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**The Application of Smart Power in Obama's Approach
to US-Iran Relations.**

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Dedication 1

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

I, proudly, dedicate this humble work to my parents *Yacine* and *Wissem* for their continuous efforts, support, and encouragement.

To my brothers.

To my family and friends. A special thanks and appreciation to my best friend *Nour*, thank you for being my unpaid therapist.

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“To the memory of my dear grandfather.”

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Dedication 2

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First and foremost, I thank **Allah**, the almighty who gave us the strength and courage to fulfill this work.

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“To those who dare to dream even in their darkest day.”

KENNAT Chahinez.

Abstract

To establish a country's strong and successful foreign relations, savvy world leaders have realized that depending solely on either coercive tactics (hard power) or persuasive strategies (soft power) might fail in protecting national interests. As a result, the concept of smart power has become essential. This balanced combination of both forceful and persuasive elements enables leaders to skilfully face the complexities and challenges of international relations. The relations between the United States and Iran have been marked by decades of geopolitical tension; however, there was a notable shift in U.S.-Iran relations after President Barack Obama came into power. The latter alongside his administration applied Smart Power strategies in conjunction with its policies towards Iran. Thus, this study aims to examine the application of smart power in Obama's approach towards US-Iran relations.

ملخص

لإقامة علاقات خارجية قوية وناجحة للبلاد، أدرك القادة العالميون المتمرسون أن الاعتماد فقط على الأساليب القسرية (القوة الصلبة) أو الاستراتيجيات الإقناعية (القوة الناعمة) قد يفشل في حماية المصالح الوطنية. لذلك، أصبح مفهوم القوة الذكية ضروريًا. هذا المزيج المتوازن من العناصر القسرية والإقناعية يمكّن القادة من مواجهة تعقيدات وتحديات العلاقات الدولية بمهارة. كانت العلاقات بين الولايات المتحدة وإيران تتسم بعقود من التوتر الجيوسياسي؛ ومع ذلك، كان هناك تحول ملحوظ في العلاقات الأمريكية الإيرانية بعد تولي الرئيس باراك أوباما السلطة. فقد طبق الأخير وإدارته استراتيجيات القوة الذكية بالتزامن مع سياساته تجاه إيران. بناءً على ذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة تطبيق القوة الذكية في نهج أوباما تجاه العلاقات الأمريكية الإيرانية.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AEOI	Atomic Energy Organization of Iran
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AIOC	Anglo Iranian Oil Company
AMF	American Machine and Foundry
ARMACO	Arabian American Oil Company
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CISADA	Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act
EU	European Union
GOP	Grand Old Party
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles
IRBM	Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile
JPA	Joint Plan of Action
JPOC	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
KGB	State Security Committee
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
MI6	Military Intelligence Section 6
MRBM	Medium Range Ballistic Missile
MW	Megawatt
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIOC	National Iranian Oil Company
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty

NSC	National Security Council
OCPA	Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs
OFAC	Office of Foreign Assets Control
ORHA	Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Aid
RFA	Radio Free Asia
SABIC	Saudi Basic Industries Corporation
TOW	Tube-Launched, Optically-Tracked, Wire-Guided
UFCO	United Fruit Company
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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Introduction

In the international relations, the nation's strength lies in its power and authority. The concept of power is very important as it is seen as the set of tactics used to influence the actions of others. Power is defined as the ability of a powerful nation to influence another less powerful nation. The most known types of power are hard power and soft power. Hard power is an ancient tactic since it was used decades before the world war. It is defined as the use of force, military intervention, and economic punishment in order to intervene in the affairs of others. In the other hand, soft power is known for the use of less harsh tactics as means of influence. It is defined as the ability to attract rather than coerce the opponent to change their preferences through using culture, political values, and foreign policies. Later on, a new strategy was presented to the international scene at the early twenties. Smart power is defined as the smart combination of strategies of hard power and soft power.

In the light of international relations, there have been always tensions and conflict between the states. This dissertation is specified to delve into US-Iran relations. The two states United States and Iran share a long history that dates back to the 19th century. The relations between the two nations are characterised as sophisticated, deep, and multifaceted. These connections are affected by many major events and tensions, which shaped the path of the relations from cooperation to hostility. Initially during the Qajar and the Shah era of governance, the relationship between the two nations was marked by an era of cooperation that extended from the second half of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century. Back at that time both nations had shared interests and each one of them had supplied the other with what it needed; the United States had provided Iran with military aid, and the latter had covered the US need for oil.

After the world war two However, US-Iran relations witnessed notable transformation following instances of US interference in Iran's internal affairs; in particular the coup of the

democratically elected Prime Minister Mohhamed Mossadegh. This major event fuelled the Islamic revolution which was the turning point in US-Iran relations. Furthermore the American hostages which were kidnapped by a group of Iranian militants had exacerbated the situation. Additionally, the succeeding revelations of Iran's deviation from nuclear accords clauses, including the hidden establishment of nuclear weapons under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini leadership lead to an era of hostility that lasted for three decades with no governmental interaction between the two states. However, during Obama's presidency the relations between the two nations marked by a sort of tranquility and improvement.

Throughout his presidential campaign, Barrack Obama delivered many speeches and held many interviews where he emphasized on his desire of change. He inherited a complicated set of global issues and a weak security strategy. Alongside his administration, Obama revealed his new security strategy that he believed it would regain the lost position of the United States as the strongest and the leader of the world. Smart power is centered on the use diplomacy, persuasion, capacity building, and the projection of power and influence. This strategy was illustrated as the combination of the old forms of power, hard and soft. it is like an umbrella term that merges between the cultural and diplomatic influence, as well as the military and economic strength. President Obama believed that the military force alone would only cause more chaos to the world. He emphasized the need of this new smart power strategy to deal with the overwhelming disobedience of the Islamic republic of Iran, since it never took responsibility over its nuclear activities. The international scene was curious on whether Obama will prove that he is a man of his word and bring Iran to the negotiations table, using this combination of tactics, or will he struggle with the rebellion of his opponent and fail the promise of holding talks with Iran.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness or the failure of Obama's foreign policy "Smart Power" towards Iran. Initially,

Through examining the components of “Smart Power”, “Hard power and “Soft Power”, as well as exploring the instances where the United States utilized these strategies, this research contributes better understanding of the importance of the three types of power in the realm of US foreign policy. Additionally, this work intends to shed the light on the complex US-Iran relationship they share over the course of their entire history. By delving into the historical major events that lead to this intricacy, this work aims to give an enhanced comprehension of US-Iran relations and the course of their interactions. Moreover, this study seeks to examine Obama’s new administration aspirations, along with his foreign policy “Smart Power” strategies towards Iran, and explore its success and failure.

The present research provides answers for the following main questions: what is Smart Power strategy? What are its components? And what are its main tactics? Also what are the key events that shaped the course of US-Iran relations? How did President Obama’s apply Smart Power tactics towards Iran? And was Obama’s Smart Power successful or not? The paper aims also to tackle how the United States under Obama’s presidency encountered Iran’s nuclear program the reasons of the consistent shift in US Strategy, and how the country worked to maintain its status as a global dominant power. As well as give a new image for the world that the United States is not a state that relies only on hard power, but rather it is open to dialogues and negotiations even with adversaries. By addressing these research questions, a comprehensive understanding of the US-Iran relations before and during President Obama’s presidency can be achieved.

To accomplish the objectives of the research, a descriptive and analytical method will be employed; the research will draw upon historical analysis, policy documents, scholarly literature, and primary sources to provide a comprehensive and nuanced examination of the topic. Through examining the strategies used by President Obama under the notion of Smart Power, this work sheds the light on the effects of these strategies on US-Iran relations.

A considerable amount of literature has examined the concept of Smart Power. In his book *“Soft Power: The Means to Success in the World of Politics”* Joseph S. Nye introduced the notion of power to the world. He defined smart power as the smart combination of hard and soft power tools, making it an effective strategy. Nye argued that nations cannot survive in the global arena if they depended only on the use of force and the economic strength, or only on persuasion and the means of attraction. Instead, a successful foreign policy requires the merge of both. Nye emphasized on the importance of the intelligence of the nation’s leaders to draw the strengths and the limitations of the different resources, and use them to enhance the national position worldwide.

In her famous article “Smart Power”, published in foreign affairs in 2004, Suzanne Nossel defined the concept of smart power as “the ability to use the right combination of hard and soft power to achieve strategic objectives.” Nossel illustrated that smart power is not just about blending the military and the diplomatic tools, however, it take into consideration the long term impact of its actions on the reputation of the nation.

A large number of books and articles have explored the relations between the United States and Iran. According to Mahmood Monshipouri in his work, *“In the Shadow of Mistrust and Diplomacy of US-Iran Relations”* (2022), US-Iran relations can be traced back to the nineteenth century, the writer emphasized that the present and future of these relations could not be understood apart from their rich and complex history. After the Islamic revolution in 1979, the normalization of the two states relations has appeared uncertain, due to the rise of anti-American ideology since that time. President Barack Obama presidency marked a sort of change in US-Iran relations; the negotiation that the two nations had at that time were a rare moment since 1979. The author proclaimed that the lack of direct diplomatic communications resulted in major barrier to dismantling the wall of distrust between the two countries.

According to the writer, direct Engagement as well as weakening the impression of Iran as a world peace's threat is the way forward.

According to Avery Elizabeth Hurt, in her book entitled "*US-Iran Relation*" (2017), following the Islamic revolution in 1979, particularly after the hostage crisis, the relationship between the two countries has been difficult and even poisonous sometimes. In recent years, in order to halt Iran's nuclear program, the United States worked on engaging in direct talks with Iran. The author stated that some people are optimistic about the US-Iran relation, yet other are not, as well as the writer declared that this relationship has never been easy, and it seemed worth working for.

Enormous number of literature has discussed Barack Obama's new smart power policy. In his book "*The Iran Wars: Spy Games, Bank Battles, and the Secret Deals that Reshaped the Middle East*", Jay Solomon provides a detailed explanation on how president Obama applied smart power in order to succeed in convincing Iran to negotiate the joint comprehensive plan of action (JCPOA), which is known as the Iran nuclear deal. Solomon stated how did Obama smartly combined the economic sanctions as well as the diplomatic negotiations how other allies pressured Iran with additional sanctions, which led to the agreement, and limited the country's nuclear activities in exchange with sanctions relief.

In his book "*Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy*", Trita Parsi explored the nuanced approach of Obama's smart power in dealing with Iran. He provided details on how Obama alongside his administration applied a dual-track strategy that focused on engaging in talks and punishing it with sanction at the same time if it showed any signs of disobedience. Parsi said that this smart power strategy made Iran feel the economic pressure, in addition to the diplomatic opportunity to engage with the rest of the world.

The opinions and writing differs about the success or the failure of Obama's smart power. In his article entitled *Obama's five Foreign-Policy Victories*, Robert Kagan mentioned

five successes of President Obama's administration including his foreign policy towards Iran. According to him, Obama's success is embodied in the U.N. Security Council resolution on Iran. On the contrary, Marc A. Theissen in his article Top Ten Obama Foreign Policy Failures, President Obama has failed to lead on Iran. From Marc's point of view, Iran has made more progress towards nuclear weapons under Obama's presidency more than it has did since the Iranian revolution. He claimed that Iran was not afraid of US use of military power during President Obama presidency, since President Obama declared to adopt new foreign policy with adversaries.

The present work is divided into three chapters. The first one entitled as "Hard Power, Soft Power, and Smart Power: Definitions and Examples", this chapter tackles smart power, as well as its components hard power and soft power, definitions. Additionally, this chapter aims to shed the light on particular instances when the United States utilized Soft Power, Hard Power and combination of both. Moreover, this chapter discusses the relationship between Soft and Hard power as well as Smart Power strategies.

The second chapter is entitled as "Background on US-Iran Relations"; it delves into the US-Iran history, reviewing the two states early interactions. Furthermore, it studies the major events that changed the two nation's relations path; from Iran being major US ally to its one of the biggest enemies. Besides, this chapter discusses Obama's new administration, his objectives and his new foreign policy "Smart Power".

The final chapter under the title "Assessing Obama's Smart Power towards Iran" explores Obama's Smart Power, in addition Obama's Soft Power tactics and Obama's Hard Power tactics applied toward Iran. This final part examines Americans and Iranians reaction to Obama's new foreign policy. Moreover, it evaluates Obama's successes and failures. Finally, it discusses US-Iran relations after Obama's presidency.

Chapter One

Hard Power, Soft Power, and Smart Power: Definitions and Examples

To maintain its position as one of the world leaders and great powers, the United States has implemented distinct types of power as its foreign policy since its independence. This chapter aims to examine the various types of power that the United States has historically employed to achieve its objectives; "Hard Power," "Soft Power," and "Smart Power." The recently coined concept "Smart power", is a combination of strategies and diplomatic approaches that merge elements of both hard and soft power. Hard power is characterized by coercion, while soft power focuses on attraction and influence. Moreover, this chapter delves into the history to provide instances when the United States had utilized these three types of power, shedding the light on their role in US foreign policy. This initial part as well examines the relationship between both soft and hard power. Additionally, this chapter explores smart power main strategies.

1.1. Conceptualization of Power

In the context of international relations, countries and nations work hard, continuously and consistently for one purpose; power. It has always been an ultimate goal for them to become great nations, by becoming so; they would have the ability to spread their influence and change events. In order to deepen the understanding of power in the context of foreign relations, it is essential to explore the various perspectives, which are offered by different scholars. Despite the longstanding of power as the main concept in the great western tradition of political science, there is an obvious absence of general agreement over the precise definition. Nonetheless, the ability of individuals or groups "to get things done" successfully lies at the basis of its meaning, particularly when their objectives are hindered by resistance or disagreement from other people (Parsons 232).

Generally, power is the ability to influence others; it may refer to any kind of influence exercised by objects, individuals, or groups upon each other's (Pallaver 32). According to the famous scholar Joseph Nye, a distinguished political scientist known for his ground breaking work on soft power and international relations, the ability to affect the behaviour of others and the outcomes of their actions is what define power (Nye, "*Soft Power: The Means...*" 2). This may sound as a general definition, and it may not be applicable to every situation. Another scholar-defined power as the possibility of an actor in a social relationship to carry out his will, regardless of the other's will (Weber). Moreover, in 1957, Robert Dahl tried to explain the concept of power by providing a situational example; he said "A has the power to influence B to do something that B would not usually do" (Dahl 203).

Power enables people to impose their desires and influence the actions of others; by making them do what is wanted from them despite their own wants, as well as to change the events to suit the will of others. These definitions lead researchers to think about the strategic use of power, for instance, in order to impose one's desires on someone you either force them or convince them to do so.

1.1. Types of Power

The concept of power emerges in a variety of ways within the spheres of governance and relationships between individuals and nations. Power is the capacity to direct and affect actions. However, there is a wide range of methods by which this influence can be achieved. Power is classified in multiple forms, which provides a better understanding. Identifying all the types in the international relations is crucial, as it facilitates the countries' ability to negotiate around global dynamics, form strong alliances, and accomplish the foreign policy goals. Nations can adjust their strategies by differentiating between hard, soft, and smart power.

1.1.1. Hard Power

The concept of power encompasses a broad spectrum of strategies, ranging from coercion to persuasion and everything in between. As the United States navigates its foreign policy, it embarks on a dynamic journey characterized by various approaches. This journey reflects the nation's ongoing adaptation and innovation, shaping its interactions on the global stage.

The first form of power adopted by the US was hard power, which means getting what someone wants by using economic approach or military force, and it involves threatening others with economic advantage or coercive capabilities (Nye, "*Soft Power: The Means...*" 5). According to Robert O. Keohane, an American academic working within the field of international relations and international political economy, hard power is about the use of military force or economic pressure in order to succeed in influencing others (Keohane). This kind of power is old and is highly practised by great nations who seek to dominate the global arena. There are three main uses for hard power, or the military might: prevention, coercion, and defense. It can be used to push a state or non-state actor to adjust their behavior (coercion), stop certain plans from being carried out (prevention), and defend the state's assets from other participants in the global system who might harm them (defense) (Art 3).

