

# **Investigating the Components of Defensive Culture in the Strategic Culture Framework of I. R. Iran (Based on Ayatollah Khamenei's views)**

**Bahaoddin Qahremani Nejad Shayeq<sup>1</sup>, Shahram Esfandiyar<sup>2</sup>,  
Meisam Belbasi<sup>\*3</sup>, Atena Bahadori<sup>4</sup>**

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Education and Thought, Tehran University, Tehran, IRAN.

2. Master of Political Science, Mazandaran University, Babolsar, IRAN.

3. Ph.D. Student of Islamic Revolution Studies, Tehran University, Tehran, IRAN.

4. Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Education, Alzahra University, Tehran, IRAN.

(Received: 15 November 2019 Accepted: 17 December 2019)

## **Abstract**

If culture is seen as a framework of "should" and "should not," defensive culture is based on issues, which are available in the society. Issues that differ from one society to another and are influenced by the strategic culture of the countries. So, the present study aimed to answer the question that what are the most important components of a defensive culture in the framework of the strategic culture of Iran, based on the Supreme Leader's views. Based on the results, the most important components influenced by Iran's strategic culture include martyrdom and Ashura culture, deepening insight and recognizing enemy, Islamic-Iranian identity and national unity, self-confidence and belief in divine victory, denial of oppression and defense of the oppressed, defensive diplomacy, democratic defense, and multilateral defense which can be effective in adopting an appropriate defensive strategy and enhancing the defensive capability of the Islamic Republic of Iran against enemies. In this article an analytical-descriptive method is used.

**Key Words:** Culture, Defense, Strategic Culture, Defensive Culture, Islam, Islamic Republic of Iran.

---

\*. Corresponding author: Belbasi.Meisam@ut.ac.ir

### **Introduction**

Islamic lands have never been immune from the threat of enemy invasion, and since the emerging of the power of Islam and Muslims in the world; Muslims have always been exposed to incursion. The present era is also one of the most sensitive periods in the history of Islam, because the Islam enemies, fearing the spread of Muslim influence in the international arena, more openly threaten Muslims of any sect and intent. Hence, they have come to dominate on the Islamic realm and plunder their resources and wealth. Countries such as Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq are prime examples of this invasion in our time.

The arrogant world is anxious about the Islamic awakening and the domination of the Muslim nations over their destiny and is deeply afraid of their unity, so it is determined to prevent the re-emergence of Islamic civilization at any cost. The new world conditions require that the Muslims, especially the younger generation, become more aware of the many capacities that exist in their school and religious culture, as well as their glorious history, and defend their dignity, honor and independence. Among the noteworthy topics in this field, the "defensive culture" has a special place (Varaei, 2003: 42-43).

The important point is that countries' defensive systems are affected by their strategic culture in various ways. Because this culture, that has shaped and changed in the face of various threats and challenges over time, determines what style and policy national defense should take (Ghanbarlou, 2012: 38). Accordingly, with changing the West's attitude towards the Islamic Republic of Iran, from the hard ware to the software struggle based on the induction of anti-Islamic ideology thought among the people, a proper and appropriate defensive choice seems necessary for our country; a defense that will be possible by taking advantage of national capacities, emphasizing on the strengthening of cultural capacities and paying attention to positive view of Ayatollah Khamenei, the leader of the Islamic Revolution, in the field of culture (Bigedlou, 2013: 79).

In the Iranian society, along with the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the change of fundamental characteristics in various fields, elements shaped such as rejection of compromise, defending of the oppressed, fighting with the enemy and arrogance, jihad and martyrdom, etc. that have been inside of Iranian political culture and have also been gradually institutionalized in the country's defensive culture. The importance of the topics of culture, defensive culture and strategic culture refers to the issue that culture and defensive concepts are part of the strategic culture and concepts such as security, rival, ally or enemy also make sense in this

context. The present study aims to point out the most important features of defensive culture within the framework of strategic culture of Iran from Ayatollah Khamenei's viewpoint.

## **1. The Conceptual Framework of Research**

### **1.1. Culture**

Today, the concept of culture is among those which have the most definitions. According to Pye and Verba, culture is a set of customs, morals, beliefs, values and symbols that are passed down from one generation to another through the process of socialization (Pye and Verba, 1965: 513).

Inglehart defines culture in his book "Cultural Transformation in Advanced Industrial Society" as such: "Culture is a system of attitudes, values and knowledge that is widely shared among people and passed down from generation to generation" (Inglehart, 2003: 19). Today, culture is mentioned as a qualitative set including values and artistic, religious, philosophical, intellectual and emotional products that guarantee the life of human societies and human civilization (Akhavan Kazemi, 2007: 11).

Accordingly, culture as one of the components of human biomass has such a capacity to form and organize the actions and behaviors in the form of a "toolbox" (Asgari and Aghajani, 2011: 7).

### **1.2. Defense**

Defense is a system or pattern associated with the mental construction and function through which the individual or group exhibits the necessary response to resist or repel imaginary or real danger in order to maintain its balance and integrity (Koohpaei, 1998: 179). Defense is an inherent, legitimate and natural right entrusted to creatures by God in order to protect themselves and to continue their lives. In religious foundations, defense is also defined as a vital need that promotes growth, security, and conduction of community which in case of leave or weakness, will have consequences such as humiliation, inferiority, increased conspiracies, captivities and all sorts of disturbances, deprivation of thought and decision of community, etc. (Darvish shani, 2014: 151).

