

UNITED STATES POSITION TOWARDS IRAN AFTER THE NUCLEAR DEAL (2015-2019)

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: This study examines the history of US-Iranian relations after the nuclear deal 2015 and it seeks to achieve some objectives.

Methodology: The study uses a combination of the historical approach and the international order approach of the one hand, and the decision-making approach and the national interest approach on the other.

Main Findings: The USA tried to dissuade Iran from pursuing its nuclear program. This was not for interests or economic motives of the USA; rather it was for satisfying Israel and maintaining its security, stability, and existence. It should be noted that the nuclear deal between Iran and the P5 + 1 was ratified by the UN Security Council, where the USA under Trump proved that it does not preserve or respect deals or conventions.

Applications of this study: This research can be used for academic purposes for universities, lecturers of political science, researchers and undergraduate and postgraduate students. Also, it can be used for policy purposes for the decision-makers and politicians.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The phenomenon that existed in nuclear deal 2015 and referring from various previous research results, the study regarding the US-Iranian relationship after the nuclear deal 2015 was conducted and presented comprehensively and completely. It is necessary to take into account this topic that can explore the US-Iranian relationship and determine the extent to which topic can contribute to political science researches.

Keywords: Nuclear Deal, US Position, Iran Position, US-Iranian Relation, Security and Stability.

INTRODUCTION

Relations between the USA and Iran were good after World War II 1945 and until the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979, after the Khomeini revolution. Thus, Iran's foreign policy was based on opposition to the USA, as an authority that exercised previous mandate over the country in terms of domination and control of the country's capabilities. We believe therefore that supporters of the modern school of thought in Iran believe that the US administration is not willing to make concessions towards Iran until the Islamic regime there is changed. After the 1991 Gulf War, Iran began to reinforce its relationship with Russia, which supplied it with nuclear energy experts. The allegations of a secret Iranian nuclear program were then widespread. Indeed, a contract was signed between Iran and Russia in 1995 to operate the Bushehr plant in Iran. In May 2003 after the US invasion of Iraq, Iranian reformist President, Mohammad Khatami, made an offer to the USA to make a secret deal with it. The deal was to transparently offer Iran's nuclear program, and to stop supporting Palestinian organization Hamas and Hezbollah in exchange for security guarantees and normalization of relations with the USA. However, President George W. Bush refused the deal categorically. When George W. Bush rejected the Iranian offer on the normalization of relations, Iran turned to international law as a guarantee to protect its natural right to use the nuclear program for peaceful purposes. Further, to prove that Iran's motives are based on scientific and economic grounds, categorically rejecting Western suspicions of military motives for Iran's nuclear program ([Khodadadi, 2016](#)).

However, under President Barack Obama, Iran-US relations improved considerably. This period was seen as a breakthrough in Iranian-US relations. This was followed by a positive change in the US attitude towards Iran's nuclear program. Consequently, the Iranian government of President Hassan Rouhani succeeded to conclude a deal with the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany, where a nuclear deal was signed on July 14, 2015, known as the Iran- P5+1 deal. After Donald Trump became the president of the USA, he re-examined the nuclear deal with Iran and imposed sanctions on Iran. Then, the US- Iranian relations worsened, because of the change in the position of the US administration, which reached the point of threatening to declare war against Iran. The USA sent the US aircraft carrier to the Gulf to safeguard its interests and allies ([Mohseni, Gallagher, & Ramsay, 2017](#)).

This study is significant since it examines the US-Iranian relations and the US position on Iran's nuclear program. Especially, the relations that followed the nuclear deal between Iran and the P5 + 1 in July 2015. It also discusses why the USA terminated and withdrew from the nuclear deal, and its attempt to convince its allies to withdraw there from. This study aims to:

1. Explain the US position on relations with Iran concerning its nuclear program in the period covered by the study.
2. Clarify the nature of US-Iranian relations before and after signing the nuclear deal in July 2015.

3. Provide conclusions and perceptions under which Iran can press the USA to change its position towards Iran, and to prevent a war due to the continued US threats to Iran since Iran does not accept the American demands.

The problem is centered on the following question: what is the US position towards Iran the signing of the nuclear deal on 14 July 2015? The following sub-questions are derived from the main question:

1. What is the nature of the US-Iranian relationship before and after the signing of the nuclear deal on 14 July 2015?
2. What are the most important elements of the nuclear deal signed between Iran and P5+1 in Geneva?
3. What is the US position towards Iran after Iran refused to assign its nuclear deal with 5P+1?

CONCEPTS

U.S Position:

1. Terminologically: a type of collective agreement among people on characteristics of the situation, its composition and how to react and adapt to it appropriately ([William, 2002](#)).
2. Procedurally: an opinion or judgment of the USA on Iran's nuclear deal after 2015 and nature of the US actions taken to respond to Iran.

