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**The Obama Administration's Policy toward the Iranian
Nuclear Program**

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Abstract

The United States of America, as a global power, interferes in many nations' internal affairs, including Iran. The latter is viewed as a danger to world security due to its nuclear enrichment program, leading the United States to enact a number of measures aimed at restricting its nuclear capabilities. The thesis studies and analyzes the diplomatic relations between the US and Iran in order to shed light on the reversal in the cordial relationship that bound the two countries during the reign of the Shah to the hostile and strained one that characterized the two states' bilateral relations since the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Moreover, it provides a historical background about the Iranian nuclear program. The purpose of this study is to analyze Barack Obama's foreign policy toward the Iranian nuclear program and assess his policies' efficacy and results. President Obama chose certain methods such as putting economic and political sanctions on Iran, but subsequently he moved to a negotiating and diplomatic strategy to end the dispute over the Iranian nuclear program. Additionally, President Obama has managed to improve the relationship between the two nations to an extent that epitomized into the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015, which ensured that Iran would use its nuclear program for only peaceful uses and not for nuclear weaponization. The study also found that the Obama administration's strategy, which focused on the use of engagement and diplomacy proved to be more fruitful than the previous hardline strategies of his predecessors as far as Iran's nuclear program is concerned.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIOC	The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company
CIA	The American Central Intelligence Agency
EU	European Union
HEU	High Enriched Uranium
IAEA	The International Atomic Energy Agency
JCOPA	The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Actions
LEU	Low Enriched Uranium
NEA	Nuclear Energy Agreement
NPT	Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
SIS	The British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6)
UNSC	The United Nations Security Council
WW II	World War II

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Introduction

The United States takes the responsibility to keep its interests a priority over any other nation; therefore, it allows its foreign policy to interfere in other nations affairs. The interference includes engaging in wars, aggression, and economic exploitation in order to protect its interests as well as its national security. The repercussions of US dominance had a great echo that affected all countries in the 20th century. Due to its involvement in several nations, notably in the Middle East, where the American government believed that its hegemonic position in the world gave it the right to assure that all countries have a democratic and diplomatic administration. The implicit goal behind setting a suitable government in all countries is that the US will have an indirect authority to interfere in all domains of these countries in terms of politics, economy, and internal and external policies.

While promoting the establishment of democratic regimes across the world, the US assigned Iran, with which it has had a long-standing conflict, a considerably greater priority. Since the end of World War II, the United States and Iran have shared a hostile atmosphere with one other. The blame falls on the operation organized by Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to overthrow the Iranian Prime minister. The Mossadeq government's removal was an obstacle to Iran's political development for he was planning to nationalize the oil industry in Iran. Shah Mohammed Reza became Iran's new leader when Mossadeq was overthrown by the United States. The new leader was welcomed by the American officials, yet, despised by Iranian people ("U.S. Relations with Iran, 1953–2021").

Throughout the reign of the Shah, the United States had a direct hand in every political, social, and economic decision taken by the Iranian government. At this phase the relationships between the two countries appeared to be close and stable, however, the case was not the same for the Iranian people who had kept their hostility toward US since the overthrow of their previous leader Mohammed Mossadeq. After a long period of time under

the shade the American administration, the Iranians came to a conclusion that the change of such state will only end through a revolution to release their country from the American chains and restore their nationalistic pride. This eventually gave birth to the Iranian revolution in 1979.

The name of Ayatollah had always been mentioned when lighting the hostility between Iran and the United States. The US considered El Khomeini to be the main reason for the revolution led by the Iranians and the loss of the Shah who used to be bridge to facilitate the American interference in the Iranian affairs especially when it comes to the nuclear power Iran owns. For these specific reasons, the United States apposed Iran to stand with Iraq in Iranian-Iraq war (1988). At this point, the enmity between the two countries mentioned above reached its peack, where each nation considered the other its official enemy (“Iran and the United States in the Cold War”).

The hostile chess match between Iran and the United States continued till the Bush administration who introduced the Bush doctrine. It placed a high focus on combating terrorism and preventing nuclear proliferation that would represent a serious risk to the United States. Under his presidency, Bush launched the "Global War on Terror," and this had remarkable influence on U.S.-Iranian relations. They had an opportunity to work together since they shared the same opponent and, for a limited period of time, they both had common interests in the fight against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. However, such common collaboration did not last, and Iran ended up on George W. Bush’s “Axis of Evil” list (Zammit).

Barack Obama already had a strong foreign policy in place when he came to office. He desired to alter the path of history in the direction of justice, liberty, and peace. Obama began his presidency by sharply criticizing past administrations’ foreign policies, and he used the word "change" as a strategy to affect US foreign policy toward Iran and the Middle East in

general. As a result, Obama's fight against Iran aimed at advancing American interests. That international circumstances would not compel Obama to make difficult foreign policy decisions, but rather give him the time to advance his domestic program, was Obama's underlying hope in his inaugural address. Obama's foreign policy would engage the Muslim world without threatening to attack it, particularly Iran, where he would try to influence Iranian perceptions of the US via discussion and diplomacy rather than warfare (M. Lindsay).

In his article "Obama and Iran", Steven Hurst spotlights on how President Barack Obama decided to intensify sanctions as a mean of stopping Iran from getting nuclear weapons. Hurst stated that Obama did not think that using force would stop Iran's nuclear program, but that it would instead risk further destabilizing the region and that Obama favored partners and domestic interests to weaken the administration's Middle East goals. Apparently, Obama's force-free policy is far away from being realistic when it comes to Iran; therefore, he was obliged to impose sanctions to prevent further complications.

Ghorbani Sheikhneshin in his article titled "Obama and Iran: Current situation and future prospects", argues that since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, ties between Iran and the United States have been fragile. All attempts to improve the relationship have failed. A resolution is doubtful, particularly considering Iran's nuclear program. Such claims have been denied by Tehran, which has underlined that its nuclear program is for civilian purposes. The writer covered Iran's and the United States' key claims and counterclaims, particularly in relation to terrorism. He proposed that the United States' foreign policy should be revised, moving away from aggressive and arrogant approaches and toward engagement and face-to-face discussions.

"US Foreign Policy in the Middle East" by Noam Chomsky, stressed that there is virtually universal agreement on what the solution to the problem should be, which is the danger of Iran as a nuclear-weapon state. Chomsky based his argument on a military

assessment submitted to Congress in April 2010, in which he admitted that Iran is not a military threat since it has practically no aggressive military capabilities and a military budget that is a fraction of the US military budget. The goal of Iranian military strategy, according to Chomsky, is to preserve the country's borders, destabilize its neighbors, and increase its influence. Basically until this moment, the Iranian nuclear power is only perceived as any other military power which is used to protect the nation sovereignty and the safety of its people.

Barack Obama took office while the tensions between Iran and his country were at their highest, despite this fact; he vowed to restore the correct image of the United States which was deceived by the policies of previous American leaders. He focused on creating stable, peaceful, and diplomatic relationships with the countries in the Middle East, more precisely, Iran. Obama has urged diplomacy and discussion, a desire for understanding, and an acknowledgment of the limits of American strength, using the concept of "change" as a platform to influence the incoming US administration's foreign policy, particularly its stance toward Iran.

This research attempts to investigate the relationships between Iran and the United States, how the American government dealt with the file of Iranian nuclear program with an emphasis on Obama's foreign policy toward the Iranian nuclear program; it also addresses the following questions:

1. How did the relationship between the United States of America and Iran evolve since the Cold War till the Presidency of Barack Obama?
2. Which policy did president Obama adopted to deal with the Iranian nuclear program?
3. To what extent was Obama's policy successful when it comes to the Iranian issue?

This research aims at investigating the political gap between the United States and Iran, and what had shaken the boundaries between the two nations since the Cold War.

Furthermore, it puts an emphasis on the policy which president Obama followed to reach common ground with Iran; through a comprehensive analysis of the main shifts that took place in terms of negotiations and diplomatic discussions between the two countries. In addition to assessing to what extent was Obama's policy effective in comparison to previous presidents.

The current study makes use of the historical and analytical approaches for collecting and analyzing data. The historical approach relies on the interpretation of previous events and data. For example, the research involves an examination and explanation of previous events that are important for understanding the conflict between US and Iran, as well as for understanding the events that created US foreign policy towards Iran. While the analytical approach is also employed in this research in order to evaluate facts and information, it is based on critical thinking by an examination of Barack Obama's foreign policy towards Iran's nuclear program, assessing its efficacy, and comparing it to past administrations' policies.

In the current study, available and reliable sources, including primary and secondary sources, were utilized to gather information. The primary sources such speeches and documents in addition to secondary sources such as books, articles, newspapers and websites.

