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FOREIGN POLICY OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN AMID THE CRISES OF 2025-2026: BETWEEN MIDDLE EASTERN CONFRONTATION AND EURASIAN DIVERSIFICATION

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Abstract. This article examines the transformation of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran amid the weakening of its Middle Eastern forward-defence system in 2024 and the crises that followed in 2025-2026. Rather than assuming that Iran has completed a geopolitical “pivot to the East,” the study asks whether mounting systemic constraints have altered the functional distribution of Tehran’s foreign-policy priorities. The analytical framework combines neoclassical realism with an examination of inter-elite interactions as a domestic intervening variable. To capture the outcome of this process, the article develops the concept of constrained functional foreign-policy diversification. Using process tracing, comparative political analysis and institutional analysis, it reconstructs the sequence linking the erosion of Iran’s regional strategic depth, the fall of Bashar al-Assad’s government in December 2024, the weakening of the Axis of Resistance, the twelve-day Iran-Israel war of 2025 and the subsequent escalation. The findings indicate that these shocks increased the costs of Iran’s established Middle Eastern strategy while raising the relative value of ties with Russia, China, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, BRICS and the states of Central Asia. Yet the Eurasian dimension does not replace the Middle East as the principal arena of security and deterrence, nor does it eliminate Iran’s financial, technological and sanctions-related vulnerabilities. The article concludes that Iran’s current foreign policy is best understood as constrained functional diversification, in which different regional and institutional arenas perform distinct tasks, but their compensatory capacities remain uneven and incomplete.

Keywords: Iran; foreign policy, neoclassical realism, strategic autonomy, functional diversification, Central Asia, Russia, China, SCO, EAEU

Introduction

Iranian foreign policy has traditionally been analysed through three enduring dimensions: confrontation with the United States and Israel, sanctions pressure, and a regional deterrence strategy built around a network of allied and partner actors. This perspective retains considerable explanatory value, but it no longer captures the full geographic reach and institutional density of Iranian diplomacy. Since the late 2010s, and especially under the administration of Ebrahim Raisi, Tehran has steadily expanded its relations with Russia and China, secured full

membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), joined BRICS and deepened economic engagement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The literature commonly describes this trajectory as a Look East policy. Yet the notion of a “pivot to the East” remains analytically ambiguous because it may refer either to a deliberate strategy of greater autonomy or to an adaptive response to the contraction of Western options [1].

A major structural shift preceded the crises of 2025-2026. Heavy losses sustained by Hamas and Hezbollah, changes in the strategic balance in the Levant and the fall of Bashar al-Assad’s government in December 2024 weakened the infrastructure of the Axis of Resistance and reduced Iran’s strategic depth. The twelve-day Iran-Israel war of June 2025 therefore did not initiate the crisis of the previous regional model. Rather, it marked a further stage in a deterioration already under way. As Pappinen argues, by the mid-2020s the Axis of Resistance still mattered, but its centrality within Iran’s Middle Eastern policy had declined as Tehran placed greater emphasis on strengthening its own defence capabilities [2].

Against this background, the institutionalisation of non-Western ties acquired greater strategic significance. On 17 January 2025, Russia and Iran signed the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty, and on 15 May 2025 the full free trade agreement between Iran and the EAEU entered into force. These developments complemented Iran’s existing membership in the SCO and BRICS. Official Iranian discourse, however, does not reduce this trajectory to a bilateral alignment with Moscow and Beijing. In July 2025, President Masoud Pezeshkian identified stronger relations with neighbouring states as the first foreign-policy priority, followed by deeper engagement with Russia, China, BRICS, the SCO and the EAEU [3]. The existence of new agreements, institutions and official priorities does not in itself demonstrate a strategic reorientation. The key question is what functions these mechanisms actually perform, how durable they are, and to what extent they can offset vulnerabilities associated with Iran’s Middle Eastern security environment.

