

Islamic Republic of Iran and the Strategic Paralysis of Iraq in the Imposed War

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Abstract

Wars are the scene of collision and confrontation of thoughts and decisions. Therefore, defeats and victories are formed in the minds and thoughts of leaders and commanders before the battlefield, since the outcome of thoughts and decisions is manifested in the form of strategies. Examining the history of Military wars reveals that three strategic logics of "destruction", "erosion" and "control" have ruled over these conflicts

Strategic paralysis is a thought which is designed to achieve control logic. The main goal in strategic paralysis will be the destruction of the organization of the operational forces, the absence of concentration of the command echelons and the forces and the destruction of the enemy's will and its ability to resist and fight. Therefore, the main focus of the discussion is on the command system.

Strategic paralysis means using the opponent's vulnerabilities and weaknesses to restrain and strike his strengths. The purpose of this article is to answer these main questions: what is strategic paralysis and can we find examples in this regard in the imposed war as well?

Key words: Paralysis, Strategic, Iraq, War

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Introduction

Are wars only an arena of violence and committing violence? Are the battlefields the only arena of hardware clashes? The fact is that these cases are only the apparent and outer shell of wars. The reality is that wars are the scene of collision and confrontation of thoughts and decisions. Therefore, defeats and victories are formed in the minds and thoughts of leaders and commanders before the battlefield, since the outcome of thoughts and decisions is manifested in the form of strategies.

The main and important function of strategies is to achieve victory with the least human and financial costs. Thus, the biggest concern of strategists is to design such strategies. In this regard, one of the options is strategic paralysis. Strategic paralysis, which means using the adversary's vulnerabilities and weaknesses to restrain and stike his strengths, is one of the guiding principles of commanders.

The purpose of this article is to answer these main questions: what is strategic paralysis? And can we find examples in this regard in the imposed war? In other words, did the commanders of our country pursue strategic paralysis in the holy defense as well?

Meaning, Definitions and Theories of Strategic Paralysis

Meaning

The word "paralysis" comes from the Greek word "παράλυσις", meaning "disabling the nerves". It is composed of *παρά* (para) meaning "from, by" and *λύσις* (lysis) meaning "to loosen/weaken/inactivate". Paralysis means "disruption in the normal functioning of the nervous system in directing some or all parts of the body" and figuratively means "losing of energy, losing power to perform regular actions". (<https://www.etymonline.com/word/paralyze>)

Strategic paralysis is not a new concept and its intellectual roots dates back to the past centuries. Sun Tzu, the great Chinese thinker, was the first to establish the theoretical foundation of war, on which later strategies were formed. He said: "It is better to keep a nation intact than to destroy it, it is better to keep an army intact than to destroy it, so those who make others' armies helpless without fighting are the best of all". (Tzu, 1988: 66-72) Although the general theory of strategic paralysis was proposed after the First World War (after 1918) and in fact the killing of the First World War led to disgust and search for a replacement for the strategy of

destruction and the result of these attempts were theories of paralyzing, "Operation Desert Storm" was the first official use of strategic paralysis by the United States and coalition governments. (Hallion, 1992)

Operation Desert Storm was the name of a war led by the United States of America and with the cooperation of a coalition of 35 different countries, which was carried out against Baathist Iraq in response to Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. Saddam attacked Kuwait on August 2, 1990 and occupied its territory within 13 hours and annexed it to Iraq and international crises raised afterwards. In response to this attack, the UN Security Council decided that if Saddam did not withdraw his forces from Kuwait as scheduled, it would authorize the use of force against Iraq. Saddam did not accept the deadline of the Security Council. US and its allies, with the support of the Security Council, launched a massive air attack against Iraq on January 16, 1991. Coalition forces responded to Saddam's aggression by using air force, which is one of the main tools of strategic paralysis. According to some, Desert Storm is, until then, the closest example to the strategic paralysis strategy that was carried out with the use of air force. (Barlow, 1992: 24)

