its assumptions to explain different events and happenings in different eras. The "systemic theory of security environment" presented by "Shiping Tang" should also be evaluated in this regard. That is, it has tried to provide a general theory that can explain the "security environment" in all historical epoch. A theory that has clear traces of neo-realism and does not hide a strong tendency towards neo-realist thinkers.

According to these explanations, the concern of this research is to understand the security environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Therefore, this research seeks to answer the main question: "How is the security environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran evaluated according to the systemic theory of the security environment?" It hypothesizes that, "given the five main indicators of "permeability of geographical barriers", "the strength of the state, behave with self-restraint ", "robust constraints behalf international structure (structural constraints) "and" Dominance of defense" which" Tang's presentation on recognizing the good security environment of a country, the security environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran is considered good (or favorable)." For this purpose, it is necessary to first consider the Components Main branches of Tang's theory and to address the main factors that, according to Tang, form the security environment of a country.

2. Methodology

In the present study, descriptive-analytical research method has been used to prove the hypothesis. Data collection was also done using library and Internet resources.

3. Theoretical Framework

The Theoretical Framework of the present study is the "systemic theory of security environment" of Shipping Tang. By using this theory and assessing the situation of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the five characteristics of "permeability of geographical barriers", "power of State", "behave with self-restraint", "robust constraint behalf international structure (structural constraints)" and "dominance of defense" Extracted from the theoretical framework, the findings of this study are formed about the quality of the security environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

3-1. Systemic Theory of the Security Environment of Shipping Tang

Shipping Tang in his famous article entitled "Systemic Theory of the Security Environment", considers the security environment as a "system" formed by several factors. In his article, he points to the four main factors "**geographical barriers**", "state- to-state interaction ", "international structure" and "military technology" that shape the security environment. "Geographical barriers" are the first factor that shapes a country's "security environment". In describing this factor, Tang writes:

“Just as geographical barriers largely dictate an organism’s ecosystem; they also serve as the founding factor for shaping a state’s security environment. The impact of a geographical barrier on the security environment can be measured by its permeability: all else being equal, the less permeable a state’s geographical barrier and the less vulnerable the state is to external forces, the better its security environment, and vice versa” (Tang,2004:4).

This is how the "reference" site defines geographical barriers. A geographical barrier can be defined as a naturally occurring arrangement of land or water that separates an area.

General geographical barriers are mountains, glaciers, islands, lakes, oceans, rivers and canyons (Writer, N.d.).

The second variable that, according to Tang, forms the "security environment" is "**state-to-state interaction**", which consists of two parts: "internal development: power" and "external behavior: Self-restraint". In describing the first section, "Internal Development: Power," Tang writes:

“As long as the international structure remains anarchic, states ultimately have to depend upon “self-help” for their security, and accumulating power will remain a central part of this “self-help” strategy. While power is a loosely defined concept in international politics, as long as we lack a better measure, we must gauge the impact of a state’s internal development upon its security environment by measuring its aggregate power: all else being equal, the greater a state’s aggregate power, the less likely it is to be attacked and the more likely it can defeat the aggressor and survive even if it is attacked, thus the better its security environment” (Tang,2004:5).

Although Tang refers to power as a concept that is freely defined in international politics, he himself does not provide a clear definition of power.

However, because he appears to be under the influence of neo-realist approaches and his use of the term "accumulated power", it can be assumed that he means "power", the same material dimension of power as Hans-Joachim Morgenthau, author of the famous work "Politics among Nations: Strive for Power and Peace" has been introduced Morgenthau presents elements of national power including "geography", "natural resources (food + raw materials)", "industrial power", "military readiness (technology + leadership + quantity and quality of armed forces)", "population (population distribution + population growth trend", "national character", "national spirit", "quality of diplomacy" and "quality of state (balance between resources and politics + balance between resources + popular support + domestic government and foreign policy)" (Morgenthau,2005:262-197).

of course, It should be noted, that scholars such as Michael Barnett and Raymond Diwall, in their paper entitled "Power in International Politics," combine different theories and perspectives into four types of power: "Compulsory," "institutional," "structural," and "productive." Which has a complete comprehensiveness (Barnett and Duvall,2005:48). According to these researchers' definition the Morgenthau's definition of the concept of "power" in terms of material dimensions can be classified as "coercive power". In addition, the definition that "Joseph S. Nye" exhibits from the concept of "hard power", is close to Morgenthau's definition of power. Nye sees police power, financial power, and the ability to hire and fire people as tangible examples of hard power that can be used to change the position of others. He believes that hard power depends on inducements (carrots) and threats (sticks) (Nye,2008:29) External Behavior: "Self-restraint" is the second part of "state-to-state interaction" as the second factor that shapes the "security environment", as Tang defines it:

“Because states tend to balance against threat, a state perceived to be aggressive is more likely to be counterbalanced, thus less likely to enjoy a benign security environment. Unless facing an aggressive opponent (a revisionist or predator state), a state has to shape a benign image among other states in order to enjoy a benign security environment. The only credible way to do so is to behave with self-restraint. By exercising self-restraint and being willing to be restrained by other states (they are two sides of the same coin), a state can reassure others and alleviate their fear of its intentions. In return, others are less likely to view it antagonistically

and act to contain it, and it becomes more secure” (Tang,2004:6).

