Islamic Political Thought

Examining the jurisprudential Imperatives of foreign policy with a novel approach

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Abstract: In foreign policy, imperatives refer to the factors and conditions that compel a country to act in specific ways or make particular decisions in the international arena. These imperatives typically arise from both internal and external factors that shape the priorities and constraints of policymaking. One significant category of imperatives in foreign policy, particularly for Islamic societies, is jurisprudential imperatives—the fundamental principles, rules, and values derived from Islamic law to guide international relations. According to the teachings of the Holy Quran and Islamic narrations, Islam provides the sole path for humanity to attain true happiness, both worldly and eternal, on individual and societal levels. To achieve this ideal state of well-being and perfection within an Islamic society, the foreign policy actions of an Islamic state must align with imperatives rooted in Islamic law. These imperatives are informed by core Islamic objectives such as the pursuit of justice, peace, preservation of human dignity, and the promotion of the public interest. This research, using a descriptive-analytical method and utilizing reliable jurisprudential sources, considering the issues affecting Islamic countries and the role of foreign policy in securing the interests and benefits of countries, identifies and explains the most important jurisprudential imperatives of foreign policy that have a special impact on the numerous and important foreign policy choices of countries in facing contemporary challenges. Within this framework, the study identifies key jurisprudential imperatives for foreign policy, including adherence to principles such as the fulfilment of the obligation (necessity of keeping promises), reciprocity, peaceful coexistence, caution in dealing with adversaries, rejection of domination (negation of mustache), invitation (da'wah), and the rules of capability and expediency. The findings underscore that Islamic jurisprudence offers vital solutions to contemporary challenges in international relations, strengthening the effectiveness of Islamic systems on the global stage.

Keywords: jurisprudential imperatives, Islamic foreign policy, peaceful coexistence, public interest, retaliation.

Introduction

Islam, as a divine instruction presented to humanity by the last and greatest of the prophets, according to the luminous verses of the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the innocents (peace be upon them), is a comprehensive and complete system that has explained all the ways to achieve the goodness and happiness of mankind. This enlightened religion considers the creation of man and the world to be purposeful and based on divine wisdom, and believes that man has a supreme perfection that he must strive to achieve during his earthly life. Undoubtedly, Islam has provided a clear plan for each Muslim person and the Islamic society to reach the desired perfection and has also explained the path of this perfection.

The comprehensiveness of Islam means that this religion provides humans with the tools and general principles of all the knowledge necessary to follow the path to achieving a transcendent goal. By utilizing these general principles, humans can obtain the necessary guidance for their happiness. Islam program includes all aspects of human life; both personal and social, worldly and hereafter affairs. Just as Islam has established rules for religious duties that have an individual aspect, it has also provided rules and principles for social and governmental affairs that are related to the collective dimension of man and guarantee the happiness of human society. Achieving happiness and perfection is not possible except by knowing and following the path specified in this religion.

In this regard, a tradition from Imam Baqir (peace be upon him) states: "God Almighty has not left anything that the nation needs until the Day of Judgment, except that He has revealed it in His Book and explained it to His Prophet. God has set a limit for everything and has specified a reason for every limit. He has also determined a punishment for anyone who exceeds these limits" (Hur Amili,1367,vol.18, p.141).

Before the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the establishment of a government based on Islamic law, despite centuries of jurisprudence and research in Islamic sciences, little attention had been paid to the governmental aspects of the Shiite religion. While other Islamic sects, which had experienced governance for centuries,

paid some attention to these issues; Although they were often deprived of the sea of knowledge of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them).

With the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially in the current situation where more than forty-five years have passed since the establishment of this sacred system, the need for research in the field of Islamic governmental dimensions, especially in the field of foreign policy, is felt more than ever.

Foreign policy and relations with other countries are considered very important factors in achieving the goals of Islamic society. Today, the impact of these relations on the Islamic society and the lives of the people is clearly visible. Especially in recent years, the issues that have arisen in the foreign relations of the Islamic Republic have had a significant impact on the daily lives of individuals.

The jurisprudential imperatives of foreign policy are the inevitable principles, rules, and values that are extracted from the sources of Islamic law to regulate international relations. In order for the Islamic society to achieve the desired happiness and perfection, the foreign policy of the Islamic state must be regulated in the light of these imperatives. These principles are based on the major Islamic goals such as achieving justice, peace, preserving human dignity, and ensuring the maximum public interest.