The central research question is therefore whether the structural weakening of Iran’s Middle Eastern deterrence architecture in 2024 and the crises of 2025-2026 transformed Iranian foreign policy, or primarily accelerated an adaptation strategy that had already been taking shape. The article advances the hypothesis that these shocks did not produce a wholesale change in Iran’s geographic orientation. Instead, they accelerated functional diversification. Eurasia gained importance as a space for economic adaptation, institutional anchoring and diplomatic manoeuvre, while its compensatory capacity remained constrained by sanctions, asymmetrical relations with major partners and Iran’s continuing exposure to the Middle Eastern security environment.

Description of Materials and Methods

Methodologically, the article draws on neoclassical realism, which links systemic pressures to domestic variables that shape foreign-policy decision-making [4]. For the crisis environment of 2024-2026, this framework is refined

through Doğan's emphasis on inter-elite interactions as a dynamic intervening variable between systemic pressure, strategic culture and specific policy choices [5]. The relevant systemic pressures include sanctions, the weakening of Iran's regional network of partners, direct military threats and changes in the international distribution of capabilities. Domestic variables include competing assessments among institutional centres and elite coalitions regarding relations with the West, Russia and China, the acceptable degree of external dependence, and the economic costs of strategic choices. The empirical base deliberately combines English- and Persian-language scholarship by Iranian researchers, articles published in Iranian academic journals, official documents and international research. This design makes it possible to compare external interpretations with debates within Iran without treating either as inherently authoritative. Process tracing is used to reconstruct the sequence from the structural weakening of 2024 to military escalation in 2025-2026 and the increased relevance of Eurasian mechanisms.

The hypothesis is assessed through four indicators. The first is institutionalisation, measured by the emergence and durability of international agreements and participation mechanisms. The second is economic diversification, understood as a broader geographic distribution of trade and reduced dependence on individual markets. The third is diplomatic diversification, defined as Tehran's capacity to sustain relationships beyond the traditional Middle Eastern theatre. The fourth is compensatory capacity, namely the extent to which new external relationships can reduce the costs of security pressure, sanctions and international isolation. This operationalisation distinguishes substantive diversification from symbolic institutionalisation and from the mere replacement of Western dependence with Eastern dependence.

Theoretical framework: neoclassical realism and functional diversification

Scholarship on Iranian foreign policy has developed around several explanatory approaches. Ideational accounts emphasise revolutionary identity, anti-hegemonic discourse and support for the "resistance" network. Realist interpretations focus more directly on state survival, security and asymmetric deterrence. Sanctions-centred approaches interpret Iran's eastern orientation as a response to restricted access to Western markets and financial systems. The literature on strategic autonomy, by contrast, stresses Tehran's effort to avoid excessive dependence on any single external centre. Iranian academic debates show that these explanations do not form a single coherent line. Studies published in *Geopolitics Quarterly* identify shifts among confrontational, moderate and pragmatic foreign-policy discourses and draw attention to China's growing role in shaping the regional order [6, 7]. Other Iranian scholars treat the eastern orientation simultaneously as a source of autonomy and as a potential source of renewed dependence [8]. The domestic academic debate therefore provides no simple consensus as to whether Look East should be understood as a strategic choice, a constrained adaptation, or a combination of both.

Neoclassical realism offers a suitable framework for examining this dynamic because it connects systemic pressures with the domestic mechanisms through which those pressures are interpreted and translated into policy. In the

Iranian case, external constraints pass through a complex institutional structure, competing elite assessments, economic pressures and different understandings of acceptable external dependence. Doğan's emphasis on inter-elite interaction further clarifies how shifting coalitions, threat perceptions and assessments of partners can produce different policy choices even under broadly similar external conditions [5]. Juneau adds an important analytical refinement by distinguishing rationality from optimality. Foreign-policy choices may be rational from the perspective of domestic decision-makers while remaining suboptimal in relation to systemic incentives because those incentives are filtered through domestic political and institutional processes [9]. This article does not use that insight to label Look East as a policy "mistake." Instead, it asks whether domestic filtering converts diversification into greater strategic autonomy or reproduces new forms of asymmetry [4, 9, 10, 11, 12].