Studies on the highly controversial Iranian nuclear program have increased in recent years due of the escalating tension between the United States and Iran. The US foreign policy towards Iran has been studied under several presidents. Only a small number of researches have been done on Obama's foreign policy towards Iran because it is a relatively new issue. Thus, a good examination and evaluation of Obama's policy toward Iran's nuclear program is the goal. This research is designed to give readers interested in history and politics with useful knowledge on the present topic.

This study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter dives into the history of American-Iranian relationships, attempting to provide a thorough picture of the Iranian-

American struggle. It examines the two nations' ties throughout the Cold War, focusing on the major events that impacted their relationship at the time. This chapter also looks at their connection throughout the twentieth century. It begins with the subject of the nuclear program before moving on to the Obama's administration and its views on Iran.

The second chapter tackles the first seed of the nuclear power in Iran. It provides series of facts on how the United States played a significant role in assisting Iran to build nuclear reactors and acquire nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, the chapter underlines the reasons behind the Iranian ambitions to strengthen its nuclear capabilities, while being accused by the United States and its allies for being a threat on the other nations' security.

The last chapter describes President Obama's policy toward Iran's nuclear plans during his first and second terms in office and gives a critical evaluation of each term. Whether his foreign policy was a success or a failure is examined, in addition to comparing his policy with previous presidents while dealing with the Iran's nuclear program.

The conclusion contains a review of the key results, the study's limitations, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter one

Historical Background of American-Iranian Relations

Each country in the world seeks to present itself as an independent nation that has all the needed capabilities and authorities to protect its national security and interests. Among the countries in the world, the United States of America is widely known for its ambitions to define itself as the most powerful nation in the world, therefore, it shapes its foreign policy accordingly. The main pillar of the American foreign policy is to establish political and economic relationships with different countries in the world. These relations would allow the US to have a limit access to national and international affairs of each country, including economy, politics, and policies. Among all the various relations with other countries, the relationship with Iran is debatably the most controversial. As long as national security is concerned, Iran represents a serious threat to the US for acquiring and producing uranium which means nuclear power; consequently, a base of negotiation concerning revealing data about the amount of uranium outcome by the Iranian government becomes an inevitable need.

The first chapter of this research paves the way to highlight the historical events which shaped the early history of the American-Iranian relationship during the 20th century. Furthermore, it spots the light on the Islamic revolution which is considered crucial concerning the relation between the two nations. This chapter also tackles the main shifts in the relationship between Iran and the United States after the Islamic revolution.

1.1. Early Diplomatic Relations between the U.S. and Iran: The Cold War Era

The two nations' relationship dates back to the mid-twentieth century, when the US began diplomatic, economic, and cultural connections with Iran. This meddling was frequently the consequence of Iranians pursuing and encouraging U.S. participation in order to counterbalance intrusive British and Russian influence which is known as the Anglo-Soviet cooperation. Iran presented an important geographical territory which made it main focus for

the two powers Russia and the UK. Therefore, the United States interfered promote Iranian nationalist claims; these circumstances aided the US in getting engaged in Iran's affairs (Mansour 9).

Most of Iran's oil fortune and its outcomes were under the control of the British company, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company from 1901-1920. However, in late 1920, Iranian authorities sought another investor to encounter the British hegemony in Iran. The United States of America appeared to be a better alternative to make an oil agreement with Iran. Therefore, in 1921, the Iranian majlis the State Department, the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, and the Sinclair Consolidated Oil Corporation agreed on making an oil deal in north Iran (Mansour 13).

In 1951, Mohammad Mossadeq was elected as the prime minister of Iran. The new prime minister had different realistic view than the Shah; he believed that the revenues of his countries oil and resources were mainly benefited by foreign nations but not Iran. He strongly sought to reverse that fact and direct the benefits of his country's treasures to Iranians. Therefore, he urgently proposed the nationalization of Iran's oil industry. This movement meant that Iranian government seizes its own oil industries and benefits from all revenues. (Morgan 1).

Consequently, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and British Petroleum oil giant, which generated billions of dollars each year from Iran's oil were displeased by this decision. Indeed the British Foreign Secretary Herbert Morrison said, "Persia oil is a vital importance to our economy. We regard it as essential to do everything possible to prevent the Persians from getting away with a breach of their contractual obligations" (qtd in. Morgan1). Needless to say, the nationalization brought severe impacts to Iran. The displeased British leaders imposed an embargo on Iran, weakening its economy (Wise1).

The United States was considered more dependable western force under these circumstances, and the Iranians sought its cooperation. On the other hand, the US was concerned that Iran may eventually bow to communism. This was seen as a threat due of the continuing Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, which began when the two superpowers became adversarial after the end of WWII. The British pressure and concern of the communist expansion had encouraged the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to join the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and organized a coup in 1953, called Operation Ajax (Wise1).

1.2. Operation Ajax

Generally known to all Iranians, the coup was the fundamental sin in their decision to join the British-American conspiracy to overthrow their country democratically elected Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossadaq, and replace him with a US-backed figure, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Since the reinstated prime minister was pliant and obedient to Western interests, the Shah's monarchy allows Britain and America to define an Iranian government that they can oversee. When they restored the authority of the Shah, they thought they had the authority to dictate their acts that in turn were controlling Iran. The United States encouraged the Shah, who was called "American Puppet" (Wise 1-2).

Mossadaq was very beloved and revered by people during his rigorous reign, when he was removed in 1953, this fact created chaos among Iranians. Unfortunately, Iranians do not hold all post-Mossadaq leaders to the same standard as Mossadaq. The post-coup era was marked by a particularly tight alliance and friendship between Shah Reza Pahlavi's rule and the US government; this popular phase arose not from Iranian contentment with the US, but from the Shah's contacts with America (Wise2).

In August 1953, the United States and Britain launched a neocolonial campaign against Mossadaq and Iran, which resulted in Mossadaq's departure from power and the Shah's

takeover of the country for the second time in his life, because he had fled the country. The CIA spent a lot of money trying to persuade Iranian military commanders who were loyal to the Shah. Furthermore, through buying key persons, planting false reports in publications, and inciting street unrest against Mossadaq's administration, Operation Ajax damaged Mossadaq's regime (Stephen 121).

For this reason, and because of Cold War tensions between U.S. and Soviet Union in 1953, the Central Intelligence Agency made this decision. A communist ruler might be portrayed by the CIA as Mossadeq, and the Soviet Union could take over Iran, or at least attempt to do so. The prospect of Soviet invasion was a key factor in launching the coup against Mossadeq (Morgan 2).

Despite the fact that the British role in deposing Mossadaq was little in comparison to the US role, it is worth mentioning. It would have been difficult for the CIA to depose Mossadaq without the British extended presence in Iran, which was critical in giving the CIA and Washington with political and economic assistance and intelligence on Iran. Because the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company represented Britain as a symbol of world economic dominance and imperialism, Britain's secret service was always eager to remove Mossadaq. When he planned to nationalize Iran's oil industry, however, Britain decided against pursuing world economic supremacy since this would allow Iran to profit from Iran's natural resources rather than Britain. In other words, nationalization of Iran's oil will not serve the British interests and will give more self-control to Iran in regards of its economy (Morgan 3-4).

1.3. The Post-Coup Period

The Shah controlled the country via a very dictatorial system that was supported by the US in the next three decades of Shah Reza's leadership. Thirty thousand people were hired in nuclear industries and most of them were abused, with the Iranian National Intelligence and Security Organization killing thousands of Iranian adversaries by the Shah

tyrannical dictatorship. By obtaining control of Iranian oil and shifting British shareholdings to US firms, the US profited from its participation in Iran. The Iranians did not, on the other hand, benefit from government change or get the advantage of the natural resources of their nation, since the Shah family and relatives were the only ones who benefitted from Iran's wealth (Wise 2).

1.4. Reasons behind the Fall of the Shah

In 1960, when the Shah had total control of the region, one of the main and evident reasons of his fall was that he wanted to create a wonderful picture of his nation overseas by staging major and various celebrations in the period from 1971 through 1978. Those extravagant and dramatic events greatly harmed the Shah and the magnificent history of the Persian Republic of Iran as they were heavily compensated with the Iranian government treasury for pompous ceremonies while poverty continued to expand in the nation (Wise 3).

Most Iranians who began to despise the Shah more and more did not benefit from the Shah's regime. The Shia clergy in Iran leveraged the anti-Shah consciousness since the Shah had transformed the national calendar from a normal Islamic nation to a pre-Islamic one. The Mullah was also unhappy when Shah changed its name from "Muhammad" to old pre-Islamic Persian name of "Aryamehz", not all that Shah did, but he also ensured that Zoroastrian elements-an ancient's religion were included and that new proverbs had been included into the Iranian National song (Wise 3-5).