Identifying and articulating these imperatives, which have a special impact on the country's important foreign policy decisions in the face of contemporary challenges in the international system, is vital for achieving the foreign policy goals of the Islamic state.

The present study aims to identify these necessities and answer questions such as "What are the imperatives of foreign policy from the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence?" and "In the event of conflict between these necessities, which one takes priority?" Given that this issue has not been comprehensively examined from a jurisprudential perspective, it seems necessary to conduct independent research in this field.

1. Literature Review

Due to the fact that foreign policy is a concept that has received attention after the formation of modern governments, in the old

jurisprudential and narrative texts, there is no specific discussion under the title of the imperative of foreign policy; Although, the discussion of relations with other nations is one of the topics that the Holy Quran and narrations have addressed, and scholars have also raised it among other jurisprudential topics since the beginning of the formation of the Islamic state.

However according to my investigations, some researches that are somehow related to the subject of foreign policy and Islamic international relations are as follows:

Abdul Qayyum Sajjadi (sajjadi,2001,p.169-182) has written an article titled "The Principles of Foreign Policy in the Quran." In this article, he has named the broad frameworks of foreign policy mentioned in the Holy Quran as the principles of foreign policy and has discussed and examined these principles.

Mohsen Muhammadi Alamoti, (Alamoti,2009,p.115-137) in an article entitled "The Objectives and Mechanisms of Foreign Policy in Islam", using the evidence of the book and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, stated that the objectives of the foreign policy of Islam, such as the formation of a monotheistic system in the world, the establishment of justice, communication of religion and delivery of divine revelations, negation of domination and defense of the oppressed, etc.; It has been pursued by the Prophet of Islam using numerous political, diplomatic, economic, propaganda, defense and military mechanisms to establish the great Islamic civilization.

Ali Akbar Alikhani (Alikhani,2011,p.11-38) in an article titled "The Foundations and Principles of International Relations in Islam" has deduced and presented some of the foundations and principles of Islam in behavior and interaction in the international system from the sources of the Quran and Sunnah.

Iran Asadi (asadi,2015,p.101-118), in her article "Fundamentals of Foreign Policy from the Perspective of the Quran," has discussed the principles of the Islamic government's foreign policy from the perspective of the Quran and the goals of foreign policy in two sections. She has explained principles such as the principle of monotheism, negation of hypocrisy, peaceful resolution of disputes, and keeping promises. In the goals section, he has mentioned the

establishment of a unified Islamic government, the establishment of social justice, the happiness of humanity, the fight against oppression, and the prohibition of war and aggression.

Seyyed Mehdi Taheri (Taheri,2015,p.73-90) in an article titled "An Examination of Islamic Ethical Paradigms in International Relations" has only addressed the dos and don'ts of international relations from an Islamic perspective from an ethical perspective and has not examined other aspects of foreign policy.

It is observed that while these studies have had important achievements and each has examined aspects of Islamic international relations, there is no research work that specifically and comprehensively addresses the imperatives of foreign policy in Islam.

2. Foreign policy imperatives

Foreign policy imperatives encompass the guiding principles and motivations that shape how nations interact on the global stage. These imperatives are essential for understanding a country's approach to international relations, including its defense strategies, economic interests, environmental responsibilities, and humanitarian efforts. The significance of foreign policy is underscored by its direct impact on global stability, international alliances, and the well-being of nations and their citizens (Smith, 2020, p. 45).

As nations confront an interconnected world, the dynamics of foreign policy imperatives continue to evolve, prompting ongoing discussions about their implications for global governance and security. The interplay between historical legacies, ideological beliefs, and practical considerations shapes the way countries engage with one another, making the study of foreign policy imperatives a critical area of inquiry in understanding international relations (Miller, 2021, p. 78). Foreign policy is shaped by a variety of domestic and international factors that interact to determine a nation's approach to its global interactions. Understanding these influences is crucial for comprehending the imperatives behind foreign policy decisions

The jurisprudential imperatives of Islamic foreign policy refer to a set of principles and rules that are extracted from Islamic religious sources to guide Muslim politicians in international relations. These

imperatives have been formed in response to global challenges and with the aim of achieving justice, peace, preserving human dignity, and securing the interests of the Islamic Ummah (Mohammadi, 2015, p. 53-58).