### **1.3. Defensive Culture**

According to the definitions of culture, defensive culture is the art of acting well in defense and the best use of material and spiritual achievements collection to protect what we intend to defend. That is, in the history of every human race and nation, a collection of "should's" and "should not's" appears. The should's are based on material and spiritual positive experiences and in an explicit word "good experiences," and vice versa,

the "should not's" are reflection of material and spiritual negative experiences or "bad experiences." Based on such understanding, "defensive culture" is the art of danger repulse based on school standards and criteria and in the broad sense, the art of defending well, implementing specific policies and strategies and making optimum use of material and spiritual tools that lead to a decent defense based on the values governing on society (Motaharnia, 1999: 66).

## **2. Theoretical Framework of Research: Strategic Culture**

From a historical perspective, for the first time, Jack Snyder used the concept of "strategic culture" in 1977 as a framework to interpret the expansion of US and Soviet nuclear doctrines. His definition of strategic culture is: "All conditional concepts, paradigms and emotional responses, and continuous behavioral models that members of the National Strategic Community have provided through education, training, or imitation" (Snyder, 1977: 8). There is no comprehensive definition for the concept of strategic culture, but it can be considered as one of the main variables and effective important motives influencing the fate of governments' defense policies and programs. Colin Gray considers strategic culture as a broad collection of ideas that are reproduced within social relations and are consistent with defensive policies and military stances. In his view, the components of any strategic culture consist of three axes:

- The historical experience of the country under study.
- A culture that is reproduced within social relations (By this culture we mean the ideas that exist in the minds of the citizens, the ideas that make them consider themselves citizens).
- The institutional tools of these ideas (schools, religious sites, models of military and bureaucratic organizations, and the like) (Farshchi, et al., 2009: 230-231).

Colin Gray defines strategic culture in an article as modes of thought and action due to the power that comes from imagining national historical experience, the aspirations for responsive behavior in national conditions and even civil culture and lifestyle. Therefore, strategic culture provides an environment in which strategy is discussed and acted as an independent variable in strategic policy-making models (Ghanbarlou, 2012: 34).

Strategic culture, in another perspective, is the interaction between identities, values, norms, as well as sight outlook that people in each country acquire through education and other socialization strategies. These special values, norms and identities play an important role in the way we

look at the concept of security, the enemy, allies, and the way for military and security readiness (Torabi and Rezaei, 2011: 138).

Also within the framework of strategic culture concepts such as security, rival, ally, or enemy find meaning. The strategic culture of each country is influenced by internal and sometimes external variables and characteristics. In a sense, each country has a particular strategic culture, for identifying the constituent factors of which, one needs to study internal and international conditions. Ken Booth, in this regard, argues that a strategic culture is derived from history, geography, and political culture and represents the combination of attitudes and behavioral patterns of the most influential views that can be related to the whole of society, political elites, military institutions or public opinion (Asgari, 2014: 95).

In the form of these attitudes and components different forms of strategic culture, such as aggressive or defensive, violent or calm can be named. Accordingly, the countries' strategic culture is usually influenced by 10 main indicators of religion, defensive concepts, geographical location, resources and climate, economic resources, old traditions and stories, political traditions, beliefs and values, history, experiences and technological foundations. Now if we apply the following model within the framework of Iranian strategic culture, we find that the components of Shiite Islam, historical experiences, and oil as the most important economic index and geographical location have the greatest role. In addition, the experience of imposed war and confrontation with the international system after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War has also been and is effective (Torabi and Rezaei, 2011: 143).

Figure1. Constructive General Factors of Strategic Culture

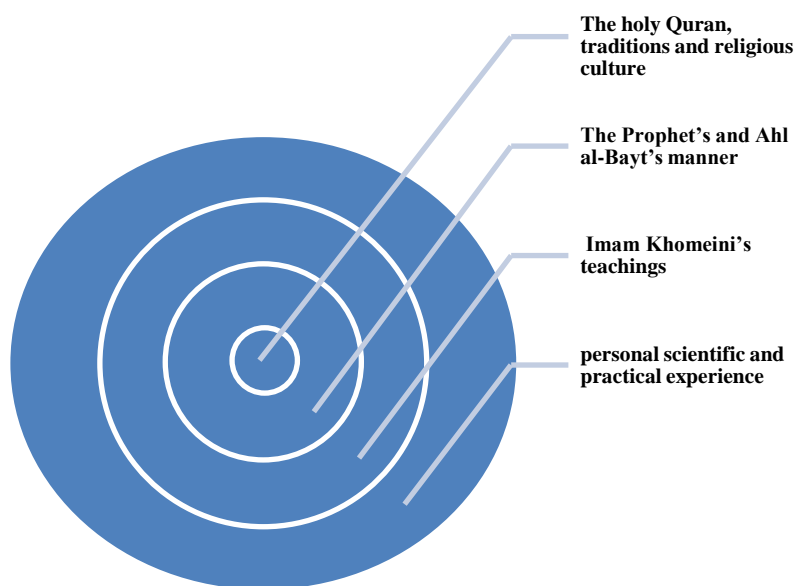


### 3. The Position of Defensive Culture and Strategic Depth Culture in Ayatollah Khamenei's Thought

#### 3.1. Defensive Culture in Ayatollah Khamenei's Thought

Although it is not easy to express Ayatollah Khamenei's defensive thoughts with regard to the different aspects of his thought fields, but the important point as an effective light in this regard is the need to follow the path of his thoughts in the mirror of Islamic foundations and religious culture. In general, the visage of Ayatollah Khamenei's defensive ideas can be sought in the following basic cases: a) The holy Quran, traditions and religious culture; b) the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) and Ahl al-Bayt's (A.S.) manner; c) Imam Khomeini's teachings, especially the strategy of popular defense and the twenty million army; d) personal scientific and practical experience.