The fact that in the 1970s the Shah got very close to America and was happy to cooperate with the US Government was another critical factor for his overthrow; in fact he was considered a major ally to the US. As a result, the Iranians were highly dissatisfied with this closeness between the two nations; this was a key cause for loathing the Shah even more, particularly throughout 1970 (Daniel 165).

In 1976, the Shah possessed, according to Daniel, over 3 000 tanks and 890 attack helicopters, 200 sophisticated fighter aircraft, 9, 000 anti-tank missiles in the greatest flotilla of hovercraft any country, and more than 200 aircraft on-board or on-order (165). There was clearly enough oil to spend on turning Iran into a regional and a worldwide military nation. This annoyed the anti-Shah who perceived him as relying on US aid, commerce and assistance. The last and most important cause of the shah's downfall was the US-dependent Shah policy, which upset Iran's most renowned religious figure, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. This provides Iranians with greater confidence in launching a revolution (Wise 4).

1.5. The Islamic Revolution of 1979

Tensions started to form in Iran as a result of two decades of Shah's tyranny, which relied so heavily on US funding, in addition to US supremacy and its harsh policy. During this time, for some opponents of the dictatorship, society changed significantly and modernized quickly. Furthermore, the Iranian people grew up in a world of tyranny and corruption, and they were well aware that their condition was directly related to that of the United States. As a result, they took to the streets, forming an enraged mass of Iranians to demonstrate against the Shah's reign, yelling "Death to the American Shah," "Death to America," and other slogans. Eventually, they become aware that the Shah is driving Iran out of the Islamic path (Kinzer 202).

Throughout the country there was such dissatisfaction with three major revolutionary functions that spoke against the Shah: women, students and religious reformers. As for women, they have been involved in marches and guerilla campaigns to fight the authority of the Shah. In addition to protest by women, university, national and international students, they were intellectuals of diverse political beliefs, and they were named "The Confederation of Iranian Students". Almost all of them had concerns against the Shah, including low admission rates to law schools, poor university education, inadequate housing, and awful living

circumstances (Keddie 218). The protests caused death to many Iranians, while the Shah's military attempted to break the masses and prevent public gatherings to abort the revolution; however, this was not strong enough to hold hundreds of thousands of rebels from marching in Tehran ("New York Times").

Ayatollah Khomeini represented guidance and a leader for the rebellion against the Shah's regime. Therefore, Revolutionaries of women and groups of students joined with Khomeini's revolutionary religious opposition. When the opponents became the leaders of the revolution, numerous parties of Iranians were formed: middle-class, former National Front, laborers and guerrillas. The purpose was to overthrow Mohammad Reza and create a new government in favor of the Iranian public. Khomeini vowed to not personally control Iran together with the religious reformers. According to Khomeini, the government was responsible for four main jobs: enforcing Muslim law, destroying corruption and establishing rights for the oppressed, eradicating falsified governments and preventing the interventions of foreign nations in Islamic countries (Wise 5).

Khomeini, a strongly anti-Western and religious personality, was banished for fifteen years following the overthrow of Mossadegh because of his resistance to the Shah, was the most popular religious figure in Iran. His exile by the Shah to Paris was thought to be effective to prevent his powerful anti-Shah rhetoric, yet, the world media succeeded in covering the events happening in Paris. Khomeini, the Islamic fundamentalist, criticized the Shah's policy the influence of USA and the secularization of Iranian society. Khomeini had begun calling for the Shah's removal in order to be replaced by an Islamic person who could administer the country according to Islamic law. Eventually, his movement grew strongly due to the military support he gained (Jones 8-9).

Because the Shah could not keep control of the situation, he summoned the SAVAK, police, and army to put an end to any civil disorder, but it did not succeed. The Shah awaited

instructions from the United States how he would react, but no response came. Because the United States refused to provide him with any more backing or assistance that would allow him to reclaim power, he had no choice but to escape Iran and seek shelter in Egypt. President Jimmy Carter permitted the Shah to enter the United States for medical treatment shortly after, for his need for cancer treatment (Morgan 5).

In January 1979 the Shah was thrown into exile, allowing Ayatollah Khomeini to return to Iran and take control successfully. Together with a 15-member Islamic Revolutionary Council a temporary government was established and Iran was declared an Islamic Republic on 1 April (Jones 8).

1.5.1. Reaction of the U.S

America continued to back the Shah with military assistance and weaponry during the instability in Iran in 1978 to retain him in power. For many reasons, the United States opposed Khomeini. Initially, Khomeini promised to restrict or remove western influence in Iranian politics and relations if he took power, since this was one of his main goals (Wise 6).

The United States was also worried about a shift in economic relations, paying particular attention to oil, if Iran fell to the Islamists. A further reason for the United States's opposition to the Khomeini administration was that the Communist Party in Iran (Tudeh) backed the revolution. This Party was dissolved by Mohammad Reza, but members were eager to cooperate with Khomeini if he will create a new Iranian government. The United States considered the communist party a possible threat that may widen the Soviet hegemony. Thus, the US officials felt an urgent need to restrain Soviet authority and control over Iran (Dutter 25).

Using Iran as an ally, the U.S. aimed to develop an interdependence in which Iran needed American support in order to become a power. The US leaders tried to retain a strong relationship with Iran because of its interests after the arrival of Khomeini and the

revolutionary movement in 1979, but they were unsuccessful. The US and Iran ties would never be steady, and Iran would have been more anti-American (Sheikhneshin 96).

1.6. Iran under Khomeini

Since the beginning, Ayatollah Khomeini made his intentions clear toward the United States which stood against his revolution. Consequently, his hostility included each country with good connections with the US; he intended to drive the Iranian-American relations to an end. The United States was perceived by Khomeini as a greedy nation that misused Iran's resources and earnings, pushing the Iranians to engage in such a bloody revolution. He was ready to jeopardize his economy only to blunt Western influence in Iran, declaring that "neither the West nor the East will interfere in Iran, and it is considered an anathema to the Persian Gulf countries" (qtd in. Sreedhar 59).

The United States was blamed for all the problems in Iran and all the costs of the revolution, as well as the misuse of the country's oil wealth, since it had dominance over the country through its puppet the Shah. Iranians considered the United States and, to a lesser extent, the Soviet Union as the world's twin lords and exploiters. The Iranian revolution would serve as a model for many other revolutions throughout the Third World, notably in Islamic nations, aimed at shaking up the Iranian system. Furthermore, the United States had no other option but to follow a diplomatic path with the new leader of Iran, in order to prevent the Soviet Union from taking over Iran. However, Khomeini said that Iran's nationalism had no direct relation with the US. Consequently, his regime was highly criticized by the American Congress that put his name on the table of discussion under the name the Great Satan (Rubin 308).

Khomeini also believed that the West, notably the US, has been committed, via the introduction of western culture and products, to a systematic attempt to weaken Iran's dominant ideologies concerning using nuclear weapons for national security. They seized

Iran's petroleum wealth in exchange. Nevertheless the Islamic Revolution was prepared to pay any price to defeat it. Indeed, as the Ayatollah repeatedly declared it was the spiritual and anti-materialistic movement, it would take huge risks to attain its goal and incur immense losses. "All the problems of the East stem from those foreigners from the West, and from America at the moment. All our problems come from America," said Khomeini (qtd. in Rubin 313-314). He thought that the United States was the sole source of Iran's problems, and as a result of his attitude and beliefs, relations between the two countries continued to deteriorate (Rubin 314). The elimination of US containment, changes in oil policy, a shift in the US-Iran arms sale deal, US rejection of Iran's "lack" of human rights, the Iranian hostage crisis, and eventually the US embargo on Iran are the six events, according to Alvin Rubenstein (599).

1.6.1 Containment

Iran was an ally against communism, which was the primary threat of America's cold war before the Islamic revolution. Khomeini released his country from the American chains after his great revolution. He allowed pro-Moscow party to resurface in Iran and made steps in favor of the Soviet Union. Iran was a key location for the United States to spy on the Soviet Union. As a result of the Islamic revolution, the United States lost such privilege. When Khomeini took over the government, he shut down two intelligence collection centers run by Americans. One ran close to the Soviet Union's border near Bandar Shah, and the other was in Kabkam. This move by Khomeini teased the American leaders when he passed the privilege of spying from U.S to the Soviet Union (Rubenstein 599-601).