This force carried out a massive aerial bombardment operation from January 17, 1991 to February 23, 1991. During this combat, the Persian Gulf War coalition group dropped 88,500 tons of bombs in more than 100,000 sorties and extensively destroyed Iraqi military and civilian infrastructure. The coalition air force, was superior to its Iraqi counterpart in terms of quantity and quality. This was especially true of special capabilities that the Iraqis completely lacked, including aerial refueling, airborne command and control, electronic warfare, precision munitions and stealth aircraft. Such capabilities are provided primarily (if not exclusively) by the United States. In space, sixteen military communications satellites (fourteen of which were owned by the United States) were supplemented by five commercial satellites to handle the vast majority of communications in the theater of operations. Iraqi civilian infrastructure were destroyed by coalition bombings. Eleven power plants out of Iraq's 20 main power plants and 119 electrical substations were completely destroyed, and six other main power plants were also damaged. At the end of the war, Iraq's electricity production was totally four percent of the country's pre-war electricity production. Those bombs destroyed the facilities of all major dams and most of the major pumping stations, and many sewage treatment plants, telecommunications equipment, port facilities, oil refineries and distribution facilities, railways and bridges

were also destroyed. This air operation destroyed all the Iraqi brigades that were stationed in the Azad desert. The attacks also prevented Iraq from effectively resupplying combat units and prevented 450,000 Iraqi troops from joining to further strengthen and concentrate Iraqi forces. These air operations also had a significant impact on the tactics employed in later conflicts. The entire Iraqi divisions were trapped in the open space and surrounded by the coalition forces. (Barlow, 1992: 4) This air operation, which resulted in the paralysis of the Iraqi military forces, became the basis for the decisive victory of the coalition forces.

Definitions

The study of the history of military wars after the First World War reveals that three strategic logics of "destruction", "erosion" and "control" have dominated these conflicts. The main issue in the logic of destruction is the destruction of the enemy, and in the logic of erosion, the main goal is to exhaust it. While the logic of control seeks to control the enemy's vital systems such as command and, in general, the set of assets at his disposal.

Strategic paralysis is a thought that is designed to achieve control logic. The premise of control logic in war is that an accumulation of ineffective forces is similar to destroyed forces. Therefore, it is better to neutralize the forces instead of destroying them. This neutralization is made possible by taking control of the enemy's forces.

According to what was said, the operational plans in order to achieve this goal, try to organize the environment in such a way that the enemy cannot take advantage of their assets. In other words, the purpose of the conducting war based on control logic is to neutralize the capabilities of the enemy's effective forces in order to define his power within the framework of his interests and will.

Some have defined strategic paralysis as follows:

"Strategic paralysis is a selective campaign against national or strategic goals that directly support the adversary's will and military efforts to continue his behavior". (Barlow, 1992: 4)

In the operational planning of the US-led coalition against Iraq during the occupation of Kuwait in 1990, some analysts, including John Warden, predicted that this operation would begin with heavy bombing and would quickly lead to the fall of Saddam. In this regard, he announced that this war will begin with a wide and intense air campaign and will last for about 24 to 48 hours and its goal is to paralyze Iraq strategically. He believed

that strategic paralysis will be achieved when it carries out various strikes and attacks in a tight time frame, and these actions lead to the loss of the enemy's concentration and make the opponent's decision-makers suffer an additional burden.

Based on what was said, demolishing and destroying the enemy's equipment and physical facilities is only a part of the effort that should be done in this model. To put it better, in order to control the enemy's forces and capabilities, one must curb the enemy's thinking power and decision making. Success in achieving this capability will free the country from destroying forces and equipment.

Theories

Although strategic paralysis is a new concept and related to the contemporary era, its roots can also be found in the strategies of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH). One of the prominent examples that can somehow be related to strategic paralysis is the process of conquering Mecca, which the Holy Prophet of Islam by using psychological warfare and creating terror in the hearts of the enemies while inactivating the enemy's military strength was able to impose defeat on them. The Prophet (PBUH) announced a general mobilization to conquer Makkah and open the strongest strongholds of idolatry and overthrow the tyrannical rule of the Quraysh (which was the biggest obstacle to the progress of monotheism) and accompanied ten thousand Islamic troops to the "Marral-Dhahran" region (a few kilometers from Makkah). In order to create terror in the hearts of the people of Makkah, he ordered that the soldiers of Islam set fire at high places and that everyone independently set fire so that a band of flames cover all the mountains and high places. The people of Makkah suddenly realized that they were under complete siege and the fire surrounded the city of Makkah like a circle. In this situation, some Quraysh leaders such as Abu Sufyan and Hakim bin Hizam came out of Mecca and started searching. By the order of the Prophet, Abbas bin Abdulmutallib took Abu Sufyan to a desert. From there, they saw a huge number of Muslims and with the weakening of their will, the thought of any resistance went out of their heads and as a result, the conquest of Mecca accomplished without a fight. (Majlesi, 1403, Vol. 5: 44)

In Napoleon's military thought and strategies, the discussion of strategic paralysis can be traced in another way. His understanding of strategic paralysis can be understood to some extent from the following propositions. According to him, the battlefield is a scene of constant chaos.