Jurisprudential studies in the field of Islamic foreign policy, especially in the contemporary world, require redefinition and dynamic ijtihad. Accordingly, jurisprudential ijtihad is essential to adapt to global developments and new approaches in international law (Khosropanah, 2020,p. 122-127).

Based on this, and considering the four arguments of Islamic jurisprudence, the most important jurisprudential imperatives of foreign policy and its applications, in the author's opinion, are as follows:

3.Islamic foreign policy imperatives
3.1. The Principle of "Nafi al-Sabil" (Rejection of Domination)
- Concept and Rationale

The principle of "Nafi al-Sabil" asserts the rejection of any form of dominance or superiority of non-Muslims over Muslims. This principle is one of the fundamental jurisprudential rules in the foreign policy of the Islamic state, ensuring the independence of the Muslim community. The rationale for this principle includes the following:

- **Quranic Verses**

Verse 141 of Surah An-Nisa explicitly denies the dominance of disbelievers over believers. This verse serves as a key basis for many scholars and jurists to deduce the principle of "Nafi al-Sabil" (Tabatabai, 1995, Vol. 5, p. 189).

- **Prophetic Traditions**

The famous narration "Islam is supreme and nothing surpasses it" emphasizes the superiority of Islam over other religions (Ibn Babawayh, 1413 AH, Vol. 4, p. 334).

- **Consensus**

Jurists from both Shia and Sunni schools unanimously agree that no Islamic ruling should allow the subjugation of Muslims by non-Muslims.

- **Reason and Proportionality**

The dignity of believers necessitates that no Islamic ruling should lead to the humiliation of Muslims (Subhani, 2015, p. 86).

- **Applications**

The principle of "Nafi al-Sabil" is applicable across various areas of Islamic jurisprudence, from transactions to judiciary and marriage, and has numerous implications in foreign policy:

o Membership in International Organizations: Avoiding treaties that could lead to the domination of non-Muslims.

o Contracts and Agreements: Nullifying any agreements that allow foreign intervention in internal affairs.

o Economic and Cultural Relations: Preventing the infiltration of foreign media and software in Muslim societies.

3.2. The Principle of Peaceful Coexistence
- **Concept and Rationale**

Peaceful coexistence entails establishing amicable relations with other nations, particularly non-Muslims. This principle is rooted in Quranic verses, Prophetic traditions, and the conduct of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

- **Quranic Verses**

o Verse 28 of Surah Al-Baqarah invites Muslims to embrace peace and harmony (Makarem Shirazi, 1995, Vol. 2, p. 102).

o Verse 90 of Surah An-Nisa instructs Muslims to accept peace proposals from their adversaries (Tabarsi, 2011, Vol. 5, p. 286).

o Verse 8 of Surah Al-Mumtahanah encourages just and kind treatment toward non-Muslims who do not harm Muslims (Tabatabai, 1995, Vol. 19, p. 399).

- **The Prophet's Conduct**

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) established numerous peace treaties with various tribes and groups, such as the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah and agreements with the Jews of Medina.

- **Prophetic Traditions**

Imam Ali (AS) emphasized compassion and kindness toward all humans in his letter to Malik al-Ashtar.

- **Applications**

o Peace Treaties: Accepting truces and peace agreements with groups that do not harm Muslims.
o International Relations: Engaging with other nations based on kindness and justice.
o Islamic Diplomacy: Promoting global peace and avoiding war and violence unless necessary.

3.3. Principle of Reciprocity in Foreign Policy
- **Concept and Rationale**

Reciprocity means responding to the actions of another party in a proportional and equivalent manner. This principle is grounded in human nature, rational conduct, and Islamic teachings. Terms such as "iatida' bi-mithl" (retaliation in kind), "jaza' bi-mithl" (equivalent recompense), and "qisas" (retribution) are directly linked to this principle in the Quran and Islamic traditions.