1.6.2 Oil Policy

Prior to the Islamic Revolution, Iran used to strike economic deals and agreements concerning Iran's oil exportation with various countries, such as, the United States, Israel, and North Africa. However, after the 1979 Revolution, El Khomeini created new path and reform concerning this matter. The new Iranian leader brought new plan to eliminate any western

hegemony in Iran especially in terms of its economy. The idea was to make an independent control over the Iranian oil revenues and exportations. In other words, El Khomeini sought to have direct relations with the countries which buy oil from Iran without any interference from other western companies (Ebrahimi et al 65-66).

When Iran initially lowered its oil supplies in December, international oil prices had increased by about 50%. Oil companies in the United States paid OPEC around \$30 per barrel of crude oil. This price was more than ten times more than what was paid just one year earlier, in 1970. This new oil strategy marked a turning point in Iran's economy. Iran began to reap more benefits from its oil industry, while the United States was obliged to pay higher prices for foreign oil. As a result, policymakers in the United States have tried to minimize reliance on foreign oil and enhance energy efficiency (Wise 9).

1.6.3. Arms Sales

The flow of armaments from the US to Iran lasted many decades, when the Shah was in power, which strengthened US's economy by billions of dollars. Therefore, Khomeini also sought to damage the U.S. economy by canceling US arms-selling to Iran along with reducing the oil capacity. In 1979, he formally banned US weaponry acquisitions totaling seven billion dollars. His activities show the dramatic transformation of the two countries' economic policy ("Chicago Daily Tribune"). Under the Shah, in 1978, US armament sales to Iran reached at 4,500,000,000 dollars. It decreased to zero the next year and the trade continued to be very small through the 1980s (Kinsella). Eventually, the United States was obliged to look for new buyer for its arms to save its economy from collapsing.

1.6.4. Human Rights

US leaders had backed the Shah's harsh policies in order to keep him in power. However, after the Islamic revolution, the US-Iranian relations started to decline. The obvious sign of this decline is when the U.S took back its support for Iran and its negative criticism for

the government of Khomeini. His attitudes were considered inhuman; for instance, the American leaders voiced their anger with Mohammed Reza Shah's condemnation to death as protestors held "Death to Shah". As result, the Senate supported overwhelmingly a resolution condemning these activities. Officials also showed dissatisfaction with Khomeini and Islamic clerical leaders for the overthrow of Mohammad Reza. The US replies clearly indicate that America has supported the Shah significantly more than ever before (Grayson 165).

1.6.5. Hostage Crisis

The deterioration of Iran-US ties reached a pinnacle toward the end of 1979. During this period, President Jimmy Carter allowed Reza Shah to enter the United States for cancer treatment. Consequently, on 4 November, Iranians took over the American embassy in Tehran and kidnapped more than 70 Americans. Carter's administration was damaged by the hostage crisis, which lasted 444 days due to support by Khomeini. For many reasons, he approved the act against the United States. Mainly, he and his clerics thought that through the US embassy in Tehran, America was attempting to overthrow the Shah's administration (Rubin 315).

To demonstrate Iran's independence and defiance to American dominance, Khomeini continued to allow his militants to retain the detainees. He recommended that the US apologize for all prior exploitation and restore Iran's money in exchange for peace; however, US authorities rejected this requests (Rubin 316).

As the chess match continues, in 1980, Carter tried twice to negotiate an agreement, but both times failed. The situation persisted, and Khomeini offered a second invitation for reconciliation, requiring the US to return Iran's resources and the royal family's money, as well as an announcement that it would no longer intervene in Iranian affairs, but the US again rejected the offer. After that, Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980. Despite the fact that the US pretended to be neutral in the fight, Khomeini blamed the US for the invasion. Mohammad Musavi Khomini, a member of the Majles hostage committee said, "How can one

meet a criminal who for long years exploited our Muslim nation and imposed the Pahlavi dictatorship on it? As for now, the United States is actually in a state of war with us” (qtd. in Keddie 251). Iran directly accused the US for being the main reason why Iraq attacked it, and only pretending for being neutral in this case.

Khomeini offered a third proposal to solve the conflict in December 1980, while he maintained his strong stand toward the United States. The terms were harsh: America would have to provide Iran \$24 billion in exchange for its frozen assets and the money of the royal family. The US declined, and Carter’s reelection campaign suffered as a result of the situation. After his firm conditions, Khomeini forced the US to accept all his terms. By 20 January, 1981, Carter left office, and the agreement was reached when Iran freed the hostages. Meanwhile, the United States restored 11 billion dollars from Iran’s frozen assets, authorities said that they would not engage in Iran’s affairs, and the royal family’s money would be blocked that Iran could strive to recover that cash through the US court. Eventually, the situation has widened the gap between the two countries. Americans became unhappy over the mistreatment of the hostages, which strengthened the anti-American feeling of Khomeini supporters (Rubin 321-323).

1.6.6. US Embargo

The US broke down all political relations with Iran during the 1980 hostage crisis, and President Carter signed Executive Order No. 12170, saying:

I hereby order blocked all property and interests in property of the Government of Iran, its instrumentalities and controlled entities and the Central Bank of Iran which are or become subject to the jurisdiction of the United States or which are in or come within the possession of control of persons subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

As stated above, Carter clearly draws the cut line between Iran and his country; his government has no more interest in the Iranian one. The immediate impact of the Islamic revolution on US-Iran relations predicted diplomacy between the two countries over the next few decades. Since Carter, every American president has maintained the trade embargo against Iran (Keddie 248). The United States has a total blanket embargo against Iran nothing comes in, nothing goes out.

Since the revolution and its aftermath, negative American-Iranian relations have persisted alongside the trade boycott. This decline can be seen in a variety of ways. For example: when Khomeini backed Shia Muslims who bombed western embassies in Kuwait in 1983. Iranians used rioting and propaganda to demonstrate their anti-American feeling in the late 1980s. The US and Iran today exchange ambassadors, but diplomacy is not as easy as it was during the time of Mohammad Reza. American Presidents and law still prohibit nearly every trade with Iran. In addition to continuing the embargo on Iran, President Barack Obama has also imposed some Iranian individual sanctions.

These trade restrictions are designed not to affect the Iranian public but the Iranian leaders because they do not meet certain standards. As long as Iran will not withdraw its support for terrorism, recognize the independence of Israel, raise standards for human rights, or reveal considerable information on its nuclear program, these restrictions will last (“US Treasury Department”).

When it comes to the American-Iranian connection, there have been numerous crucial events throughout history, but the most essential one that should be highlighted is the Islamic revolution in 1979. In terms of diplomatic and economic interchange, these two countries have experienced the biggest changes. Khomeini's emergence to power put an end to good ties. He encouraged, encouraged, and welcomed any anti-American sentiments, protest, and

terrorist activities, in addition to removing American influence from Iran. This is in direct opposition to Iran's former president, Mohammad Reza.

Chapter two

Journey of Iranian Nuclear Exploration

In recent years, worldwide headlines have focused on Iran's contentious nuclear program. American officials have been working non-stop to persuade or force Iran to limit its nuclear activities, particularly its enrichment of uranium and the development of full nuclear fuel cycle capabilities. Iranian nuclear power facilities and nuclear weapons would be able to run on the amount of fuel. All of Iran's nuclear progress has been slowed by talks, crippling economic and political sabotage, and military threats, among other factors (Vaez and Sadjadpour 1).

2.1. Historical overview of Iran's nuclear program

In the 1950s, Iran's nuclear program was launched. Iranian nuclear weapons development has been a source of US worry since the mid-1970s. Current proliferation concerns stem from Iran's building of uranium enrichment facilities using gas centrifuges. They can generate both low-enriched uranium (LEU) and highly-enriched uranium (HEU), which can be used in nuclear power reactors, and HEU, which is used in nuclear weapons. Iran has had a substantial nuclear program since the 1970s. By 1994, Iran was intended to have completed ten to twenty nuclear reactors and produced more than 20,000 megawatts of nuclear electricity. Bushehr is building a light-water reactor, and uranium enrichment and refining are being acquired for use in the project (Kerr et al.).

In 1957, Iran's nuclear program began to take shape by striking a deal with Iran under President Dwight Eisenhower Atoms for Peace initiative in 1957, Washington. The American Machine and Foundry Company built a 5 megawatt (MW) reactor for \$1 million in Iran's first power station at Tehran University. Iran received 5.15 kg of highly enriched uranium from an American corporation. Initially, the reactor was not active for a year until in November 1967. Tehran started a succession of major nuclear projects under Reza Shah Pahlavi's

administration, commencing with the building of civil nuclear infrastructure. Despite its contribution to Iran's modernization, the Shah's nuclear program alarmed Washington because of its scope and some of its objectives. Despite his protests, the Shah's administration was interested in reprocessing plutonium and insisted on the right to do so. The United States finally gave Iran a nuclear reactor in 1967. Two years after signing, Iran's parliament formally approved the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Tehran signed a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1974, and the deal was finalized in 1975. Accompanied by Akbar Etemad, a reactor physicist educated in France and Switzerland, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran was founded (Vaez and Sadjadpour⁴).