Tang's emphasis on the need for one state to present a "benign Image" among other states is close to the concept of a "security dilemma." Regarding the concept of "security dilemma", it should be said that this concept is a central concept in almost all realist theories (Snyder,2002: 155). The term "security dilemma" was first coined by John Hertz in an article entitled "Idealist Internationalists and the Security Riddle."

In that article, he defines the security dilemma as follows: Groups or individuals are motivated to gain more and more power in order to escape the influence of the power of others. This, in turn, makes others more insecure and forces them to be prepared for the worst (Herz,1950:157). Increasing the security of one state reduces the security of others," Jarvis explains the meaning of the security dilemma (Jarvis,1978:186). In other words, many of the tools that states use to increase their security can reduce the security of other states, even the security of security forces (lobell,2010:6660).

Therefore, state A may purchase fighter jets, tanks, missiles, etc. in order to increase its security. Here an important question arises in the minds of other countries. What is the purpose of state A in enlarging its army and military equipment?" Does he want to gain more power or does he want to ensure his security? This question creates a dilemma in the mind, which is called the security dilemma according to Butterfield, there is a key element at the heart of the security dilemma namely uncertainty (Collins, 2000:4). More precisely, the security dilemma is therefore a fundamental concept linked to the existential conditions of uncertainty that characterize all human relations, especially the interactions that take place in the biggest and most violent stage- that is, international politics. In the context of international relations, the existence of uncertainty means that state (decision makers, military planners and their foreign policy analysts) can never be 100% sure of the current and future intentions and motives of those who are capable of harming them militarily.

We see this as one of the unresolvable uncertainty and place it at the center of the dilemmas that pose the security dilemma (Booth and Wheeler,2008 b:133-134).

It is because of this uncertainty that state A seeks to increase its security by increasing its power and military apparatus and state B, which suspects that state A intends to increase its military capability to attack state B.

They go to war, because state B thinks that if it does not go to war with state A quickly, state A will attack her in the near future. Therefore, they enter the war without the war being favorite for them or one of them seeking revision (Moslehi and Rezaei,2020:287).

Thus, Tang's secure image of what a country should present and the restrained behavior that he believes states should behave in order to give other states a "security dilemma" and a dilemma over a state Interpret with optimism and do not feel insecure about the actions of that state.

It is in such circumstances that other states do not have a hostile view of that state and do not try to restrain that state, and this will make that state more secure.

International (Regional) Structure" is the third factor that shapes the "security environment". Tang" writes in this regard:

“Scholars have long debated which type of international structure (usually defined by polarity) is more stable (meaning ‘less prone to change’) and peaceful (meaning ‘systemic war is less likely’). The debate, however, has never been completely settled and much confusion remains. Moreover, for our purpose of defining security environment, polarity is simply too coarse a measurement. This is because while a stable and peaceful system may mean there is a generally low probability of war, it does not mean that every state faces the same probability of war: different states may have different security environment under the same structure. For instance, under bipolarity, while allies of superpowers may not face a significant threat of war from the other side, they face permanent threats from their big brothers. And under regional or global unipolarity, the superpower certainly enjoys the best security environment that the structure can offer, but unless the superpower exercises self-restraint and behaves benignly (and they usually do not), other states’ security environments will remain in constant jeopardy: Hence, whether a particular structure is stable or peaceful does not really tell us a lot about a state’s security environment under the structure, and the impact of international structure on states’ security environment cannot be simply measured with polarity per se. Instead, the impact of the international structure (for regional states, the regional structure) on the security environment can be better measured with the degree of constraint on states’ actions provided by the structure: all else being equal, the more robust the structural constraint, the less likely a state is to face or initiate a conflict, thus the better its security

environment. Under this definition, the same structure may have different constraints for different states, depending on the relative position of the state in the structure” (Tang,2003:6-7).

but in relation to the structure of the international system, it should be said that researchers have identified different models of the international system.

Morton A. Kaplan in his famous article entitled "Balance of Powers, Bipolarity and Other Models of the International System" Six models of the international system including the systems of "Balance of Power", " loose bipolar", " tight bipolar ", "Universal", " hierarchical " And " unit veto." Kaplan believes that four of these six systems are virtually non-existent, and that the other two systems, the balance of power and the loose bipolar. System, can be cited models with use of historical evidence. There was a classic example of a balance of power in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, and a loose bipolar system emerged as a result of changes in the power distribution process after World War II. (Kaplan, 1957:685-690) J. K Holsty Based on historical descriptions, also lists five types of international systems: "hierarchy", "dispersion of power", "block and dispersion of power", "bipolar" and "multipolar" (Holsty,2004:151).

