

Investigating the Position of Smart Power in Iran's Foreign Policy towards Armenia

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This article examines Iran's smart power in Armenia. The main question of this research is what are the dimensions and components of Iran's smart power in Armenia. The hypothesis of the article is that the dimensions of smart power of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Armenia include hard, semi-hard components and soft power. The results of the research show that since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenia, as one of the surviving countries of this superpower, has played a special place in Iran's foreign policy. Being close to Azerbaijan and Turkey, Having a large Armenian population in Iran and its geopolitical position in the South Caucasus and the important role of this country in Iran's access to European markets has caused that Iran play a special role for Armenia in competing with regional and supra-regional powers. In addition, use its smart power tools to influence this country. The research method in this article is descriptive-analytical and research data collected in the form of a library and through notes.

Keywords: Smart power, Iran, Armenia, soft power, hard power

Introduction

Iran and Armenia relationships after the revolutionary period have always been based on friendship and unity. Iran's union with Armenia has been a direct consequence of Azerbaijan's domestic and foreign policy developments. In other words, Iran's relationship with Armenia and Iran's foreign policy approaches in this country are a function of Iran's relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan. Because the Republic of Azerbaijan union with countries hostile to Iran, including the United States and Israel, Iran has turned to partnership and cooperation with Armenia, the traditional enemy of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This cooperative approach of Iran provided an opportunity for Armenia to circumvent the sanctions imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey. (Kouhi Isfahani, 2019: 150).

Iran's vital support for Azerbaijan and its interest to establish relations with Western countries and Israel and the elimination of Iran from the equations of this

region because of these countries pressure has shown the prominent role of the Republic of Azerbaijan in creating unity and cooperation between Iran and Armenia. The policies pursued by this country have dealt a blow to Iran's policies of excluding and marginalizing foreign powers from regional developments, and therefore Iran decided to strengthen its relations with Armenia. Also Armenia was the only country in the South Caucasus which Turkey failed to establish a good relations so friendly relations with Armenia was very important for Iran. (Kolaei and Goodarzi, 1394: 39)

Another aspect of union of these two countries is the common history and geography that has led to the emergence of commonalities in the national interests of the two countries. Apart from the significant Azeri-speaking population in Iran, Iran is home to one of the largest Armenian communities abroad. Both countries have similar experiences with the concept of isolation. The United States, some Western countries, and the international community have sanctioned Iran, and Armenia is isolated from neighboring countries, including the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkey and the existence of common hostile states is another factor in the union of these two. Relying on these factors, Iran's view of this country has been opportunity-oriented. (Giragosian, 2010)

Another aspect of this convergence is the geopolitical position of Armenia, which enclosed on land between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkey. Therefore, communication with Iran is like a bridge to the outside world and very important for this country. This geographical situation has led to a severe economic blockade on the country during the conflicts between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkey. Therefore, Iran is a bridge for Armenia to export goods from this country to other countries. (Qaisari and Goodarzi, 1388: 133). These areas have led some experts today to consider Iran's relations with Armenia closer than those of other countries in the South Caucasus. Iran's relationship with this country have been relatively stable and close since 1991. Therefore, the issue of this research is the study of Iran's smart power in Armenia. So the question is what are the dimensions and components of Iran's smart power in Armenia? This study attempts to answer this question.

Theoretical Framework

Smart power was a concept that first used in an article in Foreign Affairs Magazine by Susan Nossel. Nossel was former adviser to the United States Mission to the United Nations under Bill Clinton; she proposed a new approach to liberal internationalism by analyzing the context of 9/11, highlighted by a series of unilateral decisions by the Bush administration:” Unlike the Conservatives, who have used military power as a major tool in foreign policy. Liberal internationalists note that trade, diplomacy, aid in the development and dissemination of American values as important as military leverage. Aware of the fact that "US commitments cannot always be the best way", Nossel emphasized