The winner is the one who controls that chaos. (Carr, 2009) He believed that in war, attacking the enemy's strategy is of great importance. According to him, the morale of the enemy can be destroyed by relying on deception and a decisive battle. Napoleon emphasized high mobility and taking the initiative. (Kirimi, Jalilian, 1401: 132)

Clausewitz, a German strategist, has provided two definitions and meanings of war: "absolute war" means the complete destruction of the enemy and "real war" means that the enemy must be put in a situation where he can no longer continue the war. In this way, real war indirectly supports the paralyzing of the enemy's armed forces. (Clausewitz, 1976)

J. F. C. Fuller, the English strategist, can probably be called the designer of the modern operational plan or war plan with the aim of paralyzing the enemy. He emphasized that "the physical strength of an army lies in its organization, which is controlled by its brain." Paralyze this brain and the body will no longer work." He also emphasized that the strongest and most economical way of war is disarmament through paralyzing rather than destruction through annihilation. (Fuller, 1925)

As mentioned, Fuller and Liddell Hart were the pioneers in the theory of modern strategic paralysis in the field of ground warfare. However, land force was not the only place where strategic paralysis theorists planned, since the air force also started presenting theory in the field of strategic paralysis. Douhet, Trenchard and Mitchell were among these thinkers. The intellectual belief in the ability of the air force to create strategic paralysis had two operational forms: war against the military-economic capacities of the enemy and war against the enemy's morale.

Douhet believed that by exploiting the unique ability of the air force to strike directly the enemy's heart and bypass its ground forces, it is possible to paralyze the enemy's fighting abilities and thus force the enemy to change its behavior. (Douhet, 1983)

Trenchard, a British theorist, proposed paralyzing through attacking vital centers such as war supporting infrastructure, production, transportation and communications by which the enemy's war effort was sustained. He emphasized the psychological impact of such attacks more than the destruction or physical effects. He argued that air strikes would terrorize military industry workers and prevent them from doing their jobs and could also make ammunition loading workers abandon military ships for fear of air strikes. He preferred to create a strategic paralysis by using

the psychological panic resulted from the economic disruption and collapse.

Liddell Hart, the famous British strategist, emphasized the importance of paralyzing the enemy through the air in order to win wars at the lowest possible cost. He believed that disarming the enemy is more convincing and economical than trying to destroy it with hard battles. He advocated crippling the system, not destroying it. Liddell Hart argued that "a man who is killed is but one less man, while a man without nerve is a vector of a very infectious fear that can spread an epidemic of terror. This fear can spread to higher levels of command, even to the mind of the enemy commander and destroy the entire combat power of his forces. (Liddell Hart, 1991: 212)

An American, John Warden, is another theoretician of strategic paralysis through air force. The theory of strategic paralysis is a way to win the war by using the air force and its nature is more political than economic. Targeting the enemy leadership to change a given policy is the main goal of this approach. Warden emphasized attacking the enemy's vulnerable points and the point where the attack will make the best difference; thus, strategic paralysis is achieved not by attacking every enemy target, but the most important elements. (Warden, John, 1993) He believes that strategic paralysis is achieved by changing the mind and thinking of the enemy's leaders. He compares the enemy's military force to a system whose components are "leadership", "organization", "infrastructure", "morale/will of the people" and "forces". To him, the main element of this system is leadership. Warden believes that if leadership (command) is unreachable, one should focus on changing the mind of leadership and command, since destroying or disrupting the leadership and command causes complete physical paralysis of the enemy's system. (Warden, John, 1993) Warden looks at this discussion from a structure-oriented perspective and seeks physical paralyzing.

Other thinkers such as Fuller have also commented on this issue. He believes that the enemy's forces are organized, therefore, they are controlled by the brain and intellect. Thus, if that brain can be controlled, the power of movement can be taken from them. (Fuller, 1925: 314) In general, he considers the attack on the controlling brain to be a factor of strategic paralysis.

Boyd is also one of the other theoreticians who believes that strategic paralysis is created by breaking the will and morale of the commander and

through creating surprise or dangerous strategic or operational situations. (Fodok, 1995: 14) Boyd looks at strategic paralysis from a process-oriented point of view and his goal is to paralyze the enemy spiritually and psychologically.