The fourth factor that shapes a state's security environment is "**Military Technology.**" Tang describes this variable:

“In human history, military technologies (or dual-use technologies) have been the major force that came to penetrate states’ geographical barriers, and every revolution in military affairs (RMAs) brought a new kind of warfare, and states’ calculus of war changed with it. When states’ calculation of war changed, so did the chance of war and states’ war-making behavior, and eventually, states’ security environments. Previous work has differentiated the subjective (perceived) and objective (actual) forms of the offense- defense balance, and disagreed on whether the ‘core’ approach (i.e. purely technology driven) or the ‘broad’ approach (i.e. including perceptions) is more appropriate for measuring the impact of military technology on the probability of war.⁴⁸ For our purpose of defining the security environment, we stick with the ‘core’ approach, and measure the impact of military technology on the security environment with the actual offense- defense balance, instead of decision-makers’ perceptions of it. Under this framework, the perceived form of the balance can be better understood as an indicator of state-to-state interaction: when

a state believes in offense dominance when reality is defense dominance, that state is less likely to exercise self-restraint.” (Tang, 2003: 7-8) Regarding the offensive-defense balance, to which Tang refers, it should be noted that the "offense-defense balance theory" is one of the neoclassical theories of defensive realism (Taliaferro,2000/01:135).

Offense-defense theory argues that international conflict and war are more likely when offensive military operations have the advantage over defensive operations, whereas cooperation and peace are more likely when defense has the advantage. According to the theory, the relative ease of attack and defense—the offense defense balance—is determined primarily by the prevailing state of technology at any given time. When technological change shifts the balance toward offense, attackers are more likely to win quick and decisive victories. This prospect of quick and decisive warfare exacerbates the security dilemma among states, intensifies arms races, and makes wars of expansion, prevention, and preemption more likely (Lieber,2000:71).

Offense-defense variables play a central role in recent work on structural realism—for example, defensive and contingent realism. Unlike Kenneth Waltz’s version of structural realism, which focuses on power or the distribution of resources, these versions of realism focus on states’ abilities to perform necessary military missions. Consequently, these theories need to introduce a variable that reflects a state’s ability to convert power into military capabilities. This variable is the offense-defense balance (Glaser and Kaufmann,1998:49).

The offensive/defensive balance of military technology has been defined primarily in terms of the ease of territorial conquest, the characteristics of armaments, the resources needed by the offense in order to overcome the defense, and the incentive to strike first (Levy,1984:223).

The feasibility of conquest is shaped by military factors, geographic factors, domestic social and political factors, and the nature of diplomacy. Discussions of the offense- defense balance often focus on military technology, but technology is only one part of the picture (Van Evera, 1998:16).

Military factors include military technology, doctrine, location and deployment of military forces. Geographical factors can be such as the alignment of national borders with oceans, lakes, mountains, wide rivers, dense forests, inactive deserts or other natural barriers; Creating artificial

(man-made) barriers along borders; Existence of " wide buffer regions" such as third countries or civilian areas that separate enemies; Mountainous or forested national territory; High rural population, facilitating "guerrilla resistance" to invaders; Not vulnerable to " economic strangulation"; Self-sufficiency in water, energy, food and important raw materials; And knew that trade routes would not be cut off by sea or land siege. The most important variable that can be mentioned in the internal political and social factors is the level of popularity of the political system, which makes the state more successful in cases such as encouraging the people to guerrilla resistance. The three most important diplomatic variables are the "collective security system", the "defense alliances" and the "balancing behavior by neutral states " (Van Evera,1998:16-21). To summarize his discussion, Tang goes on to outline three general points about how interactions between factors shape a countries' security environment:

“To summarize this discussion, we can draw three general points about how interactions among factors shape states’ security environment. First, no single factor can dictate the overall international or regional security environment, and a state’s security environment. At any given time, every state’s security environment can only be understood by carefully assessing the relative strength of each factor and their interactions. Second, geographic barriers provide the first-cut for understanding the overall security environment because they localize the impact of all other factors. But geography alone cannot dictate a state’s security environment, because other factors are constantly trying to penetrate the geographical barrier. Finally, the best scenario for a state’s security environment will be: its geographic barriers are impermeable, the state is powerful and yet behaves with restraint, the international structure provides robust constraints, and defense is dominant. Its worse case, of course, will be the opposite for each of the factors” (Tang,2003:15).

Table (1): Factors Influencing the Security Environment
SHAPING THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Factors	Measurement
Permeability of Geographical Barrier	High Low
Aggregate Power	Weak Powerful
Degree of Self-restraint	Weak Strong
Structural Constraint	Weak Strong
Military Technology	Offense dominant Defense dominant
Security Environment	Poor Good

(Source: Tang,2003:15)

4. Research Findings

4-1. Investigation of the Security Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran According to Tang's Systemic Theory

Shiping Tang sees the best-case scenario for a state's security environment as geographical barriers are Impermeable, the state is strong and at the same time behaves with Self-restraint, the international structure imposes robust constraints, and defense is dominant. The worst-case scenario is, of course, the opposite of each of these factors (Tang,2004:15).