Iran's Nuclear Deal:

1. Terminologically: the set of articles signed by Iran and 5P+1 in July 2015, under which it was agreed to lift international sanctions against Iran due to its nuclear program in exchange for dismantling its nuclear program ([Mayer, 2004](#)).
2. Procedurally: the deal concluded in July 2015 following several months of negotiations on this file. The USA considered the Iranian nuclear program as a hostile act that necessitated dismantling it at any cost; since it prevents the USA from achieving its interests in the Middle East and the Gulf in particular.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted three approaches which are; historical, decision-making, and national interest. The historical approach within the time division of the US-Iranian relations, and the international order approach achieves the interactive link between the parties to the relation (America and Iran), takes into account the common interests, is comprehensive and serves foreign policy to achieve the best interests and objectives of both parties. The decision-making approach ([Robinson & Snyder, 1965](#)) is used to analyze the decision-making process by both US and Iranian administrations towards Iran's nuclear program. Further, the national interest approach ([Nincic, 1999](#)) helps both parties to maintain their national interests. This explains the dispute between the USA and Iran in terms of the nuclear program agreed between Iran and 5P+1, and Iran's consistent position on this deal.

US-IRANIAN RELATION 1979-2019

Undoubtedly, Iran's strategic location in the Middle East and its geopolitical advantages has provided a clear momentum to Iran's external political decision-making process. Perhaps the nature of the political system in Iran has a clear impact on the nature of Iranian foreign policy and foreign relations, especially with a country like the USA. This has characterized the decision-making process in Iran by complexity and similarity, especially after the Iranian revolution and the US position towards it, after a long term of good relations between Iran and the USA under the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi ([Karimi & Singh, 2014](#)).

US-Iran Relation 1979-2003

The Iranian political system deals with three schools of thought, especially with regard to its relations with the USA, as follows ([Mousavian, 2014](#)):

- **The First School of Thought**

This school adopts the idea that the USA will not abandon its policy of domination and control, which is refused by Iran as an Islamic State. This school believes that the goal of the USA is to overthrow the political system in Iran and establish a new capitalist system like the Shah of Iran's system before 1979. This system was based on the relationship between the sponsor and the client. Hence, Supporters of this school are suspicious of all US-sponsored reconciliation efforts. However, they favour normal diplomatic relations between the two countries.

- **The Second School of Thought**

Supporters of this school believe that there is a deep-seated antagonism between the Islamic regime in Iran and the West in general. They also believe the path to success is resistance until the USA recognizes Iran as an effective Islamic political system in the Middle East. Therefore, they believe that negotiating with the USA is part of the acceptance of defeat; which is completely refused in this school. We believe that what happened in November 1979, and the 444-day detention of diplomatic hostages at the US Embassy, is still a shock in the minds of supporters of the school.

• The Third School of Thought

Supporters of this school agree that the USA has endeavoured to change the regime in Iran. However, they assert that there are mutual common interests between Iran and the USA. Yet, these interests involve hostile relations between the two countries according to those common interests and each of them believes that extremism and terrorism are common and dangerous enemies. Eventually, this means that there should be effective cooperation between the two countries.

It is noticed the USA has political parameters in its dealing with Iran. These parameters are based on political and strategic facts that come from established US interests. We believe that during the Cold War 1945-1989, the US interest required to maintain the stability and independence of Iran away from the Soviet threat. Since the 19th century, Britain had defended Iran to reach India and the routes leading to it through Iran, as large parts of Iran came under Russian control.

"If the USA had not intervened in 1946, the territory of Azerbaijan would have fallen under Soviet control in preparation for the partition of the country" (Kissinger, 2002). We believe, therefore, that during the Cold War, Iran helped to resist the Soviets in Afghanistan and penetrated the Middle East, since Iran's national interests required this where Iran's goals agreed with those of the USA. The Shah strongly supported the USA; where the US motive was not emotional; rather it was the appreciation of the strategic and geopolitical importance of Iran and its material and human wealth. The USA has therefore attached great importance to Iran since Iran has a vital influence in the Caspian and Central Asian regions as a result of the decline of Russian influence, where Iran has been considered a geostrategic player (Brzezinski, 2016).

Consequently, Iran was also seen as an important geopolitical hub that provides support for the new political diversity of Central Asia, because of its control of the east coast of the Persian Gulf, and is a barrier to any long-term Russian threat (Brzezinski, 2016). Since the end of World War II in 1945, Iran has been a geopolitical hub for the USA, in addition to its role as a geostrategic player, as its internal conditions are of great importance to the future of the region. This gave it strong regional aspirations, which led the USA to search for ways to make a relationship and rapprochement with Iran. According to Kissinger, the USA must either improve relations with Iraq or Iran, where one of these countries will form a balance of power in the region.

The US desire to improve relations with Iran, especially after 1979, has become more urgent since reformist leader Mohammad Khatami won the May 23, 1997, presidential election in Iran. Khatami has ideological views concerning Western civilization, as he says in this respect: "... Who separates the old Islamic civilization, or, rather, the civilization of Muslims, from our contemporary civilization (civilization of the West), a civilization whose advantages and disadvantages are equal? The pros and cons of his civilization were a reality that somehow affects the future of all mankind" (Mehran, 2003).