Within this framework, the article introduces the concept of constrained functional foreign-policy diversification. The concept refers not simply to an increase in the number of partners but to the allocation of different foreign-policy functions across several geographic and institutional arenas while structural constraints remain in place. It is operationalised through the four indicators identified above. In Iran's case, the Middle East remains the primary arena of immediate security and deterrence; Russia and China serve as major strategic and economic partners; the SCO, BRICS and the EAEU provide institutional channels for non-Western engagement; and Central Asia offers an additional arena for pragmatic diplomacy and geographic expansion. The qualifier "constrained" is essential because none of these arenas can fully substitute for the functions performed by the others.

This approach moves the analysis beyond the binary question of whether Iran is "turning" from the Middle East towards Eurasia. The more relevant issue is how functions are redistributed across different external arenas. If Eurasian ties deepen and persist independently of the intensity of Iran's confrontation with the West, the evidence would support a structural diversification thesis. If they expand primarily during periods of pressure and fail to produce durable changes in trade, institutions and diplomatic patterns, an interpretation based on constrained adaptation would remain more convincing.

Results

1. Evolution of the Policy Model: From "Neither East nor West" to a Selective Look East Strategy

After the 1979 Revolution, the principle of "Neither East nor West" expressed the Islamic Republic's determination to avoid incorporation into either bloc of the Cold War. The Iran-Iraq War, international isolation and the subsequent need for economic reconstruction nevertheless compelled Tehran to combine ideological autonomy with pragmatic engagement. This pattern was particularly visible in the post-Soviet space. In Central Asia and the South Caucasus, Iranian policy generally prioritised interstate relations, security, trade and transport rather than the export of the revolutionary model.

During the 2000s and 2010s, sanctions and the nuclear issue increased the importance of Asian partners, but the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015 demonstrated that Tehran retained an interest in normalisation with the West. Look East became more institutionalised after the United States withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018. Under Raisi, this orientation acquired a more coherent political form through SCO membership, accession to BRICS, closer ties with Russia and China and the advancement of the EAEU agreement. Under Pezeshkian, official discourse retained the eastern dimension while placing stronger emphasis on relations with neighbouring states and regional cooperation [3]. Iranian scholarship likewise rejects a simple linear replacement of one orientation by another. Research on foreign-policy discourses highlights the influence of domestic political preferences and the balance between ideological and pragmatic objectives [6]. Analyses of China's regional role treat Beijing not merely as an economic alternative to the West but as an independent actor whose interests are not identical to those of Iran [7]. Critical Iranian scholarship also cautions that excessive reliance on the East can conflict with the principle of independence if strategic expediency narrows Tehran's freedom of choice [8].

By the mid-2020s, Look East had therefore become an established component of Iran's foreign-policy repertoire, but it had not developed into an exclusive geopolitical alignment. The crises of 2024-2026 did not create the eastern orientation. They altered its relative value by increasing the costs of Iran's previous regional deterrence model and reducing the availability of Western economic alternatives.

2. 2024-2026 as a Stress Test for Iran's Middle Eastern Strategy

The stress test of Iran's regional strategy began before June 2025. By the end of 2024, the forward-defence system had already absorbed a series of shocks. Hamas had sustained heavy losses, Hezbollah had been weakened, and the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government in December 2024 removed one of the most important state components of Iran's regional infrastructure and complicated its strategic access to the Levant. The twelve-day war of 2025 thus occurred after Iran's strategic depth had already narrowed [2]. Analytically, the crises of 2025-2026 are better understood as amplifiers of structural pressure than as the original cause of Iran's foreign-policy adjustment.

Military escalation in 2025-2026 exposed important limitations in the model of managed confrontation. Iran retained the ability to respond asymmetrically and to impose significant regional costs, but the direct projection of military pressure onto Iranian territory reduced the effectiveness of a strategy intended to keep major threats away from the country's borders through allied actors. This does not mean that the Axis of Resistance disappeared. A more cautious interpretation is that its centrality declined and that it became one instrument among several, alongside Iran's missile capabilities, diplomacy and external economic adaptation.