Regarding the security environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in accordance with the above five factors, the following points should be mentioned:

4-1-1.Geographical Barriers should be Impermeable

Border has a political meaning which has been expressed as a separation criterion of the state units and determination of the executive power territory of any type of state (Gharehbeygi and Pourali Otikand,2018: 309). Iran has the longest border among the 9 countries of West Asia (Middle East). It has 15 neighboring countries and half of its provinces are located in border areas (Shokouhi,2010:102). The Islamic Republic of Iran has the highest role in this geopolitical area due to its complete control over the northern coast of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman (Safavi, 2001:16). Iran's geographical diversity, including sea, mountains, plains, etc., has created unique geographical barriers in the country.

4-1-2.The State should be Strong

The four variables of geographical location, economic, military power and identity components have had a significant impact on the promotion of regional power of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Shakouri and

Vazirian,2019:25).

Regarding the strength of the Islamic Republic of Iran and proving that the Islamic Republic of Iran is among the regional powers in West Asia (Middle East), according to the strategic assessment of the think tank and the reference of the "International Institute for Strategic Studies" in 2016 is cited.

Although this report mentions the different characteristics of each country's military power, but only mentions the number of armed forces, including Active, Conscript, Reserve and Paramilitary, the number of main battle tanks, (MBT) the number of vessels, including Patrol and Coastal Combatants etc. Finally, the number of fighters, including interceptor fighters, air combat fighters, bombers, strike fighters, etc., will suffice.

Table (2): Strategic Assessment of West Asia (Middle East)

(Countries all the Figures in the Table are in Thousand of People)

Country Name	Total Number of Troops	Number of Active Troops	Conscript	Number of Reserve Troops	Number of Paramilitary (such as Police, Border Guards, etc.)	Number of Main Battlefield Tanks (MBT)	Total Floats	Number of Fighters
Iran	610	Army+ IRGC Ground Forces 130+150	Army+ IRGC 220+?	350	40-60 (The number of Basij Resistance Force 600)	Army+ IRGC 1513+?	Army+ IRGC 68+126 Law-Enforcement Forces 90	Army+ IRGC 333+?
		Army+ IRGC Navy 15.4+20	?					
		Army+ IRGC Air Forces 52+15	?					
		Army+ IRGC Marines 2/6+5	?					
Turkey	355.2	Ground Forces 260.2 (including		378.7	156.8	2379	41	310

		conscripts)						
		Navy 42 (including conscripts)						
		Air Forces 50	?					
		Marines 3	?					
Egypt	438.5	Ground Forces 120	190	479	397	2480	Navy 61+ Coast Guard 89	584
		Navy 8.5	10					
		Air Forces 20	90					
		Marines ?						
Israel	169.5	Ground Forces 26	100	465	8	490	45	354
		Navy 6.7	2.5					
		Air Forces 34	?					
		Marines 0.3	?					
Saudi Arabia	227	Ground Forces 75	0	0	24.5	880	32	429
		Navy 10.5	0					
		Air Forces 36 Strategic Missile Forces 2.5 National Guard 100	0					
		Marines 3	0					
Iraq	193	Ground Forces 180 (Includes Counter Terrorism Service)	0	0	145	391	32	90
		Navy	0					

		2						
		Air Forces 10	0					
		Marines 1	0					
Syria	169	Ground Forces 130	?	0	100	?	31	236
		Navy 4	?					
		Air Forces 35	?					
		Marines ?	?					
Jordan	100.5	Ground Forces 86	0	65	15	282	9	57
		Navy 0.5	0					
		Air Forces 14	0					
		Marines 0	0					
United Arab Emirates	63	Ground Forces 44	0	0	0	383	Navy 42+ Critical Infrastructur e and Coastal Protection Agency (CICPA) 113	156
		Navy 2.5	0					
		Presidential Guard 12	0					
		Air Forces 4.5	0					
		Marines ?	0					
Lebanon	60	Ground Forces 56.6	0	0	20	334	13	9
		Navy 1.8	0					
		Air Forces 1.6	0					
		Marines 0	0					
Oman	42.6	Ground Forces 25 Foreign Forces	0	0	4.4	117	10	63

		2 Royal Household 6.4						
		Navy 4.2	0					
		Air Forces 5	0					
		Marines 0	0					
Kuwait	17.5	Ground Forces 13	0	23.7	7.1	293	20	66
		Navy 2 (including 0.500 Coast Guard)	0					
		Air Forces 2.5	0					
		Marines 0	0					
Qatar	16.5	Ground Forces 12 (including Emiri Guard)	0	0	5	62	11	33
		Navy 2.5 (including Coast Guard)	0					
		Air Forces 2	0					
		Marines ?	0					
Bahrain	8.2	Ground Forces 6	0	0	11.26	180	12	38
		Navy 0.7	0					
		Air Forces 1.5	0					
		Marines ?	0					

(Source: The International Institution for Strategic Studies, 2020:153-381)

It should be noted that Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Israel can be considered as Iran's main geopolitical rivals in Middle East (Mossalanejad,2012:35).