I think that Khatami's speech at the 53rd session of the UN General Assembly aimed at removing the barriers between the West and the East on the one hand, and between the West, especially the USA, and Iran. This is because Khatami knows that it is not in the interest of Iran to antagonize the West and the USA. This is noticed in his speech, where Khatami used the expression of the great American people as a goodwill gesture to rapprochement with the USA (Harris, 2015). We also believe that Iranian President Khatami stressed the issue of dialogue of civilizations, especially cultural dialogue among nations. This was also confirmed during his speech before the UN General Assembly at its fifty-third session in 1988 (Redaei & Deskardi, 2013).

He also sent a message to the American people: "If the American decision is made in Washington, not in Tel Aviv, the national interests of the American nation will never justify the continuation of the rupture between the American and Iranian nations" (Harris, 2015).

President Khatami's keenness on the dialogue between the Wests, especially the USA, and Iran, shows that the USA should not deliberately inflame mistrust between the USA and Iran, and it should abandon the idea that it is greater than other nations. Otherwise, any civilized and cultural dialogue between the USA and others will not be beneficial or feasible and will not lead to positive results. However, the USA relied on a prudent policy towards Iran, especially in the years following the Iranian revolution of 1979-2003. The USA has had in mind that the prudent policy towards Iran should be based on two considerations (Harris, 2015):

1. The huge amount of differences between the American and Iranian view, and
2. Potential pressure by the Zionist entity on the American administration in the belief that Iran constitutes a source of threat to Israeli national security.

US-Iranian Relations 2003-2019

The period 1998-2004 was marked by a series of international, social, sporting and artistic meetings between Iran and the USA. The events of September 2001 had a negative impact on these relations; especially after US President George W. Bush placed Iran within the axis of evil alongside Iraq and North Korea. The period from 2003 to 2005, under Mohammad Khatami, witnessed a new era in diplomatic relations between Iran and the USA; where Iran pursued cultural diplomacy between the two sides.

Khatami encouraged engagement with American cultural and scientific institutions and some Iranian scientific institutions such as the Institute of Iranian Studies and the American Research Center worked hard to bring together the US and Iranian academics and diplomatic elites, prompting an Iranian-American rapprochement (Tuwaijri, 2014). However, under Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013), cultural and diplomatic meetings between the two sides diminished due to Ahmadinejad's policy towards the USA and Israel (Asgard, 2010).

Though President Bush stated about the events of September 2001 that the USA is still in open hostility with Iran despite the cooperation of the Iranian leadership - before the presidency of Ahmadinejad- with the US war efforts, Ryan Crocker, former US ambassador to Afghanistan and Iraq indicated that the subsequent dialogues on Iraq led to the disclosure of important arrangements that benefited the USA, Iraq and the region (Crocker, 2012). The US policy toward Iran remained the same, many of the outstanding issues between Iran and the USA remained undetermined, and the policy of dialogue with Iran remained a new variable in the American policy towards those files. There were no practical steps in the first term of US President Barack Obama, who did not provide details or specific steps on the policy of his administration towards Iran, where he only said that the dialogue would be the focus of this policy.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has adopted pragmatic diplomacy since 2013 in developing Iran-USA relations. In developing his relations with the USA, Rouhani has pursued a diplomatic policy of soft power through the use of realistic (practical) pragmatism. He believes that bringing Iran back into the international arena and taking it out of its isolation and economic crisis will not be realized except through an understanding with the USA, the chief of the world, as he said (Akbarzadeh & Conduit, 2016).

By observing the political developments, we see that the Iranian vision is that the Syrian developments and the presence of Rouhani as Iran's president constituted a pressure on the West for dialogue with Iran. Some Iranian politicians thought that there was a historic opportunity for a rapprochement in the presence of President Barack Obama and President Rouhani under exceptionally sensitive circumstances. Though the US president was not interested in the diplomatic rapprochement he was seeking, he imposed sanctions that he hoped to avoid. Despite the widespread communication, clear strategic benefits, and an unprecedented opportunity of dialogue, President Obama found himself in his first term in a confrontational relation with Iran. The secret of rapprochement with Iran under President Barack Obama was Obama's belief in the pragmatic school, which believes that the USA must change its policy toward Iran. However, US policymakers realized, due to regional complexities, that negotiations and dialogue with Iran are imperative, especially after the administration's inability to achieve its goals in Afghanistan and Iraq. Therefore, the Obama administration had to engage another party in the war on terrorism, namely Iran (Manshebouri, 2010).

In its war in Afghanistan and Iraq, the USA tried to rely on Iran under President Barack Obama. However, the president was reluctant to dealing with Iran and relying on it in his war on terrorism, because there is intense hostility between Iran and Israel on the one hand, and Iran was in the process of developing its nuclear program, on the other. The US hostility to Iran was noticed in the negotiations of the P5 + 1 (the five permanent members plus Germany) with Iran. We see that these negotiations were about one idea: cancelling or curbing Iran's nuclear program.