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was signed on July 1, 1968, the purpose of this international treaty is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, as well as to encourage cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to advance the goal of nuclear disarmament and universal and complete disarmament. According to Paul Kerr's book *Iran's Nuclear Program*. It was approved in 1970; as a result, Iran's uranium enrichment and nuclear fuel manufacturing capabilities were boosted. The Shah also sought to purchase nuclear reactors from the United States and Western Europe, but U.S. administrations refused to authorize the sales without restrictions that limited his ability to employ U.S.-supplied resources. A resolution was introduced by Tehran in 1974, asking for a nuclear-weapons-free zone to be set up in the Middle East. Unaware of this fact, U.S. intelligence reports from the mid-1970s expressed concern that Iran may pursue nuclear weapons development. Yet Department of State draft report in 1981 suggested that Iran may develop nuclear weapons in reaction to an Iraq nuclear weapons program, even though Iran was not one of many nations identified in the paper as having "near to medium term proliferation concerns."

There are a multitude of reasons given by the Iranian government and official media as to why Iran is interested in nuclear technology. That is has a continual need for energy in Iran, and oil at today's market prices is too expensive to be sold on the Iranian market, especially with fuel subsidies. A variety of justifications are used by Iran, however, the real reason was that the Iranian nuclear weapons should be granted to Iran because Iraq was on that path in the past and may be again in the future; because Israel, India, and Pakistan already have nuclear weapons and pose a threat to Iran (Yaphe and Lutes 3).

Iranian nuclear program intends to be highly sophisticated for only civilian purposes. Iran believes that nuclear energy is essential for improving the country's energy security, as well as for exporting its huge oil and gas deposits. Your whole nuclear fuel cycle must be managed so that you are not reliant on other countries to supply your reactors. As part of its nuclear fuel program, Iran aims to become its own primary nuclear fuel There have been doubts raised about what Iran's goals are because of the magnitude of its nuclear program and its unwillingness to share it to Western inspectors (Jones 108).

However, by the overthrow of the Shah in the revolution of 1979, which brought the Islamic government of Ayatollah Khomeini; all the Iranian nuclear programs were suspended. Tehran planned to restart its nuclear program and rebuild nuclear facilities in 1982, according to a CIA report. The Iranian nuclear program could not be restarted until 1991, despite international restrictions on nuclear materials and technologies. Iran had just recovered from the Iraq War in the early 1990s, and its nuclear program was once again progressing. Since then, Iran has intensified its nuclear program, while concealing several of its nuclear sites, according to the United Nations (Jones 110).

Stressing the fact that the relationships between the United States and Iran witnessed a remarkable change, Iran shifted its interest to Russia to struck deals concerning its nuclear programs. For the completion of one of the reactors, Iran and Russia announced \$800 million

contract in January 1995. Iran and the Russians also reached an agreement on the supply of uranium fuel for the reactor, as well as the training of Iranian employees to run the reactor. However, due to incompatibility between the German design and the intended Russian facilities, the project has been delayed. In January 2005, Russia and Iran signed a deal on the repatriation of spent fuel rods from the Bushehr reactor to Russia for reprocessing and storage. Their devotion to each other was sealed in 1995 (Jones 111).

After a hidden gas centrifuge enrichment plant at Natanz was discovered in 2003, Iran's nuclear program began. France, Germany and the United Kingdom came to a deal with Iran on uranium enrichment and heavy water reactors in October of that year. All enrichment and reprocessing operations in Iran were temporarily halted, and Iran signed the IAEA Additional Protocol to its treaty obligations. Moreover, Iran was forced to sign an extra agreement in September 2003 as a result of this and international pressure. Consequently, Iran was compelled to grant IAEA access to its nuclear facilities in addition to stopping uranium enrichment. It was claimed in 2004 that Iran was still producing parts and materials that might be utilized in the production of nuclear weapons. According to the same report, there is also continuous evidence that Iran deceived inspectors with several of its early assertions, particularly in regards to where it obtained crucial components (Kerr et al 1).

Tehran maintained its "inalienable right" to enrich uranium on its own land. After the Security Council issued Resolution 1737 and 1774 on 2006 and 2007, international sanctions against Iran were instituted. This was the start of a mutual escalation cycle. Therefore, with the construction of 3,000 centrifuges at Natanz, Iran declared a few weeks later that it had achieved industrial-scale uranium enrichment capabilities (Vaez and Sadjadpour 11).

Iran made a clear cut that it will proceed with the development of its nuclear plans despite the restraints imposed by the United States and its allies, as the supreme leader Khamenei announced :

We, the Iranian people, within the borders of our country, will cut off any hand that harms our scientific, natural, human, or technological interests. We will cut off the hand that is sent to invade and work against our people interests. We will do this with no hesitation. . . . If the enemy has the audacity to harm and invade, our blows against it will not be limited to the borders of our country. . . . If someone harms our people and invades, we will endanger his interests anywhere in the world. (qtd. in Yaphe and Lutes 33)

Khamenei explicitly threatens that his government will not hesitate to use its power against any country which may attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of Iran. His words were wisely chosen to prove that his country is qualified enough to harm any country in the world no matter how powerful and far that country is using nuclear arms, and making any implicit reference to the United States.

In this case, the American government let with only two options, it either to do something to prevent Iran's capabilities, or accept it. Iran's domestic political considerations will determine whether the United States will eventually tolerate a nuclear-armed Iran in the same manner that it has accepted a nuclear-armed South Asia. A strategy to limit Iran's nuclear weapons capability or to alter the Iranian government might be created by the United States and other countries. Tehran's leadership might change the course of events in dealing with a nuclear-armed Iran if it were ready to engage Washington on matters of mutual interest. A comprehensive deterrence strategy and diplomatic and economic engagement are needed to tolerate an Iran that has a nuclear weapons program (Yaphe and Lutes 34).

2.2. Ambitions behind Iran's Acquisition of a Nuclear Program

The United States imposed worldwide sanctions on Iran in an effort to bring down the Iranian regime and prevent it from developing nuclear weapons. Iranians are being victimized by sanctions and becoming more patriotic and anti-American as a consequence. The main

reason of the sanctions is Iran's uranium enrichment program. According to Reza Saiedi, an Iranian-American writer who spoke to the American Free Press, sanctions have made Iranians more nationalistic and angry of the West than they were before. People are urging the government to pursue nuclear weapons development because they feel they are being targeted for death (Papaherakles).

The hostile and insecure environment is not cited by Iran when questioned about its nuclear aspirations, energy, and weapons. It is made clear in the Iranian country media that Iran is not a danger to regional security and would never threaten or influence its neighbors. As for the Iranian government, it says it is entitled to possess these advanced weapons and will utilize them to benefit its neighbors as well as the world. Iran's past conflict with Iraq, on the other hand, has had a significant influence on the country's defense goals. The Iranian government stood against the fact that the United States and its allies ignored many countries with nuclear weapons and point its efforts only to Iran (Yaphe and Lutes 3). Iranians still experience a sense of isolation, which they refer to as "strategic loneliness," one year and a half after the Iraq war ended. They think that their nuclear capabilities and their total self-reliance in nuclear research and industry is the only option to maintain Iranian territorial integrity, restore Iranian pride and secure Iranian political survival (Yaphe and Lutes 4).

In order to fully understand Iran's motivations for gaining nuclear weapons, it is necessary to understand the Iranian government's security aims. It appears that Iran's authorities believe that their most pressing concerns are not external threats, but rather local and domestic opposition groups. When it comes to protecting the Islamic regime, the Iranian leadership has greater concern about opposition groups such as the mujahedin in Iraq than any potential US assaults. Iran's unique security motives for nuclearization are neither urgent nor overpowering, but they are not negligible either. But, when it comes to the mujahedin's local security threat in Iraq, nuclear weapons are not particularly useful (Hanna).

2.3. The Nuclear Program under the Shah: Cooperation with the US

In his article, Tharoor said that the United States signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with Iran in 1957, and that the United States sent economic and military help to Iran, which pushed Tehran to develop a nuclear program. As part of the initiative, the United States would provide research reactors, materials, and scientific experience to growing areas eager to utilize the potential of nuclear energy. The Shah's military progressed with the help of the United States. Garry Samore asserted that the U.S. had already purchased the most weapons from Iran in 1969. Aside from that, the United States established a unique and unparalleled policy with the Iranian leadership, called the Twin Pillar policy (22). As one of the most important defenders of US interests in the Middle East, Shah was rewarded with the right to establish a nuclear program in Iran.