4-1-3. State Be Self-Restraint

Regarding the possibility of carrying out primary jihad or the same aggressive jihad during the absence of Infallible Imam (peace be upon him) and without his permission, there are differences among jurists.

Some jurists consider the presence of the Infallible (peace be upon him) or the appointment of the Infallible Imam as a requirement of the initial jihad. On the other hand, another group of jurists do not believe in the necessity of the presence of the infallible or their appointment for the primary jihad, and they consider the order of the jurist of the University of the Conditions sufficient for the primary jihad. In any case, not only has the Islamic Republic of Iran not attacked any country so far, but with the tact of the Supreme Leader, it acted with full restraint in two specific cases and prevented the Islamic Republic from entering two full-scale wars.

4-1-3-1. Following the occupation of Kuwait by the Ba'athist regime in Iraq, Operation Desert Shield was deployed with the deployment of 500,000 troops on Saudi soil to prevent the occupation of Saudi Arabia after Kuwait. After that, the operation to liberate Kuwait, known as the "Desert Storm", began on January 16,1991, at 11:30 PM GMT. At this stage, coalition fighters, particularly advanced US and British fighter jets, launched heavy airstrikes on Iraq's military, intelligence, and economic infrastructure. As 106 thousand sorties were flown in just 34 days.

Following the successful implementation of Operation Desert Storm, US-led coalition ground forces launched Operation Desert Sabre at 4 a.m. (local time) on February 24.

That continued until 8 a.m. on February 28, when the Iraqi Special Forces and army were completely defeated (Tabarizadeh and Marei,2009:16-29). During this period, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, by adopting a logical and realistic policy, prevented Iran from entering this war for the benefit of either side.

4-1-3-2. On August 8, 1998, the Iranian consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan, was attacked by Taliban forces and nine Iranian citizens, including eight diplomats, were martyred. After that, in the meeting of the Supreme National Security Council, the majority of members decided to invade Afghanistan and destroy the Taliban, and the decision was made to

call 100,000 troops to be stationed on the border with Afghanistan, which was again vetoed by the supreme leader grand Ayatollah seyed Ali Khamenei. He prevented the Iranian military invasion of Afghanistan. When, on October 7, 2001, an order was issued to launch Operation Enduring Freedom and invade Afghanistan, and on November 9, 2001, Mazar-i-Sharif, November 13, Kabul, November 14, Jalalabad, and On December 7, the city of Kandahar was liberated from Taliban control. Shortly afterwards, the Taliban were eliminated as one of the main enemies of the Islamic Republic at the expense of another enemy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the United States (Global Security.org,2013) Everyone saw the fruit of the self-restraint of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was carried out under the direct guidance of the supreme leader grand Ayatollah seyed Ali Khamenei.

4-1-4. The International Structure Imposes Robust Constraints

Reagan Vice President George Herbert Walker Bush, who entered the White House on January 20, 1989 emphasized that the world is one century ahead of the Americans, in which the new world order will depend on American leadership, power and values (Mottaghi,1997:13).

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the "end of the Cold War" and the "Iraqi invasion of Kuwait" and the assumption of leadership of the global coalition to oust the Iraqi army from Kuwait by the United States called for the emergence of a unipolar world. This unipolar structure, or according to Boozan and Weaver, 1 + 4 (1 superpower + 4 world powers) has so far imposed robust constraints on Iran (Buzan and Waver,2003:54). Today there are five strategic and powerful actors in the global level. All of them are the UN Security Council members (Hafeznia,2017:2).

4-1-5. The Defense is Dominant

In this section, in order to determine whether a country's military doctrine is defensive or offensive, we refer to the views of "Jervis". Jarvis describes two determinants of a state's defensive or offensive tendencies as follows:

"Can defensive policies and weapons be distinguished from offensive policies and weapons?" and which has the advantage between attack or defense?

Definitions are not always clear and many cases are difficult to judge. But these two variables greatly help to clarify the question of whether "pro-status quo powers" can adopt compatible security policies. When

defensive weapons are different from offensive weapons, one state may make itself safer without compromising the security of others and when defense takes precedence over attack, a sharp increase in the security of one state reduces the security of others only slightly. "And the pro-status quo powers can all enjoy a high level of security and get rid of the 'natural state' to a great extent" (Jervis,1978:186).

In relation to the two "Jervis" indicators, namely: a) Can defensive policies and weapons be distinguished from offensive policies and weapons?

And b) which has an advantage between attack or defense? It should be said 1_ Iran has not had land development policies since the death of Nader Shah Afshar in 1747, but on the contrary, during the period that lasted for about two and a half centuries, it has melted like snow on all sides (Jafari Valdani,2006:15-14).

2- According to the statistics of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Iran's military budget is in the fifth place in terms of gross national product (GDP) in the 10th place in West Asia (Middle East) and Iran's global position in the list of arms importers in 2018-2019, it was ranked 119th and in 2017-2018, it was ranked 111th, which shows that Iran's military expenditures are even lower than many small countries in the Persian Gulf, which are not as large as one-fifth the size of Iran.