Figure2. The Face of Ayatollah Khamenei's Defensive Thoughts



(Summary of Shams Dolatabadi et al., 2014: 356)

Given the principles outlined in Ayatollah Khamenei's thought and with regard to the subject of this article, the important point is his view on the necessity of defensive culture and thinking in the society.

He says: "What I want to discuss today is the fact that defense is part of the identity of a living nation. Any nation that cannot defend itself is not alive. Any nation that does not think about self-defense and does not prepare itself is not alive; any nation that does not understand defense is not alive in one sense. We cannot have the eyes and the power of analysis, see the hostile deep conspiracy of arrogance against Islam, the revolution and the Islamic system, and, at the same time, don't think about defense. May not God bring the day that this nation and its elects would neglect the brutal invasion of the global arrogance and, above all, America" (Khamenei, 2018).

But the important point in examining Ayatollah Khamenei's thought is that his thought, especially in defensive category, has been the expression of Imam Khomeini's thoughts and among the common elements and components of Imam and his discourse, instances such as theism, the development of science and technology, the promotion of professional abilities, the recognition of enemy, hostility, resistance and endurance, martyrdom and sacrifice, trust and sincerity, and the like are emphasized. Ayatollah Khamenei knows that the exploitation of practical revival of Imam Khomeini's ideas is an approach through which the future of the

revolution can be guaranteed, especially in the field of Imam Khomeini's defensive thinking, identifying the dangers, dimensions of the enemy's conspiracy and practical advice to the nation for self-defense is crucial (Mansouri Larijani, 2000: 36).

Therefore, Ayatollah Khamenei has consolidated and stabilized the theoretical views of Imam Khomeini and with regard to his important position in Velayat-e Faqih, he plays a determinant and unique role in the defensive structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Furthermore, religious democracy theory, movement of freethought, and establishing the theorizing meetings, explaining the doctrine of foreign policy based on the components of dignity, wisdom and expediency, national unity and Islamic consistency, military authority, the strategy of practical defense, policies of outlook document can be cited as pillars and theories of the general command (Hajinejad, 2012: 118)

### **3.2. Strategic Depth Culture in Ayatollah Khamenei's Thought**

Ayatollah Khamenei, the leader of the revolution, has referred to important points in various segments and in expressing the international position of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the components of our country's power and authority. One of these components refers to the "strategic depth culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran." And everybody has paid to it from one dimension. In this section, we will attempt to refer to the place of strategic depth culture in Ayatollah Khamenei's views. He says: "The reliance of a nation is on its strategic depth. Enemies do not want the Iranian nation and the Islamic Republic to benefit the support of various countries (which, of course, is unique). Maintaining this strategic depth is of the Islamic Republic duties and it is one of those main features" (Khamenei, 2018). According to his interpretation, the strategic depth areas of the Islamic system are countries and regions which their incidents are like the root or cause of strength or tent holder strings for inside the country (Khamenei, 2018).

Our capacities and abilities are not just what we have inside; we have important capacities and supporters outside the country as well, we have strategic depth in the region and in the country; some because of Islam, some because of language, some because of the Shiism - these are the strategic depth of the country; these are part of our capabilities. We must use all of these abilities. Not only in the region, but also we have a strategic depth in Latin America and in important parts of Asia. We have facilities to use and have to use them because they will make the country strong (Khamenei, 2018).



Many factors lead to popularity and good relationships and thus influence of enactor in the behavior of other countries. For example, having a common religion and ideology can create and invigorate a strategic depth culture. The most important factor in invigorating strategic depth is common conceptual and genuine foundations. Western countries and the United States, for example, have gained widespread dominance by promoting liberal values and spreading them around the world in one interval. This dominance, of course, has been shaken seriously (Analytical Database Didban, 2014).

According to Ayatollah Khamenei, “both the values and theoretical issues of liberalism and its absolute superiority over other religions and schools have been questioned and the West's function has caused the skepticism of the world people towards arrogant governments, and the strategic depth of these countries has been severely weakened throughout the world” (Khamenei, 2018). Language is another factor in expanding a country's influence. A common language provides the basis for cooperation.

Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran has the opportunity to cooperate with the Persian-speaking countries of the region. Even in the next step, Persian language can provide a suitable context for the expansion of Iranian-Islamic culture and the expansion of the Islamic Republic's influence (Analytical Database Didban, 2014). Therefore, according to Ayatollah Khamenei, one of the main tasks of the cultural ambassadors is promotion of the Persian language through the pursuit of Persian language seats in academic and scientific centers, to introduce current Iran and its values and successes to the world, in addition to Iranian civilization and history (Khamenei, 2018).

Another important factor in expanding a country's influence is bestowing identification and being a sample for other countries. He believes: “according to Imam Khomeini, spreading the revolution is not by creating sedition and invasion to the countries, but by spreading revolution among nations through the modeling of the Islamic Republic. That is, the Iranian nation, bring the Islamic Republic system to a place that other nations are encouraged and follow it; by promoting Islamic teachings and by explicit defense of the oppressed classes of the Islamic world and the oppressed nations that have been oppressed in the Islamic world by the arrogant. This is the expansion of the Islamic system that happened. Today, the world nations look at the Iranians, and are empower by them.

Today, The Iranian nation's anti-arrogant slogans have spread throughout the Muslim world. Muslim nation's today respect your slogans,

motives and ideals. Slogan of anti-cruelty, anti-domination, defense of the oppressed, defense of the Palestinian nation, hostility to the Zionism Octopus Network. This is the heart of the Muslim nations; this is the spread of the Islamic Revolution” (Khamenei, 2018). The arrogant knows that today in many Islamic countries the hearts of the people are with the Islamic Republic of Iran; it knows that the political and strategic depth of the Islamic Republic's system is within Islamic countries; from North Africa to East Asia (Khamenei, 2018).

