

SUMMARY

Soft powers are an important tool for creating and implementing foreign policy and the related cultural and religious trends. It is among the main variables of international relations, as it plays a great role in foreign policies, especially in a time when so much knowledge is readily available for everyone and in light of the technological revolution. Advances in communication made over the last two decades created objective conditions for the control and assessment of policies.

Soft powers are pivotal for the understanding of international actions, as they exert an impact on foreign policy and at the same time provide an intellectual base for executing the state's policy toward other countries. The scientific rationale behind these powers is based upon the critical symbolic context, which employs the means available for the states to influence other countries without resorting to military or economic force, while this approach does not depend on material coercive means. Rather it includes all the material and moral factors that determine the position of a state in the international community and the ability of one party to impose their will on the other party to foster the interests of the strong party.

Soft powers are a new way for states to reach the world, relying on concepts such as youth achievement and moving away from military violence, rather exerting influence through the general population, political and economic efforts, national identity and geographical location.

Saudi Arabia, like the majority of states faces, intertwining inner and outer defies on different levels. These include, but are not limited to difficulties in modernization, which would at the same time preserve national identity, increasing effects of globalization and terrorism at the international level. The regional level is also not free from challenges, including numerous crises resulting from occupation, foreign intrusion, incitement of inner unrest in a way that delays development in Iraq, Bahrain, Yemen and Lebanon.

Dangerous defies include the efforts of some regional forces to expand and dominate. These include Iranian goals at the regional and international level and upon Saudi Arabia along with the social, political, economic, military and security dimensions beside Iran the seek to produce nuclear weapons and mass destruction.

Iranian strategy relies on extremist expansion and dominance, which is in conflict with the Saudi vision that is based on peaceful cooperative structures and respect for other states.

Iran is persistent in their efforts to incite more crises by any means, relying on their supporters or opponents.

This trend stems from the growing influences of the twelfth Shiite sect in the Islamic world, coupled with a mobilization of Sunni minority in other countries to secure the fall of ruling systems through exerting pressure. This vision came into light with Khomeini's revolution (1979), which was based on extremist tendencies in the Arab and Islamic world, instead of following the Sunnite example that is a moderate approach, visible e.g. through Saudi Arabia.

Goals pursued by Iran are based on twelfth creed, they are the result of extremist thinking that is directed against the Muslim, resulting in an approach that contradicts that adopted by Saudi Arabia. It is therefore necessary to confront such sentiments with moderate Islamic thinking, which is the ideal way to disclose that the Iranian approach became false at its core. The purpose of this would be to go against these efforts in the Islamic and Arab worlds, following a suitable strategy to counteract these conflicts, namely one based on using soft powers.

Saudi Arabia enjoys the spiritual force that stems from a clear creed, free from myths, with the Quran and Sunni as its cornerstones, supported by application of Islamic law. This country is the cradle of Islam, rich in holy places for pilgrims and guests.

Such an approach would require the coordination of forces and putting them into work as a united force, both internally and externally, as a suitable manner to tackle the challenges. It would be besides the variety and multitude of tools, including the use of the media, educational centers, diplomatic efforts, to the weapon of petrol, relying on the aid of investment funds and employing the arts of psychological warfare.

This soft confrontation against the Iranian malicious efforts is an urgent necessity to secure proper growth of society, as these actions are permanent and manifest through racial desires. The insistence behind this policy concerning the Iranian matter is that Saudi Arabia should play its role through soft powers, which would be the perfect approach in the present time.

It is important to activate these powers in coordination with popular efforts through a short-, medium- and long-term vision for confronting these malicious efforts.

The Middle East is a where international transport routes between Asia, Africa and Europe cross, therefore it is a strategic location, as it overlooks many important water bodies, not to mention its natural sources. It produces a third of the world's output of gas (66%), which became a competitive asset globally and at the regional levels through the course of decades of wars and the formation of a new world order.

Iran has a salient strategic position, located in the western-most part of the Arab region. Following the Islamic revolution in 1979, Iran undertook efforts as part of its nuclear program, seeking to dominate Middle East in order to play a regional role, tapping into the potential created by Arab revolutions and in the abortion of regional crisis and security threats beside application of its strategies in the area

Dangerous elements include the efforts of some regional forces to expand and dominate, like the goals that Iran pursues on the regional and international level, also in its dealings with Saudi Arabia, coupled with the social, political, economic, military and security dimensions, not to mention Iran seeking to produce nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

Iranian strategy relies on extremist expansion and dominance, which is in conflict with the Saudi vision that is based on peaceful cooperative structures and respect for other states.

The subject of this paper is to suggest a strategy for applying soft powers in Saudi Arabia to counteract the role of Iran in the region.

When studying Saudi soft powers, which play many varied roles in confronting the challenges brought forward by Iran in the region, one must face a number of research problems and study a number of variables. Results from the efforts are not in parallel to the Iranian role, and this is the problem to be investigated as part of the research to be conducted, seeking a convenient way to exploit these powers to counteract the Iranian role effectively.

The topic of this paper is to seek an answer to the research question and the following supplementary questions

- a. What are the sources of the challenges Iran poses to Saudi Arabia?
- b. What are the causes for Iran to direct its efforts against Saudi Arabia?
- c. What are the challenges that Iran puts before Saudi Arabia?
- d. What are the soft powers available to Saudi Arabia?
- e. How could Saudi soft powers be effective against the Iran's role in the region?
- f. What is the suggested strategy for the use of Saudi soft powers and directing them against the Iran's role in the region?

Aims of this paper

- a. Determine the sources of the challenges Iran poses to Saudi Arabia?
- b. Reveal the causes behind Iran's attacks on Saudi Arabia?
- c. The nature of the challenges Iran poses to Saudi Arabia?
- d. Identify the sources of soft powers that Saudi Arabia has?

- e. Determine the extent to which Saudi soft powers could be effective against Iran's role in the region?
- f. Suggest a strategy for the use of Saudi soft powers against the Iran's great role in the region?