The new ideas of strategic paralysis, while sharing aspects of the early strategic paralysis pioneers, went beyond the initial psychological and biological understanding of the population. Network-based warfare is one of the matured theories of strategic paralysis and is mostly based on technology. Borrowing heavily from the corporate world, this warfare introduced the concept of "locking in" (not allowing out or in) as a completely new concept in strategic paralysis theories. Borrowing from companies that used asymmetric advantage to completely deny competitors access to the market, network-based warfare envisioned a volatile "marketplace" in which advantage changed rapidly. Decentralized networked fire/firepower and logistical and intelligence advantage rooted in speed and intelligence power allowed for a decisive advantage that could push "away" the adversary from the competition. (Cebrowski, Garstka, 1998: 28-35) This somewhat deviated from the traditional theories of strategic paralysis, since it was rooted in improving and increasing speed.

The shock and awe strategy was also an intellectual effort to achieve dominance and competitive advantage. (Ullman, et al, 2002: 19) Effect-oriented operations are also among the theories of strategic paralysis. Concepts of strategic paralysis based on impact-oriented operations reflect the concepts of biological systems proposed by Fuller. (Lawson, 2010: 772)

Strategic Paralysis Modes

From what was said, we understand that the main goal in strategic paralysis is to create conditions and a situation that the enemy cannot use his capabilities (hardware and software); the enemy's command can be disrupted and he cannot be able to make proper decisions.

The result of these two situations will be the loss of the organization of the operational forces, the lack of concentration of the command echelons and the forces and the loss of the enemy's will and its ability to resist and fight; Therefore, the main focus of the discussion is on the command system.

Of course, some other concepts related to strategic paralysis can be obtained by examining the existing strategic literature. For example, we can refer to concepts such as "strategic bombing" which is always the first stage of attacks (of course, in some cases it is also used during war) and is carried out in the direction of paralysis. The main purpose of these operations, which are mostly carried out through air and missile attacks, is to inflict the most severe and rapid damage simultaneously and possible on the sensitive and vital centers of the enemy in order to paralyze his forces and prevent the effective resistance of the enemy. To put it more simply, nowadays, in these attacks, they try to destroy the enemy's support, command, control and communication infrastructures. The extensive US attacks on such Iraqi facilities in the 2003 war confirm this point. (Cordesman, April 2003)

Another discussion is "to impose a strategic burden". Strategic burden means imposing damages and injuries more than the tolerance threshold of the opponent country. In some cases, countries plan their programs and operations in such a way as to paralyze the enemy by imposing a strategic burden. Among these cases, we can mention "attack on cities". In the framework of this strategy that Iraq used in the imposed war against Iran, the enemy thought that by taking the war to the civilian population, it would cause the people to put pressure on their government and since they underestimated the threshold of tolerance of the government, it is hoped that popular protests in the cities will paralyze the opponent's power.

According to the subject of this article, these cases are not discussed much and only the measures carried out in operations for strategic paralysis are mentioned.

Based on this, according to the author's belief, strategic paralysis can be implemented in three forms: "putting in a state of indecision", "eliminating decision-makers" and "disconnecting decision-makers", which will be briefly explained below.

Putting in a state of indecision

One of the forms of strategic paralysis is putting the enemy in a state of indecision. This state shows the "conditional" aspect of paralysis. Being in a state of indecisiveness means that actor "A" behaves in a way or creates conditions due to which actor "B" cannot make a decision, make a decision that is not against the interests of actor "A" or make a decision that it does not cause significant damage to the actor "A". To put it more clearly, one

of the main pillars of "indecisiveness" is to severely limit the selection options for the opponent commanders.

One of the other actions that can create indecisive conditions for the enemy is the compression of actions and works in various dimensions at a high speed. In other words, if the enemy can be exposed to attack and pressure from several axes, then the enemy will be unable to make any decision.

In this regard, Warden also believes that it is possible to cause unimaginable losses and injuries to the enemy commander with quick, decisive and widespread attacks on the enemy's centers of gravity. In such a situation, the commander will be confused and lost his ability to make decisions. (Warden, John, 1993)

Eliminating Decision Makers

Decision makers or commanders are one of the incomparable elements of every battle. The movement and organization, structure and program of every military action in the battlefield is the result of the knowledge, morale and will of the commanders. Therefore, commanders, commander and command, are one of the center of gravity of a battle or war. The importance of this center of gravity is such that if one side can disrupt the command process of the other party, destroy the commander or commanders or prevent the issuance of orders, it can hope for victory.