The region events are the evidence for the expansion of dominance and strategic depth level of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has raised concerns for the Islamic Republic of Iran’s enemies. Hence, they have tried to eliminate or reduce Iran's influence in the region. Ayatollah Khamenei has repeatedly warned of Western efforts to undermine Iran's strategic depth (Analytical Database Didban, 2014). He says: “Muslim nations are the strategic depth of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Why do the strange American and British propaganda try to divide the Muslim nations and the Iranian nation? Why? With ethnicity, with Sunni, Shia? Because they know these are the strategic depth of the Islamic Republic. The backrest of a nation is its strategic depth. They do not want the Iranian people and the Islamic Republic system to have the various countries' support (which is, of course, unique)” (Khamenei, 2018).

#### **4. Defensive Culture and Strategic Depth Culture of Iran**

##### **4.1. The Layers of Strategic Depth of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

The first impulses to activate Iran's strategic depth capabilities appeared after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Of course, Iran already had rich natural resources, strategic geographical location and other factors affecting on the strategic depth component, but these capacities were activated only after the establishment of the Islamic system in the country and at the same time with the formation of the religious democracy system. However, it seems that the resonance of this volcano, with its intensity and weakness, has been processed and multilayered:

- Obviously, the first circles of the Iran influence were formed in the Islamic world. The closest layer to the central core of the Umma al- Qurayyah of the Muslim world was the countries with the largest Shiite population that had the most cultural-political affinity, at least in the social environment with Iran. That is why countries such as Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, Bahrain and Syria have formed the clearest areas of Iranian political influence in the region;

- On the other hand, the second layer of Iranian influence in the Islamic world is made of the Sunni states. Expanding the scope of influence in these countries, naturally, faces more problems and obstacles; meanwhile it has provoked the reaction of Iran's enemies and rivals in the Islamic world in the form of Iran phobia and Shiite phobia. However, the influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the social body and the elite of Sunni countries is more than its influence on the sovereignty elite layers;

- This advancement of continuous territorial borders, in the third layer of the Islamic Republic of Iran's influence, reaches to third world or non-aligned countries such as many African and South American countries and especially to some Latin American countries, which some day were exactly backyard of Iran's main enemy, the United States of America (Ghaffari, 2014).

#### **4.2. Characteristics of the People-Oriented Strategic Depth in Iran**

The main characteristics of the people-oriented strategic depth in Iran are as follow:

First: This component of people-oriented strategic depth is a new example of soft power and authority characteristics. So in addition to high power, it has a lot of expansion power. Therefore, and this component can be regarded as enhancing Iran's soft power and influence circle in the world;

Second: nation-oriented strategic depth is not tool-based, rather it is thought-based and influenced by people's perceptions and beliefs, so it is not costly;

Third: Nations have no geographical limitations and cannot be summarized in one place or region, so their control is extremely difficult and impossible;

Fourth: This influence circle is reciprocal, just as other nations are the strategic depth of the Islamic Republic of Iran, so the Iranian nation is their strategic depth. Therefore they help each other in times of trouble;

Fifth: The influence circle among nations is derived from their beliefs. Accordingly, it is rooted and noble. It has high durability compared to other components, so it is not imposed and is referred to the nation's choice;

Sixth: This influence circle is free from diplomatic compromises and courtesies and is not based on international or bilateral treaties that can be ignored or violated (Vaezi, 2008: 12).

#### **4.3. Strategic Depth Culture in the Defensive-Security Dimension**

The Islamic Republic of Iran, with the general policies draft of fifth development plan and its announcement by Ayatollah Khamenei, is trying

**Investigating the Components of Defensive Culture in the Strategic Culture  
Framework of I. R. Iran (Based on Ayatollah Khamenei's views)**

to create a powerful country in the region with the priority of cooperation and partnership with the world countries.

The following are important issues in political, defensive and security matters with regard to regional and international issues in the fifth plan: exalting Iran's dignity, position, authority and role in the region and the international system to strengthen national security and advance national interests, with emphasis on:

- Strengthening bilateral, regional and international cooperation with the priority of neighboring countries;
- Strengthening constructive relations with non-hostile countries;
- exploitation of relationships to increase national capacity;
- confrontation excessive and transgressive action in foreign relations;
- The attempt to liberate the region from the aliens;
- Striving for further convergence between Islamic countries;
- Organizing a common effort to create economic, political, and global and regional cultural new systems and relations aimed to supply justice, global peace and security;
- Active and purposeful presence in international and regional organizations and effort to make change in existing procedures;
- Promoting Iran's managerial role in energy distribution and transit, increasing export opportunities, capital attraction and advanced technologies and help to monetary, banking deployment and independent insurance system with the help of regional and Islamic and friend countries aiming to reduction of dependence on monetary order of domination system;
- Strengthening cultural, legal, political and economic interaction with the world, especially in the field of Islamic-Iranian civilization (Khamenei, 10/01/2009: general policies draft of fifth development plan).

In the twenty-year country vision document, the main and ideal goal has been to convert Iran into the supreme power of the region. The purpose of this document is as follows: Forming an Iran with secure, independent, and powerful features with a comprehensive deterrent-based defensive system (twenty-year vision document, 2003).