Hard power is the state's ability to employ both military and economic force, in order to strengthen its position worldwide (Waltz 111). Terms may be different, but all scholars define this strategy of power with the exact main idea. In simple terms, the aim of this strategy is to use economic and military force to gain control over other nations, and then use that power to act in the state's interests (Art 6).

States tend to use threats when utilizing hard power to influence the actions of other states in order to accomplish their own objectives. What matters is that the state posing the threat must support it and take appropriate action, or else it would lose authority if it imposed

another one (Pallaver 81). The United States has used this strategy for a long period throughout its history, by either sending their military troops to the foreign soils or imposing economic sanctions as a pressure tools.

1.1.2. Soft Power

It is said that hard times make for soft principles. Soft power is another strategy exercised by the US government. It is defined as the ability to get others to want what you want through persuasion and attraction rather than coercion and payment, by engaging hearts and minds rather than weapons and sanctions (Nye, "*Soft Power: The Means...*"1). The notion of soft power became popular after the publications of Joseph Nye from 1990's and on. When people respect the country's values and share its vision, persuasion becomes easier and more effective. Soft power, exemplified by ideals such as democracy, human rights, and individual opportunity, holds immense allure and influence. As General Wesley Clark aptly noted, soft power extends American influence far beyond traditional balance-of-power politics, highlighting its profound impact on global affairs (Nye, "*Soft Power: The Means...*"2). Soft power is about a state acquiring influence through cultural and political attraction rather than coercion (Huntington 8). Scholars emphasized on the fact that this strategy helps the US to deal with critical global issues that require multilateral cooperation among states.

1.1.3. Smart Power

About five hundred years ago, Machiavelli gave advice to princes of Italy quoting "for a prince it is safer to be feared than to be loved". This means that the prince cannot be hated for the fact that his people fear him. Consequently, they will always show him respect. However, nowadays, Nye argues in favour of both (Nye, "*soft power: The means...*"1). He presented to the world of power a new notion of power that is smart power. It refers to the combination of Hard and Soft instruments to achieve international goals, embodying a wide range of tools that includes technology, education, culture, military force, political and

economic ties (“Hillary Clinton at Senate Confirmation...”). Smart power is about the skillful integration of power resources with appropriate strategies and policies, in a world where other nations are gaining strength, and power is distributed among other actors.

According to Ted G. Carpenter, who mentioned the strategy in his writing in 2008, smart power is an alternative method that would safeguard America’s security from unnecessary military intervention. It revolves around the idea of using all the resources at the US government disposal from public diplomacy, culture and educational exchanges, to counterterrorism and economic development...etc. To confront today’s international challenges facing America (Carpenter 3). When assertive diplomatic measures, security initiatives, and a focus on military strength are merged with the influence of soft power to address an opponent, it resulted in the concept of smart power (Singh 7).

1.2. Background on US foreign Policy

Throughout time, the world’s great powers have been competing in order to spread their influence and ideologies, along with serving their interests all around the world. As one of the worlds’ dominant countries, the United States has used several strategies and approaches as a way to strengthen its position, and maintain long term connections with other states. The United States has been switching between three types of foreign approaches, persuasive approach (Soft Power), coercive approach (Hard Power) and combination of both (Smart Power), in addressing its challenges with other nations.

1.3. Hard Power as US Foreign Policy

The United States’ history had not always used only bilateral means and policies to extend its influence to various regions around the world, but it also was obliged to use Hard Power. This includes the use of economic sanctions, as well as the employment of armed force whenever it is necessary. Recognized globally as one of the greatest powers in the world, the United States possesses the ability to reach its goals and extend its influence to any

area that aligns with its strategic interests. The major aiding factor to archive such goals is foreign policy.

It was documented that the United States has launched 393 military interventions in foreign nations since 1776. Over 200 of these interventions happened after 1945, with 114 carrying out in the post-Cold War era, beginning in 1989. There have been 72 documented interventions just since the year 2000. Besides, the US has been involved in 77 military interventions particularly in the Middle East and North Africa since the 1940s (Stephenson).

America must be willing to uphold an excellent military force, to effectively lead and mediate the international order. If the country's hard power diminishes, its leaders will lose essential diplomatic influence. The United States' capacity to support allies, deter rivals, pressure aggressive states, and defeat enemies does not depend only on the commitment of its political leaders to diplomacy, but rather on the robustness of its military powers. America can advance its priorities through diplomatic channels along with maintaining a formidable military bases. By fostering an inclusive military force across all domains, the United States can instil confidence in its numerous allies and rely on their steadfast support in the future (Holmes).

On one hand, it's certain that both historical events and recent situations confirm the notion that depending only on peaceful talks doesn't always work and can harm a nation's interests. On the other hand, history also demonstrates numerous instances where employing force or threatening to do so not only expensive but also failed to achieve desired outcomes. The concept emphasises that the implementation of force and the threat of force is essential in diplomacy and foreign policy is widely accepted. However, the complexities and ethical considerations regarding the utilization of force and the issuing of threats persist, and they are likely to continue presenting challenges for American presidents, Congress, and the public in the years ahead (George).

1.3.1. US Application of Hard Power in Latin American Countries

After gaining its independence, the United States aimed to be a hemispheric power, and then compete globally with other influential spheres. Back at that time, Latin America was the major focus for the United States to realise its goal. The US was interested in Latin America due to several key factors. First, the region's geographical proximity and its richness with natural resources made it an attractive area for economic investment and strategic partnerships. In addition, the US sought to convince Latin American countries to adopt pro-capitalist policies to align with its own economic ideology. Finally yet importantly, the security issue boosted the US to maintain military bases in Latin America to enhance its national security and safeguard its borders.

1.3.1.1. Nicaragua

Starting with the Spanish speaking countries, which encountered the utilization of the US hard power policies, we take the example of Nicaragua. Before start examining this example, it is important to mention that the United States had used the Roosevelt Corollary and the Monroe Doctrine which had served as justification for using force to protect the US economic interests in Western Hemisphere. The United States invasion of Nicaragua came about due to the conflict between the liberal and conservative parties in the country, which obliged the United States to prevent them from operating, through disarming their militias to ensure that there would be peace between them. The United States' primary objective was to ensure that Nicaragua continued to have a government that was duly elected under the country's constitution (white 1).

Additionally, the willingness to protect American interests after the liberal party rebels started to impose a high tax on American businessman, besides, the death of American citizen employee in Nicaragua and the seizing of American materials and equipment by the rebels, resulted in the US intervention in Nicaragua (Nalty 13). In 1927, thousands of soldiers,

marines, military equipment and six Dehavill and aircraft were shifted to Nicaragua in order to maintain order and stop the civil war between the liberals and conservatives as well as protect US interests and civilians (14), and by 1933, the marines left Nicaragua (34).

1.3.1.2. Cuba

The intensity of the US hard power was also shown in mid-April 1961. The U.S. President John F. Kennedy launched a decree to invade Cuba through sending Cuban exiles to the Bay of Pigs to launch the invasion. However, the exiles were quickly overwhelmed by Castro forces that killed 200 and captured about 1200 attacker (Russel 33). After the latter failed operation, the Soviet Union President Nikita Khrushchev send a military aids to Cuba and started to build intermediate-range (IRBM) and medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) sites on the island (34).

These missiles were a reaction to the American Jupiter missiles in Turkey which were built on September 19, 1962 close enough to reach Soviet targets (CBC). The United States utilized the U-2 spy planes to reveal the USSR missiles in Cuba (Studart 10). After numerous meetings of executive committees, on Monday, October 22, 1962 President Kennedy announced on television that the US would install blockade Cuba in 17 minutes as a reaction to the soviet missiles (12). The blockade line was established 800 miles (1287 kilometres) from the Cuban coast to prevent any Soviet ships that it would equip Cuba with additional nuclear weapons(13). After many debates in the U.S. government and considerable tensions between the U.S. and Cuba, in addition, the involvement of the UN, Khrushchev declared that the USSR removes its missiles from Cuba only if the United States commits that it would not invade Cuba and remove its missiles from Turkey. Both of them reached agreement after President Kennedy accepted Khrushchev conditions (15).

1.3.1.3. Guatemala

Among the other Spanish nations that faced American hard power was Guatemala. On June 17, 1954, Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, a military dictator, was given support by the United States government and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to invade Guatemala and remove President Jacopo Arbenz from office. Arbenz had created a political and economic threat to the American-owned United Fruit Company (UFCO), which was the primary impetus for this invasion (LaFeber158). The United States infiltrated the country by using spies inside the military to prevent any attempts to stop Armas. Additionally, the US sent 150 highly competent American pilots to attack key locations in Guatemala City. Then Carles Castillo Armas was appointed by the CIA to succeed President Jacobo Arbenz in 1954 after the latter resigned and left Guatemala (159).

1.3.2. US Application of Hard Power in Asian Countries

After succeeding in maintaining itself as a hemispheric power, the United States aimed to extend its influence globally, with its next focus being the Asian region. Since the Asian countries were recognized for their rapid economic growth, this made them attractive allies for the US. This resulted in The US caring out its utilization of hard power in order to spread its capitalist ideology. Thus; by maintaining strong alliances in the region, the United States aimed to expend its influence and secure its position as one of the dominant global powers.

1.3.2.1. Japan

A prime example about the US utilization of force in the Asian region is the infamous atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. The event marked the most well-known example of American hard power gone wrong. The first atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima, which had a population of about 350,000 people and 43,000 soldiers, at 8:15 a.m. on August 6. Three days later The US launched a second atomic bomb on the 270,000-person city of Nagasaki (Selden 6). The majority within 1.2 kilometres of the hypocenter

perished on the day of the explosion in both Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and 80–100% of everyone exposed at this distance later perished from radiation or wounds caused by the bomb. The atomic bomb took the lives of 140,000 of the 350,000 residents of Hiroshima and 70,000 of the 270,000 residents of Nagasaki in about five months (7). US decision-makers believed that dropping two atomic bombs would limit Soviet influence in the postwar world, and lead to the immediate Japan's unconditional surrender. Moreover, the decision was a chance to avoid costly invasion of Japan and ensure U.S. dominance over the region (8).

1.3.3. US Application of Hard Power in Arab Countries

The United States has been interested in Arab countries due to their richness with natural resources, particularly oil. The US has relied on its coercive approach “hard power”, including military interventions and economic sanctions as a way to realize its objectives. The US utilization of force in specific Arabic countries was driven by the desire to first of all, secure access to their oil and other valuable resources for its energy needs. Moreover, the US aimed to make Arab countries to adopt its pro-capitalist ideologies and limit the spread of communism, especially during the Cold War era.

1.3.3.1. Iraq

President George W. Bush administration in late twentieth century shifted its focus to countries that were seen as hostile to its interests and were suspected of developing weapons of mass destruction. According to the United States Iraq was one of these countries.

Additionally, Iraq was one of the countries that the United States declared a Global War on Terror against after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks (Salah 9). In 2003, the United States occupied Iraq and overthrew the president Saddam Hussein regime between March 19 and May 1. Following this major event, the situation in Iraq deteriorated because of the Iraqi rebels and the international fighters associated with al-Qaeda who destroyed the state institutions. During all that damage, the US military stood by troops only to protect the

ministry of oil. As the destruction increased, the US military then had utilized oppressive force to deal with those rebellious and fighters, which resulted in the total collapse of the basic services of the state (10). The total number of civilian violent deaths caused by the U.S. war and occupation of Iraq from 2003 to 2011 is more than 16,000 (Crawford 6).

Furthermore, Iraq also suffered from another strategy of US hard power. The United States was very tactful in imposing sanctions on Iraq through the UN in 1991, as a response for the later invasion in Kuwait. The situation in Iraq was terrible because the sanctions totally devastated Iraq's infrastructure; as it destructed its economic capacity, agriculture, telecommunications, and significant public services, mainly electricity and water treatment. Additionally, these sanctions will prohibit Iraq government from returning to the level it reached in the 1980s and it would destroy the health, education and basic welfare of nearly all Iraqis (Gordon 1).

To maintain a position as one of the world's great powers and leaders, the United States relied heavily on the coercive foreign policy known as "hard power". The US applied hard power strategies in different regions in the world in order to achieve its strategic desires as well as ensure the spread of its ideologies. After its emergence as global super power in mid-20th century, particularly, after world war two, hard power became a key component of the US foreign policy. This was primarily aimed at protecting its national security, preserving its interests, maintaining its position, and securing global stability.

1.4. Soft Power as US foreign Policy

The evolution of U.S. foreign policy has shifted from hard power strategies to soft power strategies, marking a significant reorientation in international relations. This transition stems from profound geopolitical changes and emerging global complexities. Soft power, as articulated by political scientist Joseph Nye, is centered on attraction, persuasion, and non-coercive influence through cultural, economic, and diplomatic means. The recalibration of

U.S. foreign policy towards soft power strategies has multifaceted implications for global diplomacy, including conflict management, regional stability, diplomatic partnerships, navigating global rivalries, and humanitarian and development aid.

With the end of the cold war, every nation was struggling to differentiate its place in the world. America, just like the others, was trying to figure out where it would fit without the threat of the Soviet Union (Nye, “*Soft Power: The Means...*” 3). Powerful nations used to present their strength in wars; however, the notion of military power is losing its significance, and aspects such as education, technology, economic growth are becoming popular worldwide (4). The United States leveraged its power to bolster its image as the superior leader of the free world; as a result, the right response to the current shifts towards a soft strategy in global politics is to accept the limits of the military strength, instead of completely giving up on it (6).

The following figure presents the American superiority in soft power action during 1995-2015, comparing to other superpowers in the world:

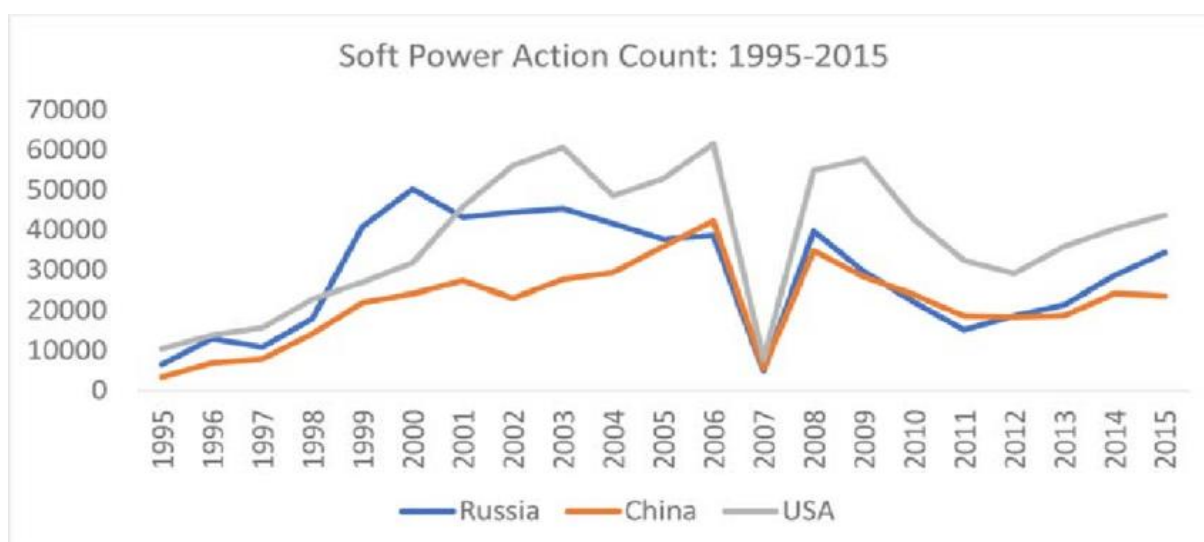


Fig. 1. Soft Power Action Count 1995-2015, Trunkos, Judit. “Comparing Russian, Chinese and American Soft Power Use...” *Research Gate*, Dec.