- **Quranic Verses**

o Verse 194, Surah Al-Baqarah: "Whoever transgresses against you, transgress likewise against them in proportion to their transgression" (Tabarsi, 1415 AH, Vol. 2, p. 33).
o Verse 126, Surah An-Nahl: "And if you punish, punish with an equivalent to that with which you were harmed" (Zamakhshari, 1407 AH, Vol. 2, p. 644).
o Verse 40, Surah Ash-Shura: "The recompense of an evil deed is an evil the like thereof" (Razi, 1420 AH, Vol. 27, p. 605).
o Imam Baqir (AS) stated: "Whoever does good to you, return the favor equally; this is justice" (Nuri, 1408 AH, Vol. 12, p. 358).

o Imam Ali (AS) said in Nahj al-Balagha: "Return the stone from where it was thrown, for evil cannot be repelled except by evil of its like" (Fayd al-Islam, 1365 AH, Vol. 6, p. 1235).

- **Applications in Foreign Policy**

o Economic and Trade Decisions: Reciprocal measures against tariffs or adverse trade policies.
o Sanctions: Retaliatory actions against economic blockades to deter aggressors.
o Military Actions: Equivalent responses to armed aggression while maintaining proportionality.
o Positive Actions: Returning positive initiatives, such as international aid or support, with equal or greater goodwill.

- **Limitations**

o Protection of Non-Combatants
o Prohibition of harming women, children, and civilians who are not engaged in combat (Makarem Shirazi, 1374 AH, Vol. 2, p. 30).
o Ban on Weapons of Mass Destruction
o Use of destructive weapons, such as chemical and biological arms, is strictly forbidden based on Islamic teachings (Kulayni, 1367 AH, Vol. 5, p. 28).
o Respect for Dignity
o Respecting the dignity of prisoners and the sanctity of the deceased is a core principle.
o The principle of reciprocity serves as a just and preventive measure in Islamic foreign policy, ensuring proportionality in responses and maintaining ethical standards. It provides a practical framework for interactions in economic, military, and diplomatic domains.

3.4. Principle of Adherence to Commitments
- **Concept and Rationale**

The principle of adhering to commitments is a cornerstone in both individual and international relations, deeply embedded in Islamic jurisprudence. It mandates honoring all contracts and agreements unless specific conditions dictate otherwise (Makarem Shirazi, 1394, Vol. 2, p. 366).

- **Quranic Evidences**

o Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 1**:** "O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts." This verse universally emphasizes the obligation to honor all commitments (Tabatabai, 1374, Vol. 5, p. 257).
o Surah Al-Isra, Verse 34: "And fulfill [every] commitment. Indeed, the commitment is ever [that about which one will be] questioned" (Makarem Shirazi, 1374, Vol. 12, p. 130).

- **Prophetic Traditions**

Imam Ali (AS) stated that adherence to commitments is universally recognized as essential for societal cohesion, even among non-Muslims (Nahj al-Balagha, Letter 53).

- **Consensus**

Across history, rational individuals and societies have regarded honoring commitments as fundamental to maintaining social order (Tabatabai, 1374, Vol. 5, p. 259).

- **Applications in Foreign Policy**

o Respecting all international agreements unless the counterparty violates them.
o Prohibiting agreements that contradict Islamic principles, such as usurious contracts.
o Ensuring transparency and clarity in all treaties to prevent misuse or misinterpretation.

3.5. Principle of Distrust Toward Non-Believers
- **Concept and Rationale**
Islam distinguishes between trust among believers and caution toward non-believers, emphasizing distrust in interactions with adversaries to safeguard the Muslim community from deceit (Makarem Shirazi, 1374, Vol. 3, p. 91).

- **Quranic Evidences**

o Surah Al-Imran, Verse 28: "Let not believers take disbelievers as allies rather than believers..." This verse underscores the prohibition of trusting non-believers without caution (Tabatabai, 1374, Vol. 3, p. 91).

o Surah Al-Hujurat, Verse 6: It instructs believers to verify any news brought by a transgressor, extending this caution to non-believers (Tabatabai, 1374, Vol. 18, p. 463).

- **Prophetic Traditions**

Imam Ali (AS) in Nahj al-Balagha warns against trusting enemies even after peace treaties (Letter 53).

- **Rational and Universal Evidence**

Caution and precaution are universally acknowledged as prudent behaviors when dealing with potentially harmful entities.

- **Applications in Foreign Policy**

o Drafting international treaties with skepticism and thorough safeguards.
o Avoiding full participation in international conventions that may compromise Islamic interests.
o Exercising vigilance in granting visas or welcoming foreign representatives.

