d. Iran’s capacities, capabilities and manners: When taking into consideration Iran’s capacities and capabilities, conventional, asymmetric and nuclear capacities and capabilities must be evaluated collectively and/or as a complementary element of each other. It should be remarked that Iran has taken lessons from the war against Iraq and places a special importance to improving asymmetric war elements. Here are some of the weapons and systems that are in the inventory of both Iranian Armed Forces and that might be used for the closure of the Strait of Hormuz:

1) Mines: It is estimated that there are about 5000 different types of mines in the inventory of Iranian Armed Forces. As the mines have an importance for interrupting the sea traffic, disposal of them once they are laid on the sea bottom and demining takes time.

2) Small boats: AGIR has developed a method in which dozens and hundreds of different types of small boats equipped with different weapons to attack en masse after the Iraq war. In order to make such an attack Iran took into its inventory 10 Houdong class missile patrol boats (installed C-802 missile launcher), nine (9) C-14 patrol boats, weapon deployed MK-14 boats, 40 Iranian production PEYKAAP patrol boats, 30-40 Swedish production Boghammer boats and the Fabiobuzzi boats designed by Italy and produced by Iran (number is unknown).

3) Submarines: In the Iranian Armed Forces there are three (3) kilo-class submarines and 12 midgets (with torpedo launch capability). It is estimated that Iran
will deploy these weapon systems in the east of the Strait of Hormuz.

4) Kıyıda konuşlu füze sistemleri: Missile systems deployed at the shore: Iranian Armed Forces took into its inventory CSS, C-2 (seersucker), Chinese production C-801, C-802 missile systems and these systems are estimated to be deployed mostly in the region of the Strait of Hormuz as well as in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. (Hezbollah used the C-802 missiles against Israel in 2006 and caused a serious damage on the ships.) The available depth for the navigation of tankers in the Persian Gulf is close to the Iran shores and this provides convenient opportunities for the missile batteries that are deployed on the beaches and islands.

5) Unmanned Aerial Vehicles: Iran claims to have produced unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). UAVs are generally used by the AGIR personnel. It is stated that UAVs developed by Iran have a range of about 100 km. Iranian authorities think that the USA and Israel threaten Iran and other countries. Moreover, it is remarkable that Iran has an aggressive attitude with the asymmetric elements. Brigadier General Hussein Salami from AGIR says: “Iran’s military strategy is defensive by nature, but the tactic of AGIR is aggressive”. Rather than blocking the Strait of Hormuz, Iran might tense the international environment by bothering and threatening the supportive countries especially the USA or creating unrest in the Persian Gulf by way of using its existing capacities such as weapons, materials etc. Similarly, as in the attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz, the potential tension in the Gulf will make western states and the USA think more carefully before increasing the economic, diplomatic and military pressure against Iran.

e. Iran can commit one or several of the following violations.
   • Iran can declare that it has closed some parts of the Strait of Hormuz or the Persian Gulf to the sea traffic and prohibits the transit ship traffic without considering the results.
   • Iran can declare that it has closed all of the Strait of Hormuz or the Persian Gulf to the vessel traffic and thus, interrupts the maritime traffic.
   • Iran can bother, open fire on or block the ships by using boats and aircrafts.
   • Iran can attack the ships navigating in the Gulf or the Strait using missile batteries, bombardier batteries or midgets deployed on the shores.
   • Iran can lay mines on some parts of the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf.
   • Iran can declare that it rules the foreign military ships to remain outside of a certain region/sea limit and prohibits entering in these regions and in case of a violation of this, it will open fire.
   • Iran can use its available naval vessels against the foreign vessels in the waters outside of the Strait.
   • Iran can sabotage the ships in the Gulf and the Strait using its asymmetric and irregular war forces.
   • Iran can lay mines on some parts of the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf.
   • Iran can declare that it rules the foreign military ships to remain outside of a certain region/sea limit and prohibits entering in these regions and in case of a violation of this, it will open fire.
   • Iran can use its available naval vessels against the foreign vessels in the waters outside of the Strait.
   • Iran can sabotage the ships in the Gulf and the Strait using its asymmetric and irregular war forces.
   • Iran can lay mines on some parts of the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf.
   • Iran can declare that it rules the foreign military ships to remain outside of a certain region/sea limit and prohibits entering in these regions and in case of a violation of this, it will open fire.
   • Iran can use its available naval vessels against the foreign vessels in the waters outside of the Strait.
   • Iran can sabotage the ships in the Gulf and the Strait using its asymmetric and irregular war forces.

f. Iran can commit the above mentioned violations in three stages.