Table (3): Military Expenditure of West Asian countries (Middle East) in Constant (2019) US\$ m.,

Country	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bahrain	1574	1580	1543	1558	1405
Egypt	4538	3829	3762	3744	4016
Iran	16028	18034	15257	12528	12151
Iraq	5942	7380	6270	7599	6994
Israel	19213	20053	20074	20504	21065
Jordan	1924	2042	1973	2032	2083
Kuwait	6655	6864	7203	7374	6940
Lebanon	2938	2669	2861	2521	1036
Oman	8145	6872	7575	6551	6663
Saudi Arabia	63337	70621	72918	61952	55535
Turkey	14112	15147	19225	20603	19567
UAE	20277 (2010)	22026 (2011)	21701 (2012)	26584 (2013)	25086 (2014)

(Source: SIPRI,2020b:21)

It should be noted that the figures in the table above are in million dollars and at a fixed price of dollars in 2018. The following table lists the share of West Asian (Middle East)

Military expenditure by country as percentage of gross domestic product (GDP).

Table (4): Military Expenditure by Country as Percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in West Asian (Middle East) Countries

Country	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bahrain	4.7%	4.3%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%
Egypt	1.7%	1.4%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%
Iran	3.0%	3.1%	2.5%	2.1%	2.2%
Iraq	3.5%	3.9%	2.9%	3.4%	4.1%
Israel	5.5%	5.5%	5.3%	5.2%	5.6%
Jordan	4.5%	4.8%	4.6%	4.6%	5.0%
Kuwait	5.9%	5.6%	5.1%	5.5%	6.5%
Lebanon	5.1%	4.5%	5.0%	4.7%	3.0%
Oman	12.1%	9.6%	9.5%	8.6%	10.9%
Saudi Arabia	9.9%	10.2%	9.5%	7.8%	8.4%
Turkey	2.1%	2.1%	2.5%	2.7%	2.8%
UAE	6.0% (2010)	5.5% (2011)	5.1% (2012)	6.0% (2013)	5.6% (2014)

(Source: SIPRI,2020a:14)

The table below also lists the countries of West Asia (Middle East) in the global list of recipients of weapons. The figures are in millions of dollars and at a fixed dollar price in 1990.

Table (5): Arms Imports to the largest Importers, 2018-2020 in Constant (2019) US\$ m

Country	2018	2019	2020	2018-2020	Rank in World in 2018-2020 Period
Saudi Arabia	3315	3419	2466	9200	1
Egypt	1677	1046	1311	4034	5
Qatar	620	2358	783	3761	7
UAE	1196	691	432	2318	8
Israel	543	546	474	1563	14
Turkey	487	754	86	1327	16
Iraq	543	175	1	719	25
Jordan	238	224	148	610	27
Oman	277	86	85	449	33
Kuwait	95	51	67	213	48
Lebanon	52	74	39	165	52

Bahrain	65	15	15	95	59
Iran	4	3	2	9	119

(Source: SIPRI,2021)

Most of Iran's military equipment, including Iran's "ballistic missiles," is defensive in nature. The main ballistic missiles of Iran can include Shahab family (1, 2 and 3) with liquid fuel, Sejil family (1 and 2) with solid fuel, Qadr-1 with liquid fuel, Gheiam with liquid fuel, Emad with liquid fuel, Fateh family 110 with solid fuel and Sumar cruise missile (based on the Russian KH-55 missile named NATO AS-15A Kent).

According to the 2016 assessment of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the Islamic Republic of Iran launches "Shahab-3 / Qadr-1" medium-range ballistic missiles with mobile launchers, "Shahab-3 / Qadr-1" silo and "Sejjil-2" and short-range missiles. It has ballistic range "Fateh-110" and "Shahab-1/2" and Ya-Ali cruise missile (The International Institute for Strategic Studies,2020:327-329).

In the 2013 assessment of the Israeli Institute for National Security Studies, Iran's ballistic and cruise missiles included "SS-1 (Scud B / Scud C) [made in Russia]", "Shahab-2 (Scud-D)", "Shahab-3 / Shahab-3B", "BM-25 [Musudan or Nodong-B made in North Korea with a range between 2500 to 4000 km]", "Thunder-69 (CSS-8) [Cruise]", "Uprising-1 "Fateh-110" and "Sejjil / Ashura" are mentioned (The Institute for National Security Studies,2013:7).

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy reports on the Islamic Republic's missile diversity as follows:

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Table (6): Missiles at the Disposal of the Islamic Republic