For many years, the United States committed to supply Iran with nuclear reactor technology under the Atomic for Peace agreement, which was signed on March 5, 1957 between Iran and the United States. United States permitted for technical support, the loan of several kilograms of enriched uranium, and collaboration in the quest for peaceful applications of nuclear energy under this agreement. The Iranian nuclear program was limited to peaceful reasons and only during the agreement's period. As a result, Iran's capability progressively increased over the next two decades, and it possessed the most technologically sophisticated, and the best trained military in the Persian Gulf region (Ramazani 109). "Iran had the fourth-largest air force and the fifth-largest military on the globe" (Wise 3).

As a result of American military help, the Iranian Air Force had extremely proficient English speakers, and their pay was dependent on their ability to speak English effectively. In the late 1970s, American president Jimmy Carter welcomed the Shah in the United States and lauded him for raising Iran into a powerful, stable, and progressive nation. He said, "Under

the Shah's brilliant leadership Iran is an island of stability in one of the most troublesome regions of the world. There is no other state figure that I could appreciate and like more" (qtd. in Wise 7)

Even the foreign policy team at Carter's administration was convinced that the Shah's measures directly benefitted the United States, noting its benefits to both America and Middle East, as well as the fact that he offered economic assistance in his region and was a stable oil supply for Israel (Bill 233). Iran's strategic importance was reinforced by President Carter in his letter to the Shah, as well as the U.S. consensus that Iran and the United States had separate mutual objectives that served the national interest of both nations (Schmitz 81-82).

Carter visited Tehran on January 1, 1978, and the two nations agreed to a nuclear deal in which Iran pledged to preserve the Non-Proliferation Treaty's (NPT) criteria and the United States guaranteed the reprocessing of nuclear fuel in exchange for Iran's assurance. A year later, in 1978, the United States and Iran Nuclear Energy Agreement (NEA) was signed to promote collaboration and regulate Iran's nuclear program's exports and transfers of equipment. Promoted assistance was intended to pressure Iran towards developing nuclear weapons. While this was going on, the Shah was overthrown in 1979, and the situation remained unchanged. As a result of this strain, the Iranian-American relationship eventually broke down. This tension was named "The Blowback" (Kibaroglu 214).

As the name implies, blowback refers to unexpected implications of American foreign policy and intervention programs. A nation reaps what it sows in a larger sense, as Johnson argues in his book *Blowback*; knowing this idea and the coup stated previously may plainly demonstrate why Shah was removed (Johnson 13).

Remember that the Iran-Iraq conflict began with the downfall of the Iranian government in order to work on its nuclear program. A nuclear weapon would be a violation of Islamic values, according to Khomeini. The fact is that Saddam Hussein utilized chemical

warfare weaponry against Iranian forces several times, which was illegal. In time, Iran became increasingly concerned about its future, its security, and its stability and it began to incentivize its military service by increasing its nuclear program. During the Bush administration, Iran was categorized as a "axis of evil," while Iraq, another "axis of evil" country, was attacked and its government overturned. Iran's regime is not really satisfied about it. Because Saddam Hussein lacked genuine deterrent weapons, the Bush administration attacked Iraq and deposed his regime, according to Iranian officials (Dorraj 326).

This decision prompted the U.S. administration to impose a military embargo on Iran because President Reagan feared that Iran might misappropriate it. A nuclear embargo was put in place as a result. He also tried to convince several nations in Europe that Iran's nuclear program was not worth cooperating with anymore (Samore and Einhorn 52). The truth remains, however, that despite U.S. efforts to slow down Iran's nuclear program, Iran was able to develop its nuclear weapons because it violated and broke the Reagan's Embargo in order to improve its security. This initiative was started by President Eisenhower as part of his "Atoms for Peace" goal, which was intended to be utilized for peaceful reasons exclusively. As a result, the United States laid the groundwork for Iran's nuclear program by themselves (Samore and Einhorn 54).

4. The Bush Administration's Policy

According to Kenneth Pollack, a former senior analyst at the National Security Council of the United States, Iran was almost at the bottom of George W. Bush's foreign policy priority list when he was elected president in 2000, and that little attention was paid to this country during his campaigns and his first years in office (343-345). After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, this ignorance changed, and both nations' governments had to make significant decisions regarding their relationship (John 123-124).

4.1. September 11 Attacks

This incident, commonly known as 9/11, was a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks on the United States by the Islamic terrorist group Al-Qaeda during the start of Bush's presidency. The assaults claimed the lives of 2,996 people and injured over 6000 others; the financial impact was high since the attack targeted the World Trade Center Complex in New York City, as well as the Pentagon. The attack on Virginia and the White House in Washington resulted in massive structural damage. The Americans' reaction to the incident was intense, and their president, George W. Bush, gave his speech to prevent any threat to their security (Keys).

4.2. Axis of Evil

In a speech on January 29, 2002, President Bush clearly characterized Iran as a clear danger to international security because of its support for terrorism and nuclear ambitions. Bush referred to Iran as a member of the "Axis of Evil." It was one of three nations – along with Iraq and North Korea – that supported terrorist organizations and was generally suspected of seeking nuclear weapons. President Khatami condemned the terrorist assault on behalf of the Iranian people and the Islamic Republic, expressing great sorrow for the American people, while Bush, on the other hand, was considering beginning a war on terror. He said that the international community would not accept the building of nuclear weapons in Iran and that he would do everything in his power to combat terrorism and prevent nuclear proliferation (Dietrich 123-124). He made a number of decisions that expanded on his presidential ideology and policy alternatives, Bush said:

After 9/11, I developed a strategy to protect the country that came to be known as the Bush Doctrine: First, make no distinction between the terrorists and the nations that harbor them—and hold both to account. Second, take the fight to the enemy overseas before they can attack us again

here at home. Third, confront threats before they fully materialize. And fourth, advance liberty and hope as an alternative to the enemy's ideology of repression and fear. (Bush 370)

The European Union (EU) nations quickly began discussions to end their nuclear cooperation with Iran after Bush made this statement. Despite the Europeans' efforts to halt Iran's nuclear enrichment program, Iran pursued its goal, leading to a cooperative relationship between Europe and the United States in order to negotiate over Iran's nuclear program. The Bush administration proceeded to impose various economic and military sanctions, as well as the threat of military invasion on Iran, which was often utilized, but Iran did not respond (Arslan 98).

However, it should be noted that in Bush's final year in office, following the election of Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005, the US reversed its position and entered into several negotiations with Iran through the EU and P5+1 (permanent five members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) because the new president wrote to Bush proposing a "new way" to end Iran's nuclear program. He also invited him to a discussion at the United Nations General Assembly to discuss Iran's right to enrich uranium, but the US White House declined the invitation (Charbonneau and Hafezi). To summarize, ties between the two countries remained hostile toward the end of the Bush administration. After all, President Barack Obama's victory would signal yet another shift in US policy toward Iran.

Chapter three

Obama's New Beginning toward Iran: Triumph of Diplomacy and Engagement

Foreign policymakers in the United States have long sought regional stability in the Middle East. The Suez Canal, which connects the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, as well as the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean via the Strait of Hormuz, are among the largest waterways for both commercial and military naval vessels. Furthermore, since the 1973 oil embargo, the US has acknowledged the strategic importance of Middle Eastern energy supplies. As a result, regional stability is a top concern for American diplomats.

Iran may potentially become the first Islamic country in the Middle East to acquire nuclear weapons, according to some estimates, for Iran is the Middle East's most formidable military power. Therefore, Tehran is crucial to restricting Western dominance in the Middle East. American national security and international stability may be gravely jeopardized as a result of Middle East nuclear weapons proliferation. Iranian nukes may lead to the proliferation of rival nuclear initiatives in many surrounding nations, further upsetting the Middle East's already fragile security equilibrium. Several countries are willing to provide Iran with weapons (N. John).

A superpower, the United States is used to break international treaties, procure illicit weapons and meddle in the affairs of other nations without being penalized for its actions. Most of America's actions have had negative effects for the rest of the globe, notably in Arab Muslim countries. However Americans think they are striving to free the world from evil and spread democracy. In the eyes of the United States, Iran's development of nuclear weapons poses a threat to Middle East stability and global security. They are painted as terrorists who encourage terrorism and destabilize the Middle East and beyond.