The strategic observation of the opponent's capabilities shows that these capabilities can be classified as follows:

- Physical power: includes hardware capacities and physical abilities to fight.
- Intellectual power: includes the power of thinking, analyzing and making decisions.
- Spiritual power: includes the will to fight and the motivation to resist and win.

Knowing these dimensions and paying attention to these capability levels is important because in strategic paralysis, we must know which points to attack. Attacking non-strategic points not only wastes time and money, but also causes failure in reaching the main goal. Therefore, attacking the intellectual power of the enemy can destroy the enemy's mental and physical power.

Accordingly, you should not only think about the complete destruction of all targets, but the attacks should be focused on power sources, especially the enemy's command system. Therefore, strategic paralysis causes fire to be concentrated on specific targets, which reduces the scope and time of conflict and its costs.

Disconnecting Decision Makers

Another mode of strategic paralysis is to disconnect decision makers. In other words, first, the issuance of orders should be prevented, and in the next step, what is important is to disrupt the command and control system. Success in this field will cause the hierarchical cycle of orders to be eliminated and forces to be put in a state of confusion.

The Paralysis of the Baathist Regime Army by Islamic Fighters during the Holy Defense Period

Paralysis at the Strategic Level

(1) The concepts of Imam Khomeini (May Allah's mercy be upon him)

The type of decisions made by Imam Khomeini (May Allah's mercy be upon him) during the holy defense period helped a lot to paralyze the Baathist regime army. He used to make decisions based on his strategic vision, since he knew the capabilities of "revolutionary Muslim Iranians" very well. In this regard, one of the most important actions of Imam Khomeini (May Allah's mercy be upon him) was to popularize defense. "People" as an irreplaceable "possibility" was always the foundation and fulcrum of the strategic views of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The sayings and statements of Imam Khomeini (May Allah's mercy be upon him) clearly illustrates the importance of the presence of people and the popularization of categories.

"As long as people are needed there (the fronts), all people, without exception, those who can, have power, it is necessary for them to provide the needs of the borders in terms of people and in terms of things that he needs there. Of course, it is not an objective obligation, it is a sufficient obligation. (Imam Khomeini (May Allah's mercy be upon him), 1999, Vol. 16: 416-415)

Another action of Imam Khomeini (May Allah's mercy be upon him) was "to make the war ideological". This solution had two specific results: first, it caused the dispatch of popular forces to the fronts. In fact, the officials of the government were able to interpret the responsibility of protecting the country and its borders as a collective duty by considering it obligatory to defend the Islamic land. By presenting a new approach on ontology and anthropology as well as the concept of war, jihad and defense in Islam, Imam explained the nature of Iraq's aggression against Islamic Iran in the framework of "Islam and atheism" and "right and wrong"; "Now the Islamic Republic is completely opposed to atheism". (Imam Khomeini (May Allah's mercy be upon him), 1999, Vol. 13: 109) Another result was strengthening the morale of the fighters and creating an epic spirit as the most important factor of superiority over the Iraqi soldiers, which relied on (armored) equipment. In fact, his type of vision challenged the understanding of the Iraqi command and paralyzed it. In the view of Imam Khomeini (May Allah's mercy be upon him), "victory" was not a slogan but a belief; therefore, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran with high self-confidence and Trust in God's help, used to say: "A thief came and threw a stone" or "Let's slap Saddam so that he won't get up." (Imam Khomeini (May Allah's mercy be upon him), 1999, Vol. 13: 223)

This behavior and discourse formed the intellectual foundations of neutralizing Iraqi military capabilities in the eyes of the Iranian nation. In addition, popular resistances were also very decisive. Vice-admiral Ali Shamkhani explains the formation of the initial nuclei of resistance in Khuzestan as follows:

"The initial forces of the IRGC were trained and experienced in Kurdistan and in urban operations... We constantly sought to increase our strength; we had patrols in Khorramshahr and at the Saediye border post and we had provided operational forces, and when the war started, we collected them all, we gave a speech to them and we organized a group of them that was called "Bilali" group... I myself participated in some of the surprise attacks. Our first successful surprise attack was under Hamidiyeh bridge. After that, we had been skilled in surprise attacks. (Interview with vice-admiral Shamkhani, 2013: 25-26)