3.6. Principle of Supporting the Oppressed
- **Concept and Rationale**

Helping the oppressed is a divine obligation in Islam, underscored by numerous Quranic verses and Prophetic traditions.

- **Quranic Evidences**

o Surah An-Nisa, Verse 75: Calls for striving in the way of Allah to aid oppressed men, women, and children (Makarem Shirazi, 1374, Vol. 4, p. 22).
o Surah Al-Anfal, Verse 72: Mandates supporting oppressed believers who seek help (Tabatabai, 1374, Vol. 9, p. 189).

- **Prophetic Traditions**

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stated, "Whoever restores the right of the oppressed from the oppressor will be my companion in Paradise" (Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 72, p. 359).

- **Applications in Foreign Policy**

o Using diplomatic, economic, and military tools to aid oppressed Muslims worldwide.
o Prioritizing oppressed nations like Palestine and Yemen in international efforts.
o Advocating for justice and standing against global oppressors through alliances and initiatives.

3.7. Principle of Unity and Islamic Brotherhood

The Islamic concept of unity emphasizes a cohesive society where resources and efforts are directed toward collective growth rather than division. It fosters solidarity among Muslims, aligning them for the collective advancement of the community.

• **Quranic Basis**

o Surah Al-Hujurat (49:10): "Indeed, the believers are but brothers." This verse underscores the necessity of mutual support and unity among Muslims (Tabarsi, 1415 AH, Vol. 9, p. 222).
o Surah Al-Imran (3:103): "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided." This highlights the importance of unity as a divine command (Tabatabai, 1374, Vol. 3, p. 46).

• **Prophetic Tradition**

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized brotherhood by declaring, "In Allah's way, become brothers in pairs" (Suyuti, n.d., Vol. 11, p. 193).

- **Application in Foreign Policy**

o Encouraging cooperation among Muslim nations and prioritizing collective goals.
o Advocating for peace and resolving disputes between Muslim states.
o Supporting oppressed Muslims globally.

3.8. Principle of Invitation (Da'wah)

The principle of Da'wah involves inviting non-Muslims to Islam with wisdom and compassion. This principle is central to Islam's global mission of spreading its teachings peacefully.

- **Quranic Evidence**

o Surah Al-Imran (3:64): "Say, 'O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you...'". This verse demonstrates the invitation to shared values as a foundation for dialogue (Makarem Shirazi, 1374, Vol. 3, p. 60).
o Surah An-Nahl (16:125): "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction..." This verse emphasizes persuasion through reason and kindness (Tabatabai, 1374, Vol. 6, p. 299).

- **Prophetic Tradition**

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) practiced Da'wah by engaging peacefully with various tribes and nations, including sending letters to rulers inviting them to Islam (Ahmed, 1419 AH, Vol. 2, p. 121).

- **Application in Foreign Policy**

o Incorporating Da'wah into diplomatic efforts.
o Promoting peaceful coexistence through shared values.
o Using ethical persuasion rather than coercion to influence non-Muslim communities.

3.9. Principle of Jihad (Struggle in the Way of Allah)

Jihad in Islamic jurisprudence refers to the struggle for justice and the defense of Islamic values. It includes both defensive and proactive measures under specific ethical guidelines.

- **Quranic Evidence**
o Surah Al-Baqarah (2:190): "Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors." This verse outlines the ethical framework for defensive jihad (Tabari, 1420 AH, Vol. 2, p. 212).

o Surah Al-Hajj (22:39): "Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought..." This verse underscores the right to self-defense (Razi, 1420 AH, Vol. 17, p. 598).

- **Ethical Guidelines**

o Prohibition of harming civilians, non-combatants, and the environment.
o Respecting treaties and peace agreements unless breached by the adversary.

- **Application in Foreign Policy**
o Defending the Muslim community against aggression.
o Ensuring global justice and eradicating oppression.
o Promoting peace while preparing for legitimate defense.