The culture of strategic-defensive depth due to the aforementioned subject and experts' viewpoint is: "A strategy composed of development and hardware and software expansion based on new defensive methods and doctrines to enemy deterrence and supplying country security". The principles of strategic-defensive depth culture areas follows:

**A)** Strengthening national security and authority by emphasizing on scientific and technological growth, political participation and stability,

balance between the different regions of the country, national unity and identity, defensive power and promoting Iran's military standing in the world;

**B)** Enhancing the armed forces' defensive capabilities for deterrence, initiative, and effective confrontation counter-threats and protection of national interests and the country's vital resources and interests;

**C)** Special attention to the presence and contribution of the people forces in the establishment of security and defense of the country and the revolution, by increasing the qualitative and quantitative capacity of the Basij;

**D)** Strengthening, expanding, modernizing and localizing the country's defensive industries, emphasizing on research expansion and accelerating employment and advanced technologies to explain and implement the country's defensive doctrine;

**E)** Adoption necessary tact with regard to hit the hostile country's military and economic facilities and installation and targets in case of aggression to the country and recognition of the hostile country's vulnerable areas.

Regarding to above principles, the following strategies can be outlined:

- 1) developing defensive-security partnerships and treaties with friendly Islamic countries and international organizations (such as Shanghai);
- 2) Strengthening people defensive-security and endless vigor of the country;
- 3) Strengthening internal Security (Mohammadi, 2008).

#### **4.4. Strategic Depth Culture and Iran Opportunities**

Strategic Depth Culture creates opportunities and capacities for the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- It provides conditions for Iran's long-term planning because of its sustainability;
- It increases Iran's bargaining power. Because in the context of confronting public opinion with an increasingly international unequal system, the use of public opinion pressure to pursue goals and interests is crucial;
- It strengthens the position of the Islamic Republic in the international arena, especially in the region;
- In contrast, it reduces the power of competitors, enemies and threats;
- It paves grounds for consolidating Iran's international and regional power. In such circumstances, the substantiation of the 20-year vision and development plans of the country will be more operational.

Nevertheless, it should not be overlooked that according to Ayatollah Khamenei, the uninterrupted propaganda of the United States and the

Western and Zionist circles to making discord between the Muslim nations and the Iranian nation continues. Propaganda and actions aimed precisely at the Islamic Republic's influence sphere to reduce the authority and power of Iran and, later, the power of the Islamic world. Therefore, adopting intelligent methods and using the new behavioral equation by the responsible authorities seems necessary to protect and reinforce this situation (Vaezi, 2008: 12).

## **5. Components of the Iran's Defensive Culture**

The defensive culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran is composed of various components and features. The present article tries to highlight its most important features.

### **5.1. The Morale of Martyrdom and Jihad in the Way of God and Belief in Ashura**

One of the key elements in the defensive culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the morale of martyrdom and jihad in the way of God. According to the sermon 27 of Nahj al-Balagha, the military believes in the resurrection, which is not attached to the glitter of the universe and considers martyrdom as a real vita and eternal life and considers jihad as a door of paradise, which God opens for His special servants (Gerami, 2012: 59).

Religion, or more precisely Shiite political culture, has played a positive and effective role in creating martyrdom morale as one of the characteristics of the Islamic Republic of Iran's defensive culture.

One of the important symbols in the scope of Shiite religion as an influential category on the jihad and martyrdom morale has been the Ashura incident and the uprising of Imam Hussein (A.S.) (Darvish shani, 2014: 166).

### **5.2. Deepen Clairvoyance and Recognizing Enemy**

According to the Holy Qur'an, clairvoyance is an inner comprehension and a conscience vision that makes one understand farther and deeper than the tangible and apparent face of life's events and developments. From the Qur'an's viewpoint and our religious culture, just as science and wisdom are associated with action and attached to it, insight as a higher order and more influential science requires action and the owners of insight are certainly among the righteous and pious servants (Lotfi Marznaki, Babatabar and Alizadeh, 2014: 241).

Accordingly, insight and vigilance are considered as components and essential features of the defensive culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, insight can be understood as a person's accurate and heartfelt

knowledge of situations, times and places to avoid falling into traps that cause him to deviation and detriment (Ghorbani Moghadam, 2010: 22).

Ayatollah Khamenei says about the importance and status of this characteristic of defensive culture: “The insight is the light; the insight is the Qiblahfinder and the compass. In a wilderness, if human moves without a compass, he may accidentally reach somewhere, but its probability is poor. Probably because of wandering he may involve many difficulties. A compass is required especially when the enemy is opposite. Without a compass, you may be surrounded by an enemy without an accouterment” (Khamenei, 2018).

The place of insight and vigilance in defensive culture is represented in recognizing enemy and is considered as one of the most important necessities. Since the gravity center of the enemy's aggression is in the field of hostility and involvement between public opinion and the elite, in this regard, it seeks to induce the public opinion and elites of the country by creating a gray and ambiguous atmosphere that the way they are going and resisting is false and contrary to their actual interests. So, people and elites must evaluate evolutions in a defensive culture framework with complete insight and vigilance, not to fall into the deceiving trap of the enemy (Lotfi Marznaki, Hekmat nejad, and Babatbar, 2014: 62).

### **5.3. Iranian-Islamic Identity and National Integration**

Over the past two centuries or more, much blood has been shed to show that our national identity is our first form of identity and it makes the basis of all our other identities and during the conflict, it has priority over other identities (Poole, 1999: 61).

One of the affective elements on the concept of defense is the element of national identity and unity, because a nation can defend itself and its values, independence, and territorial integrity by having a distinct national identity that is its reagent in the international system, and specifies the boundary between acquaintance and foreigner and will lead to national solidarity and unity in the country. The Islamic Republic of Iran is also known for its Islamic-Iranian identity, that its elements and components are reflected in the constitution as an extraterrestrial document. The favorable identity model in the constitution has combined two dimensions of Islamic identity with components such as Islamic principles and criteria namely the Qur'an and Sunnah, development and consolidation of Islamic brotherhood and public co-operation between the people by the government, the Islamic and the Shiite religion, considering the Islamic Ummah, belief in the Velayat-e Faqih (Principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 94, 109 and 110), and Iranian identity with components such as the fusion of

Islam and Iran, the common language, the common writing, the acceptance of local cultures and languages, the country flag, validating Hijri Shamsi history, attention to cultural heritage and national monuments of Iran as intellectual properties of the nation, common land (Principles 9, 15, 17, 18, 78, 83, 100, 152 and 176) that can provide national unity and cultural and spiritual solidarity among the Iranian nation (Belbasi and Esfandiyar, 2013: 95).