The figure shows the marked shift from old to new dynamics of power. The American’ use of soft power and its resources is highly increased, which proves the international shift in

power. Interestingly, there has been a noticeable decline in soft power activities around 2007, which coincides with the world's financial crisis- the most significant collapse in the economy since the great depression. Yet, when the crisis ended, the soft power actions increased even more and reached new heights. The measurement of the military strength was possible because it is easy to count and number the missiles, tanks, and troops; however, the new strategy of soft power is unmeasurable, yet Joseph Nye categorizes it into 3 categories; cultural, ideological, and institutional (Li 1).

1.4.1. Iraq

After the chaos caused in the world following the application of hard power to solve disputes on the international scene, the military force was considered less useful, and soft power started to establish its position in the world (Lawniczak). After the post-Saddam Hussain era, which is considered a post-war era, the Bush administration planned for a strategy with the aim of stabilizing and reconstructing Iraq (Yordan). President George W. Bush gave orders to create an Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Aid (ORHA) and fund it with 15 million dollars to support its efforts. The organization focused on four functional areas, which are: humanitarian relief, reconstruction, civil administration and communications, logistics, and budgetary support (Ibrahim).

Another organization was present on the stage of reconstructing Iraq, which is the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs (OCPA). Its primary goal was to help in solving dependence on humanitarian relief, and in the revival of a broad-based Iraqi economy by supporting the recovery, and rebuild of key infrastructure, strengthen the creation of effective governance based on Iraq's rich and diverse culture. As well as help build the circumstances within where the Iraqi people can build their own future (“Going it alone...”).

George W. Bush talked about the reaction of the Iraqi nation, he said:” In truth, despite our best efforts, the Iraqis quickly came to see us as occupiers, not as liberators. Iraqis didn't want

their country invaded in the first place, and while some were grateful to have Saddam gone, they resented our heavy-handed approach to reforming their society”. The consequences of this reform vary as the reaction of the Iraqi people themselves had mixed feelings between gratitude for the assistance and anger for the failure, and shortcomings of the reconstruction process.

1.4.2. Japan

It is astonishing that the United States was able to use hard power against Japan with easiness, but struggled to use soft power the same way. By saying so, that does not mean that the US did not accomplish its goal, however, it was somehow a complex task. America aimed at transferring the surrendered imperial Japan into a democratic friend of its own. Previously, General Douglas MacArthur took considerable steps to remove any military influence within the country, and made a progress of three years to omit the Japanese language and introduce English to the country, aiming at replacing it in every institution. However, since the Japanese fundamental code of education was present since 1872, it carried out the whole country. That was the reason why the US authorities were unable to complete this mission (Sahu). Japan set a successful example for the whole world on how to safeguard and remain the cultural liberty. Following the end of World War II, the United States instituted a number of reforms to guarantee its loyalty. Among the changes made was what is called “Reverse Course”, this series of policies were meant to promote democracy, demilitarize Japan, and foster modernization and economic growth (Dower). The reforms made by America are numerous including constitutional, economic and educational reforms. The United States offered Japan a security treaty along with foreign aid, providing hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth to help Japan restore its economy. In addition to a trade policy urging foreign investments into the country and allowing its exporters to access the US and European markets (Dower).

Japan's relationship with the U.S. regarded as both cooperation and an independent struggle. Although the economic growth and security of Japan were highly dependent on US support (Johnson 19). Regardless of the numerous threats and provocations issuing from the ex-intruder, the Japanese themselves preserved the leadership in many occasions like when it comes to violating regulations, they were the ones who made them, and they both accelerated and slowed down the reform process (Dower).

1.4.3. United Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

In the early 20th century, The United States and Saudi Arabia became strong partners in cultural, economic and diplomatic ties. Both countries have a history in of technical and economic exchanges, which has benefited both nations. It was claimed that the U.S. started to collaborate with Saudi Arabia in order to broaden its economy away from oil, and provide job opportunities for young Saudis ("U.S. Relations with Saudi Arabia...").

In 2022, the Saudi economy increased by 8.7 percent offering chances for American businesses to increase in industries such as energy, health care and entertainment. The U.S. enjoys a 6.4 billion dollars' trade advantage that supports approximately 165,000 American jobs. Both countries have multi-billion-dollar partnership agreements with SABIC and Aramco. Another partnership framework designed for Advancing clean energy was signed in 2022, with the emphasis on solar, green hydrogen, nuclear, and other clean energy technologies. Education is another framework, where they have strong cultural and educational ties, with over 18,000 Saudi students studying at US universities and 700,000 graduates over the past 50 years. Saudi Arabia's attitude towards US soft power can differ based on interests including possibilities for cooperation, careful and well-thought approach, resistance, negotiations and compromises ("United States-Saudi Arabia Relationship...").

1.4.4. North Korea

North Korea gives no signs of giving up on its nuclear programs; as a result, the United States felt the need to engage a new kind of power in its foreign policy, which leads to the focus on soft power (Park, “*Engaging North Korea...*” 1). Over the years, the United States has exercised a set of strategies in order to engage with North Korea’s population and promote democratic values. The most important application of soft power is “Radio Free Asia” (RFA) which aims at broadcasting uncensored and real time news into North Korea. Another aim of the U.S. is to facilitate the cultural and educational exchanges to allow North Korea’s students, researchers, and artists to visit the soils of its land. Those exchanges promote cross-cultural understanding and expose the people to an ultimate freedom (Park, “Understanding the Mission”).

Despite the political tension between the two countries, U.S. assisted North Korea with aids in times of difficulty, natural disasters, and pandemics. Its primary goal is to establish goodness and virtue among the North Korean people. Regardless of the obstacles that may occur for instance a failure in the negotiations due to the resistance and persistence of both sides (Rahimi). American soft power programs plays a vital role in shaping perceptions and building connects with the North Korean people, laying the groundwork for potential diplomatic improvements.

The strategic use of soft power has become a crucial component of US foreign policy, as shown by its varied implementation in different nations. Through the skillful combination of cultural attraction, diplomacy, and economic might, the US has used soft power in order to influence opinions, form alliances, and accomplish its objectives internationally. This purposeful use of soft power strategies highlights the value of using non-coercive methods in modern diplomacy and confirms the long-lasting significance of soft power in influencing international relations.

1.5. Examples of the United States Application of a Combination of Soft Power and Hard Power Strategies

Even before Joseph S. Nye coined the term smart power, the United States among various administrations utilized a combination of soft power and hard power tools, which are commonly known now as smart power. The United States applied such combination tools to defeat the USSR ideologically and militarily during the cold war. Igor T.A. a retired KGB officer in 1991 argued that the main reason behind the defeat of the USSR by the US is the US popular culture including movies, television, and music, additionally the images in American movies and television seemed more interesting than the Soviet ones (Zhuk 593).

Throughout the cold war era, the United States started a psychological warfare against the USSR in Eastern Europe. It had succeeded to impact Eastern European nations despite the strict censorship enforced by authoritarian governments. Music, art, dancing, and motion films were used to promote American patriotism and transmit positive messages of freedom, choice, riches, abundance, and opportunity across boundaries, as it had accomplished its goal of supporting resistance for oppressed nations and seeking freedom and liberty which were reflected in American media. Over the past seven decades, the persistent promotion of American culture functioned as a powerful agent of change, fuelling social movements, challenging Communist principles, and fostering the destruction of Communist regimes (Nowaki 15).

Another form of soft power during the cold war era is the Marshall Plan. By early 1946 the US legislators intended to rebuild the European economy meantime create a political and economic barrier for the Soviet expansion (Luth 18). In June 1947, secretary Marshall proposed the Marshall plan in his well-known speech at Harvard University, which is a program to restore Europe's economy and establish an environment for free institutions

(Deutsch 18). The United States saw the Marshall Plan as an opportunity; to not only aid Europe's recovery, but also to weaken Soviet influence in Eastern Europe (20).

The US hard power during the cold war was embodied in the arms race with from 1945 to mid-1950s, the United States had obtained atomic and then hydrogen bombs. During the second half of 1950s, the United States accomplished technology for intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) (Watts 37). By the mid-1980s, not long before the Cold War ended, the United States had close to 26,000 nuclear weapons (42).

Furthermore, the United States intended to utilize a combination of hard and soft power in Iraq. It imposed its hard power on Iraq through a military invasion in 2003 as well as through economic sanctions as mentioned previously. After the overthrow of Saddam Hussein regime, the United States ranged to utilize the soft power in order to win the hearts and the minds of Iraqi people and set out to persuade them about the importance and the advantages of US military existence in Iraq. Even though The US military leaders and even Iraqi ones appeared on television and radio addressing the favourable purposes of the US occupation, after making it possible to Iraqis for the first time in decades to gain access to satellite television, foreign news channels and printed media (Kroenig et al. 418). The Iraqis' still opposed the existence of the US military in their lands because it was incompatible with their willingness to regain their lost sovereignty (419).

The United States also had applied an integration of strategies from both soft and hard power in its foreign policy toward China. First, the United States enforced an economic sanction on china as a type of Hard Power because of a military treaty signed by the President of the republic people of china and Joseph Stalin in Moscow on 1 October 1949. Moreover, the Chinese communist forces fought the UN forces during the Korean War (Zhang 17).

The United States employed its soft power on China through various diplomacies. President Richard Nixon administration began to facilitate travel restrictions. On 14 April

1971, a group of Americans travelled to china in two decades at the same day the President Nixon decided to leave the embargo on china. The economic exchange between the two nations expanded from less than \$5 million in 1971 to \$933 million in 1974 (Gavel 48). In January 1979, Chinese Premier Deng Xiaoping visited the United States indicated President Beijing's openness to cultural and economic exchange with the United States; the agreements between both states called for cooperation in agriculture, energy, space, health, environment, earth science, and engineering, and for broad educational scientific exchanges of students, scholars, and information (51). Despite the U.S.'s inability to bring about significant political change in China, formal diplomatic bilateral relations between the two nations remain strong. They collaborate on various global challenges, such as energy policy and maintaining regional security on the Korean Peninsula (53).

1.6. The Relationship between Soft Power and Hard Power

Hard power refers to the ability to achieve desired outcomes through coercion. Any utilization of power to compel or change behaviour is a form of hard power. Hard power emphasizes that power, is derived from military and economic capabilities. Essentially, the capacity to impose economic sanctions on a nation or unilaterally engage in military intervention to shape the conduct of others is examples of hard power strategies. By contrast, soft power is about attraction; this power makes the other state do voluntarily what the soft power state want them to do (Weinbrenner 1). Hard power is commonly embodied with the use of tangible resources; however, soft power is indirect method of power represented through actions, policies, and features (Gallarotti 10). Moreover, hard power relies the most on coercion through the usage of threats and direct military interventions. Conversely, soft power is related most to attraction and persuasion. Hard power is applied by a state to achieve short-term goals, however, soft power utilized for long-term objectives (28).

The distinction between hard and soft power relies in the different available methods to achieve desired outcomes. On one hand, coercion through threats of force or financial sanctions can affect behaviour and compel a state to change its choices. Alternatively, leveraging financial incentives can sway decisions and garner compliance (Nye, “*Soft Power: The Means...*” 6). On the contrary, soft power operates through appeals to shared ideals and values, fostering a sense of connection and invoking emotions like attraction, love, or obligation to garner support and cooperation (7).

The following table is represented by Professor Joseph Nye in order to shed the light on the key differences between the soft power and the hard power:

Table 1

	Hard	Soft
Spectrum of Behaviors	Command ← coercion → inducement →	agenda setting → attraction → Co-opt
Most Likely Resources	force sanctions payments bribes	institutions values culture policies

Source: Nye, Joseph. *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics*. The United States: Public Affairs, 2004.

As it is shown in the table, hard power is associated with the concept of “command” which is the ability to control, change and direct other’s desires to be compatible with yours strong nations generally command weaker nations to adopt policies and systems that would serve the former’s interests to enforce their command successfully. Strong nations tend to use force, payments, sanctions and bribes. On the other hand, soft power is very different form of power that is associated with the concept of co-opt soft power; the states embody attraction and persuasion in order to make other states desire voluntarily the outcomes they seek. The

soft power nation generally utilizes its values, culture (high or popular), policies and institutions to attract the other nations.

Although both soft power and hard power strategies are different, they are however interrelated. Joseph Nye stated that both hard and soft powers are related because they are both aspects of the ability to achieve one's purpose by affecting the behaviour of others (Nye, "*Soft Power: The Means...*" 22). Joseph Nye also argues that today things have changed and power does not rely just on military force, he proclaimed that nowadays state wars remain possible however are not really accepted in the international community. Nye added that hard power is still important such as in the case of September 11, 2001 and in Afghanistan. However, the states need to utilize the other indirect form of power, which is soft power (Nye, "*Why Military Power...*"). As a result of Nye proclamations regarding the necessity to combine hard power and soft power to attain foreign policy goals; Nye coined the term "Smart Power" emerged as combination of attraction (soft power) and coercion (hard power), which was adopted by President Barack Obama's administration.

Furthermore, foreign policy has to incorporate a mixture of soft power and hard power and there need to be a balance between these powers depending on timing and situation. This means that there are times when a forceful power is needed, while at other times a more persuasive power is needed depending on the circumstances and objectives. Also in actual politics, soft power and hard power are closely interconnected and often work together, and it is impossible to understand or analyze them separately ("*Hard Power VS Soft Power...*"). Additionally, a U.K.-based consultancy firm called Portland, in cooperation with the USC Center on Public Diplomacy, published a report ranking the world's top 30 countries utilizing soft power. The latter report indicates that most of the countries at the top of corporation of the soft power ranking – France, the U.K., the U.S. and Germany – are also among the world leaders in using hard power (Fedirka).

Although Soft power and Hard power are totally different forms of powers with distinct strategies, we still cannot deny that they complement each other. On one hand, relying solely on hard power could harm foreign relations, leading to increased tensions and conflicts. On the other hand, counting only on soft power may not always achieve the desired outcomes, particularly, in hard and complex situations. As a result, the country's government should integrate both types of powers, in order to effectively achieve the state's strategic desires. Accordingly, a balanced approach that combines strategies of both soft and hard power is essential for acquiring desired outcomes in diplomacy and foreign policy (Gray). Through utilizing the convincing impact of soft power, alongside with the coercive capabilities of hard power, a state can face the changes and potential difficulties and challenges, and secure its national interests on the international stage.

1.7. Smart Power Strategies

In order to successfully apply smart power approach, a state must own several essential components. Firstly, it needs sufficient resources to carry out soft power strategies like aid and development programs. Secondly, it has to possess a military force to discourage adversaries or engage in hard power actions such as airstrikes. Lastly, it must have global legitimacy to enhance the credibility of both its hard and soft power actions on the international stage (Shabro 41).

Smart diplomacy composes of three major pillars that enable states to effectively apply this diplomacy and have an impactful influence both in bilateral relations and on the global stage. These three crucial pillars are: digital capabilities, multi-stakeholder diplomacy, and feminist diplomacy. First, digital capabilities that are fundamental for nations to utilize both soft and hard powers effectively. These digital capacities are online platforms that nations mainly use for several causes such as cultural boosting, trade, and security control due to the fact that these platforms reach global audiences. Moreover, they are used as a way for

affecting perspectives and easing policy communication. Furthermore, these digital tools innervating traditional diplomacy, and permitting beneficial cross-border communication. Second, multi-stakeholder diplomacy, stakeholders are Independent actors affecting foreign relations by engaging globally beyond the state. This includes non-governmental organizations, companies, academics, charities, and media. Last, feminist diplomacy, it emphasizes the perspectives of entire societies, rather than solely reflecting men's status and viewpoints on global matters. Although currently feminist diplomacy is not widely embraced by diplomats worldwide, however, there is a growing tendency among countries to align with modern diplomatic norms, ensuring equal representation for both men and women based on merit and stature (Hester).

