



Foundations and Principles of Diplomacy in Islamic International Relations

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Abstract: Diplomacy and negotiation are considered key instruments for achieving national interests and strategic objectives of states in the contemporary era. Islam, as a comprehensive system of life, has provided specific frameworks and principles for international interactions. Utilizing a descriptive-analytical method and relying on documentary and historical sources, this research elucidates the theoretical foundations and practical principles of Islamic diplomacy. The primary research question is: What are the requisites of an Islamic character for foreign relations and international negotiations within the political discourse of Islam? The findings indicate that Islamic diplomacy is founded upon fundamental principles, which include: the principle of Negation of Domination (Nafi al-Sabil), the primacy of peace-seeking, observance of mutual respect, consolidation of the status of the Islamic governance, weakening the front of enemies, optimal utilization of power components (hard and soft), leveraging post-agreement opportunities, strategic flexibility in negotiation, preliminary dialogues for confidence-building, defining responsibilities centered on justice and equity, and emphasis on absolute adherence to commitments. These principles, extracted through the analysis of the Prophetic tradition (Sira) and Quranic teachings, can serve as an effective, ethical, and strategic model for the foreign policy of Islamic countries in the present era, providing an independent framework distinct from dominant Western paradigms.

Keywords: Islamic Diplomacy, International Relations, Islamic Foreign Policy, International Treaties.

Introduction

In the contemporary international system, diplomacy and negotiation are recognized as the primary tools of interaction among political units. Following World War II, a negotiation-oriented approach gradually replaced confrontational approaches, becoming the predominant method for resolving international disputes. Success in the realm of foreign relations and the safeguarding of national interests necessitates the employment of negotiation techniques and skills, as well as a precise understanding of the principles governing diplomacy.

Islam, as a comprehensive religion and a complete system of life, not only addresses individual and devotional matters but also offers specific solutions in social and political spheres (Motahhari, 1392 SH). This divine religion, relying on its characteristics of comprehensiveness and finality, claims to address all human needs and introduces the conduct of the divine prophets as a practical model for managing individual and social affairs (Mousavi Lari, 1387 SH). This comprehensiveness also encompasses the domain of foreign relations, offering guidance that transcends mere utilitarianism.

In Islamic history, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) emerged not only as a spiritual leader but also as a political leader, legislator, and capable diplomat. Throughout his mission, particularly during the ten-year period of governance in Medina, he concluded numerous treaties and covenants, including the Medina Charter (as the first written constitution for a pluralistic state) and the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah (as a masterpiece of strategic diplomacy). These documents and practical conduct demonstrate specific principles and rules in the field of foreign relations (Sobhani, 1388 SH; Watt, 1961). A meticulous examination of these treaties and an analysis of the Prophet's approach to negotiations can provide an effective and normative model for the foreign policy of contemporary Islamic states (Nouri, 1393 SH; Lings, 2006).

In the contemporary world, where international interactions have become increasingly complex, Islamic countries require a theoretical and practical framework based on Islamic values for managing their foreign relations. Many Islamic countries in the diplomatic arena either blindly imitate Western models, which are based on different philosophical foundations (such as realism or

liberalism), or lack a coherent strategy rooted in their own identity. By extracting the principles of diplomacy from authentic Islamic sources, particularly the Prophetic tradition (Sira), this research seeks to fill the existing theoretical gap and provide an indigenous and effective model capable of establishing a balance between ethics and expediency (Ahmadi, 1394 SH).

The current international system, despite its cultural and ideological diversity, remains dominated by theoretical and practical models rooted in Western historical experiences (such as Westphalia, the Age of Enlightenment, and political realism). These models often define national interests within a purely materialistic, secular, and power-centric framework. In contrast, Islamic diplomacy aims to present an ethical-strategic model where the preservation of national interests (such as security and development) is coupled with adherence to sublime monotheistic values, justice, and human dignity. This underscores the necessity of formulating an independent theory reliant on authentic Islamic sources, so that Muslim countries can define and consolidate their diplomatic standing and identity without intellectual or strategic dependence on rival schools of thought. Furthermore, the Western diplomatic model, fundamentally shaped by the concepts of state sovereignty post-Westphalia and the pragmatic cynicism of thinkers like Machiavelli and Hobbes, separates political action from universal moral law. Islamic foreign policy, however, is conceptually constrained by Divine Law (Sharia), asserting a comprehensive political identity rooted in the notion of the Ummah (global Muslim community) that transcends the geographical limitations often inherent in the nation-state model. Understanding these historical principles helps us address contemporary diplomatic challenges (such as terrorism, human rights, unfair trade, and regional conflicts) from the perspective of an ethical discourse and contribute to the promotion of global just peace.