the protection and prioritization of American interests (Nossel, 2004: 131). She explains that 9/11 should be considered as an important topic in the contemporary history of foreign policy and international relations, both from a practical and a theoretical view. Following this incident, US State Department policymakers united around a definite agenda that included important outlines. These include fighting various forms of terrorism, aggressive compensation of threats, and emphasizing that the United States reserves the right to retaliate on its own. Conservatives have also accused the opposition, which is progressive, of criticizing the administration of George W. Bush and his foreign policy, as well as defending tactics that differ from those of the Conservatives themselves and they announced that the group, in practice, has not made much progress and is more marginalized. However, various theorists, including Nossel herself, believe that the progressives have succeeded in reconstructing and directing the theoretical reconstruction of US foreign policy around an ambitious agenda and given a historic opportunity. According to this opinion, "the power of the United States, the absence of conflict between the great powers, the horrors of 9/11, and the growing public skepticism about the Bush administration's militarization and effectiveness, is a convincing political opening and alternative. And it has created an ideal for the foreign policy of the President of the United States." (Nossel, 2004:132). Nossel's proposal has been to use smart power in foreign policy, while at the same time away from using tools of power such as military, political or soft power. According to Nossel, all this is far from smart power. To avoid these weaknesses, Nossel suggests that the way should be reversed and smarter and more cost-effective resources should be used in order to form a convincing (Nossel, 2004: 136) concept that is coherent in the national interest. Because providing an smart definition of US interests can lead to the reconstruction of US foreign policy with the aim of securing the desired international system of liberal societies and overcoming the challenges (Nossel, 2004: 137). From this point of view, the use of smart power can reconcile the fight against terrorism and fundamentalism (the conservative ideal) and the advancement of democracy and human rights (the ideal of the progressives). In this context, the fight against terrorism on the one hand and the revival of humanitarian efforts on the other, along with the reconstruction of failed governments and the liberation of repressive societies, are smart investments that will have lasting results. Unions for war prevention, empowerment of states, stronger unions, and the establishment of more effective international institutions by emphasis on entrenched human rights are also among the achievements that the doctrine of smart power insists on them. In addition, she continued that that instead of urging other governments to do what we want them to do, liberal internationalism should turn the fight against terrorism into an ideology and a set of common interests. For example, liberal internationalism can take advantage of Europe's commitment to humanitarian affairs, post-war conflict resolution, international policing, and sustainable development programs. Real commitment to free trade as well as economic development in Latin America, Asia, and Africa can also help change

their view of liberal internationalism. In short, from the point of view of smart power, adopting a new approach to liberal internationalism will once again be able to persuade many countries in the world to share their resources with the United States. Indeed, what Nossel refers as "smart foresight" (Nossel, 2004: 138) are traditional liberal priorities, such as economic development, as an important potential for eliminating long-term threats before choose the military action. Smart power means knowing that the United States is not always the best tool; because the interests of the United States are achieved by employing others for its own purposes and through unions, international institutions, prudent diplomacy, and the power of ideals (Nossel, 2004: 138). According to Nossel, liberal internationalism and the world liberal-democratic system would be less interest to war in the case of acceptable deployment and stability. According to this theory, the United States must develop and achieve a set of goals through diplomacy and economics that are no less important than militarism. Among other things that Nossel emphasizes are the limited use of hard power tools, especially militarization, and the change of military interventions with the following characteristics:

- 1- Develop the skills of military officers as peacekeepers
- 2- Emphasis on diversity and differences in abilities and specialties
- 3- Invite talented young people who are interested in national service to participate
- 4- Deploy troops on an accessible scale and carry out smaller missions independently or through multilateral organizations (Nossel, 2004:139).

Finally, another focus of Nossel on smart power is rebuilding international empathetic partnership and strengthening relations with international institutions, including the United Nations. In her view, in the context of smart power, reforms related to the United Nations and other international institutions should have the following components:

- 1- Organized bureaucracy
- 2- Dynamic capabilities
- 3- Attraction blocks
- 4- Relevant committees (Nossel, 2004: 140-141).

4-2-1- Hard power of Iran in Armenia

The necessity to development of relations in military sector between Iran and Armenia arose from the fact that after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of Armenia, both Iran and Armenia came closer to each other due to common threat from common enemies.