Among other smart power strategies is addressing the issue of energy security and climate. It is important for the United States to establish an international agreement to tackle the increasing competition for resources and the potential dangers posed by climate change in the future. Another strategy of US smart power is Non-proliferation; the most significant danger confronting the US as well as the globe presently is the prospect of terrorists acquiring nuclear weapons or materials. So it is necessary for the US to make efforts in order to produce new approaches for preventing the transfer of nuclear weapons and materials, thereby reducing the risk of them falling into the possession of rogue states or terrorists (Armitage and Nye 35). Additionally, Education is considered one of smart power strategies. Nations with a larger proportion of 15-to-29-year-olds compared to the adult population are at a higher risk of experiencing armed conflicts. Education stands as the most effective solution for steering young individuals away from violence and extremism. The US intended to make U.S. bilateral and multilateral efforts to increase education levels worldwide (36).

Another side of smart power involves addressing humanitarian disasters, with nearly 55 million individuals benefiting from U.S. disaster assistance worldwide in 2009.

Furthermore, promoting global health through bipartisan investments has led to a five percent reduction in deaths of children under five globally, with initiatives like the President's AIDS Initiative (PEPFAR) playing a pivotal role in combating HIV/AIDS and saving millions of lives since its inception in 2004. Additionally, investing in sustainable agriculture through Long-term strategies such as educating farmers on crop rotation and implementing drought warning systems can not only save lives but also enhance countries' flexibility to future droughts (Albright and Ridge 9). Moreover, demonstrating the American values is one of the smart power strategies. The latter comes into action through; AIDS Treatments Save Lives Every Day, through the US initiative (PEPFAR), over three million people received life-saving treatment in 2010.

Humanitarian Relief after the Tsunami; for years, the United States has been actively involved in delivering humanitarian aid during times of crisis and natural disasters and this create a favourable image of the united states all around the world. Additionally, Reducing Child Mortality from Malaria Since the inception of the President's Malaria Initiative in 2005, significant declines of 23 to 36 percent in child mortality rates under the age of five have been observed in African and Asian nations (11).

American strength and influence is based on the "3Ds" of U.S. national security—Diplomacy, Development, and Defence which constitute an essential framework for it. promoting the roles of diplomacy and development alongside defence is smart, particularly Prevention from conflicts through addressing failed and failing states, is essential, since the heightened costs of conflict currently. The U.S. Government acknowledges the significance of preventing and deterring conflict by collaborating with partners and allies, as well as fostering better coordination between defence and civilian agencies and organizations. It is evident that addressing future global challenges and opportunities will necessitate a greater

scale, increased resources, and a more strategic focus on diplomacy and development efforts as vital partners alongside defence (“Smart Power in Action” 12)

In the light of foreign policy, the United States has utilized three types of power throughout history; hard power, soft power and smart power. Hard power refers to the coercive notion of the foreign policy, including military interventions and sanctions. On the contrary, soft power means the persuasive strategies utilized by the states to affect on other nations in order to realize their goals without using the force. The three types of power are important components of US foreign policies since its independence. Although both soft and hard powers are totally different, yet it is proclaimed that they both complete each other. To effectively establish strong relations, preserve interests, compete adversaries and maintain its position, state need to strategically combine both types of power.

Endnotes

1. Monroe Doctrine: It is a doctrine made by President James Monroe in December 2, 1823. This doctrine had stated that future colonization from the old world in the new world would not be accepted. Furthermore, any attempt from the western powers to interfere or control any region in the western Hemisphere would be viewed as a hostile to the United States.

History.com. Editors. "Monroe Doctrine." *HISTORY*, 9 Nov. 2009,

www.history.com/topics/19th-century/monroe-doctrine. Accessed 29 May 2024.

2. Roosevelt's Corollary: It was outlined by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1904, 1905. He aimed to extend the Monroe doctrine. This doctrine was characterized as "Big Stick", also known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. The doctrine stated that the European countries interference would not be accepted only, yet the United States has the right to preserve this region.

National Archives. "Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine (1905)."

National Archives, 15 Sept. 2021, www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/rooseveltcorollary#:~:text=The%20corollary%20stated%20that%20not.

Accessed 29 May. 2024.

3. Reverse Course: It refers to a change in the strategies used by the American government and its allied forces. U.S. reversed its objectives as an effort to reconstruct Japan and rebuild the nation following the devastating World War 2. The Reverse Course started during the cold war era.

"Reverse Course | Japan Module." www.japanpitt.pitt.edu,

www.japanpitt.pitt.edu/glossary/reverse-course. Accessed 9 June 2024.

Chapter Two

Background on US-Iran Relations

US-Iran relations have been characterised as complex and multifaceted, and this due to several major key events and tensions that played a significant role in changing the relations path. This chapter tackles a historical background on the early US-Iran relations which dating back to the 19th century. Moreover this chapter examines the key events that changed the US-Iran relations course which are Iran revolution and hostage crisis which were considered as a turning point in US-Iran relations from allies to adversaries, additionally this chapter sheds the light on the major cause of tensions between the two nations which is Iran nuclear program. The unites states utilizes different strategies in order to halter Iran nuclear program and one of these strategies were sanctions, this chapter will discuss when they US imposed sanctions on Iran and on which level as well as the results of these sanctions. Furthermore, this chapter explores Iran contra affair and operation praying mantis. All of these events lead to a hostility between the two states that lasted for 30 years, however when president Barack Obama took office he declared that his new administration was seeking a new start with adversaries including Iran, so this chapter will discuss Obama's new foreign policy.

2.1. Historical Background on the Early US-Iran Relation

US-Iran relations can be traced back to the nineteenth century, and the present and future of this relation could not be understood apart from their rich and complex history (Monshipouri). Both nations have multifaceted relations along with rich and complex history that spans for many decades. Throughout time, major events and tensions shaped both states relation path from times of cooperation, interaction and alliance to periods of confrontation, competition and hostility. These key events had a long term affects that spans to current day, shaping both countries' diplomatic, economic, and political ties.

From 1795 to 1925, Iran witnessed a decrease in its regional influence during the Qajar era of governance, due to Russians exerted dominance in the north and the British asserted control in the south. In the 19th century, in order British to counter Russian expansion and confront the Ottoman Turks, the Qajar rulers sought to maintain alliances with various powers like Russia, Britain, and France. To realise their goal, Iranian rules first allied with the French then the British. However, their alliances shifted due to changes in European politics. The century-long power struggle between Britain and Russia in Persia which is known as the "Anglo-Russian rivalry" was a result of Iran aligning with Napoleon, they later partnered with the British (Poulson 100).

During the second half of the 19th century, Iran sought to establish diplomatic relations with the United States as a potential ally against British and Russian's existence in the region. Also throughout the Second Anglo-Iranian War of 1856-57, Iran even explored the idea of a military alliance with the U.S. against Britain, though this was an unsuccessful attempt. The formal diplomatic relations between the two countries began with the signing of an economic treaty in Constantinople in 1856; however the relations progressed rather slowly. In 1883 during President Arthur's era the establishment of the two countries advanced due to the opening of the U.S. legation in Tehran. Then in 1888 the first Iranian representative arrived in Washington, marking the official beginning of diplomatic relations (Bonakdarian 9).

After the formalization of Iran-US economic relations and diplomatic relations in 1856 and 1883 respectively, Iran expressed willingness to engage in substantial trade with the United States, aiming to counterbalance the increasing of Anglo-Russian interference in the Iranian economy, nevertheless, the US government maintained its "hands off". In absence of governmental initiative, the US diplomats got involved in private level trade activities in Iran (Azad 188). The later made many unsuccessful attempts to interest the State Department in

Washington and Wall Street in New York in a trans-Caspian railway and other projects, although, US maintained a discreet distance from interference in Iran's internal affairs (190).

Before the discovery of the oil in Iran, The United States showed very little interest in the Middle East area, particularly in Iran, compared to its engagement worldwide. Subsequently, after the discovery of the oil, Iran became a central focus for US economy, alongside with major American oil companies developing economic interests in the region. However, the United States did not interfere in Iran's internal affairs until August 1941 (Hussain 30). Before 1941, the US aided Britain and the Soviet Union in occupying Iran to counter German influence and facilitate supply routes for the Soviets war effort against Nazi Germany. After World War II, the US played a key role in compelling Joseph Stalin to withdraw from Iran in 1946. Eventually, through various agreements, the US established significant influence in the region after 1947 (Jordet 13).

In addition to oil being the first interest of the US in the Iranian region, there was also a major interest in the country's strategic location, between the Arabian Gulf and the Soviet Union. The U.S. considered Iran during the Cold War both as a risk of Soviet expansionist influence, and as a potential ally against the Soviet Union, when Iran considered the US as a potential protector against such external reach (Aldasam 4). Also Iran considered the US useful to advance its economy and military (5). In 1953, the US CIA and British intelligence services (MI 6) organized a military coup that overthrew Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister, Mohammed Mosaddegh and installed Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi instead. This coup was because of Mosaddegh willingness to nationalize the Anglo Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) established by Britain in the early twentieth century (6).

The 1953 coup had big effects on Iran and its ties with the US. Mosaddegh's removal ended a long friendship between Iran and America, leading to more US involvement and increased anti-Americanism among Iranian nationalists. The Shah lost much of his political

legitimacy because he supported the US and was called as “US Shah” (Eryilmaz 12).

Following the coup the Shah failed to act on his own, as a result the United States made concerted efforts to uphold the new Shah-led regime; all of this served as the initial rupture in Iranian-American relations creating the first step for the revolution of 1978-79 (13).

During the Cold War competition with the Soviet Union, Iran played significant role in protecting the US interests and its neighbours. This was due to the US support for the Shah's regime in Iran. However, this support unintentionally boosted the Islamic revolution, leading to the strategic loss of Iran as an ally on March 13, 1979. As the revolution unfolded, Iran, formerly a key ally became a major threat to the US in the region (Mousavyfar 56). Concerns arose about threats to US interests in the Middle East and the potential spread of the revolution to other regional allies such as Saudi Arabia. As a result, the US adopted a confrontational policy against the Islamic Republic, which is still going on until nowadays (57).

2.2. Reasons behind the Turning Point in US - Iran Relations

Throughout the years, there have been many changes to the sophisticated relationship between the United States and Iran. The tension was characterized by major events, and it is necessary to delve into the historical issues, geopolitical strategies, ideological conflicts, and significant incidents that caused the change in order to understand what lies behind these shift in the relations. Following the Islamic revolution in 1979, particularly after the hostage crisis, the relationship between the two countries has been difficult and even poisonous sometimes (Hurt 13).

2.2.1. The Islamic Revolution

A political revolution is driven by various factors and characterizes a sudden shift in the balance of power within a country. It results in adjustments in the cultural, economic, and socio-political structures. The Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979, from its outset, marked a

spontaneous movement that profoundly altered Iran's governmental system and ideology (Ijtemaye 1). It is important to be aware of the motives of the revolution, and to note the long-term impact on Iran's current politics, as well as its relationships with other countries. The Islamic revolution nearly sparked conflict between Iran and the United States.

The main reasons of the revolution were related to increasing unemployment rates, economic conditions caused by the 1973 oil crisis, and anger toward the corrupt political system that mainly favored Iran's wealthy merchant class. As dissatisfaction with Shah Pahlavi's oppressive rule grew, large-scale protests took place, with the religious leaders emerging as the most organized and influential opposition. Ayatollah Khomeini emerged as a pivotal figure, spearheading the revolution against the Shah (Ijtemaye 1). In the 1960s, frustrated university students in Iran started to take an active political position against the shah's government. One of their most prominent leaders was Ayatollah Khomeini. He was educated in Qom, the primary center for Shi'a scholarship. His resistance to the Shah's regime began with the White Revolution of 1963 (Harmon and Todd 15).

Khomeini opposed the Shah's regime primarily because of American influence and the secularization of Iranian society, which means the removal of any religious influence from the country. His radical activities led to his exile from the country, first moved to Iraq, turkey, and finally sent to Neauphle-le-Château, Paris in 1978. Ayatollah Khomeini was not quite in his exile, he consistently sent messaged and gave commands to the people of Iran through his representatives in the country. As the most respected political leader, Ayatollah Khomeini garnered trust and obedience among Iranians who believed he would liberate them from the oppressive regime and grant them freedom. The Iranian's faith in the government disappeared as they believed that it no longer serve their interests (January 35).

In January 1978, an Iranian newspaper published a shocking claim that significantly fueled the revolution. Ayatollah Khomeini was accused to be a British agent. Since the Shah

had control over all Iranian newspapers, not many questioned the validity of the story. Thus, the next day, many concerned religious students gathered in Tabriz, Iran, to express their disagreement, and refusal of the article. Unaware of the reason for the protest, the Shah thought that the protestors wanted to overthrow. The Shah ordered the police to brutally attack the demonstrators, resulting in the deaths of more than twenty individuals. The Shiite tradition of martyrdom played a significant role in mobilizing support for the revolution, inspiring people to gather and honor the victims (January 38).

During that period, Carter's administration support for the Shah's regime, including military aid, boosted tensions and fueled dissatisfaction. Protests, strikes, and boycotts rose as a complete refusal for the shah's regime. With every time the police respond brutally, the number of the participants grows even more. Khomeini wanted to win the police to his side rather than blaming them; he consistently encouraged them to stop using violence against protestors. By autumn 1978, many soldiers were refusing to use force again; some literally were joining the protesters on the spot. With this unexpected turning point, the revolution came to its climax (Harmon and Todd 48). In January 1979, Mohammad shah and his wife fled the country to the United States, claiming that they were going on vacation. Two weeks later, Khomeini marked his return, where millions of Iranians welcomed him (Zunes 4).

2.2.2. The Hostage Crisis

After the Shah fled the country, he consistently moved from one country to another. However, after his diagnosed with cancer, he desired to go to the United States in order to receive the best medical treatment. President Carter refused to welcome him; yet, he changed his decision after David Rockefeller, the Chairman of Chase Bank, and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger persuaded him to bring the Shah to America, saying it was wrong to prevent his opportunity to receive medical care (Daugherty).

In the early morning of November 4th 1979, a shocking incident occurred at the American embassy in Tehran. Instead of holding the planned demonstration on the streets to honor their friends' deaths, a group of university students unexpectedly took control of the embassy and broke through its gates, yelling "death to America" and "death to the Shah" (Houghton 50). A former hostage stated that they did not expect anything to happen, until they witnessed some of their colleagues being taken blindfolded, with guns to their heads (51). The Iranian militants took nearly seventy people from the American embassy in Tehran. They reduced the number later, while keeping fifty-two American diplomats and citizen for a total 444- Days ("Iran Hostage Crisis").

Ayatollah Rohullah Khomeini supported the action against the United States, which was the reason why it lasted that period. In addition to that, he thought that America was attempting to overthrow the government he was leading through their embassy in Iran (Rubin 314). Khomeini offered three separate plans to resolve the problem. He offered exchanging the hostages to the return of Iran's frozen assets, a declaration of non-intervention in Iranian affairs, and dropping lawsuits against Iran. However, the Carter administration did not accept any of them (319). In September 1980, the U.S. backed Iraq in its invasion to Iran; yet when it was blamed for the invasion, America claimed to be neutral (320).

The release of the hostages came just moments after president Ronald Reagan came into power on January 20, 1981. After the U.S. made concessions to Iran, including sanctions relief and the release of some frozen Iranian assets (Rubin). The hostage crisis inflicted significant suffering on American captives and prompted sacrifices by US military personnel. Iran's actions, including the demand for concessions and freezing of assets, led to a loss of international support and fueled the deterioration of US-Iran relations (Kratz). After the Islamic Revolution and the hostage crisis, the relationship between the US and Iran has been difficult and even poisonous sometimes (Hurt).

2.3. A Rundown on Iran Nuclear Program Development

The Iranian nuclear program was first launched in 1957 when the President Eisenhower Administration began to collaborate with the Shah in advancing Iran's nuclear program. On March 5, 1957, Iran and the United States signed an agreement, which aimed at collaborating on the peaceful utilization of atomic energy for a period of five years. Additionally, the U.S. committed to supply Iran with nuclear reactor technology under the auspices of the "Atoms for Peace" initiative (Ramazani 6). In the same year, an agreement on civil nuclear cooperation was signed between the United States and Iran within the framework of the US Atoms for Peace program. This agreement guarantees provisions for technical assistance, the lease of several kilograms of enriched uranium, and cooperation on researching the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In addition, The Institute of Nuclear Science, operating under the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), moved from Baghdad to Tehran which motivated the personal interest of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in nuclear energy development (Cordesman and Al-Rodhan 21).