- What are the theoretical foundations of Islamic diplomacy emanating from a monotheistic worldview?

- What specific operational principles and rules governed negotiations and treaties in the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)?
- How can these strategic and ethical principles be applied in the contemporary foreign policy of Islamic countries to both secure national interests and preserve Islamic identity?

This research has been conducted using a descriptive-analytical method and library and documentary sources. Historical data related to the Prophetic tradition (Sira), treaties and covenants during the period of governance in Medina, and Islamic jurisprudential and legal texts (particularly Quranic verses and commentaries related to jihad and peace) have been thoroughly examined, and the governing principles of Islamic diplomacy have been extracted and analyzed.

1. Theoretical Foundations of Islamic Diplomacy

1.1. Monotheistic Worldview and Foreign Policy

The monotheistic worldview is the fundamental basis of all Islamic thought. In this worldview, God Almighty is recognized as the Creator, Sovereign, and Absolute Manager of the universe, and all human laws and regulations, including those governing international relations, must align with the Divine will and the ultimate purposes of creation (Makarem Shirazi, 1391 SH). This perspective fundamentally transforms the nature of foreign relations.

In the monotheistic view, the ultimate goal of humanity is to attain proximity to God and realize complete justice and equity on earth. Consequently, Islamic foreign policy must also be formulated in line with these supreme objectives, acting beyond limited geographical or temporal interests. This means that the national interests of the Islamic community encompass not only material and worldly matters (such as security and economy) but must also include spiritual and ethical values, as well as the universal mission of Islam (propagating the truth and eliminating oppression) (Khadduri, 1984). This divine purpose transforms Islamic diplomacy from a merely utilitarian tool into a religious and ethical duty (Teleological and Normative), where the end does not justify the means. The principle of *Tawhid* (Oneness of God) dictates that sovereignty rests ultimately with the Divine, meaning political actions, including diplomatic engagements, must

always be tethered to ethical accountability, distinguishing this framework sharply from secular models.

1.2. Foundational Principles Governing Islamic Diplomacy

1.2.1. Justice and Equity (Al-'Adl wa al-Qist)

Justice (as a concept broader than equity) is one of the central concepts and primary ends in Islam, which must be observed in all aspects of life, including international relations (Makarem Shirazi, 1391 SH). The Holy Quran emphasizes the importance of justice in numerous verses and calls upon Muslims to observe it even in relation to enemies and opponents: "And let not the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness" (Quran 5:8). This verse provides a unique diplomatic instruction, decreeing that enmity and hatred towards a people should not hinder the administration of justice. In Islamic diplomacy, justice means observing the equal rights of negotiating parties, adhering to commitments, and avoiding oppression, imposition, and transgression (Khadduri, 1984). This principle garners the trust of the opposing party and paves the way for sustainable agreements. This concept also necessitates that the terms of any treaty must entail mutual fairness and equality in rights and responsibilities, such that no party is wronged due to weakness or lack of bargaining power. Crucially, the obligation to uphold justice ('*Adl*) is universal, extending not just to fellow Muslims, but to all non-Muslim states and individuals (*Al-Qist*), thereby establishing a framework for equitable international law and human rights that does not depend on reciprocity.

1.2.2. Truthfulness and Trustworthiness

Truthfulness and trustworthiness were prominent characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), acknowledged even by his enemies (such as the Quraysh before the Hijrah) (Sobhani, 1388 SH). These qualities laid the foundations for the credibility of the Islamic state on the global stage. In Islamic diplomacy, truthfulness in stating positions, transparency in negotiations (avoiding deceptive tricks common in Machiavellian politics), and adherence to promises are of particular importance. These are not merely short-term tactics but are

doctrinal and normative principles that bolster the international credibility of the Islamic state and establish the foundation for long-term relations based on mutual trust. The Prophet's adherence to these virtues (*Sidq* and *Amanah*) served as the original soft power, demonstrating that the state's moral integrity was its most powerful tool for attracting allies and mitigating the suspicions of rivals, an essential component of stable interstate relations.