The crisis surrounding the Strait of Hormuz further demonstrated the dual character of Iranian deterrence. Geography gives Tehran the capacity to generate systemic consequences for energy markets and maritime trade, but the use of that

leverage also affects Arab Gulf states and Asian importers with which Iran seeks pragmatic relations. Greater asymmetric pressure can therefore raise the costs of conflict for Iran's adversaries while simultaneously increasing Tehran's own diplomatic costs.

From a neoclassical realist perspective, the rising value of diversification can be explained by the interaction of external pressure, the weakening of regional infrastructure and changing domestic assessments of threat. This does not imply an automatic transfer of resources from the Middle East to Eurasia. Security remains territorially anchored in the Middle Eastern theatre. Eurasian relationships can partially mitigate diplomatic and economic vulnerability, but they cannot replace regional deterrence. The weakening of forward defence has also intensified debate over a far more consequential form of compensation, namely a reassessment of nuclear deterrence. Eslami and Kaunert link the erosion of forward defence to a greater likelihood of changes in Iran's nuclear strategy under continued direct military pressure [13]. For the argument developed here, this serves as a counterexample: if the security function is compensated primarily through national military capabilities rather than Eurasian institutions, the functional non-substitutability of Iran's external relationships becomes even clearer.

3. The Eurasian Dimension: Russia, China and Multilateral Institutions

The Russian dimension demonstrates substantial political and strategic institutionalisation. The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty signed on 17 January 2025 covers a broad range of political, economic, transport and defence cooperation, but it does not establish an automatic collective-defence commitment [14]. Closer Russian-Iranian relations therefore expand the scope for coordination without creating a conventional military alliance. Iranian assessments of the partnership are not uniform. Based on interviews with policymakers and academics, Khavarinejad finds that political actors tend to view the relationship more pragmatically, whereas parts of the academic community remain more sceptical about its long-term reliability [10]. This difference should not be reduced to a simple state-versus-academia divide. It points instead to competing interpretations of national interest and of the acceptable depth of strategic alignment with Russia.

China is important above all as an economic partner. Access to the Chinese market helps Iran preserve export revenues under sanctions and provides a major non-Western outlet, but the same concentration can create a new form of dependency. Beijing has a far broader range of energy suppliers and investment opportunities than Tehran has alternative large-scale economic partners. Increased trade with China should therefore not be equated automatically with greater strategic autonomy. Under an unfavourable structure of exchange, it can reproduce asymmetry rather than reduce it.

Multilateral institutions can partially mitigate the risks associated with bilateral asymmetry. The full free trade agreement between Iran and the EAEU entered into force on 15 May 2025 and replaced the interim arrangement that had operated since 2019 [15]. The SCO also functions as more than a symbolic

platform. Since becoming a full member in 2023, Iran has participated in the organisation's regular political, economic and expert mechanisms [16]. Tehran has also sought to translate political participation into financial and economic instruments. In July 2026, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi identified broader economic cooperation and common infrastructure as key SCO priorities and linked Iran's proposal for an SCO Development Bank to the creation of a financial basis for trade and investment among member states [17]. These initiatives expand institutional opportunities, but they do not remove secondary sanctions, payment constraints, investment shortages or technological restrictions.

Transport connectivity provides an additional, but not independent, indicator of diversification. The International North-South Transport Corridor can strengthen Iran's potential transit role, yet it operates in a competitive geoeconomic environment. The Middle Corridor, IMEEC and other initiatives offer partners alternative routes, some of which bypass Iranian territory. Iran's transport position should therefore be treated as a potential strategic asset rather than a guaranteed advantage. For the purposes of this article, the central issue is not which corridor will "win," but whether Tehran can maintain several connectivity options and thereby avoid dependence on a single logistical axis [18].

Taken together, the Russian, Chinese and multilateral dimensions demonstrate a widening range of foreign-policy options while also exposing the limits of that process. Institutional and diplomatic expansion is the clearest outcome. Economic diversification is less advanced because formal agreements do not by themselves eliminate the concentration of export markets, financial restrictions or technological dependence. The distinction between declared strategy and implemented outcomes is therefore critical. Agreements and official statements indicate the direction of policy, but strategic autonomy ultimately depends on whether the structure of trade, investment and financial settlement mechanisms actually changes. Compensatory capacity in the security field remains more limited because neither the SCO, BRICS nor the EAEU constitutes a collective-defence mechanism for Iran.