After the "Atoms for Peace speech," numerous United Nations member states took steps to establish the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1957, with the aim of ensuring the utilization of atomic energy for global peace, health, and prosperity ("The status of Iran's nuclear program" 9). The agency operates by engaging in bilateral and multilateral security agreements with states interested in developing nuclear programs (10). In 1959, the Shah initiated the creation of the Nuclear Research Centre at Tehran University and commenced negotiations with the United States regarding the acquisition of a 5-megawatt (MW) thermal research reactor for the center. Initially, the research primarily focused on post-graduate education and basic nuclear science and techniques. After that, the Centre received government funding and began establishing laboratories for radiation measurement and radiation chemistry. Also, in September 1967, Iran obtained a pool-type 5 MW (thermal)

reactor and its fuel from American Machine and Foundry (AMF). Additionally, the United States provided Iran with several new laboratories, including a significant radioisotope production unit (Kibaroglu 225).

The Shah of Iran sought to reassure allies that Iran was not pursuing nuclear weapons by signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1974. Iran also became a party to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA's) safeguards agreement. In 1974, Iran intended to demonstrate its adherence to peaceful nuclear energy development through proposing a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East. However, in the mid-1970s, Iran's interest in developing a nuclear program had grown among a period of significant economic growth driven by rising oil prices (Ramesh and Tsegaya 3). The Shah planned to build twenty-three nuclear plants by the end of the 20th century to serve Iran's national interests and make use profitable international markets through the establishment of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI). This shift reflected not only the Shah's nuclear ambitions but also Iran's financial interests (4).

In the early years, the Iranian nuclear program received support from various Western nations. Reactors were acquired from the United States, France, and West Germany. Iranian nuclear scientists underwent training in these countries as well as in Great Britain, Italy, Belgium, India and Canada. Additionally, Argentina, willingness to become a nuclear power at the time, offered advisory support. While these countries aimed to assist Iran in developing nuclear energy rather than nuclear weapons, it was evident that the Shah had ambitions for nuclear weapons capability (Quillen 17).

The Iranian Revolution in April 1979 brought about significant changes on various national aspects, including impacts on Iran's nuclear program. Following and during the Revolution, both domestic and foreign nuclear experts fled the country, while Ayatollah Khomeini initially criticized the nuclear program as opposed with Islamic principles until

1984. Due to the newly hostile American-Iranian relationship Iran did not receive any support from the US and its allies, obliging Iran to turn to Pakistan and China for assistance, however, the US interfered and succeeded at blocking the Iran-China agreement that would have been given Iran traditional reactors. As a reaction, Iran acquired nuclear technology, such as centrifuges, from anonymous sources suspected to be associated with A.Q. Khan's clandestine network. Beginning in 1992, Iran entered into deals with North Korea, mainly involving missiles; North Korea supplied missiles to Iran in exchange for additional funds for its missile program. Due to the antagonistic relationship that much of the western world has with these two nations, details of their exchanges are largely unknown (Malus).

Proclamations regarding Iran's hidden nuclear activities emerged in 1992, initially dismissed by IAEA inspectors as consistent with peaceful nuclear energy use. However, the situation changed dramatically in August 2002 when the National Council of Resistance of Iran disclosed two clandestine nuclear sites: a uranium enrichment facility in Natanz and a heavy water facility in Arak. The IAEA expressed concerns about Iran's lack of transparency and potential military use of its nuclear facilities in a June 2003 report. Despite diplomatic efforts by France, Germany, and the UK in 2003 and 2004, which were later rejected by the US, Iran faced nuclear non-compliance charges by the IAEA in February 2006 (Huang 4).

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declared uranium enrichment success in April 2006, resulted in a UN Security Council resolution demanding Iran to suspend enrichment activities in July 2006. Thus; resolutions imposed sanctions on Iranian entities, which worsen the crisis. Over the next decade, the P5+1 countries followed a dual-track policy towards Iran, combining sanctions with economic incentives, in an attempt to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue (5). On 2015 the P5+1 and Iran signed a nuclear agreement known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which ensures that Iran's nuclear program

remains peaceful, setting out a timeline and procedures for lifting nuclear-related sanctions against Iran (“Joint Comprehensive Plan...”).

2.4. The US Embargo

The United States has been applying a variety of sanctions since the Islamic Revolution of 1979 as an essential tool of American policy toward the Iranian government (“U.S. Sanctions on Iran”). The U.S. Iran relations tensed for the last thirty years after the revolution. Since then, Iran has been subject to a number of sanctions, which aimed at two main objectives: improving Iran's behavior and changing the regime (Pirani and Naderi 315).

President Jimmy Carter, through Executive Order no. 12170, implemented the embargo against Iran. The 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. The embargo was intended to put pressure on the Iranian government to release the hostages, and to address other issues of concern such as Iran's alleged support for terrorism and its pursuit of nuclear weapons. The embargo has had significant economic and political consequences for both the US and Iran, and has been a major source of tension between the two countries for over four decades. Since then, every U.S. president has maintained the trade embargo against Iran (Wise 11_12).

In 1983, the Reagan administration launched Operation Staunch, a worldwide diplomatic push to stop Iran from receiving weapons during the Iran-Iraq War. This was part of a broader international effort to restrict Iran's access to weapons, which had been ongoing since the 1979 revolution. The embargo was imposed due to Iran's military actions in the region such as launching missiles at neighboring countries, attacking oil tankers, smuggling weapons into conflict areas, and even shooting down a civilian aircraft. Its purpose was to

limit Iran's ability to acquire advanced weaponry and prevent the transfer of weapons to unauthorized parties (United States Institute of Peace). The Clinton's administration applied sanctions and executive orders in 1995 to prevent exporting any products or services from Iran to the United States. This action came as a response to the nuclear program of Iran, and because of the country's support for terrorists. These measures highlight the enduring importance of sanctions as a tool of statecraft (Sen). Despite the damage caused by the sanctions, Iran has not learnt the lesson, as Iranian government behavior remains a threat to U.S. interests and those of its partners.

2.5. Iran-Contra Affair

In November 1986, a Lebanese magazine published an article stating that senior officials in the U.S. President Ronald Reagan's administration had sold weapons to Iran, which was under an embargo, and transferred the profits to counter-revolutionary forces fighting the government of Nicaragua. These actions violated both domestic and international laws. The latter surprising fact almost ended Reagan's presidency, and jeopardized the credibility of the US foreign policy (Modrazo 504). This arms sale operation came into application after months of discussion at the National Security Council (NSC) of an Israeli proposal to provide Iran with weapons in order to re-establish relationship with Iran and as an attempt to release the hostages; however, President Reagan administration members discovered later on that Iran only interested in arms (Sofaer 1084).

In March 1984, Hezbollah kidnapped William F. Buckley, the CIA station chief in Beirut, Lebanon, in addition to six more Americans over the next year. In February 1985, President Reagan secretly authorized National Security Advisor McFarlane to engage in talks with Iran, Hezbollah's supporter, Despite the fact that the President's public stance against negotiating with, as they call them, terrorists. The negotiations resulted in Reagan approval of a plan in August for Israel to sell American missiles to Iran in exchange for releasing the

seven hostages despite a congressional arms embargo on Iran (“The Iran-Contra Affair” 4). Ninety-six TOW missiles were sent to Iran on August 20, 1985, in exchange for the release of four hostages, though none were freed. Another 408 missiles were delivered on September 14, resulting in the release of one hostage the next day. Weapons sales to Iran continued in the hope that more hostages would be freed (5).

Following the leaked news that the US government had been selling arms to Iran in 1986, in 1987, Congress launched an investigation into the Iran-Contra Affair, seeking to expose participants and Reagan's involvement. Despite Reagan's Republican victory, Democrats hold control of Congress. As the House and Senate joint committee prepared for their inquiry, Reagan confirmed to the public that the U.S. didn't negotiate with terrorists and initiated the Tower Commission to investigate the matter internally. On March 4, 1987, Reagan addressed the nation, admitted his administration's involvement in an arms-for-hostages program, and assumed responsibility as president, however; he claimed his ignorance of operational details. Congressional hearings on May 5th investigated the covert arms sale. Reagan addressed the nation again on August 12th, taking blame but asserting ignorance of the Iran-Nicaragua exchange's complexity (Holden 5).

Congress released its report on November 16th, 1987, stating that President Reagan was not aware of the operations, but military members and Reagan's administration were aware of the exchanges, however the report did blame him by stating “if the President did not know what his national security advisers were doing, he should have.” Following the Congressional Report, numerous members of the Reagan administration were indicted for providing false testimony, conspiracy, and diversion (6).

2.6. Operation Praying Mantis

In the winter of 1988, tension eased during the Iraq-Iran war and The Iranians kept in laying mines. On April 14th, the guided-missile frigate USS Samuel B. Roberts hit a mine; the

explosion caused a 15-foot hole in the warship's hull and cracked its keel. In addition to the injury of ten men, four of them were severely burned. U.S. commanders wanted a revenge, which would teach Iran a lesson. They spent a whole week planning for the special mission; its coded-name was "Operations Praying Mantis" (Wise).

Operation Praying Mantis was a U.S. naval operation in the Persian Gulf on April 14th 1988, in response to Iran's mining of the USS Samuel B. Roberts. The commanders tasked SAG Bravo and Charlie warships with attacking oil platforms, while SAG Delta hunted for another Iranian warship. The USS Enterprise and the Air Force provided air support. Both SAG Bravo and Charlie gave warning to the occupants of their respective targets before attacking and destroying them. The Iranian response was minimal, with small craft attacking ships and oil platforms. The US response was by destroying two of the Bog hammers and forcing the rest to flee. An Iranian fast attack craft Joshan, posed a threat to U.S. forces, but was destroyed after ignoring warnings to turn away.

The operation demonstrated the impact of advances in communications technology and marked a significant moment in naval warfare (Dalton). The Operation highlighted the U.S. Navy's fast and strong response to the Iranian aggression in the Persian Gulf. This operation pointed out the potential challenges and tactics that could shape the future naval conflicts in the region, emphasizing the need for readiness and adaptability in the face of evolving threats (Brimelow).

2.7. A New Foreign Policy Vision

The United States relied heavily on hard power tools, especially on the military interference, along with sending its troops to the foreign soils in order to get involved in their domestic issues. This process was going on for many years, and it continued even more under the presidency of George w. Bush. Following the 9/11 attacks, almost everything America did was wrong (Graff). The incident was like the fuse that increased the inflammation. The Bush

administration overestimated the use of force, and poured all of its attention on securing America by over-using the military strength, in addition to fighting the global terror. Bush thought that his violent and problematic strategy would strengthen the position of America in the global arena; however, none of that has happened (Valdés-Ugalde and Duarte).

There was an international disappointment and shock in regarding the violent attitude of the Bush administration, where many previous allies started to cut their connections. Robert M. Gates, the secretary of defense, did not agree with the ability of the military force alone to solve the security threats facing the America. He stated that the way towards victory cannot be achieved through killing and capturing (Gate). General David Petraeus, one of the military leaders, advised the administration to support economic development and governance while maintaining the safety of local residents. However, their voices were not taken into consideration (Glenn 2). With all the efforts made, and despite spending more than the rest of the world on the military, Americans did not feel secured.

Hopes and expectations increased with the election of Barack Obama as a president. In 2009, the whole world was looking forward to see how the 44th U.S. Leader would change the dramatic current situation of the United States, and adopt a new approach in foreign policy since the latter strongly argued with the Bush approach of the “war on terror” (Drezner).

President Barack Hussein Obama's 2008 presidential campaign marked a transformative shift in American foreign policy, challenging rooted mindsets and outdated doctrines that had guided previous administrations. His new vision aimed to restore strategic effectiveness, and allow for more significant interventions in the critical areas. Obama sought to redirect U.S. focus from prolonged engagement in Middle Eastern conflicts towards the economically vibrant Asia-Pacific region, recognizing its growing significance in U.S. trade and investment. This strategic move signaled a departure from the longstanding emphasis on European affairs during the Cold War era. Additionally, Obama's plan adopted a new foreign

strategy, rejected violent actions, and promoted policies aligned with American values and constitutional principles (Unger 1).

Obama has promised to change the traditional way of thinking about foreign policy, when he has stated that his desire is not just ending the war, but putting an end to the mindset that got people into war in the first place. Barack Obama promised a national security plan that would be financially stable, balancing Washington's ambitious goals with its limited military and financial capabilities. He vowed to carefully decide when military action was needed and when it was not, taking into account the unique circumstances of each situation (Unger 2). Concerning the use of military power, president Obama stated:

I will not hesitate to use force, unilaterally if necessary, to protect the American people or our vital interests. We must also consider using military force in circumstances beyond self-defense in order to provide for common security that underpins global stability _ to support friends, participate in stability and reconstruction, or confront mass atrocities (Obama).

Hillary Rodham Clinton, a secretary of state under the Obama administration, introduced their new foreign policy strategy in her confirmation hearing. She stated the need for the use of a new foreign policy “Smart Power”, which refers to the combination of instruments including, diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal, and cultural elements. Every situation requires a carefully considered decision for the best instrument to use; she also made it clear that a military intervention might be essential for some occasions. Clinton informed the audience that they would be working on restoring the relationships, which were ignored during the Bush administration (Collinson).

Barack Obama's presidency brought significant changes to American foreign policy. His main challenge was not only to recognize and deal with the issue of security, but also to regain the lost authority. His smart power foreign policy goes beyond the usual tools of hard

and soft power; which is an alternative approach that would be efficient in maintaining the country's leadership, and preserving the global order. Instead of declaring war on terrorist organizations, he choose to go ahead with a demilitarization strategy and indicated that he was open to hold talks with North Korea and Iran (Nelson).

President Obama focused on similar geographic concerns as those of the previous president. Yet unlike George W. Bush, Obama tried to present these concerns in a more peaceful manner through his speeches. As an example of this speeches “Cairo version” in June 2009 titled as "a new beginning" in which he presented his vision for a new era in U.S.-Muslim relations. The later was welcomed positively in the Middle East and west from both regional leaders and commentators (Totman and Hardy 82_83). So did Obama succeeded in fulfilling his promise of adapting a peaceful approach, or did he failed in upholding his commitment and shifted towards the Bush doctrine?

The United States and Iran shares a long history going back to the nineteenth century. During the Qajar and the shah era of governance, both states experienced an era of cooperation and shared interests, with Iran being the US great ally in the Middle East after World War two. However, both nations turned into adversaries after the Islamic Revolution which is considered as a turning point in US-Iran relations. The latter event was fueled by the US interference in Iran’s internal affairs, as well as the coup of Mohammed Mossadegh. This major event was followed by another key event, which is the Hostage Crisis. As result, the tension increased between the United States and Iran. After the Islamic Revolution, Iran’s ambitions towards nuclear weapons increased and resulted in establishing hidden nuclear weapons. To maintain the world peace and stability, the United States has worked on stopping Iran’s nuclear program that was encountered by the use of hard power strategies. On the contrary, President Barack Obama took another direction to halter Iran’s nuclear program. He

utilized a combination of soft power and hard power strategies which are commonly known as smart power.

Endnotes

1. The War on Terror: or the Global War on Terror (GWOT) is an extensive plan declared by President George W. Bush After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. This plan had aimed to fight and stop the terrorism all around the world. As part of this plan was the war on Iraq and Afghanistan.

National Archives. "Global War on Terror". *George W. Bush Library*, 3 Jan. 2003,

www.georgewbushlibrary.gov/research/topic-guides/global-war-terror.

[Accessed 29 may. 2024](#).

2. Al-Qaeda: it is proclaimed that Al-Qaeda is broad-based militant Islamist organization founded by Osama bin Laden in the late 1980s and became one of the world's most notorious terrorist organizations after carrying out the attacks of September 11, 2001. It began as a logistical network to support Muslims fighting against the Soviet Union during the Afghan War.