1.2.3. Wisdom and Prudence (Hikmah and Maslahat)

Islam emphasizes the use of wisdom and sound judgment in all affairs: "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction..." (Quran 16:125). In the domain of diplomacy, this means selecting the best method for achieving objectives, considering temporal and spatial circumstances (Fiqh al-Maslahah), and proper prioritization of goals (Pakatchi, 1395 SH). Wise diplomacy requires a deep understanding of the psychology of the opposing party, anticipating the long-term consequences of every decision (even if it seems bitter in the short term, like the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah), and avoiding hasty and emotional actions. This principle allows the Muslim diplomat, within the framework of Sharia and relying on the concept of 'supreme interest' (Maslahat al-'Ulya), to possess the necessary flexibility to achieve the best strategic outcome. The ability to correctly assess *Maslahah* (expediency or public good) is considered a key qualification for a diplomat, requiring rigorous analysis that balances immediate gains against the preservation of fundamental values and the long-term security of the Ummah.

1.2.4. Dignity and Independence

Preserving the dignity and independence of the Islamic community is a non-negotiable and permanent principle in Islamic diplomacy. This principle, manifested in the famous jurisprudential rule "Nafi al-Sabil" (Negation of Domination), is based on the verse "And never will Allah give the disbelievers over the believers a way [to dominance]" (Quran 4:141) and means the non-acceptance of any form of domination, guardianship, influence, or political, economic, military, and cultural control by foreigners over Muslims. This principle safeguards foreign policy from falling into the trap of dependency, neo-colonialism, or becoming a tool for the interests of foreign powers, and emphasizes

the preservation of territorial integrity, national sovereignty, and independence in decision-making at all levels. This principle is a permanent red line for the Islamic state. It is crucial to understand that *Nafi al-Sabil* is not a call for isolationism; rather, it is a mandate for symmetrical interaction, demanding that diplomatic engagement should always be predicated on mutual respect and the sovereign equality of the parties, thereby preventing the institutionalization of structural dominance.

1.3. Goal-Setting in Islamic Diplomacy

In Islamic diplomacy, strategic objectives are determined based on fundamental Islamic principles. The ultimate goal is the formation, consolidation, and enhancement of Islamic governance, and more importantly, the propagation of universal Islamic values such as justice, peace, and human dignity in the world. This macro objective is broken down into medium-term and short-term goals, which include maintaining national security, economic development, regional influence expansion (without hegemonic ambitions), and fostering solidarity among Islamic countries (Ahmadi, 1394 SH; Hashmi, 2002). Unlike Western models that focus solely on state survival and increasing power, these ends also emphasize the ethical and universal dimensions of Islam, broadening the diplomat's horizon beyond limited interests.

1.4. Difference between Islamic Diplomacy and Western Diplomacy

Western diplomacy is primarily based on political realism (such as the balance of power theory) and pure national interest (Realpolitik), whereas Islamic diplomacy, in addition to rational attention to national interests, also considers ethical and spiritual values (such as justice and fidelity to covenants) as necessary and perpetual constraints (Al-Ghunaimi, 1968). In Western diplomacy, the ultimate goal is power and superiority, but in Islamic diplomacy, the ultimate goal is the realization of justice and Divine pleasure. This difference in foundation leads to differences in method as well. Realist diplomacy may permit resorting to deception, threat, or violation of commitments if it serves national interests, whereas in Islamic diplomacy, fundamental principles such as fidelity to covenants and justice are inviolable, even

in dealing with enemies. In fact, Islamic diplomacy is a teleological and normative model, whereas the dominant Western model is more positivist and lacks inherent ethical weight. The entire framework of Islamic governance is encompassed by *Siyasa Shar'iyya* (Governance according to Sharia), which mandates that diplomatic strategy must operate within morally permissible boundaries (Halal) and just means ('Adl), actively resisting the Machiavellian separation of politics and ethics. This means the *means* of diplomacy are intrinsically as important as the *ends* achieved.

2. Practical Principles of Diplomacy in Islam

2.1. The Principle of Negation of Domination (Nafi al-Sabil): Preserving Dignity and Independence

Principle: No treaty, economic agreement, or political relationship should lead to the weakening of the position of Muslims or the strengthening of the position of the enemies of Islam.

