





# The Impact of Western Sanctions on the “Look to the East” Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2000–2023)

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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The statement "Western sanctions against Iran stemmed on the one hand from Iran's independence-oriented stance..." needs citation support. Include references to foundational documents or scholarly assessments justifying this assertion.

You mention that "soft balancing" led to a shift from unipolarity to multipolarity. Please support this transformation with recent empirical or theoretical studies to solidify the argument.

The literature review is narrow. Only a few authors are cited. Expand to include recent studies post-2020 that analyze Iran's Eastern pivot in the context of current global shifts (e.g., China's BRI or the U.S.–China rivalry).

While the CISADA is described, the geopolitical consequences of the law are not analyzed. Include commentary or analysis on how this specific act materially altered Iran's strategic calculus.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

### 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The article claims: "The necessity of writing this article lies in exploring strategies for economic development..." Consider reframing this more academically by stating the knowledge gap your study addresses.

The sentence "Thus, neorealism is also suitable from this perspective" is too conclusory. Please explain how neorealism specifically helps interpret Iran's shift toward Eastern alliances rather than, for example, liberalism or constructivism.

The reference to Kenneth Waltz's "third image" would benefit from a citation to Waltz's original work (e.g., *Theory of International Politics*, 1979) to reinforce theoretical grounding.

The article claims an "innovation" by integrating multiple variables. Please clarify how this approach differs methodologically from prior works—does it use a new framework, synthesis method, or a unique historical range?

The statement "Strategically, sanctions pursue the same goals as military operations..." is conceptually strong but potentially controversial. Cite academic or policy literature that equates sanctions with coercive diplomacy to support this.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

## 2. Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.