1) Low intensity conflict (Tanker war): Iran can disturb the ships that are in the Strait of Hormuz or passing in transit using civil flagged ships without causing any damage to its own oil trade. Iran can use its supportive terrorist organizations for these disturbances. While Iran acts in one of the abovementioned way, it refrains from confrontation with the western and the USA military forces.

2) The attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz: Iran must carry out the activity for the closure of the Strait of Hormuz in a coordinated manner and in strict privacy. Taking into consideration that the 5th fleet of the US Navy in Bahrain does consistently conduct reconnaissance and surveillance activities in the Strait of Hormuz, the following possibilities must be kept in mind: Iran's attempt may be revealed at the beginning and the USA's attempt to prevent may turn
into a close conflict in the event that the USA is fired back and it may attack on Iran's other strategic and economic objectives.

3) Iran's complete closure of the Strait of Hormuz: This attempt of Iran is thought to be a disaster scenario. In this scenario it should be remembered that the USA will do a comprehensive retaliatory operation by taking other western states as ally. It is thought that Iran will use inevitably the sea mines in all kinds of military operation in the Strait of Hormuz. The first reason is that the Iranian Armed Forces have plenty of sea mines in its inventory and the second reason is economical. It is preferred that a target with a high cost is shot with a low-cost weapon and a mine with an estimated value of 1000-2000 $ can overpower a ship with a value of hundreds of millions of dollars. The example of Iran's possible sea mine operation in the Strait of Hormuz is given in Figure-4.3 It is thought that Iran can lay mines on the east and west sides beginning from the north cape of the Musandam Peninsula leaving most of the missile batteries on the east side and thus, prevent the reinforcements coming from outside.

6. COUNTRIES THAT CAN INTERVENE AGAINST IRAN:
Among the countries that can intervene against Iran's attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz, the USA comes first. The USA will immediately intervene with the 5th Fleet and the military forces deployed in countries in the region and will step in afterwards with the forces that will be brought from the main continent. The United Kingdom, France, Canada, Gulf Countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait) and the countries that are close to the USA in the defence policy will participate to the coalition to be established by the USA against Iran. Some countries will send forces even if it is symbolical and will be on the USA's side politically.

7. EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION
Iran's attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz will be of vital importance in terms of its economic rather than political effects. Especially the permanent members of the UN Security Council and neighbouring countries as well as the countries purchasing oil and natural gas from the region of the Persian Gulf will not support this attempt and take part in the group against Iran. This is one of the important issues that Iran must take into account. It is thought that Iran having been supported during the nuclear weapon negotiations by the Russian Federation and China will not have the same support this time (China will only support politically and won't provide military support). In that case the most appropriate action for the western states will be uniting against the aggressor. “Since the Iran's attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz won't comply with the international norms, it can be considered as the “piracy” by many countries. Iran has achieved to stay away from serious conflicts by quelling demonstrations and identifying people that might be against the regime after an investigation of the elected/to be elected parliamentarians, the heads of state and other state officials since 1979. The control of the religious representatives over the economy and the security forces have prevented the regime confronting a threat of a coup or internal rebellion up to the present. Revolutionary Guards that are formed in parallel to the regular army by the mullahs and that have the mission of protecting the religious regime create the necessary pressure on the community. While many people in Iran are not content with the regime, a few Iranians are willing to move out of the election process. It should also be noted that “Iran's regime is not an unchangeable system”. The unemployment and the reduction in the revenues increase the rate of people that are not content with the regime. When people take to the streets, a civil war will be inevitable if AGIR and Basij forces take measures against the people on the streets. In the Strait of Hormuz, one of the most important transition point in the world, it will be inevitable that the ship traffic in the region will slow down or stop, the oil prices will rise to such an extent that cannot be controlled, the insurance premiums and prices of sea transportation will increase in the event of any intervention in the naval traffic by Iran. It is estimated that the energy need in the world will increase gradually in the coming years and the consumption will be 97 million barrels per day in 2020 and 115 million barrels in 2040. Liquid fuels will be used at most in the transport sector at the rate of 63%. Once the oil prices increase, the prices in the transport sector will increase with an annual average of 1,1% and this rate will hit 38% in 2040. In the meantime, the natural
gas demand will increase at the rate of 64% and the consumption which was 113 trillion cubic feet in 2010 will be 185 trillion cubic feet. The demand for oil and natural gas will lead to a further increase in the interest in the countries of the Middle East. In the event of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran, if the USA and other western countries attempt to open the strait it should be remembered that Iran will use specially trained troops with the ballistic missiles and can attack the economic and military targets of the coastal countries, carry out acts of terrorism in the countries that intervene, organize attacks such as suicide attacks as well as attack with the unmanned aerial vehicles using bombs or missiles in the Gulf countries. If Iran is defeated in the Strait of Hormuz, it can organize attacks in the countries that are sided against Iran especially with the USA by way of using its asymmetric forces (Jerusalem Force) and the supportive illegal organizations such as Hezbollah. Iran can also organize attacks in the delegations of these countries in other countries. It is considered that Iranian Armed Forces will be ineffective against a trained and sophisticated attack and its present forces are powerful enough to deter weak neighbours, and for the internal security, it will be difficult for Iran to conduct an operation outside the borders with regard to air power and logistical support and it can perform attacks on a limited scale with the ballistic missiles and naval forces. There may be a general estimation that Iran can hinder maritime traffic in the Strait of Hormuz by using its present means (mines, submarines, speed boats, missile batteries deployed on the shores, air forces and other systems). It also can be considered that the USA alone or in coalition with other western countries will re-establish the traffic in the strait by way of an operation that will take days, weeks or months. It should be remembered that the US troops follow every move of Iran in the Strait of Hormuz and in the Persian Gulf and at the beginning of an attempt of closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the USA can prevent the troops while they are just in the ports. Iranian authorities must take into consideration that in the event of an insistence for closing the Strait of Hormuz for a few days to two (2) weeks, Iran can lose all of its means and the USA and western countries can target other military, economic and strategic facilities by way of retaliation and operation of destruction. The US administration has clearly declared that they see the Islamic Republic of Iran as the biggest threat in terms of their regional interests. According to the USA’s statements, Iran supports the terrorism, puts pressure on its people with the authoritarian administration, tries to possess weapons of mass destruction and poses a threat to Israel by disturbing the regional stability. Iran thinks that the USA and Israel jeopardize the national security of Iran and try to isolate Iran from the outside world. Israel is at war with Hezbollah in Lebanon and with Hamas in Palestine. If it is taken into consideration that both groups are supported by Iran and considering the policy adopted by Iran after the mullahs against Israel came to power, Iran’s possibility to use the weapons of mass destruction against Israel decreases and Israel begins to worry over justified reasons. Iran wants to ensure the survival of the regime through nuclear activities. This topic is clearly expressed in the dialogues with the EU. It should be taken for granted that if Iran