Explanation and Elaboration: The rule of Nafi al-Sabil, rooted in verse 141 of Surah An-Nisa, is not merely a military rule but a governance and economic directive. This principle necessitates that in trade negotiations, oil contracts, or even cultural agreements, the Islamic state must strictly avoid accepting any clause that leads to economic dependency, political influence, or the weakening of national will. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) observed this principle in all his negotiations and treaties. *Nafi al-Sabil* is a permanent red line that limits all diplomatic strategies of the Islamic state and ensures that no compromise comes at the cost of losing the dignity, autonomy, and sovereignty of Muslims. In the Medina Charter, this principle was manifested in the form of guaranteeing the ultimate authority of the Prophet's leadership and preserving the independent decision-making right of the Islamic community. In the contemporary context, this principle serves as a critical guideline against neo-colonialism and economic subjugation. It dictates that agreements related to sovereign debt, technology transfer, or natural resource exploitation must be scrutinized to ensure they do not create *structural dependency*—such as allowing foreign entities to dictate domestic policy—which would constitute the "way (sabil) to dominance" forbidden in the Quranic injunction.

2.2. Primacy of Peace-Seeking over Warmongering

Principle: Absolute priority to peaceful solutions and considering war only as a last resort and a defensive action.

Explanation and Elaboration: Examination of Quranic verses and the Prophetic tradition indicates that the primary principle in international relations is peace (*Silm*) and peaceful coexistence. War (military *jihad*) is only permitted under specific circumstances and as a last resort to repel aggression, eliminate sedition (*Fitnah*), or counter manifest oppression (Afsaruddin, 2013). The Holy Quran states in verse 61 of Surah Al-Anfal: "And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah." This verse shows that Islam prefers peace over war. This precedence of peace over war illustrates the *defensive nature of "Jihad"* in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) always strove to achieve his objectives through dialogue and negotiation, and only resorted to defensive war when peaceful avenues were closed and the enemy committed aggression. This approach makes diplomacy the first and most desirable instrument of foreign policy. The concept of *Silm* goes beyond mere truce; it implies a state of security (*Aman*) and stability necessary for the free worship and prosperity of the community. War is only sanctioned when *Fitnah*—which is defined as religious persecution, severe oppression, or aggression that threatens the foundational security of the Muslim state—cannot be resolved diplomatically, making the diplomatic channel perpetually superior.

2.2.1. The Medina Charter: A Model of Peaceful Coexistence

The Medina Charter, formulated in the first year of the Hijrah, is a clear example of the Prophet's peace-seeking and pluralistic approach (Hamidullah, 1998). This document established a single political community (*Ummah*) with the participation of various tribes and different religions (Jews and Muslims) and laid down a specific legal framework for social, economic relations and collective defense. This charter explicitly recognized the *civil rights* of non-Muslim groups and presented a governance model based on covenant. The Charter established the principle of collective security, where injury to one group was deemed injury to all, setting an early precedent for a

multilateral security pact founded on citizenship and shared allegiance, rather than monolithic religious identity.

2.2.2. The Treaty of Hudaibiyyah: An Example of Strategic Diplomacy

The Treaty of Hudaibiyyah (6th year AH) is the masterpiece of the Prophet's diplomacy (Sobhani, 1388 SH; Haykal, 2008). The seemingly unjust conditions of this peace provoked protests from some companions (such as returning fleeing Muslims and omitting the title "Messenger of Allah"). However, the Prophet, with particular foresight, understood the long-term benefits of this peace:

1. Recognition: By signing the agreement, the Quraysh practically recognized the Islamic state in Medina as an equal and legitimate power.

2. Freedom to Preach: The ten-year truce provided an unparalleled opportunity for *propagating Islam (Da'wah)* throughout the Arabian Peninsula, which was not possible before due to military conflicts.

3. Internal Consolidation: The peace allowed for the consolidation and strengthening of the military and economic infrastructure of the Muslims, which immediately led to the conquest of Khaybar and its spoils. The Quran called this peace "a clear victory" (Fathun Mubin), indicating its strategic diplomatic importance. The lesson derived from Hudaibiyyah is the importance of distinguishing between tactical concessions and strategic defeat. The Prophet yielded on symbolic points (like his title) and short-term operational issues (the Umrah pilgrimage postponement) to secure the fundamental strategic need: ten years of recognized peace, which neutralized the main enemy's aggression and allowed the spiritual growth of the nascent state to proceed unhindered.