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Al-Qaeda | History, Meaning, Terrorist Attacks, & Facts." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2018, www.britannica.com/topic/al-Qaeda.

[Accessed 29 may 2024](#).

3. Dual-Track Policy: throughout the west' attempts to halter Iran's nuclear program, the west countries particularly the p5+1 countries, has employed distinct policies. The Dual-Track policy was one of the p5+1' policies under which these countries had utilized two tracks. The first one is opening for the negotiations with Iran, and the second one is imposing sanctions on Iran to oblige it to accept the accords provided by the p5+1 countries.

"Iran and the P5+1: Dual Track Clash." *The diplomat.com*,

thediplomat.com/2010/12/iran-and-the-p51-dual-track-clash/. Accessed 29 may 2024.

P5+1 countries: Adam Hayes defined the P5+1 countries as: The P5+1 countries are a group of nations working together on the Iran Nuclear Deal. The countries include the five permanent members of the United Nations (U.N.) Security Council, with the addition of Germany. The U.N. Security Council consists of China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The agreement is more formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Hayes, Adam. "P5+1 Countries." *Investopedia*, www.investopedia.com/terms/p/p51.asp.

[Accessed 29 may 2024](#).

Chapter Three

Assessing Obama's Smart Power Approach

When he took office in 2009, President Barack Obama inherited a complicated set of global issues, many of which had to do with the United States relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Decades of enmity were caused by concerns about Iran's nuclear program, its involvement in regional conflicts, and its violations of human rights. This chapter examines the tactics, which were used by President Barack Obama to deal with the long-standing hostility between the two countries. The tactics shaped by the new administration were in two types: Soft tactics, and hard tactics. The soft power embodies the Obama's promise for a new beginning, the negotiation process with Iran over its nuclear activities, and the humanitarian assistance of Obama to his rival country in their time of need. Whereas, the hard power embodies the economic sanctions which aimed to punish Iran for its international disobedience, in addition to the Cyber-attacks. This chapter as well evaluates the success and the failure of Obama's smart strategy, whether he succeeded in realizing his goals or not. The final title tackles how the next administrations dealt with Iran, aiming to explore the prospects of US-Iran relations.

3.1. Obama' Smart Power

After World War II, numerous Republicans and Democrats have utilized military force as a mean of enhancing regime change when confronted with challenges anywhere in the world. As an example the Kennedy administration's military intervention against Fidel Castro in 1961, Nixon's administration overthrow of Salvador Allende from power by force in Chile in 1973, Reagan's use of force in Grenada in 1983, and George W.H. Bush's overthrow of Manuel Noriega in Panama in 1989. Moreover, George W. Bush followed the same policy and employed force to remove the Taliban from power in 2001 as well as Saddam Hussein in

2003. These instances shed the light on the US choice to use the force and military interventions in its foreign policy (“the Iran Nuclear Deal...” 2).

In contrast, President Obama favoured a distinct strategy towards regime change and to the application of American diplomacy since he took office in 2009. His initial inaugural address in Washington D.C. outlined his political and foreign policy philosophies. He promised a new start with adversaries and allies alike based on various new approaches to American foreign policy. Throughout his presidency, Obama aimed to urge dialogue, involve with enemies, loosen one's grip, and permit diplomacy to proceed before turning to force. Many of his predecessors favoured force as the primary approach to achieve their objectives. However, President Obama set a different tone at the beginning of his term with the Muslim World, Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Syria, Al-Qaeda, and others, aiming to alter their perspectives. He welcomed all to open up and view things from more positive perspectives to find common grounds and a better understanding of the challenges faced by all societies (3). However, in the case of Iran, President Obama encouraged diplomacy and negotiations with Iran; however he never opted out the use of force and military option against Iran in case the negotiations failed (Asghar 40). in order to effectively handle the Iran issue President Obama smartly combined the economic sanctions as well as the diplomatic negotiations how other allies pressured Iran with additional sanctions, which led to the agreement, and limited the country's nuclear activities in exchange with sanctions relief (Solomon 6).

3.1.1. Obama's Soft Power Tactics

President Obama intended to pursue different, moderate and flexible foreign policy to push forward US interests throughout the world. This new foreign policy was based on dialogue, cooperation, and negotiations over confrontation. To Obama, US interests required working on changing the world's idea about the US, from state that favours military interventions to a state that utilises soft power strategies and diplomacy in order to restore

allies and confront enemies (Brandal161). In American foreign policy towards Iran, President Obama rejected his predecessor President Bush's approach and adopted the principle of "diplomacy first" in persuading Iran to stop its nuclear program (Castigilioni 3).

3.1.1.1. A promising beginning

For the last 30 years, the formal relationship between the United States and Iran has been intense. It all started in 1953, when the CIA helped in the coup against the Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh, who was elected democratically by his people, and strained even more when the Iranian students seizure at the American embassy in Tehran during the Iranian revolution of 1978 (Sharp 1). In 2002, the most obvious example of this issue was when President Bush classified Iran as a part of the "Axis of evil" with Russia and North Korea. However, the new U.S. government is trying to depart from the past and adopt a more accommodative approach. President Obama has shown in his interviews that Washington is ready to establish diplomatic relations with Iran (Jahanbegloo 1).

Obama's first moments into presidency were characterized by an unofficial outreach from the two rivals. Barack Obama was seen as the one who would restore America's lost image, as he spoke for the nations desire "to lead again" and regain the lost credibility in the global arena. In international relations, words do have their effects. The most notable changes that Obama emphasized during his first months in the office were linguistic changes. The shift from the harsh language of Bush to Obama's diplomatic mannerism approach and vision of change, have already raised hopes for a diplomatic turning point (Sharp 3).

Two days into his office, Obama received an unexpected congratulation letter on his election victory from Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the president of the Islamic republic of Iran. His letter was not as harsh as the previous letters to President George W. Bush; it nevertheless contained a heavy dose of criticism of America. Ahmadinejad stressed on the desire of nations of the world to demand an end to policies that involve invading, bullying, scheming,

warmongering, humiliating other nations via the implementation of unjust and biased rules, and a diplomatic strategy that decreased respect for America's people, and fostered resentment for its leaders, The desire to witness actions that uphold friendship, fairness, respect for the rights of people and nations, and having no say in the affairs of others (Parsi 42).

Six months into his presidency, Obama choose his first official interview to be with Al-Arabiya, an Arabic-language speaking television channel, he stated that if countries like Iran were willing to “unclench their fists” they would find an extended hand from the American side (Cooper and Landler). Obama made it clear that he is ready to hold talks with Iran through diplomacy.

One of Obama’s famous speeches was delivered at “Al Azhar” university in Cairo. Obama insisted that he was looking for a “new beginning” between the United States and Muslims all over the world, a beginning which is centered on respect and shared interests. In addition, he illustrated that Islam and America are not distinct or conflicting; rather, they overlap and have shared values such as tolerance, the value of every human being, and the principles of justice and peace (“The American Presidency Project”). In the same interview, Obama claimed that his administration would opt for a peaceful approach in reconciling any differences.

Ahmadinejad, the 6th Iranian President, noted that the United States' unexpected readiness for engagement should be fundamental not manipulative, and to address problems rather than merely provide political cover for upcoming sanctions and threats. He further stated that his people welcome real changes, and that they are ready to hold talks based on mutual respect and in a neutral setting (Fathi and Cowell).

In March 2009, during the Nowruz celebrations that marked the Persian New Year, President Obama extended a hand to Iran through a heartfelt video message. He expressed a sincere desire for a fresh start, emphasizing that the United States sought to see Iran embrace

its rightful role within the global community. Obama underscored that this esteemed position could be attained only through peaceful means, displaying the inherent greatness of the Iranian people and their rich civilization. This gesture aimed to foster dialogue and cooperation, steering away from the path of conflict and highlighting the potentials for mutual understanding and prosperity (“President’s Message to…”).

Another attempt to refresh the relations between the two countries was when the state department notified all of their embassies and consulates worldwide, informing them that they are allowed to invite the Iranian diplomats to the celebrations of their independence on 4th July. The American officials regarded this move as another step of the American overtures to Iran (Landler). This was considered as a genuine step, because the Iranian representatives were not invited to such celebrations since the two countries broke ties in 1979 (Sharp 4).

3.1.1.2. Negotiations with Iran

Sitting with Iran on a negotiation table would lead to a positive change internally. Despite its challenges, dialogue would identify mutual interests between the United States and Iran. Mohammad Khatami, in his first major foreign policy statement in 1997, reached out to the American people, drawing parallels between the American and Iranian revolutions to highlight the compatibility of religion and liberty. On March 17, 2000, US Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright publicly confessed America's role in overthrowing Iran's popular government under Mossadegh and expressed regret for supporting Iraq in its war against Iran (Jahanbegloo 6). However, the propitiatory tone of Albright's statement was undermined by the subsequent aggressive approach of the Bush administration (7).

President Obama’s approach has adopted a “carrot and stick” policy to push Iran to negotiate (Nuruzzaman 183). Obama administration aimed to convey to both the Iranian people and leadership that the US's objective was not to fundamentally change the Islamic Republic but rather to engage in constructive talks and cooperation through multilateral

channels. His focus narrowed to encouraging behavioural changes, notably regarding Iran's nuclear program rather than pursuing broader regime change goals (Tarzi).

Shortly after assuming power, President Obama delivered a significant foreign policy address in Prague, outlining his agenda for advancing global nuclear disarmament (“Remarks by President Barack...”). In the autumn of 2009, following the exposure of Iran's secret enrichment facility at Fordow (Sanger and Broad), Obama made his elementary attempt to broker a partial nuclear agreement with Iran within the framework of a "fuel deal" proposed by the P5+1 group, consisting of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany. Before the project Iranians claimed that the existing low-enriched uranium stockpile in their country was utilized for only civilian purposes. However, the P5+1 countries' proposal required shipping abroad 75-80% of Iran's low-enriched uranium stockpile to be converted into fuel plates for the Tehran Research Reactor. This offer aimed to test Iran's commitment to peaceful nuclear activities, which the West doubted, by requiring tangible actions as proof. Despite Tehran's rejection of the deal and its failure to meet this test, the Obama administration persisted in his diplomatic efforts to engage with the determined nuclear proliferators (Sanger).

In late 2009, the U.S. Senate approved a resolution denouncing the Iranian government's censorship tactics against its people. The resolution also called for the implementation of the VOICE Act, which the Obama administration launched in January 2010. Throughout its first year, the Obama administration encountered mounting pressure to take a firmer stance against the Iranian regime. The initial strategy of engagement, followed by a scaling back of efforts to promote democracy in Iran, went revisions as the administration entered its second year. By the end of the year, the Obama administration began adjusting to the reality that the Iranian regime was unwilling to engage in meaningful

negotiations regarding its nuclear program or uphold its citizens' rights to participate in open discussions on democratic freedoms (MacLean 35).

The P5+1 group persisted on halting Iran nuclear program. In May 2012, the P5+1 group took part in what became known as the Baghdad negotiations, intending to address the unresolved Iranian nuclear issue. Obama administration Officials entered the talks with a sense of optimism, seeing Iran's willingness to engage in negotiations as a crucial indicator of the effectiveness of sanctions in pressuring the regime. However, aside from agreeing to continue discussions in Moscow in June, no primary agreements were reached. The negotiations in Moscow also failed as Iran refused to comply with the P5+1's demand to stop its uranium enrichment at 20%, a level just below that needed for nuclear weapon production. Additionally, Iran refused to shut down its nuclear facility in Qom and to export its stockpile of enriched uranium out of the country. After the latest round of negotiations ended without success, President Obama had no choice but imposing sanctions on Iran. In late July 2012 Obama took action by signing Executive Order 13622. This order focused on sanctioning the Iranian oil industry and imposing restrictions on financial transactions related to conducting business with associated entities (48).

The year 2013 marked a breakthrough in diplomatic effort due to the election of Hassan Rouhani as Iran's new president in June. Shortly after taking office in August, Rouhani actively advocated for renewed negotiations with the P5+1. This willingness to negotiate and compromise from the Iranian leader resulted in direct communication between Rouhani and Obama, as well as meetings between U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (Fantz). A possible shift in diplomatic dynamics on the nuclear issue has been identified by these high level talks, which were the first of its kind since the 1979 Iranian revolution. The Obama administration focused on halting Iran's nuclear program due to; its awareness about the necessity of preventing Iran

from obtaining nuclear weapons, and its concerns about the possibility of Iran's rapid nuclear development and its prospective consequences, including pre-emptive strikes by Israel or nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, particularly by Saudi Arabia. On November 24, 2013 a new round of negotiations in Geneva led to the signing of an interim agreement that opt to diminish Iran's nuclear enrichment activities known as the Joint Plan of Action. In return the P5+1 states are going to made a limited sanctions relief for Iran, while further negotiations aimed for a more permanent resolution (Mansoor et al. 4).

3.1.1.3. Iran Nuclear Deal

The Obama administration followed various strategies to integrate target countries into the international non-proliferation regime. The Obama administration strategy towards Iran represented through accepting Iran's enrichment program for peaceful purposes, while restricting it using heightened monitoring and inspection measures. This approach entailed reducing Iran's enrichment capacity by one third, while also decreasing its stockpile of enriched uranium in terms of quantity and level of concentration. In order to close off all potential avenues for Iran to divert nuclear materials or equipment, Obama administration along with IAEA inspections granted access to any site at any time for a period of ten to fifteen years under international verification. In his remarks on the JCPOA President Obama articulated this vision, recalling President Kennedy's concept of "attainable peace" through gradual institutional evolution and expressing a preference for a peaceful, diplomatic resolution. The administration believed that Iran's nuclear weapon development could be effectively curtailed through the establishment of a robust, verifiable, and collective non-proliferation system. Obama administration took the necessary Measures to ensure swift detection of any attempt to divert nuclear material, while modifications were made to the basic structure of the Arak reactor and the removal of existing spent fuels aimed to eliminate Iran's development of nuclear weapons using plutonium (Lee et al.).

Following the successful conclusion of an interim agreement, known as the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA), in late November 2013, negotiations for a comprehensive and final nuclear deal commenced in January 2014 (Landau 3). The Joint Plan of Action (JPA) outlined that a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) would involve establishing a clearly defined Iranian enrichment program with practical constraints and transparency measures to guarantee its peaceful nature. More precisely, Iran and the P5+1 nations would negotiate in the JCPOA framework to achieve permanent and comprehensive sanctions relief in exchange for limitations, to be agreed upon for a specified duration, on various aspects of Iran's enrichment activities. These restrictions would encompass the scope and level of Iran's enrichment operations, the capacity and location of its enrichment facilities, as well as the size and composition of Tehran's enriched uranium stocks (Kerr and Katzman 7).

By 2014, negotiators from the P5+1 had concluded that the 2013 objective of dismantling Iran's nuclear infrastructure and prevent its development of nuclear weapons was unachievable. They were left with no alternative but to consider watered-down goal. They worked on prolonging the time it would take for Tehran to produce enough material for a nuclear weapon from several months to a year, while allowing much of Iran's nuclear infrastructure to remain intact. In addition to lifting many restrictions and giving Iran many others concessions such as agreeing not to discuss ballistic missiles, which opened the door for additional compromises, all in an effort to keep Tehran at the negotiating table (Landau 3). In July 2015, with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Obama asserted with pride that every path to Iranian nuclear weapons had been cut off, effectively preventing Tehran from acquiring such capability. He insisted that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would have access to any suspicious facility "where necessary, when necessary. ("Statement by the President...").

Under The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) Iran should be obedient to a series of commitments: Iran would suspend enrichment activities at the Fordow facility for 15 years, repurposing it into a research facility with Russian assistance, while limiting enrichment at the Natanz facility and refraining from building new enrichment sites for 15 years. Additionally, the Arak heavy water reactor, capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium, would undergo redesign to prevent such production. Moreover, Iran would significantly reduce its low-enriched uranium stockpile by 98% to 300kg over 15 years, limit uranium enrichment to 3.67% for civilian nuclear purposes (well below the 90% threshold for weapons-grade enrichment) for the same duration, and reduce its operational centrifuges by two-thirds. Iran agreed to provisionally implement the Additional Protocol to its Safeguard Agreement with the IAEA (Mills 4).