Imam's crisis management ability, along with popular resistance, especially in war zones, caused Iraq's failure to advance the blitzkrieg strategy. As a result of this failure, Iraq proposed a cease-fire, but Iran could not decide and act to end the war while it was invaded and lost part

of its lands. Iraq was also looking for a privilege. Therefore, gradually the "war of attrition strategy" dominated the space of the fronts. The Iraqis assume that Iran cannot tolerate a war of attrition, while Iraq and its army want a long-term war. In this situation, Imam with his insight, both in response to this strategy of the Iraqis and in response to the internal elements who were hopeless and considered positive movement on the fronts to be out of mind, said: "If this war lasts for twenty years, we are standing." (Imam Khomeini (May Allah's mercy be upon him), 1999, Vol. 13: 315)

After these events and communicating this general concept of Imam, the fighters of our country, with self-confidence and experience gained, besides mobilizing facilities and people and in addition to paralyzing the enemy, started the operations of liberating the occupied areas.

(2) Application of the method of revolutionary war as an intellectual superiority

One of the most important factors that prevented the Iraqis from using their "technological and equipment" superiority is Iran's innovative war style, is Iran's innovative method of fighting. From the second year of the imposed war, along with developments in the political field such as the dismissal of Bani Sadr, the entry of the Revolutionary Guards into the war, the mobilization of popular forces and the change in strategic thinking about war, a new style of war matured, which had unique characteristics. The origin of this idea was the Islamic Revolution. Accordingly, through taking the Islamic revolution as a model, "thought and faith" as the source of this thinking was determinant to the outcome of the war. Due to the influence of the Islamic revolution, classical thinking was not able to continue its life. From the beginning of 1981, the formation of new defense thinking emerged and this was the greatest turning point in the history of this war.

In this period, after creating a fundamental change in the view of war and evolution in strategies, a new way of war was proposed, which had the following characteristics: objective learning; affirmative command; freedom of action for commanders; flexibility of the structure of the combat organization; battle at night; creativity and innovation; redundancy; speed of action; focusing on manpower mobilization; ethnic-oriented fighting; fighting in obstacles; surprise; choosing an operational area in accordance with the combat power (Asgari, 1999); replacing

operation-oriented to technique and tactic-oriented. (Rezaee, 1998: 54) In fact, by choosing this way of war, Iran challenged the mental assumptions of the Iraqi commanders and put them in a state of paralysis. According to the Baathists, the Islamic Republic of Iran will fight against their invasion in traditional way, in which superiority was given to the possessor of equipment and technology.

(3) Spiritual superiority

The spiritual element is one of the emphasized components in Islamic thoughts. In verse 65 of Surah Anfal, Allah the Exalted emphasizes to Muslims: If there are twenty steadfast among you, they will overcome two hundred. And if there are one hundred of you, they will overcome one thousand of the disbelievers. Morale is a state, tendency or psychological reaction that is characterized by features such as high mood, positive emotion, self-confidence, group population and a great desire to accomplish the group (organization) missions. This factor motivates a person to be actively and enthusiastically involved in the actions of the organization (group), not to be afraid of dangers and to confront with enemies. (Elyasi and Naeeni, 2009: 43-44)

According to all experts, the most important component of national power and combat power in holy defense is the epic spirit and characteristics derived from the beliefs and convictions of the Iranian people and Islamic fighters. For example, Kramer in a retrospective study has shown that "the most important factor that caused Iran, just after the revolution, to mount an irreplaceable resistance against Iraq, which has the armed support of its neighbors and major world powers and to deprive the government of Iraq in realizing its intentions, was the warrior spirit, revolutionary faith and the collective cohesion of the nation. (Kramer & et al, 2001)

This epic spirit which was a result of "religious beliefs", "leadership of Imam Khomeini", "Ashura culture", "attitude towards the enemy as wrong and unbeliever" and "management of war propaganda" (Naeeni, 2009: 6-24), means voluntary and active preparation of the people of Iran and fighters of Islam to defend the country and the system of the Islamic Republic, which is characterized by indicators such as readiness, courage, self-sacrifice, hatred of the enemy, love for the system and leadership of Imam Khomeini, self-confidence and self-esteem, resistance, trust in divine help, and etc. can be examined. (Naeeni, 2009: 6)

This epic spirit was one of the enabling factors of the Islamic Republic against the invasion of the Baathist enemy. A factor that Iraq was unaware of or was unable to evaluate and calculate. Many thinkers and military strategists of the world believe that in a war, the side that has high morale will be victorious. The Iraqi forces were in a lower condition compared to the forces of our country in terms of morale. The aggressive nature of their invasion, their presence in the land of the invaded country (Iran) and lack of familiarity and sufficient mastery of the geography of the occupied regions and etc. are among the reasons for the moral weakness of the Iraqi forces.