It is noticed that a breakthrough in US-Iranian relations occurred when the nuclear deal was reached, after multiple rounds of negotiations, between Iran and the P5 + 1 in Geneva in July 2015. Under the deal, Iran has the right to enrich uranium. It should suspend uranium enrichment by 20% for six months. Operations in Arak and Natanz nuclear reactors will continue. The ban on several areas, most notably the petrochemical industry, oil, and banking is lifted. This deal was provisional and the prelude to a final treaty between Iran and the P5 + 1. The Geneva Accord on Iran's nuclear program was an important step regarding the lifting of the economic embargo on Iran, and the success of Iranian diplomacy under Rouhani and Obama to reach an agreement on the Iranian nuclear file. Obama said: "Diplomacy alone can lead to a lasting solution; there is a real opportunity for a comprehensive peace agreement" (Mussian, 2014).

After the American elections at the end of 2016, President Donald Trump worked to withdraw from the nuclear deal signed between Iran and the P5 + 1 in Geneva, contrary to the position of President Barack Obama. Trump not only withdrew from the agreement but also imposed new economic sanctions on Iran. (Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). Hence, we believe that the Iran-USA relations have worsened and returned as they were, though they have been slightly relaxed before the Iranian nuclear deal with the P5 + 1 and since Rouhani took office in Iran. However, Trump missed this opportunity on the pretext that the nuclear deal between Iran and the P5 + 1 group does not contain clauses that address the Iranian behavior that disturbs the USA in terms of security and threaten its allies in the Middle East, (I think he means Israel here).

IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

In the period 1991-2004, the Iranian nuclear program saw considerable interest from the Iranian government. Iran completed sufficient infrastructure to conduct advanced nuclear research and completed work on other facilities. Iran relied on cooperation with China in this field, where 21 agreements were signed between China and Iran in January 1991 for the construction of a nuclear reactor in Isfahan. Iran has benefited from this reactor in identifying enrichment technology and turning uranium into material for the production of the fuel and yellowcake. At the same time, agreements were signed

with Russia. Through this cooperation, Iran managed to complete the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant. Cooperation between Iran and Russia has taken place since the end of 1994 ([Abd Al- Shafi, 2011](#)).

Development and Objectives of Iran's Nuclear Program

Iran's nuclear program, like any nuclear program, went through several stages until it reached its nuclear power and production. According to the viewpoint of the West, especially America, this has become a threat to the interests of the West and the USA in the Gulf region in particular and the Middle East in general.

Stages of Deployment and Establishment of Iran's Nuclear Program

Iran's nuclear program went through several stages until it became a productive program. These stages were as follows:

Stage 1: (1957-1967): This stage was the beginning of Iran's nuclear program. It was under the Shah of Iran, who had cooperative relations with the USA, where the Shah's regime was an ally of the USA. The USA cooperated with Iran in this regard through the "Atom for Peace" program, which was announced by US President Dwight D Eisenhower in 1953. Iran and the USA signed an agreement on cooperation between them in this field. This cooperation lasted from 1953 to 1968. Under this agreement, Iran received technical nuclear assistance from the USA ([Al-Saadi, 2015](#)). This stage also involved the construction of the first small physical nuclear reactor at Tehran University in 1957. The Iranian plan at this stage was to build 23 nuclear reactors from 1957 to 1990 ([Al-Zawahra, 2015](#)).

Stage 2: (1967-1979): At the beginning of 1967, Iran established the first large Iranian facility at the Research Center of Tehran University. The facility was managed by the Nuclear Energy Organization, with an estimated 600 kilograms of plutonium produced annually. In September 1967, it was provided with a larger charge of 104 kg ([Al-Saadi, 2015](#)). However, this reactor faced many challenges and constraints in November 1967, prompting the search for international companies to find solutions to those obstacles. In this respect, Iran signed several agreements with French nuclear energy and activated the agreement signed with the USA in 1957. In late 1972, Iran started to think of having two large power reactors to produce more nuclear power ([Al-Zawahra, 2015](#)). After 1977, Iran resorted to Germany and France for nuclear cooperation, after President Jimmy Carter delivered a speech declaring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In 1976, Iran signed a nuclear agreement on the Bushehr reactor, as well as the construction of two other Iranian reactors in Isfahan, and two other reactors near the Iran-Turkey border ([Abu Maghli, 1982](#)).

Stage 3: (1980-1990): It is called the suspension stage due to the political conditions in Iran since the beginning of 1979. There was a revolution in Iran that ended with the residency of Ayatollah on 11 February 1979, where all nuclear activities were suspended. In 1986, the nuclear program was resumed, and some Iranian weapon design-related activities were carried out. This program received assistance from France. Isfahan Nuclear Research Center was established to produce 30 kW of power. However, this center became a permanent target for Iraqi airstrikes, and it was stopped. At the same time, the USA exerted pressure on Germany to stop nuclear cooperation with Iran. At that time, Iran decided to make use of the Soviet Union. Iran became dependent on Soviet aid as part of its nuclear program. In June 1985, Iran signed another agreement with China on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and it signed an agreement with Pakistan in 1986 at the wish of Khomeini in; which was a matter of concern to the USA ([Al-Saadi, 2015](#)). The Iranian nuclear program developed during this period until the construction of the first nuclear reactor in 1988, which became ready for production in 1992. Iran also signed an agreement on nuclear cooperation with Argentina as well as North Korea and the Soviet Union to complete the Bushehr reactor and the establishment of two other reactors with a capacity of 440 MW ([Al-Saadi, 2015](#)).