In exchange, nuclear-related sanctions would be progressively lifted over ten years under the JCPOA agreement, with the provision that non-compliance could initiate the automatic reinstatement of sanctions. However, specific sanctions remained in effect under Annex V of the JCPOA and Annex B of UNSCR 2231. These sanctions mainly targeted proliferation-sensitive goods, ballistic missile technologies, and individuals and entities associated with Iran's nuclear and missile programs. In January 2016, after the signing of the nuclear agreement; the majority of European Union (EU), United States (US), and United Nations (UN) sanctions pertaining to Iran's nuclear program were lifted following verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that Iran had taken the substantial steps to fulfill its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) commitments (5).

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) implementation timeline proceeds systematically, beginning with Finalization Day on July 14, 2015, when Iran, the P5+1 countries, and high representative of the EU approved the accord. This was followed by Adoption Day/ New U.N. Security Council Resolution on October 18, 2015, that marked the

official commencement of the JCPOA after 90 days of the endorsement of the JCPOA, with the U.S. giving provisional exemptions for sanctions relief. Next, the Implementation Day, declared on January 16, 2016, marked the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verification of Iran's fulfillment of specified nuclear-related tasks and the lifting of certain sanctions that were imposed by the U.S., the U.N., and the EU. Transition Day, planned eight years from Adoption Day (October 18, 2023) or upon receipt of a favourable report from the IAEA, signifies the initial easing of U.N. Security Council scrutiny over Iran (Kerr and Katzman 8).

Finally, UNSCR Termination Day, scheduled ten years from Adoption Day (October 18, 2025), the specific measures imposed by the U.N. Security Council, while certain obligations under the JCPOA endure indefinitely would terminate, signifying a long-term commitment in order to monitor and manage Iran's nuclear activities (9).

In 2008, the Drug Enforcement Administration launched Project, in response to findings indicating Hezbollah's transition from a regional military and political entity to a global criminal enterprise, known as project Cassandra. Allegedly this group generated around \$1 billion annually from various illegal ventures including drug and arms trafficking and money laundering. The Obama administration sidelined an extensive law enforcement initiative aimed at combating drug trafficking by Hezbollah, an Iranian-supported organization, neglecting the evidence suggesting Hezbollah's involvement in smuggling cocaine into the United States, all in an attempt to pursue a nuclear agreement with Iran (Meyer). According to a former Treasury official from the Obama administration, as stated in her written testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, investigations into Hezbollah were intentionally downplayed to avoid disrupting relations with Iran and potentially endangering the nuclear deal ("Project Cassandra").

3.1.1.4. Humanitarian Relief

On 2010, a devastating earthquake damaged plenty of villages in north and west Iran. At that time, a number of lawmakers gave a request to president Obama to lift the necessary sanctions against Iran in order to ensure that the Iranian people receive all the humanitarian help in the times of their need (Mortazavi). In order to explore the offer of assistance and the best ways for the American people to help Iranians in need, the White House organized a conference call for interested groups from the Iranian-American community and other communities. Representatives from the Treasury Department, USAID, State Department, National Security Staff, and the National Security Staff explained to callers how Americans might contribute to humanitarian efforts, without going against the current restrictions (McDonough).

Donations and aid transaction needed a special permission from the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), which is in charge of a complex network of administrative regulations related to Iranian sanctions (Gladstone). Although items of food and medicine, among other humanitarian supplies, to Iran were exempt from Treasury licensing requirements. In an attempt to facilitate American individuals' assistance to Iranians in their recovery from these disasters, the Treasury Department today released a temporary license that allowed the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to transfer funds up to 300.000 dollars. As well as a General License that permits U.S. citizens to make direct contributions to earthquake relief operations in Iran. For a 45-day period, it permits specific fund-raising and the transfer of monies to Iran for the relief. By taking this action, the American people may assist groups who are pursuing more extensive efforts to reconstruct impacted regions, as well as those that are engaged in humanitarian assistance activities; such as the delivery of essential medical and shelter supplies (McDonough).

The Iranian government has made the regrettable choice, which is to decline the offer of humanitarian aid. Government officials declared that they are prepared to offer emergency medical kits, blankets, hygiene supplies, food sets, plastic water containers, water treatment units, and other help through the NGOs whenever the Iranian government reconsiders its decision (McDonough). McDonough, the United States secretary of Veterans Affairs, stressed that this humanitarian action was just temporary, and did not change the administration's overall strategy for imposing sanctions on Iran. He further stated that America is still dedicated to enforcing the sanctions and other measures imposed strictly in order to put further pressure on the Iranian regime and to keep raising the burden of Iran's failure to meet its international responsibilities over its nuclear program (Rojin).

3.1.2. Obama's Hard Power Tactics

Before signing the nuclear agreement under the name JCPOA with Iran, soft power strategies such as negotiations did not achieve the desired success, this failure necessitates President Obama to utilize hard power strategies as an attempt to realize its goals. Obama's administration deduced that soft power tactics only would not be able to solve Iran's issue as a result it turned to hard power tactics. This shift was not out of unilateral decision but rather a strategic response of the complexities of this situation.

3.1.2.1. Obama's Sanctions on Iran

The United States has been applying sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran since 1979, in an attempt to pressure the country into changing its behavior. The application of sanctions started when the President Jimmy Carter signed an executive order to prohibit any Iranian assets held in U.S. during the hostage crisis. Additional restrictions were imposed throughout the 1990s with the intention of diminishing Iran's conventional arsenal, and limiting its capacity to spread force across the Middle East. As Iran advanced its nuclear

program in the 2000's, US sanctions attempted to put pressure on the country to restrict its nuclear activities (Clayton 22).

President Obama has given the Iranian regime a very clear option since taking office: either fulfills its international nuclear obligations and reaps the benefits of increased economic, political, and security integration that come with membership in the international community, or face increasing penalties for non-compliance. Obama alongside his administration applied a dual-track strategy that focused on engaging in talks while punishing Iran with sanctions at the same time if it showed any signs of disobedience (Parsi 213). The latter has been subjected to what President Ahmadinejad referred to as "the most severe and toughest sanctions ever imposed on a country, because of its decision to keep proceeding on the path of international isolation ("Sanctions related to Iran").

Despite his call for Iran to "unclench its fist" after winning the 2009 presidential elections, President Obama had actually imposed more severe sanctions on Iran than the Bush administration, making it the most sanctioned nation in the world, because of accusations that Iran's nuclear program was secretly developing a bomb. In addition to the fact that Iran ignored multiple U.N., resolutions forcing it to stop its nuclear program (Nuruzzaman 183), Obama warned that although diplomatic avenues were open, if Iran persisted in rejecting international calls to end its nuclear enrichment program, it would face much more pressure from other countries. He declared that the new sanctions will be the toughest to ever be imposed, and will make it tougher for Iran to purchase refined fuel as well as products and services, which it requires to improve its oil and natural gas industry, that is the backbone of its economy (Colvin).

With the increased disobedience of Iran in relation to its nuclear program, Obama held a speech where he said that some behaviors result in costs, and the Iranian regime will experience some of them this time. Since the Iranian government is proving that its own

unfair acts are a threat to justice everywhere, whether they are harming the nuclear non-proliferation system, the human rights of its own population, or the stability of its own neighbors by supporting terrorism (Lee). In this context, Obama stated:

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 communities are determined to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons (qtd in Dyar).

The following sanctions are considered the harshest to ever harm the economic sector of Iran. On July 1, 2010, Obama signed a sanction bill which was approved by the congress on June 24 from the same month. The comprehensive Iran sanctions, accountability and divestment act (CISADA), passed by a vote of 408-8 in the House of Representatives, and 99-0 in the Senates. This sanction aimed to increase the prohibitions of the Iranian transaction regulations, which were controlled by the OFAC of the department of treasury. It punished foreign organizations that supplied Iran with refined petroleum products, targeted the country's enhanced petroleum sector and financial system, and assisted Iran in sustaining its own domestic petroleum resource development. The Bill allows the President, in a variety of situations, to enact at least three of nine defined sanctions measures on enterprises ("The comprehensive Iran's sanctions...").

The Executive order number 13599 was signed in February 5, 2012 in response to the dishonest practices of Iran, keeping transactions related to sanctioned parties, the weak implementation of Iran's anti-money laundering laws, and the unacceptable risk that Iran's actions remain a threat to the world financial system. The executive order aimed at blocking every property and assets owned by the Iranian government, including the Central Bank of

Iran or other associated businesses that are under the control of the U.S. (including overseas branches), whether they are presently in the country or enter it, are to be frozen. Without express permission, these assets cannot be moved, paid for, exported, withdrawn, or handled in any other way. (“Executive Order 13599” 1).

The Executive Order 13622 was signed in July 30. 2012 in order to established sanctions for foreign financial institutions, which are discovered to have knowingly conducted or helped in large-scale financial transactions with the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). In addition to the authority granted to the secretary of the treasury department to seize the assets, and interests in assets of those who have been found to financially, materially, or technologically support, sponsored, or contributed products or services to support NIOC (“Archive of Iran-Related...”). The sanctions of the United States under the president Obama have severely damaged Iran's economy, and forced Tehran to engage in nuclear program negotiations. Although lifting them is crucial to the deal, it will be a challenging task (Laub).

3.1.2.2. Obama’s Cyber-Attacks against Iran

In the first months of his presidency, President Obama privately commanded a series of increasingly sophisticated cyber-attacks targeted Iran's principal nuclear enrichment facilities, indicating a significant expansion of America's use of cyber weapons, a program that founded during the Bush administration under the codename Olympic Games. Despite confronting a severe dilemma in 2010 when a component of the program, known as the Stuxnet worm, unexpectedly escaped and spread internationally, Obama remained steadfast in his support for the cyber-attack. A critical event happened at a stressful discussion in the White House Situation Room shortly after the worm's release. Obama, along with Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and then- CIA Director Leon E. Panetta, negotiate whether to stop the operation altogether. In the middle of uncertainties about the extent of Iran's

awareness of the compromised code and increasing evidence of its continued havoc, Obama ultimately decided to precede with the cyber-attacks. New versions of the worm targeted the Natanz plant over the next several weeks; causing massive damage by temporarily shutting down nearly 1,000 of the 5,000 centrifuges Iran had spinning at the time to purify uranium. This strategic decision confirmed Obama's commitment to stop Iran's nuclear goals via new means, despite the risks and ethical difficulties posed by the widespread use of cyber weapons (Sanger).

Iran at the beginning denied the impact of Stuxnet on its enrichment facilities but later admitted its discovery and containment. Later on, the nation announced the formation of a military cyber unit, alerting readiness for "cyberspace and Internet warfare." The United States appears to be the first to repeatedly utilise cyber weapons to damage another nation's infrastructure, achieving what was traditionally done through physical means. According to studies the code is 50 times more sophisticated than a regular computer worm, demonstrating the operation's expertise. Despite extensive investigations, the responsible party remains unknown. President Obama, aware of the ground-breaking nature of these cyber-attacks, expressed concerns about potential precedents for other nations, terrorists, or hackers to justify their own cyber-attacks, emphasizing the delicate balance between national security imperatives and the risks of deploying cyber weapons globally (Sanger).

3.2. Americans and Iranians Reaction to Obama' Foreign Policy towards Iran

President Obama was the first President to engage in high level talks with Iran after thirty years of hostility. Obama administration used a combination of soft power and hard power strategies to be able to obtain its goal which was halting Iran's nuclear program. The reaction differs between praising and judging Obama's foreign policy from both sides Americans and Iranians. When Obama first came to office and declaring to outline for a new

start with adversaries, people were optimistic about his policies. However, after applying his strategies people's reaction to his foreign policy changed.

3.2.1. The American Reaction

By the time he took office, Barack Obama had pledged a post 9/11 foreign policy, one that would refocus the nation's attention from "war on terror" to global issues like nuclear proliferation and climate change. Despite his well-mixed strategies, some critics have noted that, after his presidency, the international community has grown increasingly violent, unstable, and divided (Boyle).

The Republican National Committee (GOP) has launched a series of speeches on the Senate floor criticizing President Obama for his actions in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Russia, Benghazi, and China, as well as the swap for Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl. They argued that Obama made further errors by withdrawing US troops from Afghanistan. The senators revived the theme that Obama is "leading from behind", and believed that his attitude has left America weaker and weakened the national security posture of the United States. Republicans also criticized Obama for not laying out a concrete plan in Iraq after discussing his options with congressional leaders (Everett).

The administration of Obama was accused of releasing \$1.3 billion, in addition to \$400 million of the Iranian frozen assets that had been held since 1981. It was suggested that the funds were used to pay for the release of Americans who had been unlawfully imprisoned in Iran. The Republican candidate Donald Trump accused Obama's secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, of starting the negotiations with Iran. Trump stated on twitter that Clinton initiated negotiations to provide Iran with 400 million dollars in cash. There was a growing annoyance within the Republicans, on why the administration would waste so much money to get a good deal with Iran (Wroughton).

In relation to the historic nuclear deal with Iran, prominent Republicans and a few Democrats reacted in frustration over President Obama's choice to seek UN approval for the deal before Congress has had an opportunity to comment. Critics claimed that by hinting that the international sanctions on Iran will end whether Congress approves or rejects the agreement, the decision seemed to be intended to ignore the Congress. According to House Speaker John Boehner, that was a "bad start for a bad deal". Obama has threatened to veto any decision related to the easing of the sanctions, so Congress will need to hold two-thirds of both chambers in order to reject it (Everett).

Additionally, Chairman Ron DeSantis declared that Shortly after its announcement, then-President Obama hailed the deal as "the strongest non-proliferation agreement ever negotiated" and asserted that it "cuts off all of Iran's pathways to a bomb." However, over a year and a half later, what actually happened contradicts what was said by President Obama. Instead of blocking Iran's path to obtain a nuclear weapon, the JCPOA appears to provide Iran with a clear route to achieve this capability. The next 10 to 15 years will gain access to an expansive nuclear program, supported by advanced technology and increased resources, resulting from the sanctions relief which the agreement's sunset clauses guarantee. He said: "This is a bad deal" stating that President Trump labelled it "the worst deal ever negotiated" for the previous reason. Senate Minority Leader Schumer and the Democratic Ranking Members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Senate Foreign Relations Committee also opposed it for similar concerns ("DeSantis Opener-Assessing...").

Obama's efforts towards limiting Iran's nuclear capabilities caught the attention of the American people. The congress designed a poll voting to end the debate concerning this issue in addition to other issues. It was entitled "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling issues?"

Approval Ratings of President Obama's Handling of Situation in Iran, by Party

% Approve

	Republicans	Independents	Democrats	Gap: Republicans minus Democrats
	%	%	%	(pct. pts.)
Approve	10	31	56	-46
Disapprove	82	58	29	+53

GALLUP

Fig. 2. Approval Ratings of President Obama's Handling of Sanctions in Iran, by Party,

McCarthy, Justin. "Obama Gets Low Marks for His Handling of Iran". *Gallup*. 15, Aug. 2015.

As it is noted from the Gallup poll above, most Democrats approved the Obama's handling of the situation in Iran with 56%, while a small minority of Republicans approved with only 10%. The percentage is vice versa regarding the disapproval. This result shows approximately that Republicans opposed the nuclear deal with Iran, while most of the Democrats supported it (McCarthy).

3.2.2. The Iranian Reaction

Iran's reactions to Obama's presidential win were mixed. The first opinion believed that the presidential elections represent a new change for the US to change its policies that the President George W. Bush has adopted. Those who have this opinion believe that a progress in US-Iran relations is necessary. They suppose that in order to realise a change in US-Iran relation President Obama needs to show just how sincere his pledge of change is and to take action without delay. As an example of those who share this opinion we have: Vice President I. Rahim- Mesai and A. Soltaniyeh, Iran's representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency. In contrast, we have a second opinion shared by some of the radical and traditional conservatives who hold negative views of Obama and the prospects for change in US policies. This opinion is based on the perception that influential US institutions are under the influence of Zionist lobbies, regardless of whether the president is republican or democrat (Sinkaya).