3.10. Principle of Capacity and Feasibility in Foreign Policy (Qa'idat al-Wus'a)

Islamic scholars, both classical and contemporary, unanimously agree that responsibility is contingent upon capacity. Divine obligations are not imposed on individuals or entities beyond their ability, and those who lack capacity are absolved of responsibility (Qaradawi, 2009: 1318). This principle also applies to the foreign policy of an Islamic government. Any principle of foreign policy that a state is incapable of implementing ceases to be obligatory. It is worth noting that the "no hardship" rule (*qa'idah la haraj*) serves as evidence supporting the principle of capacity, as it governs all primary and secondary rulings in Islamic law by virtue of its inclusion of the term "in religion" (*fi al-din*).

3.11. Principle of Public Interest (Maslahah)and Its Interaction with Other Principles

All political systems endeavor to adopt foreign policies that safeguard and advance their interests and welfare. Consequently, the objectives and priorities defined by each system play a fundamental role in shaping its foreign policy. For an Islamic government, the primary function of foreign policy is to realize Islamic values and objectives while securing the welfare of Muslims. All decisions, strategies, and

actions, including those in foreign relations, are taken in light of the interests of Islam and the Muslim community. The Islamic state, maintaining its internal and external independence, pursues peace and cooperation with other nations to promote the welfare of Muslims and humanity at large. Therefore, the principle of expediency holds a higher status among the tenets of foreign policy. When expediency clashes with other principles, expediency takes precedence.

In international relations, "national interest" is often emphasized. Relations between states are primarily driven by their respective interests, which include fulfilling essential needs and achieving national aspirations. The key distinction between an Islamic government and others lies in its ultimate goal: the well-being of Islam and Muslims. While Islamic expediency encompasses material and spiritual welfare, it also aims at human perfection. The Islamic identity of the state necessitates that its foreign policy goals be defined according to Islamic interests and values.

Like other governments, an Islamic state seeks to secure its interests in foreign relations. However, these interests are rooted in the welfare of Islam and the Muslim community. Core values and objectives, such as preserving the Islamic system, promoting its ideals, ensuring the security of Muslim territories, and fostering Islamic unity, are central to this mission (Dehqani-Firouzabadi, 2009: 211). The Islamic Republic of Iran exemplifies the synthesis of Islamic expediency and national interest. The preamble of its Constitution reflects this integration, emphasizing the advancement of an international Islamic community and the ultimate victory of the oppressed over oppressors.

The Constitution tasks the state with pursuing Islamic interests alongside national interests. This dual responsibility underscores the alignment rather than conflict between these two domains. The Islamic Republic, grounded in its revolutionary origins and territorial sovereignty, prioritizes both national and supra-national objectives. However, national interests are subordinate to Islamic expediency (Dehqani-Firouzabadi, 2009: 234).

When a conflict arises between Islamic interests and national interests, priority is given to Islamic expediency. According to the

principle of *wilayat al-faqih*, the jurist-leader is responsible for the entire Muslim community, transcending national boundaries. The Islamic Republic, as the *umm al-qura* (core of the Islamic world), has a dual mandate: addressing the needs of the Iranian people while ensuring the welfare of the global Muslim community.

The preservation of the Islamic Republic is the highest priority, as its collapse would signify the defeat of Islam itself. Even primary religious obligations may be suspended if necessary to ensure the survival of the Islamic state. This paramount concern reflects the intrinsic link between Islamic interests and the survival of the Islamic Republic as the center of the Muslim world (Dehqani-Firouzabadi, 2009: 216-218).

Islamic interests and the national interests of Muslim-majority states have an overlapping but not identical scope. For example, safeguarding Islamic principles, strengthening the Muslim community, and promoting Islamic unity align with both domains. However, national interests that involve exploitation or oppression, as justified by some powers under the guise of "national interest," cannot be considered Islamic expediency. In cases of conflict, the specific Islamic interest takes precedence over general national interests, affirming the primacy of Islamic values in policy decisions.

3.12. Conflict between Jurisprudential imperatives in Foreign Policy

A critical point in implementing the principles of foreign policy in Islam, as derived from their evidences, is that there is no "conflict" in the technical sense among the governing principles of foreign policy in the Islamic system. Conflict (ta'arud) in the context of Islamic jurisprudence refers to a contradiction or opposition between two or more pieces of evidence such that it becomes impossible to reconcile their meanings. However, such a contradiction does not exist among the principles of foreign policy derived from the Quran or the sayings and practices of the Infallibles (peace be upon them).