2.2.3. Observance of Mutual Respect and International Etiquette

Principle: Interaction with representatives and leaders of other countries based on etiquette, honor, and respect for human dignity.

Explanation and Elaboration: Islam emphasizes respect for human beings, regardless of their religion or creed. This principle is also observed in Islamic diplomacy.

2.3.1. Respect and Immunity of Envoys

In Islamic diplomacy, ambassadors and representatives of other countries enjoyed *full diplomatic immunity*. Even if their message was unpleasant, insulting, or threatening (like the envoys of Musaylimah the Liar), the Prophet never allowed anyone to harm them and emphasized: "Were it not for the fact that you are envoys, I would have struck your necks." This approach shows that the Prophet adhered to the principles of diplomacy and international law (Nouri, 1393 SH). This preservation of immunity kept communication channels between states open, even during hostility, to allow for negotiation and crisis resolution. This commitment is a historical antecedent to modern diplomatic protocols and the Vienna Convention, establishing the principle that the person of the envoy is inviolable, regardless of the content of their message, thus ensuring essential communication linkages are always protected.

2.3.2. Respect for Customs and Traditions

The Prophet, in the Medina Charter and other treaties, respected the customs and traditions of different peoples. In the pact with the Christians of Najran, the Prophet preserved all their religious and financial rights and emphasized that they were free to perform their religious rites and maintain their churches (Jafarian, 1390 SH). This acceptance of *cultural and religious diversity* speaks to the pluralistic approach of Islam in international relations.

2.4. Consolidation and Enhancement of the Status of Islamic Governance

Principle: Using diplomacy to gain legitimacy, achieve international recognition, and strengthen the authority of the state.

Explanation and Elaboration: One of the main objectives of Islamic diplomacy is the consolidation and enhancement of the status of Islamic governance in the international arena (Pakatchi, 1395 SH).

2.4.1. The Prophet's Letters to Kings

After the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, which signified the end of internal conflicts and the consolidation of the state, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) sent official letters to the kings and great rulers of his time,

including Khosrow (King of Persia), Caesar (Emperor of Rome), Negus (King of Abyssinia), and Muqawqis (Ruler of Egypt). These letters were not only an invitation to Islam but also constituted official documents for *establishing diplomatic relations* at the level of the superpowers of the time, in which the Prophet introduced himself as the Messenger of God and the leader of an independent state (Sobhani, 1388 SH). This formal act of correspondence elevated the nascent Islamic state from a regional tribal power to a legitimate international player on the global stage, initiating a comprehensive foreign policy that recognized the existence of other sovereign authorities while asserting its own unique moral and political status.

2.5. Weakening the Front of Enemies

Principle: Using active diplomacy to prevent the alliance of enemies against the Islamic community (the strategy of dividing the enemy's front).

Explanation and Elaboration: One of the important strategies of Islamic diplomacy is to weaken the enemy's front and prevent their unity against the Muslims. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), through active and intelligent diplomacy, strove to deter various tribes and powers from joining the enemies of Islam (Pakatchi, 1395 SH).

2.5.1. Management of Alliances

In the Battle of the Confederates (Khandaq), the Prophet, through negotiation and promising concessions (ultimately without fulfilling those promises due to internal distrust among the enemies), managed to create distrust between the Quraysh and the powerful tribe of Ghatafan, dismantling the grand alliance of the enemy (Ahmadi, 1394 SH). This approach demonstrates his mastery of the principles of *managing inter-tribal crises* and using *soft power* and psychological warfare to manage the balance of power.

2.6. Optimal Utilization of Power Components (Hard and Soft)

Principle: Relying on a combination of military power (deterrence), economic power, and ethical power (credibility).