Stage 4: (1991-2004): At this stage, Iran signed a nuclear agreement with China to build a nuclear reactor in Isfahan to enrich uranium and convert uranium into material for the production of nuclear fuel. In this period, Iran managed to persuade Russia to complete the construction of the Bushehr nuclear reactor in 1994 and early 1995 ([Abd Al- Shafi, 2011](#)). It is noticed that from 1995-2004 this was the stage of secret development of Iran's nuclear program in terms of unreported programs, activities, and dangers. In the period 1995-2004, Iran cooperated with several countries to develop its nuclear activities, including Kazakhstan, the Soviet Union, Pakistan, and China. US pressure on Iran to halt Iranian nuclear activity increased, but Iran continued its nuclear attempts. According to President Khatami's statement in 1997, Iran's nuclear program is for peaceful purposes and it will not produce a nuclear weapon. Thus, 2002 was the beginning of the discovery of the objectives of the Iranian nuclear program and facilities by the USA, including those in Natanz and Arak. At that time, Iran was working on uranium and heavy water enrichment, to which the USA objected. However, the Iranian president at that time stated that "Iran is working under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency and that it is not seeking to acquire a nuclear weapon" ([Chubin, 2010](#)). In 2003, Iran took advantage of regional conditions and US problems in its war against Iraq, accelerating nuclear work and trying to gain time to move forward with its nuclear program ([Abdul Fattah & Zwaini, 2012](#)). In this period, Iran also tried to gain the support of the countries of the region and the European Union in the negotiations with the UN and the USA ([Al-Zawahra, 2015](#)). Thus, it is noticed that during this period the USA wanted to politicize the Iranian nuclear file and turn it into negotiations with the Soviet Union. This gave Iran an opportunity and time to achieve a major milestone in its nuclear program, avoid the military, economic or political sanctions or submission of the file to the UN Security Council. The European support for Iran's position against the USA contributed to Iran's economic and technical gains. The European Union believed that diplomacy is the best way to negotiate with Iran over its nuclear program.

Stage 5: (2005-2015): At this stage, given the public announcement of the nuclear program, Iran announced in 2004 that it had agreed with France, Germany, and Britain to suspend uranium enrichment activities and sign the CTBT protocol. Yet, Iran subsequently withdrew from the agreement on the pretext of its imbalance (Rapan, 2019). In 2005, Iran removed the IAEA seals and control devices attached to its facilities and installed centrifuges, causing tension between Iran and Western countries. This drove the IAEA to vote to deprive Iran of its uranium enrichment activities. Then, Iran returned to work at the Isfahan reactor under the supervision of IAEA, after suspending its work in the other nuclear reactors for a specified period (Al-Saadi, 2015). After Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had taken office in 2005, Iran made progress in confronting the world over its nuclear program, particularly with Western powers, led by the USA. Thus, Iran remained in a confrontational stance against the Western powers, exploiting the years 2006-2015 to secretly enrich uranium. While the UN Security Council imposed a ban on supplying Iran with equipment for uranium enrichment and ballistic weapons production, Iran negotiated with the IAEA and Western powers. Both France and Britain have declared that Iran is building an underground nuclear reactor without the knowledge of the IAEA, which was denied by Iran. This led Israel to ask the USA to bomb Iranian nuclear facilities, which was rejected. Economic, commercial and financial sanctions were imposed on Iran and a strict monitoring regime was imposed on its nuclear facilities (Rapan, 2019). Between 2010 and 2013 work began on the Bushehr nuclear plant, and in July 2012 the EU began to ban the purchase of Iranian oil, and expand economic sanctions on Iran. On September 19, 2013, Barack Obama announced the USA's readiness to offer flexibility on economic sanctions against Iran. In the first telephone conversation since 1979, Obama and Rouhani exchanged views on the nuclear program and an attempt to reach a nuclear deal with Iran" (Rapan, 2019). Indeed, this deal was signed on July 14, 2015; a series of serious and substantial negotiations between Iran and the (5 + 1) in Geneva.