4. Central Asia as an Indicator of Geographic Expansion

Central Asia is relevant to the hypothesis not because it has already become a major economic pillar of Iranian foreign policy, but because it provides a useful indicator of the geographic expansion of Tehran's external relations. Trade and investment remain modest compared with Iran's ties to its largest partners, and sanctions continue to constrain banking and investment mechanisms [19]. Nevertheless, the region carries broader significance within Iran's foreign-policy logic because it links neighbourhood diplomacy, Eurasian institutional engagement and access to alternative markets and transport routes. This interpretation is consistent with the broader concept of Iran's neighbourhood policy, which treats relations with adjacent states as a means of reducing external vulnerability while recognising the economic and political limits of such a strategy [20]. Central Asia therefore provides a useful test of whether Look East extends beyond the Russia-China nexus.

In 2025, Iran maintained active political dialogue with Central Asian states, including Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, alongside continued trade, transport and diplomatic engagement. These relationships are largely interest-based and do not presuppose bloc solidarity. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan pursue their own multi-vector strategies, which means that their relations with Tehran differ markedly from Iran's ties with allied actors or adversarial states in the Middle East. For Iran, Central Asia thus offers a form of pragmatic engagement that is less directly embedded in the confrontation with the West.

Central Asia is therefore better characterised as an emerging vector than as the economic core of Look East. Its significance lies in the durability of political dialogue, the development of practical trade and transport channels and Tehran's ability to sustain relationships outside the Russia-China framework. The region broadens Iran's diplomatic room for manoeuvre, but its economic contribution remains limited and the multi-vector policies of Central Asian states place clear constraints on the political depth of cooperation [19].

Discussion

Limits of Diversification: Between Autonomy and Dependency Substitution

The first constraint arises from sanctions. Institutional expansion does not automatically provide access to the global banking system, investment capital or advanced technologies. A gap therefore persists between the formal density of agreements and their material economic effects. If new arrangements increase the number of political channels without altering access to finance and technology, their contribution to strategic autonomy remains limited.

The second constraint stems from the asymmetry of Iran's relationships with Russia and, especially, China. These partnerships may carry greater relative value for Tehran than Iran does for its partners. A reduction in Western alternatives can therefore concentrate dependence rather than diversify it. This is the central counterargument to an optimistic interpretation of Look East: changing the geography of dependence does not necessarily increase autonomy. Iranian debates reflect this tension. Some scholars and policymakers view stronger eastern ties as a necessary adaptation to sanctions and changes in the international order, while others warn that strategic necessity may gradually narrow Iran's freedom of manoeuvre [8, 10]. The disagreement is analytically important because it reveals competing conceptions of strategic autonomy within Iran rather than a simple division between supporters and opponents of eastern engagement.

The third constraint is the non-substitutability of foreign-policy functions. Eurasian institutions can reduce diplomatic isolation and facilitate selected forms of trade, but they do not provide a replacement security architecture. Central Asia expands the geography of Iran's partnerships but is not a comparable source of capital or technology. Transport projects can improve connectivity, yet they remain dependent on route competition, infrastructure investment and the sanctions environment. In the security field, the post-2024 debate itself suggests that compensation may be sought through stronger national military

capabilities, including a possible reassessment of nuclear strategy, rather than through Eurasian institutions [13]. Functional diversification therefore improves resilience primarily by distributing risks, not by eliminating vulnerability.

Iran's current foreign policy can consequently be located between two trajectories. The first is dependency substitution, in which the contraction of Western ties produces excessive concentration on Russia and China. The second is constrained functional diversification, in which major-power partnerships are complemented by multilateral institutions, middle and smaller states, and multiple channels of economic connectivity. Available evidence suggests that Iran lies between these outcomes. Institutional and diplomatic diversification is already visible, economic diversification remains partial, and the capacity of Eurasian relationships to compensate for security vulnerabilities remains limited.