Explanation and Elaboration: In diplomacy, power plays a pivotal role in the success of negotiations. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) knew well that to succeed in negotiations, he must utilize various

components of power. The formation of a regular and powerful army (hard power) for deterrence, increasing the economic capacity of the Islamic community (conquest of Khaybar), and also using *spiritual power and ethical values* (soft power) that made Islam attractive, were characteristics of Islamic diplomacy (Nouri, 1393 SH). Combining these two components - deterrent military power and moral authority - allowed the Islamic state to enter negotiations from a position of dignity and strength, not weakness. The diplomatic strategy ensures that hard power serves as a deterrent shield, while soft power – rooted in the demonstrated justice, fidelity, and prosperity of the Islamic state – acts as the primary magnet for international influence, inverting the realist hierarchy that prioritizes military might.

2.7. Leveraging Post-Agreement Opportunities

Principle: Viewing an agreement as a means, not an end, for achieving long-term objectives.

Explanation and Elaboration: Concluding treaties and agreements opens new opportunities for the parties. The Treaty of Hudaibiyyah is a prime example of this principle, as it provided unparalleled opportunities for the Muslims (Sobhani, 1388 SH):

- Liberation of Propaganda Capacity:** Muslims were able to propagate Islam freely and attract neutral tribes.
- Financial and Military Provision:** The opportunity to attack Khaybar and secure financial resources to strengthen infrastructure was created.
- Development of Relations:** The establishment of formal diplomatic relations with major powers began.
- Preparation for the Conquest of Mecca:** This peace prepared the ground for the conquest of Mecca two years later without widespread bloodshed.

Islamic diplomacy views agreements as a bridge for achieving longer-term and more strategic goals. The diplomatic process, therefore, is continuous; the signing of a treaty simply shifts the focus from achieving the contract to maximizing the strategic gains available within the environment of peace that the contract has created.

2.8. Strategic Flexibility in Negotiation

Principle: Maintaining red lines (dignity and religion), but exhibiting tactical flexibility in secondary matters (based on the principle of *Maslahah* - expediency).

Explanation and Elaboration: One of the important principles in successful negotiations is flexibility, which is rooted in the principle of *Maslahah* in Islamic jurisprudence. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) demonstrated in the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah that for the sake of a greater strategic achievement or to avert a major corruption, one can forgo some apparent and short-term interests (Ayati, 1392 SH).

Examples of Flexibility in the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah:

- Omission of the phrase "In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful" and its replacement with "In Your name, O Allah".
- Omission of the title "Messenger of Allah" (in the document) and writing "Muhammad son of Abdullah".
- Postponement of performing the Umrah and returning to Medina.
- Acceptance of the condition to return fleeing Muslims to Mecca.

This flexibility was not a weakness but a sign of the peak of diplomatic prudence and foresight. However, the Prophet had red lines that he never crossed: preserving dignity and independence, preserving doctrinal principles (such as the right to invite to Islam), and preserving long-term interests (Pakatchi, 1395 SH). The ultimate demonstration of this strategic foresight was the Prophet's calm reaction to the companions' outrage over the conditions; he was able to see the future implications of the political recognition granted by the Quraysh, which fundamentally re-drew the power map of Arabia in the long run.

2.9. Preliminary Dialogues Prior to Formal Negotiations

Principle: Utilizing secret diplomacy and sending representatives to understand positions and build initial trust.

Explanation and Elaboration: Before concluding the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, the Prophet held several rounds of preliminary dialogues by sending representatives like Kharash ibn Umayyah and Uthman ibn Affan to Mecca. These dialogues were not merely message carriers but helped in accurately understanding positions, gauging the

opposing party's willingness for peace, and reducing initial tensions (Nouri, 1393 SH). This principle emphasizes the importance of "*diplomacy in the shadows*" and "*initial confidence-building*" before entering formal negotiation tables, which facilitates the main negotiation process, anticipates obstacles, and formulates alternative strategies. The goal of this preliminary diplomacy is to establish reliable intelligence on the opponent's true intentions and minimum acceptable terms, thus mitigating the risks inherent in high-stakes public negotiations.

2.10. Defining Responsibilities Centered on Justice and Equality

Principle: Formulating treaty terms based on clarity, transparency, and the principle of equity in the distribution of rights and obligations.

Explanation and Elaboration: The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in his treaties always strove to define the rights and duties of all parties transparently and based on justice (Hamidullah, 1998). The Medina Charter is a perfect example of a transparent and comprehensive document that emphasized the abolition of tribal privileges and equality in retribution (Qisas) and defense. This approach guarantees the sustainability of commitments, as unjust agreements are doomed to failure. Islamic diplomacy does not seek "formal equality" but rather "*substantive justice*" that considers the weakness of the opposing party to ensure a just and stable agreement.