What may arise in this context, instead, is priority conflict (tazahum), a concept in Islamic legal theory. All the objectives and principles of foreign policy remain valid and applicable, yet in practice, challenges may emerge that make it impossible to adhere to all of them

simultaneously. In such cases, the Islamic government—as the legal subject in this matter—must prioritize among these principles based on their significance.

For instance, when there is a discussion about a "conflict" between the principle of rejecting subjugation (Nafi al-Sabil) and the principle of adherence to treaties and agreements, the term "conflict" is not used in its technical jurisprudential sense but rather refers to practical tazahum.

Consequently, in the domain of foreign policy necessities, priority considerations in cases of tazahum are paramount. In these scenarios, the principles are ranked based on their importance in practice, and according to rational judgment, what is more significant (aham) takes precedence over what is less significant (muhim).

This framework ensures that the Islamic government acts in alignment with both the spirit of Islamic jurisprudence and the practical realities of governance.

Since choosing between foreign policy principles based on their importance in practice and prioritizing the more significant (aham) over the less significant (muhim) is a rational judgment, the importance of each principle cannot be determined without considering its objectives. Therefore, it is essential to briefly outline the objectives of each principle to compare them and ascertain their significance and position relative to one another.

In summary, the objectives of these principles can be described as follows:

1. The Principle of Inviting Non-Muslims to Islam (Da'wah)

The primary goal of this principle, which at times may necessitate military confrontation (jihad), is to increase the followers of this divine path and facilitate the movement of more individuals toward the ultimate purpose of human creation—worship, obedience, and submission to the Almighty Creator.

2. The Principle of Distrust Toward Enemies

This principle aims to adopt a realistic approach in international relations and to prevent the Islamic community from being deceived, exploited, or harmed in its foreign interactions.

3. The Principle of Adherence to Treaties and Agreements

This principle seeks to create a foundation for establishing sustainable and enduring relations. Without adherence to treaties, no social or international system can function effectively.

4. The Principle of Reciprocity

The objective here is to eliminate the basis for any hostile or malicious actions by others while simultaneously encouraging other nations to adopt a friendly and well-intentioned approach toward the Islamic state.

5. The Principle of Rejecting Subjugation (Nafi al-Sabil)

This principle is instituted to preserve the superiority of Muslims and prevent any actions that could undermine the dignity or weaken the Islamic community.

6. The Principle of Peaceful Coexistence

This principle aims to provide a framework for realizing shared human rights, minimizing friction and the waste of resources among nations, and fostering synergy among all humanity in pursuit of noble human objectives.

By comparing these objectives, the relative importance and position of each principle in Islamic foreign policy can be better understood.

3.13. Principle of Public Interest (**Maslahah**)and Its Interaction with Other Principles

All political systems endeavor to adopt foreign policies that safeguard and advance their interests and welfare. Consequently, the objectives and priorities defined by each system play a fundamental role in shaping its foreign policy. For an Islamic government, the primary function of foreign policy is to realize Islamic values and objectives

while securing the welfare of Muslims. All decisions, strategies, and actions, including those in foreign relations, are taken in light of the interests of Islam and the Muslim community. The Islamic state, maintaining its internal and external independence, pursues peace and cooperation with other nations to promote the welfare of Muslims and humanity at large. Therefore, the principle of expediency holds a higher status among the tenets of foreign policy. When expediency clashes with other principles, expediency takes precedence.

In international relations, "national interest" is often emphasized. Relations between states are primarily driven by their respective interests, which include fulfilling essential needs and achieving national aspirations. The key distinction between an Islamic government and others lies in its ultimate goal: the well-being of Islam and Muslims. While Islamic expediency encompasses material and spiritual welfare, it also aims at human perfection. The Islamic identity of the state necessitates that its foreign policy goals be defined according to Islamic interests and values.

Like other governments, an Islamic state seeks to secure its interests in foreign relations. However, these interests are rooted in the welfare of Islam and the Muslim community. Core values and objectives, such as preserving the Islamic system, promoting its ideals, ensuring the security of Muslim territories, and fostering Islamic unity, are central to this mission (Dehqani-Firouzabadi, 2009: 211). The Islamic Republic of Iran exemplifies the synthesis of Islamic expediency and national interest. The preamble of its Constitution reflects this integration, emphasizing the advancement of an international Islamic community and the ultimate victory of the oppressed over oppressors.