In the section on Iran's hard power in the Republic of Azerbaijan, it was said that the military aspect of Iran's power in the Republic of Azerbaijan did not grow much under the influence of factors, and this fact is also true about the military aspect of Iran's smart power in Armenia. The military aspect is less developed than other aspects of these two countries' relations, although some media believe that it just looks like that these two countries secretly have extensive military relations. (Kouhi Isfahani, 2019: 213). The Presidents of Iran and Armenia signed a joint statement in May 1992 on relations, which included military aspects, including the fight against piracy, terrorism, as well as the fight against weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological. In 1997, the two countries, with Greece, signed a military cooperation agreement that some experts have called an anti-NATO treaty. Although these three countries insisted that, the agreement was not aimed at any particular country or organization (Mirzoyan, 2007: 199).

The pressures of US sanctions on Iran-Armenia relations have always been a powerful deterrent. For example, in 2002, the Minister of Defense of Iran during his visit to this country called for the improvement of security and military relations and agreement on the same issue signed between these two countries. A few weeks after the deal, two Armenian companies were sanctioned for what the United States called a violation of Chapter 3 of the Iran Prohibition Treaty. Because, according to the United States, the two companies had provided equipment and technologies that were prohibited under the same agreement. In general, the military cooperation between the two countries and the visits of the officials of the two countries to each other during the last decades have caused a great deal of sensitivity among the American officials. Because they thought that Iran had invested in the electronic radio engineering of the military in this country (Wolfson, 2002: 2) and that Iran's goal in these relations is to acquire specific weapons and military equipment. In 2012, another security agreement was signed between the ministers of two countries, which dealt with the fight against security crimes, drug trafficking, border issues and so on. The visit of the Minister of Defense of Armenia to several Iranian industrial-military bases in 2017 and talks with Iranian officials about cooperation in the field of industry and military sciences were other main manifestations of these relations, which this meeting was accompanied by the visit of the Minister of Defense of Iran and the holding of other talks in this regard in Yerevan (Mukhtari. 2018).

Despite these obstacles in the way of deepening military relations between the two countries, including US pressure, Iran still wants a better level of military relations with this country. From the point of view of this research, assuming that the speculation of some media about the hidden military relations between these two countries is not correct, it should be said that despite Iran's willingness, with the exception of the defense and military agreements mentioned above, there is no further evidence of further security cooperation between the two countries.

4-2-2 Iran's semi-hard (political-economic) power in Armenia

Armenia has the smallest economy and least development among the countries of the South Caucasus and has the 40-kilometer common border with Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran recognized its independence on December 25, 1991, and a few months later, in April 1992, established its embassy there. Since then, the two countries have not had any border or economic disputes or religious or ethnic animosities with each other. so, from its beginning it has evolved from a sincere relationship to a strategic partnership.

Like Azerbaijan, in the case of Armenia, the initial manifestations of Iran's smart power can be seen in help and supply of fuel and basic necessities of life during the harsh winter of 1991-1992. These donations were made while public opinion, especially the Azeri-speaking people in north of Iran, had expressed their disagreement with this measures. Despite ideological differences between the two countries, Iran has always considered Armenia a bridge to European markets and relying on advantages such as common borders, historical and cultural ties, and common political and economic interests, it has used its relations with this country to strengthen its smart power. Azerbaijan's hostile stance on Tehran, the US insistence on expelling Iran from the oil pipeline project, and Baku's insistence on leaving Armenia led to the polarization of regional alliances, forming the Moscow-Yerevan-Tehran alliance. In the days after independence, due to the special geographical conditions and the extensive border with Azerbaijan and Turkey, the country suffered severe pressure from its two hostile neighbors. Georgia's northern neighbor did not help this country escape the isolation because the country itself was involved in post-independence crises and the state-building process. As a result, the two countries did not have any diplomatic relations until the summer of 1993. In such a critical situation, Iran was the only neighbor of Armenia that contributed significantly to the country's survival with its continued assistance. Iran's assistance in the face of severe sanctions and isolation of Armenia by its two neighbors, the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkey, is one of the most important political aspects of Iran's smart power in Armenia.