2.11. Emphasis on Absolute Adherence to Commitments (Fulfillment of Covenants)

Principle: Complete and absolute fulfillment of treaties as long as the opposing party has not violated the covenant.

Explanation and Elaboration: One of the fundamental principles of Islam is the fulfillment of covenants. The Holy Quran emphasizes the importance of adhering to commitments in several verses: "O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts" (Quran 5:1). The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was also a perfect example of covenant fulfillment throughout his life (Motahhari, 1392 SH). A clear example of the Prophet's adherence was the return of Abu Jandal ibn Suhayl (a fleeing Muslim) to the Quraysh after the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, even though this action was displeasing to the Muslims (Jafarian, 1390 SH).

Adherence to commitments strengthens the "trust" and "international credibility" of the Islamic state in the eyes of the world and demonstrates the distinction between diplomacy based on divine ethics and purely expedient diplomacy (Ramadan, 2007). The term for a contract in Islamic law, '*Aqd*', carries a profound theological weight, making its violation a major ethical transgression and a direct breach of faith with God, thereby providing a powerful moral safeguard for the stability of international treaties.

3. Contemporary Challenges and Solutions

3.1. Challenges of Diplomacy for Islamic Countries

Islamic countries in the present era face numerous challenges:

1. **Lack of Unity and Political Consensus:** Doctrinal and political differences among Islamic countries prevent the formation of a cohesive diplomatic front.
2. **Dominance of Western Models:** Excessive reliance on Western intellectual frameworks and international institutions has overshadowed the Islamic diplomatic identity.
3. **Economic and Military Weakness:** Economic and military dependence on foreign powers makes the effective application of the principle of *Nafi al-Sabil* difficult.
4. **International Pressures:** Accusations related to human rights or terrorism limit the diplomatic bargaining power of Islamic countries (Ahmadi, 1394 SH).

3.2. Solutions Based on the Principles of Islamic Diplomacy

To overcome these challenges, Islamic countries can use the principles of Islamic diplomacy as a roadmap:

- **Implementing the Principle of *Nafi al-Sabil* in New Dimensions:** Apply the negation of domination not only in the military dimension but also in the **economic (resistance economy), cyber, and cultural** dimensions. This calls for Islamic countries to invest in independent digital infrastructure and educational curricula to prevent foreign cultural and technological control.
- **Strengthening Islamic Solidarity:** Reduce internal differences by centering on the principle of justice and mutual respect, and use multilateral diplomacy to create an Islamic power bloc. The

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) must transition from a consultative body to an active diplomatic bloc, utilizing the combined economic and political weight of its members to pursue common *Maslahah* on the global stage.

- **Strengthening Soft Power Components:** Invest in the cultural, scientific, and ethical power of Islam to gain international influence and credibility, which was the most important component of Prophetic diplomacy. This involves prioritizing global humanitarian aid rooted in Islamic charity (*Zakat* and *Sadaqah*), supporting international scientific endeavors, and proactively addressing global challenges like climate change and poverty from a moral, faith-based perspective, thereby projecting a non-hegemonic and morally compelling image.
- **Using Active Diplomacy and Adherence to Commitments:** Increase international credibility by relying on the principle of fulfilling covenants, and adopt a firm and law-based stance against violations of commitments by enemies.

Conclusion

Islamic diplomacy is founded upon the monotheistic worldview, the ultimate goal of realizing Divine justice, and the ethical principles of Islam. Relying on these foundations, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) presented a complete model of a successful and strategic diplomat to humanity. The eleven elaborated principles include the rule of Negation of Domination (Nafi al-Sabil), the primacy of peace-seeking over war, observance of mutual respect, consolidation of the status of Islamic governance, weakening the front of enemies, optimal utilization of power components, leveraging post-agreement opportunities, strategic flexibility, preliminary dialogues, defining responsibilities centered on justice, and emphasis on adherence to commitments. These principles provide an ethical-strategic and effective model for the foreign policy of contemporary Islamic countries (Ahmadi, 1394 SH). Success in contemporary diplomacy requires a combination of adherence to ethical principles, political wisdom, and intelligent use of operational power components.

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