The Constitution tasks the state with pursuing Islamic interests alongside national interests. This dual responsibility underscores the alignment rather than conflict between these two domains. The Islamic Republic, grounded in its revolutionary origins and territorial sovereignty, prioritizes both national and supra-national objectives. However, national interests are subordinate to Islamic expediency (Dehqani-Firouzabadi, 2009: 234).

When a conflict arises between Islamic interests and national interests, priority is given to Islamic expediency. According to the principle of *wilayat al-faqih*, the jurist-leader is responsible for the entire Muslim community, transcending national boundaries. The Islamic Republic, as the *umm al-qura* (core of the Islamic world), has a dual mandate: addressing the needs of the Iranian people while ensuring the welfare of the global Muslim community.

The preservation of the Islamic Republic is the highest priority, as its collapse would signify the defeat of Islam itself. Even primary religious obligations may be suspended if necessary to ensure the survival of the Islamic state. This paramount concern reflects the intrinsic link between Islamic interests and the survival of the Islamic Republic as the center of the Muslim world (Dehqani-Firouzabadi, 2009: 216-218).

Islamic interests and the national interests of Muslim-majority states have an overlapping but not identical scope. For example, safeguarding Islamic principles, strengthening the Muslim community, and promoting Islamic unity align with both domains. However, national interests that involve exploitation or oppression, as justified by some powers under the guise of "national interest," cannot be considered Islamic expediency. In cases of conflict, the specific Islamic interest takes precedence over general national interests, affirming the primacy of Islamic values in policy decisions.

Conclusion

By examining the objectives of establishing governance in Islam, analyzing the jurisprudential evidence for foreign policy principles, and considering the role of foreign policy in securing the interests and welfare of nations, the following principles emerge as Imperative for achieving comprehensive and balanced foreign policy objectives in an Islamic state:

1. The Principle of Distrust Toward Enemies

This principle ensures that the Islamic system approaches its relations with others cautiously and vigilantly. It prevents unnecessary risks to national interests and welfare due to misplaced trust in others.

2. The Principle of Reciprocity

Reciprocity serves as a critical deterrent against hostile or harmful approaches by other states toward the Islamic community. It also encourages friendly relations and goodwill from other nations through fair and proportional responses.

3. The Principle of Rejecting Subjugation (Nafi al-Sabil)

This principle protects the dignity and independence of Islamic nations and prevents the domination of Muslims by arrogant powers or non-Muslims. Its implementation necessitates acquiring power and planning to attain all resources and means that constitute strength in the contemporary world.

4. Strengthening Islamic Brotherhood

Eliminating sources of tension among Muslims is vital to fostering unity and paving the way for the formation of a united Islamic community. This unity can lead to the emergence of a global power bloc centered on Islam, ultimately facilitating the establishment of a just Islamic government worldwide.

Supporting the Oppressed and Promoting Resistance Against Oppression:

Advocating for the oppressed, opposing tyranny, and striving to remove arrogance from international relations are fundamental components of Islamic foreign policy.

5. Peaceful Coexistence

Engaging in peaceful interactions with states and nations that are not considered "Dar al-Harb" (abodes of war) in Islamic jurisprudence is essential. However, this coexistence must align with Islamic principles rather than the demands of the global order shaped by arrogant powers. Through peaceful coexistence and interactions, the hearts of those who do not intend harm toward Muslims can be softened, thereby facilitating the Islamic duty of inviting others to Islam—a primary responsibility of Muslims and Islamic governance.

6. The Principle of Da'wah (Invitation to Islam) and Jihad

The ultimate aim of Da'wah and Jihad is to spread the teachings of Islam, promote justice, and invite humanity to fulfill their divine purpose of worship and submission to Allah.

7. Capacity and Feasibility

The implementation of these principles depends on the capacity and ability of the Islamic state to carry out the necessary actions. If the state lacks the means to implement a specific principle, it is no longer deemed obligatory.

8. Priority of Maslahah (Public Interest)

In cases where any of the aforementioned principles conflict with the principle of Maslahah, the latter takes precedence—provided it represents genuine and long-term public interest rather than hypothetical or short-term considerations.

This framework ensures that Islamic foreign policy remains grounded in its foundational principles while maintaining flexibility to address contemporary challenges and realities.

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