Conclusion

The analysis broadly supports the hypothesis, but also requires an important qualification. The crises of 2025-2026 should be understood in conjunction with the structural weakening of Iran's Middle Eastern position in 2024. The weakening of Hamas and Hezbollah, together with the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government, reduced Tehran's strategic depth before the twelve-day war of 2025. Subsequent escalation therefore acted less as the original cause of adjustment than as a stress test for an already weakened forward-defence system.

Iran's Eurasian orientation likewise did not emerge as an immediate response to these crises. Its institutional foundations had developed earlier, particularly after the United States withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018 and during the Raisi administration. Developments in 2024-2026 increased the relative value of existing ties with Russia, China, the SCO, BRICS, the EAEU and Central Asian states. The change is therefore better described as a redistribution of foreign-policy functions than as a geographic pivot.

The concept of constrained functional foreign-policy diversification captures this uneven pattern. The Middle East retains the central role in immediate security and deterrence. Russia and China provide strategic and economic resources while reproducing important asymmetries. The SCO, BRICS and the EAEU expand Iran's institutional room for manoeuvre without offering collective defence. Central Asia broadens the geography of engagement but has not become the economic core of Look East. Official Iranian discourse and domestic academic debate also place different emphases on this process. State rhetoric stresses neighbourhood cooperation, mutual respect, shared interests and multilateral engagement, whereas critical scholarship focuses more closely on asymmetry and the risk of renewed dependence. These perspectives are not mutually exclusive. Their tension indicates that the durability of the current course will depend on Tehran's ability to convert diplomatic and institutional expansion into a more diversified structure of trade, investment and financial relations.

The four indicators produce uneven results. Institutional diversification is the most developed and is reflected in Iran's full participation in the SCO, the treaty-based consolidation of relations with Russia and the full EAEU free trade

agreement. Diplomatic diversification is also evident in the persistence of relations beyond the Middle Eastern theatre. Economic diversification is more limited because broader Eurasian engagement has not removed market concentration, financial sanctions or technological constraints. Compensatory capacity in the security sphere remains the weakest dimension because Eurasian partnerships cannot substitute for regional deterrence. This uneven distribution of effects is precisely what justifies the qualifier “constrained” in the proposed concept.

The durability of the Eurasian orientation will provide the most important test of the model. If institutional, trade and diplomatic ties continue to deepen independently of sanctions-related and military shocks, the evidence will increasingly support the interpretation of structural diversification. If their intensity continues to track fluctuations in Iran’s relations with the West, Look East will remain better understood as an adaptive strategy. In Juneau’s terms, the distinction also offers a way to assess the gap between declared strategy and policy effectiveness: a sustained expansion of viable external options would indicate adaptive rationality, whereas growing one-sided dependence under an increasingly dense institutional rhetoric would point towards a suboptimal outcome.

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**2025–2026 ЖЫЛДАРДАҒЫ ДАҒДАРЫСТАР ЖАҒДАЙЫНДАҒЫ
ИРАН ИСЛАМ РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫНЫҢ СЫРТҚЫ САЯСАТЫ:
ТАЯУ ШЫҒЫСТАҒЫ ТЕКЕТИРЕС ПЕН ЕУРАЗИЯЛЫҚ
ӘРТАРАПТАНДЫРУ АРАСЫНДА**