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Of course, such conditions were repeated for Iran between 2010 and 2015, and relations with Armenia were one of the only ways to exit this isolation for Iran and it was an opportunity to play a more effective role in regional equations. What we have said so far from the beginning of this section has been about the political aspect of Iran's semi-hard power in Armenia because it has been done in line with Iran's political support for this country. However, this smart political power also

includes economic aspects, for example, part of Iran's political support for Armenia can be seen in the provision of fuel for this country during the conflicts with the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is necessary to re-emphasize this point that Iran's policy of neutrality in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, while one of the parties to the conflict was a country with a majority of Shia Muslims. However, according to some experts, Iran has de facto supported Armenia by supplying fuel to Armenia during the conflict. (Najafov, 2008: 36)

In dealing with the economic aspect of Iran's smart power in Armenia, areas such as energy, transportation, communications, and agriculture and health can be enumerated. On the other hand, some consider the economic aspect of the relations between these two countries as the main basic in the relations between the two countries. (Kouhi Isfahani, 2019: 217)

In the early years after independence, the issue of energy supply and survival in the harsh winter was one of the main concerns of the country's political system. For this reason, the Minister of Energy traveled to Tehran and signed an urgent contract, guaranteeing the annual transfer of 550,000 tons of oil to this country. This agreement and Iran's cooperation in this regard was a saving solution and caused the fuel needed to be supplied to the country before the construction of the gas pipeline. However, because the only railway line connecting the two countries crossed the territory of Nakhjavan in Azerbaijan, the bridge over the Aras River was the only important and practical route. And made it possible for the required fuel to reach the southern regions of the country. Iranian aid and goods were also sent through the same bridge (Mirzoyan, 2007). In the first 5 years after the country's independence, Iran controlled 100% of the Armenian market. However, due to weak quality and high prices, Iranians lost this market and with the expansion of Armenia's relations with European countries, as well as Turkey, Iran's share in the Armenian markets decreased significantly. In the field of energy, Iran is one of the main suppliers of natural gas to this country and with the construction of the pipeline that has been established since 2006, a significant part of the country's gas is supplied by Iran. Gas exported from Iran is exchanged with Armenian electricity under a 20-year contract signed in 2004 and started in 2009. Armenia also joined the North-South Transition Corridor in 2006(Almasyan, 2014) which, as mentioned above, is to connect Russia to India via Iran and Armenia and facilitate trading. Participation in this project required a strong rail system for Armenia and this requirement created a suitable environment for the implementation of the Iran-Armenia railway project, which had been proposed since the late 1990s. Implementation of this project has been incomplete despite efforts so far and the main reason is the budget deficit in its financing by Armenia.

The construction of a hydraulic power plant and a high-voltage power transmission line on the border between the two countries, the construction of a 470-kilometer railway between Iran and Armenia, and the construction of an oil pipeline in 2008 are other manifestations of Iran's semi-hard power. It should be

noted that the power plant project did not make much progress due to problems in financing from Armenia, but after negotiations, Iran finally agreed to finance the completion of the power plant. In the field of energy, oil cooperation between the two countries has also been significant. (Kouhi Isfahani, 2019: 217) Construction of a 300-kilometer oil pipeline from Iran to Armenia began in 2010 and is set to transport oil from a power plant in Tabriz to Ararat province in Armenia. It is one of the main manifestations of this cooperation, and the second and third projects of the construction of an oil pipeline in 2014 and 2015 for the daily pumping of oil to Armenia show the continuation of this cooperation. (Kouhi Isfahani, 2019: 217)

Efforts to facilitate access routes between the two countries are another manifestation of Iran's semi-hard power in relation to this country. The construction of a highway connecting the city of Tabriz to Armenia began in 2010, but the completion of this project has been delayed due to the country's financial deficit. Completion of the project could facilitate tourism and provide better access to free markets in border areas.

In the final summary of this section, it should be said that the economic dimension of Iran's smart power in Armenia has been the most dominant aspect of this power. And the military aspect, the hard side of Iran's power, has been the least extensive. Also in the economic field, the greatest amount of Iranian influence is related to participation and presence in the energy sector of this country.

4-2-3 Iran's soft power in Armenia

As we have shown in the section above and in describing the hard and semi-hard aspects of Iran's power in Armenia, the two countries are strategic partners in the region and their relationship can be described as extremely friendly. From the beginning of diplomatic relations between the two countries, they had no border disputes and no religious or ethnic enmity with each other. Common historical background between the two countries is the most important feature of social relations between the two countries, which is based not only on common historical heritage and cultural traditions, common worldview and common philosophical perceptions. It is also closely related to the idea of oneness and monotheism that is characteristic of both nations. Both countries are ancient and their common Aryan heritage is the main point of social relation between these two nations. Their common archeological-civilizational background has provided a very strong social and intellectual basis for cooperation. (Mirzoyan, 2007: 176-177)