ROCKET/MISSILE	REPORTED RANGE (KM)	FUEL/PROPULSION	COMMENTS
Fajr-3/-5	45/75	Solid	Mid-range rocket—transferred to Hezbollah
Zelzal-1/-2/-3	125/210/300	Solid	Long-range rocket—transferred to Hezbollah
Fateh-110	300	Solid	Missile derived from Zelzal series rockets—Syria's M-600 (a derivative) transferred to Hezbollah
Khalij-e Fars	300	Solid	Electro-optically guided anti-ship ballistic missile—derived from Fateh-110
Hormuz-1/-2	300	Solid	Anti-radiation/anti-ship missiles—derived from Fateh-110
Shahab-1	300	Liquid	Derived from Russian Scud-B missile via North Korea
Shahab-2	500	Liquid	Derived from Russian Scud-C missile via North Korea
Fateh-313	500	Solid	Extended-range Fateh-110
Zulfiqar	700	Solid	Extended-range Fateh-313
Qiam	800	Liquid	Finless design derived from Shahab-2 missile
Shahab-3	1,000	Liquid	Derived from North Korean Nodang missile
Ghadr	1,600	Liquid	Derived from Shahab-3 missile
Emad	1,700	Liquid	Derived from Ghadr missile, reportedly has a maneuvering RV
Sajjil-2	2,000+	Solid	Multistage missile, test flown but not operational
BM-25	4,000	Liquid	North Korean design based on Russian R-27 submarine-launched ballistic missile, test flown?
Ya Ali	700	Turbojet	Air-launched land-attack cruise missile, operational status unknown
Soumar	2,500–3,000	Turbofan	Ground-launched land-attack cruise missile based on Russian Kh-55?

(Source: Eisenstaedt, 2016:4)

The arrangement of the missile launch sites and the scattering of these sites throughout the country also show the efforts of Iranian military strategists to protect these sites from the so-called first strike attacks of the enemy special the United States of America with extraordinary air power. Therefore, Iran's main military equipment is defensive in nature and not offensive.

3_ None of Iran's military doctrines, exercises are not offensive in nature. One of the major military investments in Iran is in the field of air defense. Air defense systems such as Hawk (MIM-23), Mersad (optimized version of Hawk with Shahin and Shalamchek missiles), Rapier, Shahab Saqib (based on FM-80 system), Sayad (based on Chinese Hq-2 system) SA-2 (guideline), SA-5 (S200), SA-6 (Ginfol), SA-15 (Tour- M1), SA-22 (Pantsir), HQ-10 (Chinese model S-300), "man-portable" defense systems such as SA-14 (Sterla-3), SA-16 (Igla-1), SA-18 (Igla Groves), Covenants 1 and 2 and GHAEM Anti-Helicopter Missile, air cannons of various calibers such as Mesbah (Rezaei and Taghvinejad, 2011:243). Also, new air defense systems such as Raad (optimized version of SA- 6 or Ginfol with Taair-2 missiles), 3rd of Khordad (optimized version of SA-6 with Taair-2b missiles), Tabas, "Alam-ul-Huda" system (with Taair-2 missiles) B and Sadid 630, the ninth Herz (moving example of Saqib shahab) ya Zahra (semi- moving example of Saqib shahab) and recently S-300 have

only defensive nature (Rezaei and Parto,2017:174).

The International Institute for Strategic Studies in its 2016 assessment, described the composition and number of air defense systems of the Islamic Republic as follows. 250 FM-80 launchers (Chinese example of Krotal system), 30 Rapier launchers, 15 Tigerket launchers, over 150 MIM-23B launchers including original I-HAWK and localized Mersad systems, 45 S launchers -75 (SA-2)", 10 launchers" (SA-5) S-200", 29 launchers" Tor-M1 (SA-15)".

The assessment also included the launch systems "Stinger (FIM-92A)", "Sterla-2 (9K32 or SA-7)", "Sterla-3 (9K36 or SA-14)", "Igla-S (9K338 or SA-24), Misaq (Covenant)-1 (QW-1), Misaq (Covenant)-2 (QW-2) and HN-54.

According to this assessment, the air defense cannons of the Islamic Republic include 100 23 mm ZSU-23-4 cannon, 23 mm ZU-23 cannon, 37 mm Orlican cannon, 80 57 mm ZSU-57-2 cannon. 942, 14.5 mm cannons, ZPU-2 and ZPU-4 300 23 mm cannons ZU- 23-2, 92 35 mm cannons, Sky guard 37 mm cannons M-1939 50 mm 70mm cannons, 200 57 mm cannons S-60 and 300 85 mm cannons. M1939. (The International Institute for Strategic Studies,2020:350)

In the report of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, in addition to the above systems, the existence of "SA-6" and "SA-22" systems in Iran has been confirmed (Cordesman and Toukan,2016:109). The Institute for National Security Studies, an Israeli institute in its 2013 assessment, noted the existence of the Raad (SA-17) and RBS-70 air defense systems in addition to the above (The Institute for National Security Studies,2013:19). In addition to the above, we must add the powerful "S-300" system regarding the air power as the main weapon for carrying out the so-called "first strike" attacks, it should be said that the Islamic Republic has made the least amount of military investment in its air sector.

Variety of Islamic Republic fighters including F-4 D/E (Phantom), F-5 E/F (Tiger), F- 14 A (Tomcat), Mig-29 A (Falchrome), M Su-24 (Fencer), Su-25 (Faragfoot) is saegheh and azarakhsh (Rezaei,2008:91-90).