#### **5.4. Self-confidence and Faith in Divine Victory**

The issue of self-confidence is very important and valuable for any society and every human being. Self-confidence is a viewpoint that allows individuals and society to have a positive and genuine image of themselves.

Faith is also one of the most urgent needs of human life, without which life and living would not be possible, because it guides man to trust and confidence in God. When faith dominates on human soul, he devotes his life to God with full knowledge and faith. Under these circumstances, he will feel a strong sense of self-confidence and will thus lead the way to success (Asgari and Aghajani, 2011: 60-61).

Therefore, one of the main roots of self-confidence is trust in God, “and whosoever puts his trust in God, he shall suffice him”. This issue, which is derived from our religious culture, is also important in the defensive culture of Iran and in some cases it has been introduced as the secret of victory. The leader of the Islamic Revolution states: “we believe that God will help one who helps Him. Who has helped the religion of God more than this nation and has been in the middle of danger? So the divine victory is natural and self-evident” (Khamenei, 2018).

#### **5.5. Cruelty Rejection and Defense of the Oppressed**

Another important feature of the defensive culture that has influenced the attitude of the Islamic Republic to war and peace is the issue of cruelty rejection and defense of the oppressed. Meanwhile, anti-arrogant actions and fighting against oppression and defense of the oppressed is one of the main ideals of the Islamic Revolution, among the teachings of Islam. With regard to the Quran, 2/279, justice is only manifested in the shadow of rejection of all kinds of oppression and cruelty in man, and forbidden tendency to cruelty, albeit slightly. That is, one must not only be not cruel, but should not even tend to the oppressors. Based on divine teachings, human beings, just as they should be justice seeker and anti-cruelty, they must stand against cruelty and oppressors (Pourhasan, 2011: 148).

Based on Imam Khomeini's recommendation to reject oppression and defense of the oppressed, the leader of the Islamic Revolution, says about



this issue, as one of the most important affective religious concepts on defensive culture and of course the strategic decision making of the Islamic Republic: "The turning point of the Imam's word in his will and statements is necessity of standing firm against the greedy and the arrogant. This position must be strongly kept by the Iranian people and all the various elite groups in the country who are obligated to the Imam and loyal to the Imam's ideas and opinions" (Khamenei, 2018).

#### **5.6. Defensive Diplomacy**

Defensive diplomacy is a part of national power that, alongside foreign policy, is shaped as a source of power to enhance the action capacity of a country in foreign relations (bilateral and multilateral). Therefore, it oversees both the application of defensive policy in the field of diplomacy and the diplomacy share in the field of defensive policy (Saed and Alidousti, 2011: 85). But diplomacy in the defensive culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a particular type of defensive diplomacy that is also associated with the two keywords "Iran" and "Islam" and has evolved with different principles and specific orientations toward other countries' defensive diplomacy. In Islamic-Iranian defensive diplomacy, the role of the Vali-e Faqih and its central role in the top management of foreign policy affairs on the one hand and defensive affairs on the other hand have given this model a special meaning. Thus, the characteristics of this model can be summarized as follow:

Firstly, our country's defensive diplomacy is based on an ideological basis, based on our view of man and the world, the epistemic system of Islamic worldview. Therefore, drawing the threat and opportunity in the international environment, whether in its grand form or with a special defensive reading, will be the outlet of this worldview.

Secondly, the practical principles of the International Defensive Agency have been put forward by Ayatollah Khamenei on various occasions and accordingly, actors in the international environment must be divided into friendly, neutral, and warlike countries and defensive diplomacy will focus on relations with the first two groups, against third-party threats.

Thirdly, defensive diplomacy has auxiliary functions and does not replace hardware power in defensive jihad. Therefore, the leader of the Islamic Revolution has repeatedly emphasized on the necessity of creating, maintaining, strengthening and updating the power of action, agility and a decisive response of the defensive sector against any external threat (Kalantari, 2014: 271-272).

### **5.7. Popular Defense and Integrated Presence of People in Defensive Conditions**

One of the most prominent and distinctive features of the Islamic Revolution has been the presence of different crusts of people and their role in the revolution victory. Accordingly, there has been some form of dependence and spiritual relationship to the preservation and protection of the Islamic system among the people, and this has been reflected in the defensive culture of the Islamic Republic. Ayatollah Khamenei says: "For several reasons the people are the owners of this system: firstly, because Islam gives people the most right to management of social systems and considers every governmental system as a servant state for the people. Secondly, people were the creators and constituents of this system because it was based on a revolution and that revolution was created by people. Thirdly, because the intervention and supervision of people is the most guarantee to keep this system from deviation" (Ghanbari, 2009: 232-233).

With regard to the historical experience, the Iranian nation has a long precedence of self-sacrificing and confronting the enemy. In other words, defending the homeland as a religious and national duty has always played a role in the mentality and beliefs of the Iranian people. In fact, it is through such trait that the concept of "popularization of defense" makes sense. This was raised by the widespread and unprecedented presence of people on the fronts of the imposed Iraq war against Iran (Asgari, 2008: 47-48).