Religion is one of the important cultural variables of Iran's soft power in Armenia. Iran's soft power in Armenia is also part of the larger framework of Iran's Islamic-cultural foreign policy, which has been implemented through socio-cultural and research activities. In general, Iran's cultural policy in Armenia has been described as cultural diplomacy, in which religion is inherently integrated. But given that

there is no significant Islamic community in Armenia, Iran's policy in this country can not be about Shiism in this country. In addition, propaganda activities in this country cannot be carried out in comparison with other countries with Muslim populations such as the Republic of Azerbaijan. In fact, the case of Iran's soft power policy in Armenia shows that the role of religion in transnational relations can be limited to cultural and civilizational relations.

One of the main fields of cultural and economic relations between the two nations is the social existence of Iran and Armenia in both countries. About 100,000 Armenians live in Iran, mostly in Tehran, and are considered a religious minority and freely engage in their religious activities and rituals. Armenians are the largest non-Muslim community in Iran, and there are about 200 Armenian churches throughout Iran, represented by two members of parliament.

On the other hand, there is a relatively small Muslim minority in Armenia and it has a population of about 8,000 people in this country who are of Iranian nationality or belong to other countries in the Middle East and India. (Mkrychyan, 2019: 173)

The existence of religious minorities in these two countries represents a good relationship for Iran with Armenian Christians and creates a positive international image for Iran. In particular, Iran, as a country that has experienced isolation as a result of sanctions, can use this image to create tools for reconnection with the world.

In general, the topic of cultural diplomacy revolves around issues of dialogue, understanding and trust. The goal of Iranian cultural diplomacy is to influence and use the Armenian audience, which is created over time. And it creates a positive attitude among the people of this country to Iran's policies in various fields of politics and culture. Iran's cultural diplomacy in the country also included helping to change the country's policies and political judiciary, which helps prevent and manage tensions and conflicts with the country. Because Armenia has always supported constructive relations with Tehran, unlike relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan, Iranian cultural diplomacy in this country has always have positive view.

This policy has various aspects. Provide a comprehensive understanding of Islam and Iranian culture and civilization, promote Islamic sciences and ethics, introduce prominent figures and the glory of Islamic and Iranian history, establish active links to strengthen friendship, promote knowledge of Persian language and literature and ultimately encourage mutual cultural understanding and human experiences are among them.

In fact, in order to implement the policies of cultural diplomacy in this country and develop of religious themes and contents, Iran's efforts have been mainly focused on the general and comprehensive values and philosophical and intellectual aspects of Islam. (Jodiche, 2018: 18) Such a feature is also evident in

the speeches and positions of Iran's leading leaders, which also emphasizes the general and common aspects of humanity regarding relations with Armenia.

The Organization of Islamic Culture and Communication, which promotes Iran's cultural policies abroad and is a subset of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, has also been active in Armenia and before 2015, it was the main executor of Iranian programs and projects there. But since 2015, the Cultural Center of the Iranian Embassy in Armenia has been the main body in charge of organizing and implementing Iranian cultural activities and programs in Armenia. There are two points in this transfer of responsibility: First of all, Armenia has a high priority in Iran's foreign policy. Secondly, the Iranian ambassador to this country is more actively involved in bilateral cooperation and is eager to develop mutual understanding. (Mkrychyan, 2019: 173)

Thus, although religion is an important factor in establishing cultural relation between the two countries, the existence of different religions has been a positive factor in bilateral relations, because despite the rule of Muslim authorities in Iran, the Armenians living in this country have remained faithful to their religion and have not changed their religion throughout history. Both countries emphasize that Armenian Christians and Muslim Iranians have positive relations with each other and these two religions have lived close together in peace and harmony.