Instead of accusing Iran of being weak and unable to protect itself, the United States and its allies blame it of doing so in front of them. It has now been revealed that Iran has an

undisclosed nuclear program. The security of the United States and its allies, as well as the security of the Iranian people, will be seriously compromised if Iran acquires nuclear weapons. This would encourage the country's strong foreign policy, leading to further conflicts with the international community. Iran already has the capability to target US and allied forces in the Middle East and Europe with conventional weapons (Wood 1).

In his speech Obama clarified that the enmity toward his country has shaped Iran's character in part, and their relationship has a stormy past. During the Cold War, the United States was involved with Iran's democratically elected government. Iran has been involved in hostage-taking and violence against U.S. troops and civilians ever since the Islamic Revolution. Historically, this is a well-documented truth. There has been no mistaking that his country is eager to go forward, rather than stay in the past. Now, it does not matter what Iran rejects, but rather what type of future it wants to build (Obama 10).

3.1. Obama in the White House

The United States embarked on a new path of action as soon as Obama took office, based on his responsibility to protect his country and its inhabitants. In his speech in Cairo, he made list of statements where he focused on the issue between his country and Iran. “There will be many issues to discuss between our two countries, and we are willing to move forward without preconditions on the basis of mutual respect...” (qtd. in Castiglion 2). A new foundation for a positive relationship with Iran has been established. After criticizing his predecessor for weakening American leadership and credibility, Barack Obama tried to develop a new approach that was unique from previous administrations after decades of hostility and rivalry. He goes on to say: “We will show the courage to try and resolve our differences with other nations peacefully not because we are naïve about the dangers we face, but because engagement can more durably lift suspicion and fear” (qtd.in Castiglion 2).

Obama sought to pave the way for more diplomatic relationships with Iran; he wanted to make a turning point as far as the boundaries between the two nations are concerned.

He made a clear vision that his policy will try to build a peaceful base with Iran which will work on solving the previous issues and Obama's hand extended to Iran during his inauguration address should be taken into consideration in light of these circumstances. In his address to the people of underdeveloped nations, he stated, "We will extend our hand to you, if you are willing to unclench your fist." He also called out "global leaders who want to create conflict or blame their society's problems on the West." Because of the bad picture that has been painted of the United States by the Bush administration. However, as a hegemon power, the United States was in decline, and unipolarity had been supplanted by multipolarity, undermining the United States' supremacy. Only Washington's inaction in Syria and its efforts to reconcile with Iran on the nuclear issue are cited as evidence of Washington's reluctance to maintain an overstretched hegemony. As a result, the US economy has suffered, while other nations such as China have prospered (Oktav 3-4)

On his part, Obama did his utmost to persuade Iran to engage in a constructive conversation over its nuclear program throughout 2009's first half. When Obama went to Cairo, Ankara and Prague, he made speeches in which he frequently stressed the importance of a new beginning, as well as engaging in mutually beneficial relationships. The Iranian government was persuaded soon after his speech to join the P5+1 delegation in Geneva to negotiate Iran's nuclear program. This was a positive start for both countries (Castiglioni 3-5). China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, collectively known as the P5+1, achieved a deal with Iran following three rounds of negotiations with Tehran's new negotiating team (Davenport).

In reality, Iran did not accept the idea firmly but said it would consider it with the IAEA. Americans recognized that their prior deal did not work since Iran would not accept

IAEA's suggestion, so Obama and several European countries reduced their economic cooperation with Iranian firms, and imposed sanctions on Iran's economy as a result (Castiglioni 8-9). To put it bluntly, despite President Obama's hopes for dialogue and discussion, Iran's enrichment program continued. This ineffective approach was altered by the imposition of economic and political sanctions against the country restricting and sanctioning the Iranian economy.

3.2. Obama's Policy towards Iran during his First Presidential Term

Obama has recognized that the United States would strive to establish the groundwork for a new course in US policy towards Muslims. He also said that their relationship had to progress in order for them to be able to share honestly with one another what they were thinking. As a result of this, the United States must intensify its efforts so that the Muslim nations may engage with her in order to learn from each other and to respect one another. Therefore, Obama insisted on avoiding harsh tension between them. He clearly asserted this in his speech in Cairo:

I seek new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap and share common principles... principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings. (Obama)

President Obama had a clear idea of his foreign policy goals and objectives when he took office in January 2009. When running for president, he promised to restore the United States' international standing States, especially for Muslims; ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; re-establishing relations with Russia as a step towards a world without nuclear weapons; access to Iran; and bring peace and stability to the Middle East. While as president, Obama hoped to make a significant difference in the direction of justice, peace and stability in

the world when Obama was elected in 2008, it was hoped that US policy towards Iran would change, he presented an ambitious plan for the country. A more peaceful and diplomatic approach to create a stable world order was one of Obama's campaign promises. To rebuild America's reputation abroad, Obama sought to rely heavily on negotiation and diplomacy with other nations which had issues with the United States (Indyk et al 29).

3.2.1. Diplomacy and Negotiations

Critics say that the Bush administration's non-negotiation approach was a failure and that a new strategy is needed. As part of the Bush administration's efforts to stop Iran's nuclear program, “non-negotiation” has less to do with actual actions and more to do with the perception of Bush policy. At the time, Democratic presidential contender Barack Obama shared this opinion. “I will also renew the tough, direct diplomacy that can prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons” said President Obama in his 2008 acceptance speech to become the Democratic candidate. He made clear cut that his first attempts concerning the relations with Iran will built on diplomacy and negotiations (Mac Lean 27).

While running for president in 2008, Barack Obama described his administration's strategy on Iran's nuclear program. In his speeches, Obama said that sanctions had failed and that the United States needed a new strategy to Iran that included direct negotiations with no additional conditions. While Bush's government pursued its foreign policy goals with sanctions, Obama had intended to reverse that. During his efforts to repair U.S. international relations, Obama addressed a message to the Iranian people from the White House on March 20, 2009. After admitting that the U.S.-Iran relationship had been strained, Obama said that Nowruz would be an opportunity for the two countries to repair their relations. He stressed that he has a government that is now committed to diplomacy that handles the whole range of problems before them, as well as the promotion of goodwill and healthy relationships between their country and Iran, and Using threats as a deterrent will. It was a bold declaration from a

presidential government that set the standard better in terms of Iran's reintegration into the international community (28).

Obama administration wrote a letter to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei exactly one month before the Iranian presidential election seeking for reconciliation with Iranian government on nuclear problem. While initially dismissing it, the Iranian leader would later mention it in a sermon during the post-election riots, using it as proof to back his claims that foreign forces were working against Iran to undermine the election's legitimacy (MacAskill).

President Obama's approach to negotiations has been met with criticism by the Iranian regime, which has questioned the American intentions. It is important to note that the Iranians were unable to ignore the various complaints of third-world nations against Western supremacy because of their perception of Americans and their imperialist arrogant leaders. In contrast, the Iranian government was certain that the Americans would do more than simply talk in order to restore US-Iran ties and open the door to a flexible negotiation strategy with the country. It should be founded no conflict between Iran's right to enrichment of its nuclear program and the world's right to live in peace (Mac Lean 29-30).

It became obvious after the elections that the next round of diplomacy or conflict would take place under Obama and Ahmadinejad's presidency. Iran and the United States have not been able to come to an agreement on a solution that would meet both sides objectives and aspirations since then (Şen 348). A fresh round of discussions, according to Castiglioni, began in October. In the first dual meeting between the United States and Iran, he put the bargaining approach into action. The "Fuel Swap Deal" was agreed upon during the summit, which stipulated that Iran would send out an equivalent amount of uranium enriched to 4 percent in exchange for a supply of fuel for Tehran's research reactor. The deal was a score for all parties, but the Iranian leadership began to doubt the pact's values and the

absence of guarantees from the United States and the p5+1 (permanent five members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany) after it was signed (5-6).

In this context, Trita Parsi cites the fact that Iran had misgivings about the deal, but that it was unable to address it due to a lack of time provided by the Obama administration. As a result, Obama was under pressure from Congress to impose sanctions (141). Due to the internal pressure, Iran was given a last warning, which resulted to the breakdown of the negotiations. In other words, Iran slammed the door in the face of the United States leaving no room for any kind of discussions (Castinglioni 5).

In order to interfere in the Iranian regime so quickly after Ahmadinejad's election scandal, Obama took a calculated risk. The incident drained Iran's diplomacy to the point of failure in Obama's first year in office. Nowhere was Obama worried about the diplomacy, but rather about the penalties he had been hoping to avoid (Parsi 147). As Maloney Suzanne stated, Tehran has refused a high-profile attempt to engage it in a serious conversation to resolve the nuclear issue and go forward. Instead of diplomatic engagement, Washington has turned to a more coercive strategy that relies on economic pressure. Internationally, the urgency of Tehran's nuclear ambitions is at an all-time high, and this shift occurs in the middle of a dramatic new environment within the Islamic Republic, marked by unprecedented instabilities on the streets and severe tensions among the elites. Sanctions are a logical outcome. The United States has used sanctions on Iran for the past thirty years. In 1979, after Iranian students attacked the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, the United States imposed an economic embargo on Iran, which has been in force since the Clinton administration.