When President Obama first came to office, he introduced a new nuclear weapons policy which designates Iran as a potential target. The Iranian officials had seen the policy as a threatening and seditious one. A significant number of Iranian lawmakers were upset to be included in such policy, as they saw it as a threat to their country's security. As a result, they argued their government to file a formal complaint to the United Nations in which they were willing to accuse the United States of warmongering and pose it as a threat to world peace. Additionally, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini criticized the new Obama's policy stating that the US is "sinister government" and emphasized their distrust towards it (Fathi).

In the occasion of the Nowruz, the Persian New Year, President Obama published a video congratulating the Iranians in this occasion, followed by the Israeli President Shimon Peres also congratulating the Iranians in this occasion. The video was a part of Obama's new foreign policy which aimed at showing to Iran and the globe that the new administration had changed the US policy, and demonstrating its willingness to engage in talks with other regimes particularly Iran. Besides, the Israeli President through his video intended to show to Tehran that the Israeli opposition would not hinder the US initiatives towards Iran. However, the previous initiative was received coldly in Tehran, with Iran supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini stating that this video does not show any sort of change in US hostile attitude towards Iran.

From the Iranian perspective, the United States has made two initial demands of Iran: stopping Iran's nuclear program and stopping the support for what the US call it terrorism such as Hezbollah and Shiite factions in Iraq. In return, the US would suspend the sanction imposed on Iran. Tehran, however, sees that these sanctions are ineffective due to its limited compliance internationally, and a view that the economic challenges are more due to internal

issues that the sanctions. According to Iranians point of view the US is asking for strategic concessions, yet offering very little in return (Friedman).

3. 3. Successes and the Failures of Obama's Smart Power

Obama's Smart Power policy towards Iran particularly the JCPOA, became widely known around the world as it is a new foreign policy toward Iran since the Islamic revolution. Obama's predecessors intended to apply only the hard power to stop Iran's nuclear program, which is described as a threat to the world peace as the great nations stated. In order to suspend this program, President Obama applied a blend of both soft power and hard power strategies, the first of their kind toward Iran. Did president Obama succeeded in applying his smart power policy towards Iran? Or did he fail?

3.3.1. The Success

The first Obama's success is embodied in the U.N. Security Council resolution on Iran (Kagan). Barack Obama started his term as a president with confidence, believing that his innovative, mixed, and smart strategies would enable him to significantly strengthen the US ties with foreign nations. As well as accomplishing the desired American objectives. President Obama had foreign policy objectives that went beyond the conflicts he took over, or that started while he was in office. He was committed to drag Iran to sign the deal about its nuclear program. Beginning with his second term in 2013, Obama and the leaders of five other countries engaged in discussions with Iran, which resulted in a 2015 deal to stop the country from obtaining nuclear weapons, for a minimum of ten years in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions imposed by the UN. Iran gave up 97% of its enriched uranium as per of the deal. Obama has made advancement in addressing climate change, but much more work remains in both areas (Hamilton). His ability to have constructive interactions with old rivals Iran and Cuba proves that his approach of "engagement and dialogue" was somehow successful.

Some critics argued that it would have been better if the United States did not interfere with the issues of Iran; however, if Obama did not get the opportunity to sign the deal with Iran, the situation would have been worse, because Iran was just few steps ahead of developing a nuclear bomb. To explain it more, Iran possessed around 20,000 centrifuges and a significant amount of enriched uranium, enough to produce eight to ten bombs. It would have taken Iran two to three months to acquire enough weapons-ready uranium, or highly enriched uranium, to construct their first nuclear weapon, if they rushed to produce a bomb without the agreement in place, Iran's centrifuge count and stockpile would increase rapidly, nearly ensuring the country's ability to produce a bomb. Iran would take longer to develop a weapon if it signed this agreement. Significantly, until the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) certifies that Iran has fulfilled its half of the agreement, no more sanctions relief would be granted to Iran. The UN, US, and the EU have the authority to re-impose the sanctions that have severely damaged Iran's economy in the event that Iran violates any part of this agreement (“The Historical Deal...”).

3.3.2. The Failure

One of the reasons that led to the Obama’s foreign policy failure towards Iran was: first, Washington supposes that the international community opposes Iran’s nuclear program and willing to impose sanctions to punish Iran for it. However, the truth is that Iran is more incorporated economically and politically with the international community than it has ever been. In addition, many of Iran’s trading patterns prioritise their business and energy relations with Iran than punishing Iran for its nuclear weapons. Moreover, the west’s concerns about anti-proliferation seem to be highly selective, supporting Indian nuclear program and overlooking Pakistan’s and Israel’s nuclear capabilities. Many rising powers in Asia and Latin America, such as China and Brazil, do not take the concerns about Iran’s nuclear program seriously, and may even see that Iran’s nuclear program as a way to balance the US

influence. Second, Obama's administration seems to have assumed that it need only to make surface-level good will gesture would persuade Iran for making great concessions on one of its most important projects. However, the choices provided to Tehran were limited and unattractive; whether to stop their enrichment or face additional sanctions (Larison).

It cannot be denied that President Obama succeeded in convincing Iran to sign a Nuclear Deal; however, this agreement received several criticisms and this due to numerous reasons. First of all, Iran's uranium enrichment, which Obama's administration and the UN Security Council insisted to stop it. However after the negotiations they allowed Iran to keep enriching the uranium. Also, at the beginning, the US aim was to reduce Iran centrifuges by about two-third, but Iran centrifuges have multiplied from the negotiation's start to 20,000. Initially, the US proposed to limit Iran centrifuges to 500, yet the final deal allowed Iran to have 6,104. Iran's foreign minister claimed that after signing the nuclear deal; Iran will be able to use advanced IR-8 centrifuges that would enable Iran to enrich uranium 20 times faster than IR-1 centrifuges, which was totally contrary to what the US asserted (Zukerman). Iran has made more progress towards nuclear weapons under Obama's presidency more than it has did since the Iranian revolution (Theissen).

President Obama declared that any Iranian attempt to cheat would be revealed to the world, and anything suspicious would be immediately inspected. Still, critics insisted that the inspections won't be intrusive enough to expose Iranian violation or to hinder any breakout attempts effectively. Iran has a long history of teaching of records of international agreements. Secretary Moniz has stated IAEA inspectors must have "anywhere, anytime" access, but Ayatollah Ali Khomeini and his military say "no way." In addition, the Iran nuclear deal has given Iran what it wanted for a long time; relief from economic sanctions for only limited constraints on Iran's behaviour. Critics argue that this setup makes the whole agreement vulnerable to invasion by Iranians. However, even after this nuclear deal and negotiations

with the US, the Iranian supreme leader Khamenei is denouncing the US as the “Great Satan”, emphasizing the idea that Iran would not normalise the relations with the United States (Zukerman).

The Obama administration had based its policy on three main pillars; the peace progress, engagement, and containment. The peace progress aimed to garner favour with the Arabs in the Middle East and encourage the Arab states to form a strong alliance against Tehran. Engagement was aimed to demonstrate to its European allies, Russia, China that the US has made significant efforts to the community of nations, making containment workable even if engagement failed. However, all of those pillars had eventually failed (Smith).

3.4. US-Iran Relations after Obama’s Presidency

After the promise he made during his presidential campaign, Donald Trump withdrew from the JCPOA in May 2018. Initially Iran adopted a patience strategy yet, after the provocative language of Washington, Iran gradually announced a series of what it called reversible breaches of its obligations under the nuclear deal, exceeding limits on its stockpile of enriched uranium and the level to which it is enriched. Moreover, it suspended its protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency. At the beginning of 2019, Washington blamed Iran for the series of attacks on the oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman. At the beginning of 2020, the tension between the two countries grew even further, after a series of violent attacks that targeted the top military leader of Iran Gen. Qassem Suleimani, who was killed by an American drone. President Trump re-imposed sanctions on trade with Iran, which obliged companies from Europe and Asia to end their economic engagement with the country. This action heightened the social and political tension between the US and Iran relations (“What Comes Next...”).

The Joe Biden administration currently appears committed to revive the Iran Nuclear Deal, but after months of delay and permanent distrust, Iranian’s willingness is not clear. If

Iranians doubt that Iran would receive adequate sanction reliefs in the deal's implementation, or they believe that they could sustain through oil exporting and trading with states flouting US secondary sanctions, the JCPOA's survival becomes uncertain. Even if the negotiations succeed, it is uncertain the Biden administration would provide Iran with the necessary additional sanctions relief in order to follow-up a nuclear agreement further limiting Iran's nuclear program. Moreover, Biden administration would take into consideration Israel's opposition to concessions to Iran, whether those set by the original deal or any additional ones, in future agreements with Iran (Kaye).

When he was asked about the strategy of president Biden towards Iran, an official in the administration answered with a laugher "there is no Biden strategy for Iran" (Toosi). The future of U.S.-Iran relations is uncertain and highly dependent on various factors, including geopolitical dynamics, domestic politics, economic considerations, and regional stability. While there is potential for re-engagement and diplomacy, significant obstacles and challenges could derail efforts to improve relations between the two countries. Ultimately, finding a path toward peace and cooperation will require leadership, compromise, and a willingness to engage in constructive dialogue on both sides (Khan).

President Barack Obama had employed various strategies from both types of power as an attempt to suspend Iran's nuclear program. Initially, Obama utilized soft power tactics. When Obama first assumed office, he promised Iran with a fresh start as well as with other adversaries. Then, President Obama engaged in many talks with Iran, however, using only soft power tactics didn't enable President Obama to reach his objective. This failure obliged President Obama to combine hard power tactics along with soft power strategies. Obama imposed sanctions on Iran and launched cyber-attacks against Iran's nuclear bases. As one of the soft power strategies used by president Obama was a humanitarian relief after Iran earthquake on 2010. As a result of the combination of hard power and soft power strategies by

President Barack Obama, the US and Iran reached a nuclear agreement and engaged in high level talks after three decades of non-interaction. The reactions about Obama's smart power differ from both Iranians and Americans, with some of them approving this foreign policy, while others criticized it. The efficacy of President Obama's smart power remains a matter of debate due to Obama success in achieving some of US objectives and its failure in realizing other goals.

Endnotes

Carrot and stick policy: it is a policy that combines both reward and punishment to induce cooperation.

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Conclusion

The present research aimed to measure how President Obama applied his foreign policy “Smart Power” towards Iran, and its success and failure. In order to provide clear and comprehensive vision, the work is divided into three chapters that complete each other; with each one of them examining an important item of the main topic. Smart Power strategy is a new coined term by the American political scientist. However, the United States used to apply such combination of powers even before coining this strategy in the 21th century. Each president is known for the preference of one power, for instance President George W. Bush has been known for its extremely utilization of hard power. However, in our context, President Barack Obama has been known for its preference of two kinds of totally distinct powers.

The study shows in the first chapter that Smart Power is a combination of persuasive strategies, which are known as Soft Power, and forceful tactics, that are known as Hard Power. Throughout that chapter, the study confirms that both strategies are crucial for the US; to maintain its position, preserve its interests, compete adversaries, and support its allies. Moreover, this chapter demonstrates instances when the US utilized Hard Power, Soft Power and combination of both, which we refer to as Smart Power, as a foreign policy in order to achieve its goals. Throughout the chapter we can indicate that the United States has relied heavily on hard power especially during 20th century, but it is undeniable it has relied also on its soft power even with some adversaries. Additionally, the initial part explains the relationship between soft and hard power; despite the fact that both foreign policies are totally different, but relying only on one without the other can damage states connections, interests and image.

Since it is impossible to understand the present tensions apart from the past events, the second chapter explores the long history of US-Iran relations. The US-Iran interactions have

begun in the 19th century. However back at that time the relation had progressed very slowly, as the US had chosen the non-interference in the region; due to the fact that US allies (Britain and Russia) controlled the region. However, the discovery of the oil in Iran after the Second World War had changed the course of the interaction. The relations took a positive direction under the shah governance. The United States direct interference in Iran's internal affairs and the overthrow of the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohamed Mossadegh resulted in a cooperation era. The latter major events resulted in the exchange of oil from Iran to the United States and of military aid from US and Britain to Iran. The chapter deduces that the United States had established relations with Iran back at that era in order to maintain a strong ally in the region that would encounter the communism and spread the US ideologies, besides the interaction with Iran would cover the US need of oil and preserve its interests in the Middle East. On the other hand, Iran's objective from the interaction with the US was to obtain economic, political, and social development.

However, the cooperation era between the two states did not last for a long time, the interference of the United States in Iran's internal affair and the coup of Mouhamed Mossadegh had fuelled the Islamic revolution, in which the Iranians had overthrown Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and replaced him with Ayatollah Khomeini. Other key events lead to the rise of the tensions between the United States and Iran; such as the hostage crisis and Iran contra affair. Additionally, Iran nuclear program has been causing a huge tension between the two states, as it is considered one of the main reasons behind the hostility between the two nations. Generally, Obama's predecessors had employed hard power tactics (sanctions and military power) as attempts to suspend this program. On the contrary President Obama had encountered utilizing a combination of tactics from both hard power and soft power which is known as smart power.

Chapter three examined the flow of relations between the United States and Iran. From the moment president Obama took office, he declared his new foreign policy strategy and set up his goals, he as well pledged a new beginning with the Arab world in general and Iran in specific. The most important goal that Obama set for himself is to break the strained relations, and negotiate with Iran. The president divided his smart power strategy into hard power tactics and soft power tactics. At the beginning of his presidency, the president aimed to only use soft tactics in order to convince Iran to sign the JCPOA. However, with the growing disobedience of the rival country and the non-commitment to its international obligations concerning its nuclear program, the only choice left is to blend the hard tactics, which are represented in the cyber-attacks and the economic sanctions with the purpose of weakening the economics of Iran. The reactions towards the application of Obama's smart power on Iran varied among the international scene.

The international reaction was positive as most of the nations like the smart combination of powers, even some nations were opt to adopt the same policy. The American reaction was somehow negative, because the majority of the congress' members disliked when Obama focused his full attention to deal with Iran and neglected other important issues, mainly the domestic ones. The Iranian reaction was cautious at first, because the Iranian leaders did not trust the American openness for talks. However, when Obama expressed his commitment, they started to take his efforts seriously, and emphasized on the importance of a balanced interests. To sum up, we cannot say that Obama's smart power strategy fully succeed, or fully failed, it was kind of a mix. It was a success because Obama realized his primary goal in getting Iran to sign the nuclear deal, yet he did not stop the country's ambition to obtain nuclear weapons, which considered as a failure.

After the Iranian revolution, the Islamic Republic of Iran started the process of developing nuclear weapons. American leaders applied only hard power strategies in order to

sustain Iran's nuclear program. In contrast, Obama utilized a combination of soft and hard power tactics known as smart power. When President Obama first came to office, he had set several goals concerning the Iran issue. These objectives were represented in: starting a new beginning with Iran, putting Iran on negotiation table, making Iran sign a nuclear agreement and the most important goal was stopping Iran's nuclear deal.

President Barack Obama succeeded in realizing some of his goals. He had achieved the goal of making Iran sign a nuclear agreement, and officially, Iran signed the JCPOA in 2015. Moreover, Obama succeeded in putting Iran's supreme leaders on the table of negotiations, and held a high level of talks that were the first of their kind since 1979. However, president Obama failed to start a new beginning with Iran. It cannot be denied that there were a sort of improvement and tranquility between the two states yet it could not be called a new beginning due to the fact that President soft power tactics only did not succeed, so he was obliged to use hard power tactics as his predecessors did. Additionally, President Obama failed to realize the US most important objective, which is stopping Iran's nuclear progress. After a period of amelioration in the US-Iran relations during the presidency of Barack Obama, yet the withdrawal of President Donald Trump from the JCPOA along with the military tensions lead to the increase of tensions between the two states. Moreover, the non-existing strategy towards Iran from the administration of Joe Biden alongside with the election of the extremist Iranian leader Ebrahim Raisi, make the future of the US-Iran relations uncertain.

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