The cultural centers that form the main structure of Iran's cultural diplomacy are in fact subdivisions of the Organization of Islamic Culture and Communication. These centers in Armenia and somewhat in Georgia, hold cultural events language courses, bilingual translation, magazine printing, conferences, and intercultural dialogues. As we have said, the Cultural Center of the Iranian Embassy in Armenia is the main sponsor of these activities which mainly organizes programs in February, which coincides with the Fajr decade and the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

The Blue Mosque is the center of Shiite Islam in Armenia which built in 1766 and stopped its activity during Soviet rule and has been turned into the History Museum of Yerevan. However, after the independence of Yerevan, this mosque was rebuilt and revived with the help of Iran, and in addition to being a place of worship, it has become a center for holding religious ceremonies and occasions, including Ashura, as well as an Islamic educational center. In 2013, a center called Dar al-Quran was established in this mosque, which aims to teach Quranic lessons to Muslims and the Nasta'liq script and provide religious advice. (Ghazanchyan, 2016) The Blue Mosque is the only active mosque in the city and the center of worship for Iranians, and every Friday prayer are held there by a cleric from Iran. Regarding the publication of books and magazines, which are an important part of Iran's cultural diplomacy activities in this country, it should be said that the Iranian Cultural Center in this country has been publishing at least two magazines in this country until 2012. Mehr and Parsian Magazines have been published quarterly in this country since 2001. These magazines do not seem to have a

religious orientation, but in fact they have Islamic content and are published in both Persian and Armenian. The Cultural Center of Iran in Armenia also has a website which it offers a number of books and brochures with religious content. (Jodiche, 2018: 19)

Media and media activity is another important part of the Islamic Republic's propaganda activity in Armenia. In line with media cooperation, two countries have established offices on each country. Iran Radio and Television World Service is an international news radio network that was established in 1956 with the aim of acquainting different nations of the world with Iranian culture and history. After the revolution, it promotes the revolutionary positions and ideals of the Islamic Revolution. The service currently broadcasts in 32 languages, including Armenian. The Armenian-language section of the radio network includes programs in this language for 2 and a half hours during the day. It broadcasts news as well as programs focusing on introducing Iranian culture, but there are also religious parts, such as the recitation of Quranic verses, at the beginning of the program. (Mkrychyan, 2019: 181)

Also every year, the Iranian Cultural Center and its Armenian counterparts hold a conference on the anniversary of Imam Khomeini's demise. These conferences are also covered by the Armenian language section of the World Broadcasting Service as well as the Armenian public media. Holding annual programs in the Fajr decade, in accordance with the victory of the Islamic Revolution, is one of the other regular annual programs of the Cultural Center of Iran. Among the programs held on the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution are meetings between Iranian and Armenian intellectuals, an exhibition of modern Iranian art, and other galleries. Also in 2013, Iranian Film Week was held at the Blue Mosque in Yerevan.

Basically, holding exhibitions in one of the art galleries in Yerevan is a constant part of the activities of the Cultural Center of Iran. In recent years, holding music concerts and film screenings, as well as visits literary, artistic and theatrical groups in the two countries have been other aspects of cultural and diplomatic activities. (Mkrychyan, 2019: 184)

Nowruz and the celebration of the beginning of the new year are covered by Armenian news agencies every year. Iranian tourism has grown significantly during the Nowruz days in recent years, and Iranian cultural centers are holding programs for Iranian and Armenian audiences at this particular time of year. Apart from these cultural activities carried out through Iranian cultural centers in this country, other measures, including the abolition of the visa requirement for Iranian and Armenian citizens to enter the two countries since 2016, have greatly facilitated trade and tourism relations between the two countries. And it is considered an action to strengthen soft power.

Summary and Conclusion

In the final summary and analysis of the various dimensions of Iran's smart power in Armenia, it can be said that in general, the economic, commercial and trade aspects, which according to the definition of this study are in the field of semi-hard power. They are the main and most important dimensions of Iran's smart power in this country. Other aspects of Iran's power in the political and soft aspects are not as developed as the economic aspect of Iran's power. It can also be said that the military-security aspects of Iran's power in this country have had the least develop and growth. Recently, with the alliance of Turkey and Azerbaijan, the security aspect of Iran's power in Armenia has become more important. An analysis of the causes and factors of this requires a separate study, but the reason for this backwardness of the military dimension of Iran's smart power in this country can be attributed to the sensitivities and considerations of the presence of other powers and actors, including Russia. Relations with Russia in various dimensions have always been of vital importance to Iran, and on the other hand Iran know the importance of the South Caucasus as part of the former Soviet Union. Therefore, the lack of development of this aspect of Iran's power against any country in the region can be attributed to the above considerations.

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