### **5.8. Multilateral Defense**

The most complete definition of multilateral defense is: "Preparing and deploying all human capital, material and spiritual resources to prevent and counter any threat or invasion of domestic and foreign enemies" (Khodsiani & Moghiseh, 2014: 217). One of Imam Khomeini's speeches is the main reference to the term "multilateral defense." He addressed the military commanders on 17/09/1988: However, we must be ready.

We have determinant and sensitive days ahead and the Islamic Revolution will still have other determinant years and months ahead. So it is obligatory for the pioneers of jihad and martyrdom to be present and ready in all scenes, and not to be ignorant of the imperialism, the US and the Soviet Union guile and even in terms of rebuilding the armed forces, our greatest focus should be on rebuilding our forces and talents and transferring military and defensive experiences to all people and defenders of the revolution. Because during the battle it has not been possible to address all the strengths, weaknesses, plans and programs, and in fact, to draw up a comprehensive defense strategy. But in normal circumstances,

we should pay to this issue with patience and far from feud and use all resources, experiences, talents and plans, and we should endeavor to attract righteous forces to revolution. Also we should share experiences with others and try to equip all people of this country based on the specific principles of comprehensive defense to reach the real and true organization of the 20 million Basij and army (Pourhasan, 2011: 149).

### **Conclusion**

Firstly, culture and identity are important to all nations, and are most important to the Islamic Republic of Iran, because the foundation of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on cultural identity orientation. Therefore, for purely political reasons relying on cultural identity is essential and strategic for the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this regard, one of the important cultural and identity issues is the defensive culture and identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which with the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution in 1979; major discursive changes happened in it and were based on Islamic-Iranian teachings and culture.

Secondly, the defensive culture is primarily refers to the rate of participation and role of people in social and political affairs. The formation of the Islamic Republic of Iran by the people volition, during the eight years of sacred defense made the people feel responsible for their and the country destiny and participated in the war with great enthusiasm. Culture, does not form one day, but becomes institutionalized over time.

Thirdly, strategic culture has a fitting place and importance that can be regarded as the basis of deterrence in any country. In fact, strategic culture can have an affective role on the selection of strategies and style of defensive culture. Strategic Depth Culture is the political, geographical, human resources, beliefs, potential and actual defensive forces of a nation and a state for self-defense. Strategic depth focuses on the capabilities and capacities of a country and government to advance goals and programs.

Hence, strategic depth is the depth and influence scope of a nation and country, which can include any material (hardware), and non-material (software) tools and capabilities such as ideas, thinking, and beliefs.

Fourthly, in the political thought of Ayatollah Khamenei, the Islamic Revolution in its appearance and empowerment has had such an impact on the Muslim world and the Muslims that have made this system popular and exemplary. On the other hand, it has significantly increased the affection and success coefficient of the Islamic system in the international arena, especially the developments in the Middle East (West Asia) and it has

**Investigating the Components of Defensive Culture in the Strategic Culture  
Framework of I. R. Iran (Based on Ayatollah Khamenei's views)**

created good opportunities for the Islamic Republic of Iran. From Ayatollah Khamenei's viewpoint, "the influence of the Islamic Revolution on the Muslim world and Muslims" and "Muslims interest in and support for this revolution" is a reciprocal relationship which its results are the "strategic depth" and finding support for the Islamic Republic among the Muslims and reviving the spirit of dignity, anti-domination and defense of Iran and the Islamic world.

Finally, according to the authors, the most important components of the Islamic Republic of Iran's defensive culture, include the culture of martyrdom and Ashura, recognizing enemy, Islamic-Iranian identity and national unity, self-confidence and belief in divine victory, denial of cruelty and defense of the oppressed, defensive diplomacy, democratic defense, and multilateral defense which can be effective in adopting an appropriate defensive strategy and enhancing the defensive capability of the Islamic Republic of Iran against enemies.

### References

- Akhavan kazemi, B. (2007). "Investigating the Interactions of Political Culture and Partyism in Iran." *Journal of Political Science*, vol. 4, fall 1386, pp. 32-7.
- Asgari, M. (2008). "The Islamic Republic of Iran's War method in Imposed War." *Defense Letter*, vol. 2 (17).
- (2014). "Theoretical Origins of Intelligent Defense in Imam Khamenei's Defensive Thoughts." *Proceedings of the Second Conference on Explaining Imam Khamenei's Defensive Thoughts*, vol. 1. Tehran: Ministry of Defense Political Support and Forces Armed, pp. 79-136.
- Asgari, M; Aghajani, A. (2011). "Forming Factors and Characteristics of the Strategic Culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran." *Defense Letter*. Third Issue (26), pp. 7-126.
- Belbasi, M; Esfandiyar, Sh. (2013). "Desirable Identity in the Framework of the Native Pattern of Progress (with an Approach to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran)." *National Studies*, vol. 4, pp. 119-95.