fails to guarantee the survival of the regime especially against the USA and Israel, it will continue the nuclear activities in this way, because the regime’s survival problem and doubts urge Iran to possess nuclear powers. The solution of the Iranian regime’s survival problem is possible with the establishment of good relations between the USA and Iranian administration of mullahs. Iran believes that the presence of the US troops in the Persian Gulf primarily poses a threat. Unless the relations between Iran and the USA return to normal, it would be wrong to expect a change in Iran’s policy of nuclear activities. When compared, Iranian Armed Forces can resist to any armed forces of the countries, except the USA. In a simulated war game prepared by the US Army, Iranian and the US Armies were confronted and although the USA lost 16 ships including the destroyer and the aircraft carrier, the game finished in 5 to 10 minutes. Therefore, it is considered to be more pragmatic that instead of looking for an adventure with an army that is ineffective against the USA, Iranian authorities should find a solution to social problems in their country. Iran’s attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz will be a clear cause of war for the coastal countries and the countries, economy and industry of which depend on the oil coming from the Gulf countries. Iran is in a situation that it faces the opposition of
almost all of the countries. The attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz must be a vital issue for Iran. Therefore, the Iranian authorities shouldn’t have the aim of a show of strength against the USA and western countries or testing these countries. Declaring a war must be based on such vital grounds for Iran that the people of Iran can stand up for that war. Taking into consideration that the war is not carried out only by armies and all power of the states is used for it, it will be for the benefit of Iran if it makes assessments with good sense instead of doing heroism and takes decisions by recognizing its enemies without getting passionate and takes lessons from history in the event that Iran and western countries confront with each other. The revolution in 1979, the eight year war against Iraq and placing importance on the asymmetric forces afterwards have caused that the Iranian authorities haven’t given the necessary priority to the naval forces affiliated to the regular army and thus, the naval forces have lost its current capacity. The ships that were procured before 1979 and the weapon systems installed in these ships will be ineffective against advanced weapon systems. It is claimed that Iran can throw a missile to the ships perceived as enemy in the 1600 km-long coast of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea and can overcome and even damage the USA’s close defence measures by using the weapon systems of AGIR, the hit and run tactics and the speed boats. The USA’s ship named COLE was severely damaged as a result of the attack in Yemen in 2000. A large part of the oil facilities of Iran is situated in the Kharg Island; the ships are loaded in that island and then delivered to other countries through the Strait of Hormuz. In the event of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, Iran’s oil transport will be disrupted and if the closure continues, Iran’s foreign currency reserves will decline and the country will slide into an economic chaos. Even damage on the facilities that are situated in the Kharg Island will cause serious damages in Iran’s oil transport and the economy of the country. Iran does not have a pipeline that bypasses the Strait of Hormuz. The biggest economic impact of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz will be on Iran since Iraq through Turkey, Saudi Arabia and UAE have alternative ports to the Persian Gulf and Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait can benefit from these ports. Blocking the Strait of Hormuz will be a cause of war; therefore, Iranian authorities will be required to take measures against this attempt. This attempt further strengthens rather than weakens the Iranian administration. As in the Iraq war, the living conditions may be very difficult, but unification of Iranians under the flag is possible. Iran has developed its Defence doctrine on the external threat as well as on the possibility of internal conflict supported by outside powers. Since the mission of AGIR is to ensure the continuation of the revolution, Iran always focuses on scenarios with two fronts. Therefore, it is considered that as a result of the general character of the Iranian people, the need for “always being on the strong side” and the possibility that a weakening economy gets worse can cause a decrease in the people’s confidence to the administration and lead to internal conflicts. Blocking the Strait of Hormuz and the concerns for a crisis will increase the oil prices in a short time. In the event that the oil transport takes long time, the world economy may go into a period of recession. In order to maintain the oil flow and avoid the threats of Iran, the existing capacities of the pipelines can be improved in the Strait of Hormuz or new pipelines can be built. In the State Administration, insisting on prioritizing the personal ambition and greed, exaggerating its own power and looking down on (ignoring) the enemy and/or the opposing forces even if they are strong and going into a war by dragging the people with otherworldly aspirations mean “deliberately destroying the nation”. Iranian authorities shouldn’t have an option for closing the Strait of Hormuz. It should be considered that if it is closed the USA will go into a massive war against Iran and gain support from many countries in the world in the political arena. If Iran and the USA go into war, the USA’s intervention will not be limited to the Strait of Hormuz; it will surely attack the economic and military targets in other regions of Iran. Against such an attack, it would take years to recover for Iran. Considering the above mentioned issues, even though Iran claims that it will close the Strait of Hormuz, it should take into account that its economy will be damaged in case of a closure. As a result, Iran cannot close the Strait of Hormuz. If the Iranian authorities don’t take lessons from the history, the attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz will be the beginning of the end for Iranian people and the administration.
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