Paralysis at the operational level

It was mentioned earlier that the main goal of strategic paralysis is to prevent the enemy from using their capabilities. This principle has been carefully considered by commanders of wars and operations. In the following, an example of these actions during "Walfajr-8" operations is mentioned.

"... During the war, the absolute value of Iraq's combat power was greater than the absolute value of Iran's combat power... Absolute value means the sum of air, ground and armor powers. For this reason, wherever Iran carried out operations, the Ba'athist regime carried out counterattack after the operation in the morning of the operation. He used to counterattack based on the mobile attack strategy. In choosing the operational area of Walfajr-8, in addition to examining the probability of victory, attention should also be paid to the enemy's counterattacks. So Faw Island was chosen, since it was a swampy area. That is to say, if the enemy wanted to counterattack, which was based on its armor strength, it could not attack easily... We had to do another thing about the counterattacks... That was the proper arrangement of our artillery... The arrangement of the IRGC artillery was appropriate in a way that before the operation, they would shoot record the communication nodes on the communication roads, and during the operation, as soon as the enemy's counterattack started, they would hit these nodes, that is, before the enemy reaches the lines, the enemy's formation will be disrupted..." (Alaee, 2005: 136 and 140)

With this smart choice and proper planning of friendly power, the enemy's strong point (armor power) became neutral and ineffective.

"... Considering the fact that the Iraqi Baathist army had absolute air power, we should have done something so that this power would not be used immediately. Because if this power was used, it would hit our rear areas, it would hit all the bridges built on Arvand, so we had to take action that would neutralize the enemy's air power, i.e., we should do aerial camouflage and this was a difficult task. Innovation in engineering, engaging the enemy's forces, is a difficult task... Therefore, we hid whatever missile air defense sites we had among the palm trees and deployed Hawk missile sites in several places. As a result, when the enemy aircraft entered this area, they were targeted before they could identify the Hawk site. Of course, with the tactics that the air defense forces had learned, they turned off the radars. Because they had anti-radar missiles and when the radar was turned on, they would hit the radar first and blind the defense. Thus, with the intelligence observers they had in other places, they would detect the aircraft when it entered the operational area, without turning on the radar and when the aircraft arrived, there was no more time, and they would turn on the radar and shoot the aircraft. That's why the only operation in which we shot down the most aircraft from the enemy was "Walfajr-8" and the enemy lost 45 of them." (Alaee, 2005: 139)

In addition, it should be pointed out that in the military-operational planning of war commanders, some principles were always taken into consideration in order not to face the enemy's strengths. "To avoid fighting in one front" is one of these cases. Not using the communication axis of the Ahvaz-Khorramshahr road in Beit-ol-Maqqadas operation as the main direction of the internal forces against the Baathist enemy, as well as not using the Shalamcheh axis at the beginning of the "Karbala-5" operation, are among the proofs of this matter. To put it better, with the use of these methods, the strengths and power of the Baathist army became ineffective.

(1) Putting Iraqi military commanders in a state of indecision

The command and management of the battle relies on the accuracy and speed of communicating information to the higher headquarters. If correct, accurate and timely information is communicated, the headquarters and the command will be able to take the necessary orders and measures to deal with new situation. The nonfulfillment of such conditions makes the war commanders and decision-makers unable to make a decision. Examining the performance of our country's military forces reveals that the speed of action and the use of the principle of surprise put the enemy in a state of confusion, and in such conditions, it is not possible to achieve

an accurate estimate of the performance of the attacking forces, thus, the commanders cannot make a decision. This matter has been explicitly mentioned by Iraqi army during the Fatah-ol-Mobin operation.