This meant that Obama's foreign policy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran was moving towards sanctions, which turned out to be a major accomplishment of the Obama presidency. A return to the previous administration's policy was highlighted by the adoption of U.S. and international sanctions on Iran. The nuclear problem remained a priority for the

Obama administration. The Obama administration received Russian backing for putting sanctions on the Iranian government through the United Nations Security Council in September 2009. The Chinese, on the other hand, have been hesitant to penalize Iran for breaching prior nuclear-program accords (MacLean 34). Simply to say, it is a fact that president Obama drew a diplomatic zone in order to achieve a common ground with Iran without any need for sanctions or embargos, however, reaily had its own opinion, his plans took another path and he was obliged to reconsider the sanctions.

3.2.2. Sanctions against Iran

President Barack Obama's administration attempted to re-establish contacts with Iran in 2009, immediately after taking office, and to "reach an open hand" to the Iranian leadership. This attempt at involvement had gotten off track by the summer of 2009. Following the 2009 Iranian presidential election, there was a violently suppressed demonstration. As a result, the Obama administration was faced with a decision: to pursue engagement with Iran or to use sanctions and promote democracy to push the government to modify its behavior (MacLean 1).

As a result of Iran's disobedience of international requests to alter course on its nuclear program, President Barack Obama has signed into law legislation passed by Congress to impose severe new sanctions on the Iranian regime. To increase pressure on Iran's leadership, the legislation imposes sanctions on companies that assist the Iranian energy industry, with an emphasis on gasoline and other refined petroleum products. Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corp is also targeted by a measure that prevents American banks from doing business with international institutions that provide services to the Guard. Major Democrats and Republicans in Congress joined the president in supporting the law, which passed by 99-0 and 408-8 majorities in the Senate and House of representatives. In this context Obama said:

With these sanctions, along with others, we are striking at the heart of the Iranian government's ability to fund and develop its nuclear programs. We are showing the Iranian government that its actions have consequences. And if it persists, the pressure will continue to mount, and its isolation will continue to deepen. There should be no doubt-the United States and the international community are determined to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

(qtd in. Dyar)

The purpose behind these sanctions is to weaken the economy of Iran in order to face obstacles feeding its nuclear facilities, stressing the fact that Iran's stubbornness and recklessness led to such penalties. As part of its efforts to encourage Iran to alter direction and comply with non-proliferation commitments, the U.S., the United States Security Council, the European Union, and other individual nations have taken the following actions as sanctions. Therefore, US corporations are already prohibited from doing business or investing in Iran, thus this bill affects international companies as well. In recent years, Iran has built hundreds of additional centrifuges and has denied that its nuclear program is intended at creating nuclear weapons (Dyar).

European Union officials also voted to impose more limitations on Iran's financial and banking sectors, as well as the transportation and energy sectors. The sanctions imposed this summer were harsher than the most recent U.S. actions. Additional sanctions have been implemented in order to increase pressure on Iran to return to international negotiations on its disputed nuclear program. Sanctions on oil firms that sell gasoline to Iran as well as against international institutions that have links to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps or Iran's nuclear program are imposed by the United States. New sanctions, according to Obama, will make it more difficult for Iran to purchase refined petroleum as well as products and services that it needs to upgrade its energy industry, which is a major source of revenue for its

government and economy. The door to negotiations was still open, he added, but the world community would be more pressed on Iran if it continued to ignore UN requests to stop enriching uranium (Colvin).

3.3. Obama's Policy towards Iran during his Second Presidential Term

Eight officials of the Iranian government were sanctioned in September 2010 by an executive order issued by President Obama for their involvement in crimes against humanity in Iran. Many of those featured on the list have previously been sanctioned in the past. When a suicide bombing murdered 39 people in Iran in December 2010, the Iranian authorities accused US support of a group known as Jundollah on the United States. Jundollah was added to the list of foreign terrorist groups by the Obama administration in November 2010 before this occurrence occurred. This led to a break in relations with the group that had previously been supported by the Bush administration. Barack Obama's policies differed from those of his predecessor, however remained similar one year later. International agreement on sanctions was a key objective of the Obama administration. It has also supported legislative efforts to impose sanctions on Iran and promote democracy in the country (Mac Lean 40).

There is a chance to convince Iran to restrict its nuclear program and restore the US-Iran relationship after decades of enmity, according to Obama's strategy. Although the legislature and his Republican opponents and regional allies pressed him to remove the Iranian nuclear threat, rather than engage in negotiation. Iran and the United States' goals are so fundamentally misaligned that discussions cannot work. The United States wants to stop all Iranian enrichment efforts on one side, while Tehran wants to recognize Iran's nuclear rights on the other (Katzman, 19).

It's no different with Iran, where President Obama has committed himself to an effort that may prove challenging without military action, which he surely wants to avoid at any cost. He wants to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. The odds of him attacking the

Iranian military are slim unless there is an urgent military provocation. In terms of the Iranian Supreme Leader, it's unclear if economic sanctions are going to have the desired effect on him in terms of reaching a deal on stopping uranium enrichment. Though it may not entirely eradicate it, a political transition in Iran might have an influence on the environment. While a change in Iran's administration could impact the country's environment, the country's aim to be a nuclear power is unlikely to fade (Dunne 121).

3.4. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

Iran and the P5+1 countries signed an agreement called “Joint Plan of Action” in Geneva that includes a temporary suspension of portions of Iran's nuclear program in exchange for the easing of economic sanctions. Iran agreed not to carry out any more operations and provided the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with further information on its nuclear program. The objective of the Joint Plan of Action (JPA) was to devise a strategy for addressing US and international concerns about Iran’s nuclear program over the long term. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), often known as the Iranian deal or the Iranian nuclear deal, was an international agreement between Iran and the P5+1 on Tehran’s nuclear program. It was consequence of JPA that was ratified on January 20, 2014. The JCPOA would compel Tehran to settle its nuclear reactor interests, desist from reprocessing nuclear fuel, and allow transparent monitoring in return for the constraints. As part of the JCPOA, Iran’s nuclear program would be treated as if it were a non-nuclear nation (Katzman and Kerr 8)

China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the European Union’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Islamic Republic of Iran, has expressed their support for the historic Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) 2015, which will ensure that Iran's nuclear program is exclusively peaceful and marks a significant shift in their attitudes toward nuclear

weapons. As a result, they think that properly executing the JCPOA would help to ensure regional and worldwide peace and stability. Iran will never pursue nuclear weapons, develop them, or get them. Iran expects that the JCPOA would allow it to conduct a completely peaceful, internal nuclear program in agreement with scientific and economic considerations, while also encouraging international collaboration and increasing confidence. In this context, the JCPOA's first mutually negotiated limits will be followed by a realistic transition of Iran's peaceful nuclear program, including enrichment operations, to a commercial program for purely peaceful objectives, in conformity with international nonproliferation standards ("Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action" 2).

Iran will be subject to numerous inspections and verification procedures by the international community over the next fifteen years if the Iran Nuclear Agreement is effectively implemented. Others, however, believe that this conclusion is still better than the pre-Agreement position, when Iran may have been just months away from possessing a nuclear bomb. As a consequence of the continuous inspections and verifications mandated by the Agreement and encouraged by the easing of different international sanctions, it is quite possible that Iran would suspend the creation of nuclear weapons permanently. The Iran Nuclear Agreement is also seen by many as a way for Iran to re-engage in the international arena. A number of economic restrictions that have plagued Iran's economy for decades will be lifted as a result of the Agreement (Sterio 78).

4.1. The implementations of the Agreement

As of January 16, 2016, the Joint Comprehensive Action Plan (JCPOA), which was finalized on July 14, 2015, was officially implemented. According to the IAEA, Iran has implemented the procedures outlined in the JCPOA to harm and eliminate its nuclear capabilities. For example, treasury officials and state department officials took steps to ensure that the United States understood its obligations under the JCPOA, including eliminating a

number of executive orders and issuing general licenses to authorize certain trade and transaction related to foreign entities owned or controlled by the United States. The nuclear deal was adopted by UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which came into force on implementation day of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which was announced by the P5+1. This was one of the terms of the deal. International Atomic Energy Agency authorities confirmed that Iran is adhering to the JPCOA because the IAEA has monitored and regulated Iran's nuclear obligations (Kerr 10).

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