Iran's objectives of the nuclear program

In the development of its nuclear program, Iran seeks to achieve the following objectives:

• Military and Strategic Objectives

We think that Iran has focused, in its strategic military thought, on the lessons learned from its war against Iraq, and the ongoing US and Israeli threats after the announcement of its nuclear program. It recognizes that its possession of a sophisticated nuclear weapon is one of the main criteria for measuring the state's strength and development and preserving its interests, and improving its defensive and offensive systems and other strategic objectives that preserve the state's sovereignty and independence. Therefore, by acquiring a nuclear weapon, Iran seeks to strengthen its international political standing through:

1. Possession of nuclear energy and then nuclear weapons,
2. Obtaining political, security, and strategic gains, and maintaining its independence and sovereignty of its territory,
3. Obtaining political gains through the negotiation of major countries,
4. Protecting its regional role and seeking international support for its issues,
5. Realizing full security and stability. Iran recognizes that its national security is threatened by the USA and Israel and that this threat can be faced only through a nuclear-deterrent (Ibrahim & Abd-Alhamid, 2013).
6. Strengthening the Iranian security presence in the region and the Arabian Gulf in particular, and
7. Achieving strategic balance with the Zionist entity.

• Geopolitical objectives

1. Expansion of Iranian influence in the Arabian Gulf region due to its important strategic location.
2. Iranian national interest in the Arabian Gulf region.
3. Iranian ambitions in Bahrain, which it considers Iranian territory.

Therefore, Iran insists on naming the Gulf as the Persian Gulf, in addition to its occupation of the three islands of the Lesser Tunb, Greater Tunb, and Abu Musa, as well as the occupation of the Iraqi Ahwaz. Hence, Therefore, Iran seeks to acquire a nuclear weapon to protect its regional role and to strengthen its presence in that region through its acquisition of a nuclear weapon" (Al-Saadi, 2015).

• Economic Objectives:

1. To promote Iran's economic interests in the Arabian Gulf, the Caucasus and the regions of Russia, and work to develop cooperation with these countries, which represent markets and a commercial crossing for Iranian exports by taking advantage of its strategic location?
2. To create regional partners in the region, Central Asia and the world through its nuclear program, which has played a role in enhancing regional security and stability?

3. To guarantee Iran's economic interests and obtain financial, petrochemical and oil investments. The USA has interests (oil, petrochemical, and financial in the Persian Gulf). Since the USA is aware of the Gulf's pitfalls, Iran is concerned about its interests in the Persian Gulf, which requires Iran to have a permanent presence in the Gulf. Iran can only do so through a national nuclear program that protects it from the USA and its allies.
4. Thus, Iran has tried to use the tools that enable it to respond to the US hostile policy towards Iran. It is noticed that Iran has stepped up its defiance and threat to American interests in the Gulf and prevented the USA from crossing through the Strait of Hormuz, which is controlled by Iran. It also sent a message through its media that the USA wants Iran to clash with the Gulf States to preserve its interests, and reassured the Gulf in this regard through many means. Iran has tried to consolidate the concept that USA is a common enemy of all Muslims, especially Iran and the peoples of the Gulf, and that stability in the Arabian Gulf is necessary and important by non-inference of the USA in the affairs of the Gulf States and Iran until security and stability take place in the region.

Iran Nuclear Deal July 2015 and US Position on it 2015-2019

According to the European Union and the US administration, the Iranian nuclear deal reached with the P5 + 1 in Geneva on 14 July 2015 is a paradigm shift in Western-Iranian relations. Through this deal, the West managed to weaken the chance of possession of a nuclear bomb by Iran. However, Iran considered that the mere recognition of it as a peaceful nuclear state is a great achievement. Another achievement is the abolition of Western economic sanctions on Iran.

Summary of Iran Nuclear Deal with the P5+1

On July 14, 2015, Iran and the P5 + 1 initialled the text of the nuclear deal, the most important clauses of which are:

- **Uranium enrichment and enrichment research development** ([Ahmad, Salahieh, & Snyder, 2017](#)):
 1. The long-term Iranian plan includes specific restrictions on all enrichment activities and the activities associated with its enrichment. It also includes restrictions on specific activities, research, and development during the first eight years, followed by gradual development at a reasonable pace. It will reach a peaceful enrichment stage, and Iran undertakes to observe its covenant concerning the long-term enrichment plan.
 2. Iran begins to phase out the centrifuges in the heavy water reactor (IR-1) in 10 years. During this period, Iran maintains its enrichment capacity at the Natanz site at a compound enrichment value of 5,060 centrifuges in the heavy water reactor (IR-1). Excess centrifuges and enrichment-related infrastructure are stored at the Natanz site under the continued supervision of the IAEA.
 3. Iran continues to conduct enrichment research and development in a manner that does not lead to the accumulation of enriched uranium. Iran's 10-year enrichment research and development include centrifuges in heavy water reactors (IR-4), (IR-5), (IR-6), (IR-8). Iran will not engage in testing centrifuges in heavy water reactors (IR-6) and (IR-8). Iran will begin testing up to 30 centrifuges in heavy water reactors (IR-6) and (IR-8) after eight and a half years.
 4. Iran will not enrich uranium by more than (3.67%) in 15 years, and at the Natanz site only. It will not enrich uranium in the underground Fordow reactor against attacks. Fordow reactor will be transformed into a reactor for scientific research that experiments will be carried out in coordination with the international community.
 5. Iran will transform the Fordow facility into a nuclear, physical and technological center. International cooperation involving scientific partnership agreements will be established in agreed research areas. 1,044 centrifuges will remain in the heavy water reactor (IR-1) in six serial pumping devices in one wing of the Fordow facility. Two of these serial devices will rotate without uranium and will be converted after proper modification of their infrastructure to produce stable radioisotopes. The remaining four devices, together with their entire associated infrastructure, will remain inoperative. All other centrifuges and enrichment-related infrastructure will be removed and stored under IAEA ongoing monitoring.
 6. Iran's stockpiles of enriched uranium will be determined in the next 15 years by 300 kg, and no more than 3.67%. However, Iran will sell the excess amount at international prices, and it will be delivered to international purchasers in return for natural uranium delivered to Iran, or it will be mixed to return to the level of natural uranium.
 7. Russia will supervise the provision of nuclear fuel by 20% in reactors for scientific research, provided that it will convert it into nuclear fuel.
- **Russia will oversee the provision of nuclear fuel as follows** ([Pieper, 2019](#)):
 1. Heavy water reactors: Arak heavy water reactor will transform into a light water reactor. Arak reactor will be transformed into a reactor with peaceful aims for scientific research and will have a capacity of not more than 20 MW.
 2. Spent Fuel- In the next 15 years, Iran will not carry out any activities related to spent fuel except the production of radioisotope batteries. Iran also undertakes to sign an additional protocol of IAEA on intrusive inspection and to grant permits for inspection purposes at any time.
 3. Deal Monitoring- IAEA will monitor all Iranian nuclear sites regularly. Iran will accept limited access by IAEA inspectors to non-nuclear sites of a military nature in the presence of doubts about the nature of their work.