During the Fatah-ol-Mobin operation, the Iraqis did not report the situation of the units to their higher headquarters with a desired accuracy. In these reports, the situation of the units was exaggeratory and vague, and since the positions of all the units were targeted, the units announced that the number of (Iranian) forces are very large and the breach will be done in a short period of time; an issue that caused the higher headquarters to be in a situation where it could not make a decisive decision. (Analysis of the Iraqi Army..., 2003: 154)

(2) Eliminating Iraqi commanders or decision makers

In the imposed war, attacking the command of the enemy units was one of the main goals of the fighters of Islam. The chaos and wandering of the Baathist forces after their command was hit reveals the success of this military program. In this regard, it is possible to mention the operation of Fatah-ol-Mobin, which made their power and organization to be lost due to the attack on the command of the Iraqi forces. The commander of the 96th brigade of the Iraqi army during the captivity in this operation described the situation and conditions of the Iraqi forces as follows:

"The arrangement of the Iraqi forces was confused and they did not have a single command, since the units were separated from their respective units and assigned to the units. And wherever there was a sense of danger, they scattered the units, which was a kind of weakness for the Iraqi army. (Analysis of Fatah-ol-Mobin and Beit-ol-Maqqadas, 2004: 150)

(3) Disconnecting Iraqi commanders or decision makers

It was mentioned earlier that destroying the communications and communication networks of commanders and disrupting the process of communicating orders is one of the strategic paralysis forms. This significance can be clearly seen during our country's operations against the aggressor Baathist regime. For example, according to the Iraqi army's admission, this issue is one of the reasons for their failure and defeat in the Fatah-ol-Mobin operation. The Iraqi army has listed one of the reasons for Iran's victory in the Fatah-ol-Mobin operation, the success of the Islamic fighters in destroying the communication systems of the Baathists.

"... with an increase in the intensity of the (Iranian) campaign and the lengthening of the operation time, these communications were gradually lost due to the cutting of most of the telephone wires due to the artillery fire. Even those hidden underground were destroyed and as a result, the ability to respond to the request of units and transmission of information became completely impossible. On the other hand, the wireless communication was also not working due to many reasons, including the (Iranian) jammings. Therefore, they did not have the ability to communicate information and orders appropriately and in harmony with the rapid changes of the battle. (Analysis of the Iraqi Army..., 2003: 152)

According to the Iraqis, during the Fatah-ol-Mobin operations:

"...it was observed that several battalions were captured or retreated from their positions after losing contact with the relevant headquarters or killing of its commander." (Analysis of the Iraqi Army..., 2003: 152)

In the "WalFajr-8" operation, the loss of communication between the command and the fighting Iraqi units has been cited as one of the reasons for the defeat of the Baathist forces.

Conclusion

In the introduction of the article, it was mentioned that the purpose of this article was to present a framework about strategic paralysis and also to investigate the implementation of this strategy by Iran in the imposed war with Iraq. In line with this goal, strategic paralysis was first defined and its theoretical origins were pointed out. In the following, the modes of strategic paralysis were discussed and in the final part, the implementation of this model and strategy during the holy defense period was explained.

The findings of this article indicate that the commander is the thinking and controlling brain of the units before and during operations. Due to such a unique position, the author considered controlling or destroying it to a large extent synonymous with strategic paralysis. Therefore, it can be claimed that the abundance of force and firepower are no longer the only factors that determine and guarantee victory. There is no longer a need to destroy the enemy in a long-term and face-to-face battle physically and widely, but it is possible to neutralize the enemy's physical power by attacking the center of emergence of strategic thinking (command).

Based on the contents of this research, it can be said that the history of military thought about strategic paralysis in many societies and eras has

gone through various transformations, but the enemy's incapacitation through the neutralization of power and, as a result, his will to fight, has remained constant.

Among other results of this article is that the strategies should seek to discover and use the Achilles heel of the enemy to defeat him. In other words, strategies should seek to hit the enemy through his weaknesses and vulnerabilities in order to neutralize his capabilities and strengths. In fact, the art of a good strategist at the strategic level is to paralyze the enemy.

One of the other characteristics of strategic paralysis is that, in addition to homogeneous wars, it also has the appropriate ability and efficiency in heterogeneous wars. In other words, when faced with symmetric and asymmetric enemies, this pattern can be used to hit them.

The study of recent wars clearly illustrates that communication and command networks were among the most important and first targets that were attacked. These attacks, which are carried out with the aim of paralyzing the enemy's strategy, bring the lesson that in a conflict and operation, the command, the commander and the communication system of command transmission are very important. Therefore, one should think about ensuring the security of the components of this process. In other words, preparing a safe command system in critical and operational conditions should be on the agenda of the decision-making centers.

Finally, without a doubt, one of the reasons of the victory and success of Islamic fighters in some operations was the use of the strategic paralysis model.

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