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Аңдатпа. Мақалада 2024 жылы Иран Ислам Республикасының Таяу Шығыстағы «алдыңғы шептегі қорғаныс» жүйесінің әлсіреуі және 2025–2026 жылдардағы кейінгі дағдарыстар жағдайындағы сыртқы саясат трансформациясы қарастырылады. Зерттеудің мақсаты – аталған күйзелістер Тегеранның сыртқы саясатының географиялық қайта бағдарлануына әкелді ме, әлде бұған дейін қалыптасқан бейімделу мен әртараптандыру стратегиясын жеделдетті ме деген сұраққа жауап беру. Теориялық негіз ретінде неоклассикалық реализм және элитааралық өзара әрекеттесуді талдау қолданылады, ал нәтижені сипаттау үшін «шектеулі функционалдық сыртқы саяси әртараптандыру» ұғымы ұсынылады. Әдіснама process tracing, салыстырмалы-саяси және институционалдық талдауды біріктіреді. Эмпирикалық база халықаралық және ирандық академиялық әдебиеттерді, ресми құжаттарды және Иранның мемлекеттік ақпараттық ресурстарын қамтиды. Нәтижелер Башар Асад үкіметінің құлауы, «қарсылық осінің» әлсіреуі және Иран–Израиль эскалациясы бұрынғы аймақтық модельдің шығындарын арттырғанын, бірақ қауіпсіздік саласындағы Таяу Шығыстың орталық рөлін жоймағанын көрсетеді. Сонымен бірге Ресей, Қытай, ШЫҰ, BRICS, ЕАЭО және Орталық Азия институционалдық орнығу, экономикалық бейімделу және дипломатиялық маневр арналары ретінде маңызын күшейтті. Зерттеудің ғылыми жаңалығы географиялық «бетбұрыс» пен сыртқы саяси міндеттердің функционалдық қайта бөлінуін ажыратуда. Практикалық маңызы Иранның Еуразиялық бағытының тұрақтылығы мен шектеулерін, соның ішінде Орталық Азия мемлекеттері үшін салдарын дәлірек бағалауға мүмкіндік беруінде. Қорытынды бойынша, қазіргі Иран саясаты аяқталған «Шығысқа бетбұрыс» емес, институционалдық және дипломатиялық мүмкіндіктер экономикалық және әскери-стратегиялық өтемге қарағанда жылдамырақ кеңейетін біркелкі емес функционалдық әртараптандыру ретінде сипатталады.

Тірек сөздер: Иран, сыртқы саясат, неоклассикалық реализм, стратегиялық автономия, функционалдық әртараптандыру, Шығысқа бетбұрыс, Орталық Азия, Ресей, Қытай, ШЫҰ, ЕАЭО

ВНЕШНЯЯ ПОЛИТИКА ИСЛАМСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ ИРАН В УСЛОВИЯХ КРИЗИСОВ 2025-2026 ГОДОВ: МЕЖДУ БЛИЖНЕВОСТОЧНОЙ КОНФРОНТАЦИЕЙ И ЕВРАЗИЙСКОЙ ДИВЕРСИФИКАЦИЕЙ

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Аннотация. В статье исследуется трансформация внешней политики Исламской Республики Иран в условиях ослабления ее ближневосточной системы «передовой обороны» в 2024 году и последующих кризисов 2025-2026 годов. Исследование не исходит из предположения о завершившемся геополитическом «повороте на Восток», а ставит вопрос об изменении функционального распределения внешнеполитических приоритетов Тегерана под воздействием нарастающих системных ограничений. Теоретическая рамка сочетает неоклассический реализм с анализом межэлитных взаимодействий как внутренней промежуточной переменной. Для описания результата предлагается понятие «ограниченной функциональной внешнеполитической диверсификации». На основе process tracing, сравнительно-политического и институционального анализа реконструируется последовательность, связывающая сокращение региональной стратегической глубины Ирана, падение правительства Башара Асада в декабре 2024 года, ослабление «оси сопротивления», двенадцатидневную ирано-израильскую войну 2025 года и последующую эскалацию. Результаты показывают, что эти потрясения повысили издержки традиционной ближневосточной стратегии Ирана и одновременно увеличили относительную значимость отношений с Россией, Китаем, ЕАЭС, ШОС, BRICS и государствами Центральной Азии. Однако евразийское направление не заменяет Ближний Восток как основное пространство безопасности и сдерживания и не устраняет финансовую, технологическую и санкционную уязвимость Ирана. Сделан вывод, что современная внешняя политика Ирана представляет собой ограниченную функциональную диверсификацию, при которой различные региональные и институциональные контуры выполняют разные задачи, а их компенсаторные возможности остаются неравными и неполными.

Ключевые слова: Иран, внешняя политика, неоклассический реализм, стратегическая автономия, функциональная диверсификация, взгляд на Восток, Центральная Азия, Россия, Китай, ШОС, ЕАЭС

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