4. Lifting of Sanctions-For Iran's compliance, all parties undertake to respect the provisions of the deal and not to breach it and to lift sanctions against Iran, including those imposed by the UN. The USA and EU and undertake not to impose an embargo on Iran except arms embargo for an additional five years, and eight years for ballistic missiles.
5. In case of dispute in the application of the deal- The Joint Committee, composed of all parties will resolve any dispute arising out of the application of the deal within 15 days. If such dispute is not resolved, it will be referred to the State Department. If the State Department fails to resolve the dispute within 15 days, the dispute shall be referred to an advisory committee composed of three persons, including an independent member. If the dispute is not resolved, it will refer to the Security Council, which in turn will vote to lift or continue the embargo against Iran. If the Security Council fails to pass a resolution, UN sanctions will be re-imposed on Tehran.

As for the international and regional factors that accelerated preparing the nuclear deal, these are the factors stemming from the nature of the international political system and the major countries that have a direct and clear impact on the issue of the Iranian nuclear program and have a regional impact like the five permanent members. This is in addition to the internal factors emanating from Iran itself and the reformist powers. This is due to the nature of Iran's national interests, vital strategic location, and role in the fight against terrorism ([Mussian, 2014](#)).

Position of US Administration on the Nuclear Deal under Donald Trump

Following the signing of the nuclear deal between Iran and the P5 + 1 in July 2015, the deal entered a complex and difficult phase under the pressure of US sanctions on Iran, military escalation, and targeting economic interests and sea lanes in the Gulf region and the Sea of Oman, which almost ignited a war after Iran shot down a US drone. This angered the US president, who almost carried out a military strike against Iran. Trump commented, "Iran has made a big mistake" ([Mohseni et al., 2017](#)). On the part of Iran, Iran has no longer seen any interest in this agreement unless it has achieved economic goals. The USA targeted Iranian oil tankers in the Sea of Oman in a desire to share the Gulf Arab countries with economic pressure on Iran before reaching a new nuclear deal with Iran. Donald Trump canceled the nuclear deal, announcing the US withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear deal with the P5 + 1. The group became 4 + 1 after the US withdrawal ([Abrahamian, 2018](#)). Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal stemmed from several motives. The first of which is Trump's commitment to public statements he made and adopted during his election campaign to his voters that he would tear up the deal once he took office. The second motive was to satisfy the Republican majority in the US Congress, which rejected the nuclear deal from the beginning. The third and final motive was to try to please Israel, where Tel Aviv rejected the deal from the beginning and spared no effort to stop it.

Consequently, the USA withdrew from the deal on 8 May 2018. In cancelling this deal, the USA aimed to increase economic pressure on Iran to drag it to the edge of the abyss and to push it to accept the amendment of the nuclear deal. This would not be confined to the nuclear program; rather it would include modifying Iran's behavior that threatens US interests and its allies in the region, especially Israel ([Bahgat, 2017](#)). It is noticed that the cancellation of the deal by the USA will have negative aspects for the USA for several reasons, including:

1. The increased cost is borne by the USA since the deal is multilateral.
2. The deal was ratified by the UN Security Council and signed by the US Administration under Obama. The USA is therefore required to inform the UN Security Council of the breach of the other party (Iran), which did not happen, where IAEA did not inform the UN Security Council of Iran's breach of the Nuclear Deal.
3. Under Trump, the USA appeared as a state that does not respect international law nor the parties to the Deal. Therefore, the US president does not observe international conventions and agreements.
4. USA paved the way for withdrawal from the Deal through its Secretary of State, Mark Toner, who said that there is nothing to prevent the USA from withdrawing from the Deal if the new US President "Donald Trump" wants so, and any other party can withdraw from the Deal.