Western fighters have a lifespan of 40 to 50 years, and Russian fighters have a lifespan of 20 to 30 years. In the evaluation of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, published in 2016, the number of Iranian fighters is as follows:

Table (7): Composition and Number of Fighters of the Islamic Republic

Fighter	Number	Fighter	Number
F-14 A	43	Su-25 UBK	3
MiG-29 A/U/UB	36	Su-24 MK	29
F-7 M	24	Mirage F-1E	10
F-4 D/E	62	P-3 MP	3
F-5 E/F	+55	Saegheh	More than 6
F-5 B	20	azarakhsh	More than 6
Su-25 K	7	EMB-312 Tucano	15

(Source: The International Institute for Strategic Studies,2020:351)

Also, in two articles published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, one in 2016 and the other in 2015, the number of Iranian fighters is mentioned.

Table (8): Other Statistics on the Composition and Number of Fighters of the Islamic Republic

Fighter	Number According to 2015 Statistics	Number According to 2016 Statistics
F-14 A	43	43
MiG-29 A/U/UB	36	36
F-7 M	24	24
F-4 D/E	65	64
F-5 B/E/F	75	75
Su-25	13	10
Su-24	30	30
Mirage F-1	-----	10

(Source: Cordesman and Toukan,2016:97; Cordesman and Lin,2015:49)

Center for International and Strategic Studies (CSIS) "in its detailed study entitled" Iran - Persian Gulf Cooperation Council: Analysis of Air Force, Defense and Missile Operational Capability "with a detailed analysis of the superiority of the Air Force of the Cooperation Council member countries Persian Gulf with fighters such as F-15, F-16, Mirage-2000 and Tornado ADV on missions related to "first strike" such as "SEAD (suppression of enemy air defense)", "air superiority", "Air patrol" and has proved (Toukan and Cordesman,2009:44-93).

While US military presence in the region in the form of 1 Centcom Force, 2 Fifth Marine Fleet based in Bahrain, 3 aircraft carriers for deployment to the region and 4 US military bases in the Persian Gulf countries. Along with the military presence in the two neighboring countries of Iran, namely Afghanistan and Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran considers it as a

result of the aggressive approach of the United States and an action to increase the relative power of that country. and since, according to the principle of self-help, countries cannot rely on the state or other states to maintain their survival, in order to ensure their security, it is necessary to form an "informal implicit regime of regional security of the Islamic Republic" called the Axis of Resistance. In order to increase the relative security of itself and its allies and thus maintain the survival of itself and other members of the regime (Adami and Rezaei,2016:77).

Thus, the "axis of resistance", as its name implies, is not aggressive in nature.

Therefore, in the military doctrine of the Islamic Republic, defense dominates and the military doctrine of Iran has no offensive orientation. At the same time, the Islamic Republic can easily resist the expansionism of regional powers. It can be deduced from all the mentioned cases that according to the five indicators of "Tang", the security environment of the Islamic Republic is considered a desirable security environment.

5. Conclusion

Since Shiping Tang considers the understanding of the "security environment" as the basis of "security strategy", while criticizing the "traditional approach to recognizing the threat" which defines the "security environment" according to the identification of threats. Tang views the security environment as a "system" formed by four main factors: "geographical barriers", "state-to-state interaction", "international structure" and "military technology".

Tang also cited five indicators of "permeability of geographical barriers", "strength of state", "behaves with self-restraint", "robust constraints behalf international structure (structural constraints)" and "dominance of defense" on recognizing a better security environment. A country offers. In this research, while examining the above five indicators, it was concluded that the "security environment" of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a good (or favorable) environment. Although threats from that environment may be directed at the Islamic Republic, but the Iranians have been able to rely on internal strength and capability. Indigenous peoples repel those threats.

Utilizing Tang's theory both helps to accurately understand the security environment of a country, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, and can help manage the threats posed by that environment to that country. For this

reason, researchers consider the use of Tang's theory to be both theoretically and practically useful.

The findings of the present study show that the Islamic Republic has unique geographical barriers due to the geographical diversity of Iran, including sea, mountains, plains, etc., which according to the theory of the system-oriented security environment of Tang Shing in the index of "permeability of geographical barriers ". Regarding the power of State, as the second indicator derived from Tang's theory, the strategic estimate of the highly prestigious IISS shows that the Islamic Republic is one of the most powerful states in the region. Regarding the third characteristic, "powerful and yet behaves with restraint", the Islamic Republic has shown that it is not only reluctant to attack any country, but also with the tact of the Supreme Leader of Iran in two specific cases (not entering the first Gulf War and not the military response to the Taliban regime's atrocities in the martyrdom of Iranian diplomats has acted with complete restraint. In the fourth feature extracted from Tang's theory, it was emphasized that the unipolar structure of the international system in the current situation, or in the words of "Buzan and Wæver" 1 + 4 (1 superpower + 4 world power) has so far imposed robust constraints on Iran Is. Regarding "dominance of defense" as the fifth characteristic of Tang in assessing a country's "security environment", it was argued that none of Iran's military doctrines, maneuvers and exercises are offensive in nature, and that the Islamic Republic invests most of its military investment in sectors. It has done with a defensive nature such as air defense.

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