

# ***INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION OF IRAN AND ITS EFFECTS ON GLOBAL ENERGY SECURITY***

## **Overview**

The world relies heavily on energy, as it is essential to modern human life. However, resources are limited and exist in specific regions. It has been forecasted that North America will import 75 percent of the total oil in 2020, and this figure for the European Union (EU) will be 90 percent in the year 2030. In addition, the political instability of energy producing countries, the manipulation of energy supplies and the competition over energy resources, attacks on supply infrastructures as well as accidental events and natural disasters all pose a threat to energy security. The dominant countries that rely on the supply of foreign oil also have problems with regard to energy security. Boasting more than half of the world's known crude oil reserves, the Middle East (ME) is the key region for the international energy supply. The free flow of oil to the world markets from the ME is a vital part of the major energy safety issues. Energy security can be considered as both an international and national security issue. Iran occupies a significant position in geo-economics due to its production of energy. The state not has the second largest natural gas reserves and third largest crude oil reserves in the world, but it is also located at the center of Afro-Eurasia. Moreover, it shares a cultural background with other parts of the ME and Central Asia. Geographically, Iran shares a border with seven countries and has the strategic position of linking Europe, Africa, the ME, and Asia in economic, political, and social contexts. Iran also has a giant land mass with a comparatively high population. Iran's largest advantage is its various rich natural resources. This thesis will briefly examine some physical, social, cultural, and economic features of Iran, as these features provide the basic setting within the regional security complexes pursued. The common analytic ground in the study is the regional configurations in Iran and how these function in terms of energy security in both the regional and global contexts.

The current tensions between Iran and the Western powers and local political instabilities have caused severe issues with regard to world energy security. For that reason, it is important to investigate the main causes and situation of Iran's international isolation and determine how these factors relate to global energy security. This will lead to suggestions for suitable solutions to the energy security issue in the world, starting with the specific circumstances surrounding Iran. In this paper, the background of the dispute between Iran and the United States (US), its trend, the current tension, and its effect both on energy security and regional security will be analyzed.

## **Methods**

Primarily, we conduct a literature review of energy import sources and energy security. The information utilized in this study will be derived from secondary sources: available studies and reports, books, journals, dissertations in press. On a conceptual and theoretical level, we adopt Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) and Rentier State Theory (RST) for the case study of Iran. In addition, we attempt to adapt RSCT to the energy security issues and historical tensions between Iran and the US to analyze the current tensions between Iran and Western powers regarding the nuclear issue. The application of RSCT and RST to the case study of Iran will enable the treatment of external relations over internal troubles.

## **Conclusions**

The level of dependency on oil and gas import and export is linked to energy and national security in every country. This applies especially to rentier states, which derive the majority of their revenue from oil exports, such as Iran. Considering that Iran is a rentier state, its economic security and national security are inseparable.

There is a strong relationship between the diversification of national security and energy security. National security determines accessibility and availability in the energy trade market. The major consumers are looking for stable sources of energy, while the major suppliers are looking for stable markets. However, if there is a lack of national security cooperation between a country and its neighbors, we would not expect any types of cooperation or alliances among them. This assumption would be

applied to all parties either producers or consumers. It is necessary for there to be balanced security between states for a secure energy supply. Any political insecurity and competition to assume the dominant position in the region will create an unbalanced situation. In the case of Iran, it has been internationally isolated due to the imposition of different types of sanctions since 1979. Thus, Iran had to establish its self-sufficiency for national defense, and it has constantly influenced global energy security. In conclusion, in order to convert an energy security complex to an energy security community, international cooperation among all parties is required.

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