- Bigedlou, M. (2013). "National Defense of the Foundation Culture and Confronting the Soft War." *Soft Power Studies*, vol. 8, pp. 79-96.
- Darvishshani, H. (2014). "Intelligent Defense and Spiritual Power in Imam Khamenei's Thoughts." *Proceedings of the Second Conference on Explaining Imam Khamenei's Defensive Thoughts*, vol. 1. Tehran: Ministry of Defense Political and Political Organization Armed Forces Support, pp. 137-180.
- Farshchi, A; Sani ejlal, M; Hosseini Moghaddam, M. (2009). "Strategic Culture and Defensive Preparation in Frontier Areas." *Defensive Policy*, vol. 69, pp. 217-246.
- Gerami, H. R. (2012). "The Role of Spirituality and Providence in Strengthening the Deterrence of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Region." *Proceedings of the First Conference on Explaining Imam Khamenei's Defensive Thoughts*, vol. 2. Tehran: Ministry of Defense and Political Opinion Armed Forces, pp. 177-17.
- Ghaffari, M. (2014). Relying on Strategic Depth against Alliance with Superpowers. Mehr News Agency, Available at: <http://www.Mehrnews.com/news/2383876/>
- Ghanbari, A. (2009). *Political Thought of Supreme Leader*. Tehran: Zamzam Hedayat.
- Ghanbarlou, A. (2012). "Strategic Culture and National Defense, a Case Study of Imposed War." *Strategic Studies*, vol. 3, pp. 31-50.
- Ghorbani Moghaddam, M. (2010). *Insight in Nahj al-Balaghe*. Tehran: Hayat Tayebeh Publications.
- Hajinejad, A. (2012). "Investigating Imam Khamenei's Defensive Thoughts." *Proceedings of the First Conference on Explaining Imam Khamenei's Defensive Thoughts*, vol. 1. Tehran: Political ideological organization of The Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Support.
- Inglehart, R. (2003). *Cultural Transformation in the Advanced Industrial Society*. (M. Watr, Trans). Tehran: Desert Publishing.

**Investigating the Components of Defensive Culture in the Strategic Culture  
Framework of I. R. Iran (Based on Ayatollah Khamenei's views)**

- Kalantari, N. (2014). "Iranian Islamic Defensive Diplomacy and Intelligent Defense Explaining the Perspective of the Supreme Leader." *Proceedings of the Second Conference on Explaining Imam Khamenei's Defensive Thoughts*, vol. 2. Tehran: Ministry of Defense Political Support and Armed Forces Support, pp. 265-284.
- Khamenei, S. A. (2018). *Hadith Velayat Software*. Excerpts from various meetings with officials, athletes, people, Basijis, academics, the Assembly of Experts, the Ahlul-Beit World Assembly, the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council, clerics and more.
- (2009). General Policies of the Fifth Development Plan, available at: [www.khamenei.ir](http://www.khamenei.ir)
- Khodsiani, M; Moghiseh, R. (2014). "The Model of Defensive and Martial Preparation in the Thought of Supreme Leader." *Proceedings of the Second Conference on Explaining Imam Khamenei's Defensive Thoughts*, vol. 1. Tehran: Ministry of Political Science Defense and Support of the Armed Forces, pp. 205-248.
- Koohpaei, M. (1998). "Imam Khomeini and Cultural Defense." *Proceedings of the Siri Conference on Imam Khomeini's Defensive Thoughts*, vol. 3. Tehran: Ministry of Defense Political Support and Armed Forces.
- Lotfi Marznaki, R; Babatabar, A; Alizadeh, A. (2014). "The Strategy of Smart Defense in Supreme Leader's Defensive Thoughts with Emphasis on Defensive Diplomacy." *Proceedings of the Second Conference on Explaining Imam Khamenei's Defensive Thoughts*, vol. 1, Tehran: Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Political Department, pp. 227-264.
- Lotfi Marznaki, R; Hekmat nejad, N; Babatbar, A. (2014). "The Autopsy of the Concept of Smart Defense and Its Components in the Opinions of the Supreme Leader." *Proceedings of the Second Conference on Explaining Imam's Khamenei Defense Thoughts*, vol. 1. Tehran: Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Political Opinion, pp. 49-78.
- Mansouri Larijani, I. (2000). *The Effectiveness of Defensive Policy*. Tehran: Ayah Cultural Publishing.

- Mohammadi, Gh. (2008). The Strategic Depth of the Islamic Republic of Iran with a 20-year Perspective. *Kayhan Daily*, sixty-seventh year, 17 september.
- Motaharnia, M. (1999). *Culture of Defense and Cultural Defense*. Tehran: Ministry of Defense.
- Poole, R. (1999). *Nation and Identity*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Pourhasan, N. (2011). "Religious Foundations of the Strategic Culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran." *Defense Letter*, vol. 3 (26), pp. 127-164.
- Pye, L. W; Verba, S. (1965). *Political Culture and Political Development*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Saed, N; Alidousti, Gh. (2011). "Adaptive Defensive Diplomacy and Drawing of its Management Model in the Islamic Republic of Iran." *Defensive Strategy*, vol. 34, pp. 120-185.
- Shams Dolatabadi, M. R; Abdolmaleki, H; Mesbah, H. (2014). "Islamic and National Identity in the Supreme Leader's Defensive Thought." *Proceedings of the Second Conference on Explaining Imam Khamenei's Defensive Thoughts*, vol. 3. Tehran: Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Political Opinion. pp. 381-342.
- Snyder, J. L. (1977). *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operation*. A Project AIR FORCE Report Prepared for the United State Air Force, Santa Monica, CA: Rand.
- Torabi, Gh; Rezaei, A. (2011). "Strategic Culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran Positive Backgrounds, Essential Indicators." *Strategic Studies*, vol. 4, pp. 135-162.
- Twenty-year vision document of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2003). Available at: [www. Dolat.ir](http://www.Dolat.ir)
- Analytical Database Didban (2014). "The Concept and Extent of the Strategic Depth of the Islamic Republic." Observatory Explanatory,

**Investigating the Components of Defensive Culture in the Strategic Culture  
Framework of I. R. Iran (Based on Ayatollah Khamenei's views)**

Analytical and Streaming Database, Available at: <http://didban.ir/en/news-details/17373/>

Vaezi, R. (2008). The Strategic Depth of the Multi-Oriented. *Khorasan Daily*. Publication, vol. 17165, January 7, p. 12.

Varaei, J. (2003). "Jurisprudential Principles for Defending Islamic Lands." *Islamic Government*, vol. 28, pp. 42-71.