As the USA withdrew from the nuclear deal with Iran, economic pressure on Iran increased from 2018 to 2019. The ban on Iranian banks has not been lifted, and maritime controls on Iranian ships and oil tankers in the Gulf have become stricter. This has increased the burdens of the Iranian economy, and this economy continues to suffer to date due to the failure of the USA to lift the economic embargo on Iran.

Through the foregoing, it appears that the policy of the United States of America towards Iran has varied during certain periods, and this is clear in the policy of the United States towards Iran before and after the Islamic revolution in Iran. Before the Islamic revolution, the relationship between the two countries was characterized by harmony and friendship and witnessed the conclusion of cooperation agreements between the two countries. This period witnessed some disputes, but they did not affect the relationship of cooperation between the two parties. As for after the Islamic Revolution, this friendship turned into a conflict, and Iran with the United States of America became a threat to it in the Middle East region, especially after the events of 11 of September 2001; as a result of doubts about Iran's involvement in this incident, which was confirmed by Iran's official recognition later helping al-Qaeda.

Since the success of the Islamic revolution in Iran and the deterioration of the relationship between the two countries, the United States of America has been seeking to restore Iran to its hegemony as it was its ally and dependent on it in the Middle East region to achieve its interests and goals, and the United States of America has taken many methods and tactics for that. The GCC countries have used Al-Khaleeji against Iran and tried to carry out many military coups to change the political system inside Iran, but it failed to do so. The current President of the United States Donald Trump stated in a speech to him that he hoped to change the regime in Iran, and announced that the United States liked the agreement of the Iranian nuclear program and the imposition of new sanctions on Iran, the most important of which was the inclusion of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard on the list of terrorist organizations, and this comes after Iran shot down an American military plane that was flying over the Strait of Hormuz and also after Iran announced that it was continuing to enrich uranium but would leave the door open to entry in new negotiations on American and Israeli terms, which this arguments and result supported by (Bahgat, 2017).

The recent events do not require entering the two sides in a military confrontation, despite the exchange of accusations and threats, but they have confirmed their unwillingness to enter into a traditional war, and this is shown by Trump's announcement of willingness to enter into negotiations, and on the Iranian side, this appeared through its adherence to the agreement despite the withdrawal of the states the United States of them. Entering the United States with Iran in a military confrontation is almost impossible (Davenport, 2019), as it understands the extent of Iran's military ability and it is one of the most important oil and gas producing countries on which the global economy depends. It also requires entering into a war to withdraw the United States from Iraq, which hinders its interests and plans in the Middle East region, especially in Iraq.

The USA tried to dissuade Iran from pursuing its nuclear program. This was not for interests or economic motives of the USA; rather it was for satisfying Israel and maintaining its security, stability, and existence. It should be noted that the nuclear deal between Iran and the P5 + 1 was ratified by the UN Security Council, where the USA under Trump proved that it does not preserve or respect deals or conventions.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the US position towards Iran after the signing of the nuclear deal between Iran and the P5+1 in July 2015. The US-Iranian relations after World War II 1945, through 1979, the year of the Iranian (Islamic) revolution to 2003 are reviewed. Further, the US occupation of Iraq, the US position on the disclosure of Iran's nuclear program, and the US attempts to discourage Iran from pursuing this program are discussed. This study also clearly reviews the history of Iran's nuclear program, the most important historical turning points, including the progress of negotiations with Western countries, which were the prelude to reach the deal of July 2015. By looking at the roots of the Iranian nuclear program, since the 1979 Islamic revolution, and after the beginning of the intensified rush, Iran's intensified efforts and its attempt to cooperate with Western and Eastern countries to develop its nuclear program, the suspicions of the USA, including Israel and Europe, began to accuse Iran of seeking to develop a secret nuclear program and produce a nuclear bomb. However, according to its statements, Iran sought to develop this program to achieve political, economic, strategic and other important objectives. It considered that the oil material will be depleted one day, which encouraged it to establish a nuclear program to serve it in the future.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

This current study is mainly focused on the relationship between the United States and Iran after the nuclear deal, specifically in the period (2015-2019). This study can be replicated to ascertain the investigate the impact of the nuclear deal in the Middle East, and what are the opinions Middle east countries on such deal. Another limitation of this study is that it is primarily conducted to examine the USA and Iran relationships, but future studies might be able to replicate this research in more diverse US relations with other nuclear countries.

IMPLICATIONS

The nuclear deal is a powerful resource for the countries aiming for dominance. Iran must preserve its scientists and experts in the nuclear field and develop the necessary infrastructure necessary for the return of nuclear activity. Also, it must use the economic and strategic issues to pressure the US side to abide by its commitments. On the other hand, The UN, the sponsor of the nuclear deal between Iran and the P5 + 1, should affirm the validity of a comprehensive nuclear arms ban for every country in the Middle East.

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